POWER AND STATE FORMATION IN WEST AFRICA

Appolonia from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century

PIERLUIGI VALSECCHI

Translated by Allan Cameron

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Primary Sources and Abbreviations

The interviews carried out during field research have been fully explained in the notes.

The archive documents (full information provided in the notes) were taken from the following collections:

AN-OM	Archives Nationales, Section Outre-Mer, Paris, France
ANTT CC	Arquivo Nacional De Tôrre Do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, Lisbon, Portugal
ARA	Algemeen Rjks Archief, The Hague, Netherlands
ARA AANW	Aanwinsten
ARA NBKG	Nederlandsche Bezittingen Ter Kuste
ARA OWIC	Van Guinea
ARA RKWI	Oude West Indische Compagnie
ARA SG	Raad Der Koloniën In West-Indië
ARA VEL	Staten Generaal
ARA VWIS	Verzameling Kaarten
ARA WIC	Verzameling Verspreide West-Indische Stukken (Tweede) West Indische Compagnie
BM	British Museum, London
BPP	British Parliamentary Papers. House of Commons
FC	Furley Collection, Balme Library, Legon, Ghana
GAR	Gemeente Archief, Rotterdam, Netherlands
KITLV	Koninklijk Instituut Voor Taal, Land En Volkenkunde, Leiden, Netherlands
PF SOCG	Archive "De Propaganda Fide," Scritture Originali Riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali, Rome, Vatican City
PRAAD	Public Records and Archives Administration Department (ex-National Archives Of Ghana – Nag)

PRAAD ADM	Administrative Records, Accra
PRAAD WRG	Western Regional Group, Sekondi
SGI	Società Geografica Italiana, Rome, Italy
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, United Kingdom (Ex-public Record Office-PRO)
TNA CO	Colonial Office Papers
TNA MP	Map Room
TNA T	Treasury Papers

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Note to the Readers

The spelling of the names of people and places (in normal lettering) and other Nzema words and expressions (in italics) generally follows the convention recognized and adopted by the Bureau of Ghana Languages. The same is true of terms in other local languages. Where, as often occurs, the current spelling (including the one used on maps) differs from this convention, other variants in use will be shown in brackets after the first mention: for example, Benyinli (Beyin). Personal names of people interviewed have retained the form provided by the person in question or in general use (e.g., Annor Adjaye rather than Anɔ Agyevi, and Morkeh rather than Mɔke) and the same rule has been applied to "stool names" (regnal names) of chiefs and other titles in use either currently or in colonial times. Indeed the spelling used in centuries gone-by and established through bureaucratic convention and the registration of births and deaths differs considerably from standard linguistic usage. The names of historical people and places, when they can be clearly and credibly ascertained, have been put into modern spelling, followed by historical variants in brackets after the first mention, for example, Awiane (*Abiani*, *Abyani*, etc.), otherwise they have been kept in their original spelling (followed by any variants) and written in italics, for example, *Maqua Affoo Ausy* (*Maquafo Ausy*).

Introduction

This book examines the history of the ancient Gold Coast in West Africa between the early sixteenth century and the second half of the eighteenth. It mainly focuses on the western extreme of the Gold Coast, the region known as Nzema, which today has been divided between Ghana and the Ivory Coast. In linguistic, cultural, historical, and political terms, Nzema is part of the Akan world, a larger formation of societies sharing many common elements.[1]

I will examine the logic behind the manner in which political entities in the Nzema area were structured territorially, as well as the formation of ruling groups and aspects of their political, economic, and military actions. Our attention will be both on what we might call the local level and on the more general context of this part of West Africa. Such an approach is almost obligatory when it comes to writing about the Akan world. To ignore the specific and autonomous features of each component of the Akan world would be just as restrictive and misleading as to isolate each component from its wider context in which it was such an integral part, and specific situations provide us with opportunities to compare a set of general problems in the history of this part of Africa.

Hence this book is an attempt to fill a gap in our historical knowledge. During the second half of the twentieth century, historians showed a great deal of interest in Akan states and societies, particularly the great political structure built by the Asante in the eighteenth century and the composite societies of the coastal centers that had early European presences. The results of their work have been very fruitful. In many ways, this subject was one of the main training grounds for the newly born sub-Saharan historiography.[2] However, the emphasis on the great political, military, and economic centers was not counterbalanced with similar attention to the dynamics of the numerous entities that made up a complex and very particular "periphery," although the emphasis on the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries was partially counterbalanced by a few studies into more ancient periods both of a general nature[3] and on specific local and subregional situations.[4]

Nzema is an area that has been visited and revisited by anthropologists, particularly Italian ones,[5] but ignored by historians with very few exceptions.[6] This lack of interest is all the more remarkable when you consider Nzema's seaboard location and the early appearance of Europeans on its shores, which means there is a considerable amount of written sources of some antiquity compared to neighboring areas (especially those situated toward the interior). We have written records on this area going back to the end of the fifteenth century, although these are isolated, sketchy, and often indirect.

Nzema runs more or less from Cape Three Points, in the east, to the coastal lagoons formed by the Bia and Tano (Nz. Tanoɛ) rivers, in the west, and is cut in two unequal and distinct parts by the final reaches of the Ankobra River (Nz. Siane). Historically the main center of the western section was the hilly coast known as Cape Appolonia and its immediate hinterland, the upper basin of the Amanzule River. An important political entity was built in this area in the first half of the eighteenth century and lasted until the mid-nineteenth century. This "Kingdom of Appolonia," as the Europeans called it, is well known to anyone who has the least knowledge of the literature on the precolonial Gold Coast.[7] This name has been adopted in this book in preference to *Amanahea* or *Amelhayia*, given that we only have reliable records of the latter dating from the nineteenth century (cf. PARA. 1.1) and for the moment we have no information on its use in the eighteenth century.

This study focuses on the western part of Nzema (between the Ankobra and the Tano), but it is worth emphasizing that it also gives weight to a determinedly regional analysis and pays careful attention to historical processes that clearly went beyond the boundaries not only of the area in question and its constituent human and political entities but also the larger units of Nzema and the Gold Coast, and even the black-African world in the strictest sense of the term. Africans and Europeans were in different ways inextricably involved in the events that from the late fifteenth century led this region to play its role in the theater of commercial, military, and political relations relating to the origins of the great Atlantic system. It follows then that the reference to the "powers" of Appolonia does not signify a precise provenance and identity, but rather various shades of meaning and entities differentiated by particular historical moments, which included African ruling groups and supporters or retainers of European

commercial interests. They acted within a local context of social relations founded on a relatively high degree of integration (suffice it to recall the network of matrimonial alliances and the role of the Eurafrican community).

Anyone who reads this book in the expectation of a historical monograph on the formation of a "black" precolonial African state or an ethnic account of the Nzema will therefore be disappointed. It is practically impossible to separate the history of the area from the wider phenomenology affecting the whole surrounding region in a constant and uniform manner, such as trade between the coast and the interior, the European presence, colonial aspirations and rivalries, the establishment of large polities in the forest region, migrations, and the continued interaction between various groups, whether ruling or not, within a macroregional network. While events concerning area and groupings that came to make up the "Kingdom of Appolonia" during the eighteenth century obviously dominate the foreground of this work, there is also systematic analysis of wider contexts of which specific situations in the area are simply components among many others. Moreover I have consciously attempted to avoid a deterministic reconstruction of history as a backward projection of later realities (the existence of a state or ethnicity in a given historical moment used to demonstrate their inevitable historical roots). Indeed there is no single definition of Nzema or Appolonia stretching back into the past that clearly delineates it. For instance, they are not the product of an eighteenth-century political configuration, but rather complex historical constructs whose contributing factors changed over time and often went on to become part of separate contexts outside Nzema and Appolonia.

However, faced with powerful regional and supraregional factors pressing for integration and the influence of an extensive network of interests, the local political community retained a fundamental importance for the various social groupings over the historical long term, as the place to mediate between the increasing regional homogeneity and the realities of the territorial settlement.

Modern perceptions of Akan history, in terms of both its local representation and academic interpretation, have been strongly influenced by the great sociopolitical changes that affected the region in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. R. Kea's study, which was published in 1982, is a brilliant description of the structural changes that led in those centuries to the creation and consolidation of various new political, economic, and military players. According to Kea, whose analysis is often indebted to the works of I. Wilks,[8] this process

witnessed a transition from a prevailing form of social reproduction that was mercantile–agrarian (ruling groups structured through oligarchic commercial networks)[9] to one that was imperial–agrarian (ruling groups based on concentrations of military power).

The change in the rationale behind production and commerce is supposed to have been brought about by a radical transformation of the region's social, military, and geopolitical framework, which occurred at the same time as the birth and expansion of the large state formations in the interior: Akwamu, Denkyira, and in particular Asante.[10] From a sociopolitical point of view, this is supposed to have led to the demise of the previous forms of horizontal corporative organization of ruling groups around what Kea calls "brotherhoods of nobles," which operated across states. They were replaced by extensive exogamic matriclans, which became the prevailing criterion governing relations between ruling social groups and subject ones.[11] The matriclan thus triumphed as the universal form for structuring social hierarchy to the exclusion of almost every other type of grouping. According to Wilks, this completed a process that had started in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[12]

The extent of the changes brought about by the new states was such that they color every attempt to examine the previous history of the greater Akan region. The "before" generally surfaces in the local historical memory as something nebulous and incoherent, and the consistency of its various pieces of historical wreckage is directly proportional to their usefulness to the political and ideological arguments of the new powers. The "Kingdom of Appolonia" is one such piece of historical wreckage. As we shall see, the strength of its legacy is such that it has thoroughly permeated the local memory and representation of the region's past.

The establishment and consolidation of the "Kingdom of Appolonia" represent the end of the period covered by this book, which in relation to the historiography of this part of West Africa is pretty much "ancient history" and is considered an obscure and uncertain past. In other words we are examining period before the political settlement of the eighteenth century rather than the period that followed it. It must be stressed that none of the sources I have used describe or even suggest that the area had ever lacked structured political formations of a notable territorial and demographic consistency, as well as complex institutions, differentiated production, and social hierarchy. It does not matter how far you go back in the period under examination, you will always find some form of state, even if you want to define it as a "proto-state," "early State," "micro-state," "weak state," or using a similar term.[13]

One of this study's principal aims is precisely to give greater historical weight to some significant trends in the process that led

from a fragmentary reality to the construction of the local society that we see documented in the second half of the eighteenth century, whose political organization certainly differed from the past, not least because of its larger territorial dimensions and its greater centralization of power. Hence, some basic aspects of the history of "before," however nebulous, can obviously provide an essential reference point for a discussion on the origins of the eighteenth-century state by attempting to identify the elements of continuity and discontinuity.

It is my hope that the results of this study will prove useful to an overall evaluation of the historiographical problems concerning the state not only in this specific area but in the wider regional context. On the other hand, this book also aims to increase our knowledge of an area that could in many ways be defined as a frontier area. Indeed during the eras in question, it was open to a great "frontier," as I. Kopytoff has defined the phenomenon,[14] along an area that was made up of the Comoé and Bandama basins. These regions, into which the Akan world was expanding, were characterized by "low density" regimes in terms of demography, economics, production, and also the complexity and consistency of their institutions and political formations.[15] Nzema and Aowin can be seen as key areas in the liaison and transition between the heart of the Akan world (i.e., central-southern Ghana) and the periphery made up of the seaboard and the southwestern river, lagoon, and forest areas. This role as a place where different worlds met, traded goods, exchanged ideas, and occasionally clashed is clearly demonstrated by the fact that even at the end of the seventeenth century the Cape Appolonia region constituted a linguistic frontier,[16] where a language that was to develop into modern Nzema and was closely related to modern western Akan languages was expanding and supplanting languages related to those now represented by some groups in southeastern Ivory Coast, such as Abure, Ewuture, and Essuma.

This aspect proved to be lasting and had several implications. Even today Nzema experiences a frontier existence, divided as it is by the border between Ghana and the Ivory Coast, which separates not only two states but also different cultures, particularly given their membership of different "official" linguistic universes. The border also creates a fairly clear distinction in historiographical approach that on the whole is still in force today, in spite of significant attempts to develop areas of historical research that bridge the gap.[17]

From a theoretical and methodological point of view, this work shifts on several occasions between history and anthropology. This approach is almost unavoidable, given the types of sources used and the scarcity of written material in local society during the period

under examination, even in the case of the European and Eurafrican components of the population.

The chronological framework used in this work is based on the Julian and Gregorian calendars and the Christian system of dating. Clearly this method of calculating time was not the prevalent one in the society we are examining. It would have principally used a complex set of references to lunar and solar cycles, as well as a ritual calendar based on three-weekly cycles (the Akan week was made up of seven days), which organized days and periods in accordance with their extrinsic significance to individual and social life, and the relationship with the transcendent.[18] Social and, for our purposes, political behavior was strongly influenced by a perception of time in which particular periods were suited to particular *negotia* (business, agriculture, fishing, war, funerals, travel, assemblies, etc.) and not to other aspects of life (worship, festivals, relations with the dead, ritual purification, etc.). This crucially important factor influenced also the behavior of resident Europeans in their dealings with local society.

However the inertia dictated by the available historical materials proved stronger than my awareness of the problem, and in any case constant "translation" between the different temporal environments would have been extremely laborious.

The Fundamental Questions

This examines problems of very different orders, but is held together by four fundamental questions:

(a) What are the essential parameters that define the subject matter (Nzema/Appolonia)?
(b) How did the local geopolitical and socioeconomic framework develop as it felt the impact of increasing European interference and the great transformations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries?
(c) Who were the exponents of the new hegemonic system that produced these transformations, and what did they represent?
(d) What mechanisms did the old and the new hegemonic systems use to operate and reproduce themselves?

The Context of Identity

Chapter 1 deals with question (a), which relates to identity, and it attempts to define the subject of this study by reconstructing and

analyzing the linguistic, territorial, kinship, and political contexts into which the Nzema identity or rather identities were translated. The structure of this section is markedly diachronic, goes beyond the historical period under examination (i.e., past the second half of the eighteenth century) and touches upon current trends.

The modern Nzema identity, which is highly potent, complex, and equipped with a forceful ideology of self-legitimization ("tradition"), inevitably tends to project itself into the past, and hence to imbue and indeed "colonize" any historical reconstruction. We therefore have little choice but to commence with the identification of at least some of the principal elements of identity that intersected or were superimposed during the last few centuries, as well as the mechanisms used. We will then be able to move on with the historical analysis in the strict sense of the term.

The colonial period is often considered to have been one in which ethnic denominations took on an almost rigid form.[19] Writing, as the instrument of translation and propagation of the colonial order, was supposed to have had a key role in turning loose definitions into inflexible categories with unprecedented power, as they became "performative" concepts, which are "capable of generating by themselves the groups they describe."[20]

But if we move from general questions of African studies to the specific Akan context, this broad interpretation comes up against interpretive concepts produced by a well-established historiography, founded on wide-ranging records that stretch back over a remarkably long period of time.

Leaving aside generalizations and categorizations, the regional situation is marked by the presence of varying factors all produced by very different periods and circumstances, which are all still influential to varying degrees and at different levels, but interconnected in a complex manner. Undoubtedly colonization brought a considerable break with the past, and did indeed act as a powerful catalyst in a process of actual change, but within a context where the elements of continuity were exceedingly strong and numerous.[21] An "Asante identity" preceded, continued during, and survived the colonial period, and was in many ways autonomous and capable of putting forward and sustaining its own responses to the challenge posed by European domination. It was clearly the state, as a concrete reality long before the colonial period, which defined Asante as a specific category and which was used to include and exclude at various levels.[22]

Historical argument takes on a different tone in the case of the many Akan areas and formations, which lack a structure comparable

with that of the Asante and therefore considered more malleable material in the hands of the colonial "creator of ethnicity."[23] But in such cases, it is obvious that each history is dependent on particular circumstances that make a single interpretation impossible, and thus the process of ethnic categorization during the colonial (and post-colonial) period is only one of the available registers actually used within the heterogeneous "palimpsests" of identity that influence ideological, political, and social debate in the region.

I will go as far as is possible in attempting to define clearly and concretely "that which is Nzema" and what it means to be a Nzema, both currently and in the past. This is not simply a philological matter, however significant that may be, nor indeed a question of precisely defining categories, which are in any case relative ones. My purpose is rather to get closer to an understanding that is more grounded in the history of the reasons why individuals and communities make use of different identities on different occasions.

The Historical Framework

The next part of this study (chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) is an attempt to reconstruct the situation in the Nzema region between the beginning of the sixteenth century and the early decades of the eighteenth, in reply to question (b).

This is not an easy task. The written sources, as I have said, are relatively copious and go quite far back in time when compared with most of sub-Saharan Africa. This legacy (of which maps make up a considerable part) certainly constitutes a cognitive and critical aid of inestimable value, but it is still sparse, incomplete, and made up of often fragmentary and indirect information that is of doubtful use to an overall historical study. On many occasions there is even uncertainty or ambiguity over the definition of the places in which events took place. This work contains references to historical settlements, in some case even important territories and entire political communities, whose very existence is challenged. Moreover, there have been no significant and systematic archaeological investigations into the region. Hence the need for the historian to wrestle constantly with the vagueness of his/her historical material and to refine it with varying degrees of success by use of not entirely satisfactory documentary devices. Of these, cartographic material takes pride of place. In truth, any success in detailing the historical geography of social and political communities, migrations, and some crucial moments of change is in itself a considerable achievement.

As the states that were formed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries tended to project themselves onto the past in an all-embracing manner, the themes of ancestral settlement, migration, or indigenous development of social groups obviously became crucial elements in the local historical memory. The reason was their ideological use to legitimize the occupation of territory, hierarchies of groups, general and specific power structures, and even challenges to all of these. The case of the Nzema region is paradigmatic. The "Kingdom of Appolonia" is widely used as the beginning of history in "traditional" narratives and the memory of "before" survives only a very subdued form, although it does occasionally reappear (as a counterinterpretation) to create the basis for challenges to specific existing social and political structures.

In line with the widely used model in the region, the "traditions" concerning the origins of the "Kingdom of Appolonia" tend almost always to claim that the first settlement of the area occurred along with the birth of the state. The settlement, by which we mean the original occupation of the territory, therefore becomes a crucial ideological element in establishing local political and institutional legitimacy. Two models are used to represent these versions of history: the autochthonous genesis of early ancestors or inward migration. The first model excludes or ignores the presence of an indigenous population before the appearance of the first progenitors, and the second model generally only admits to its existences in some auxiliary role, generally in peripheral areas of the political entity and not its central core.

The most common migration stories link the origins of the founding group to Takyiman, an ancient and renowned polity in the Abron region, associated with the early phases of Akan political and economic expansion. They might also mention an ancestral land of indeterminate geographical location (usually somewhere in the north) called *Anwea Anwea* (these two possibilities are not mutually exclusive).[24] Both themes are widely used in the greater Akan region. The link with *Anwea Anwea* is a very familiar *topos* in most of the southwestern Akan region. Outside Nzema, it is found in the migration stories of the founding peoples of Aowin, Anyi Ndenye, Sanwi, Moronou, and the Anyi groups in general, but also such groups as Ewuture, Abure, and Wassa.[25] Scholars of the area have made several attempts to identify *Anwea Anwea* with varying degrees of success.[26] Although these efforts to historicize this and other ancestral migrations as they have been handed down to us by local traditions and to pin down their geography and chronology should certainly not be underrated, it is not however possible to isolate a single moment or specific phase of

migration as the prevailing factor in the development of local society, at least in relation to the periods for which there are reliable historical records. I am well aware of the circumstantial evidence of migration as a central factor in the region's historical formation and, as far as is possible, I attempt to take into account the rationale of the territorial, political, military, and economic relations between groups that underlie the various migratory events. Given this reality, we need to place and critically revisit the great majority of current versions of founding histories. It speaks of a great founding migration that occurred in a context of spatial and temporal homogeneity and involved society as a whole at the same time as its development as a polity, but it is not supported by the available documentary sources. Examination of historical documents makes it possible to identify various migrations in different eras, but in the context of ancient and continuous human settlement and political organization of the area that went much further back than the historical developments recorded or suggested by oral traditions.

J. Y. Ackah wrote of the supernatural entities (*awozonle*, sing. *bozonle*)[27] associated with the three main rivers in the Nzema region:

> the Amanzule and the Tandoh (. . . Tanoɛ) are at enmity with each other. Whenever a priest or priestess of one is being ferried across the other, his or her eyes must be covered with cloth. The Amanzule is believed to have taken the colour black to differentiate her from the Tandoh which is brown . . . Both of them are friendly to the Ankobra (Siane).[28]

One could add that, while the regions of Amanzule and the Lower Ankobra, together with Ahanta, share the *kundum* or *abisa* as their principal annual festival and essential moment to reassert their communities' values and local political hierarchies, the settlements in the Lower Tano area do not celebrate it. The *kundum* is in fact a *kyibadeɛ* (abomination) for the Tano, who will not tolerate its celebration in its vicinity: the communities located on the banks of the river therefore send representatives to the celebrations held in Benyinli and Kyapum.[29]

The imagery relating to the implications of this Nzema theogony lends itself wonderfully to the translation and the distillation of the historical relations between the region's larger geographical components, particularly in the case of the central component, namely the Amanzule river basin and Cape Appolonia. Historically this area was the focal point of the communications systems and the political and economic developments of the great river systems to the east and the west, that of the Ankobra and the Tano.

Historically, the underlying political and economic options of the Amanzule–Appolonia region alternated between two different tendencies: (a) oscillation between the two powerful poles of attraction, which were the lower reaches of the Ankobra and the Tano, with a preference for the former; (b) the tendency "to stop the pendulum" and establish itself as the fulcrum capable of bringing stability to the center as an autonomous alternative to the river basins on either side.

As far as the first tendency is concerned (a), the predominance of Ankobra was dictated by significant demographic, economic, political, and cultural factors. R. Kea came up with an interpretation mainly based on archaeological and historical data and hypotheses provided by O. Davies, K. Y. Daaku, A. Van Dantzig, and J.-P. Chauveau,[30] and related the commercial, demographic, and political development of the Ankobra and Tano river basins to the increased exploitation of the gold mineral deposits. According to Kea, however, the sudden development of the middle and lower reaches of the Tano occurred in the second half of the seventeenth century (after 1640), whereas the Ankobra River region, more densely populated, was supposed to have been experiencing a process of expanded reproduction over the previous hundred years. The economic and political regional centrality of Axim (i.e., the Ankobra Basin's outlet to the sea) was already an established fact by the sixteenth century, and Kea notes that in the 1570s the network of local subregional economic and political centers or central places, as he calls them, was fully established within this area on a basis that was to remain unchanged throughout the region's subsequent history.[31] For the western Nzema areas, Axim remained an unavoidable reference point: this world was constantly looking eastward, even in those moments of greatest independence and expansion to the west. Thus the history of the "Kingdom of Appolonia" is undoubtedly a history of a component that defines and develops itself while remaining part of a whole. It is part of the history of Nzema, a historical context centered on Axim, which always retains its consistency as a higher and inclusive identity.

Ruling Groups and Power Structures

In chapters 7 and 8, I examine problems relating to the establishment of new ruling groups—question (c)—and the mechanisms for the reproduction of power—question (d). The origins of the founding group of the "Kingdom of Appolonia" are clarified and placed within a system of relations between groups of regional significance (Akan), while attempting to gauge the contribution made by this "network"

to the creation of the "Kingdom" and providing some essential biographical data on the key players. Moreover, I attempt to provide a brief overview of the new political entity.

As already stated, the "Kingdom of Appolonia" is principally a result of the great political transformation that affected the Akan world during the decades that straddled the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The history of its creation should be interpreted within the general process that also led to the creation of the "forest empires" of Denkyira and Asante, as well as other entities such as Aowin and Wassa. This is an established fact, but not all historians are willing to accept it as such. Indeed historical approaches have often suffered from a considerable "insularity," which may arise from the tradition of anthropological studies into the Akan region.

I am convinced however of the absolute need to overcome a common difficulty for the local or, if you like, "ethnic" history of individual parts of what is called the Akan world. Historical study into this huge complex of communities is known for its extraordinarily well sign-posted development, which make it easier to undertake than most other regions in sub-Saharan Africa. This is due to the abundance of documents written from the fifteenth century onwards, and the intense research into oral sources relating to the many subdivisions in the Akan world. These subdivisions differ in size and origin, and in their territorial, linguistic, historical, and political makeup, which is however ancient and of uninterrupted importance in the history of this vast area. The term "ethnic group" and the adjective "ethnic" are still commonly used to define these subdivisions in the Akan complex. This terminology is widely used in the area under examination, and it naturally tends to underscore their importance, lengthy history, and ability to reproduce coherent local identities based on distinct features (territory, language, history, and economy). Naming some of these group identities can make the point: Denkyira, Asante, Aowin, Anyi, Sehwi, Akim, Akwapim, Kwahu, Wassa, Nzema, Ahanta, Abron, Baule, and Fante. Many of these groups include more than one political and historical unit, and these units are more or less the foundations for the current "traditional states" in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.[32]

Studies into the Akan world have been, and in many ways still are, distinguished by a markedly "ethnic" dimension, in that most attention has been overwhelmingly paid to specific subdivisions of the whole and their internal dynamics. On the other hand, it is clear to anyone who has had first-hand experience of historical material concerning the Akan region, that there is continuous, sophisticated, and significant interaction between the different local ruling groups at

a broad regional level. This interaction is characterized by the use of systems of contacts and networks of relations that cross through the different political centers on the basis of a very particular geographical outlook.

This interaction is clearly demonstrated in some general historical studies into the area. R. A. Kea wrote about the "brotherhoods of nobles" that gathered together the "big men" (Twi: *abirɛmpɔn*, sing. *ɔbirɛmpɔn*) of the different political entities in the Gold Coast during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He saw these social institutions as horizontal organizations of ruling groups, which were gradually replaced by the new model of vertical social groupings of matriclans.[33] By the end of the seventeenth century, the matriclans were fully established. A. Van Dantzig perceived the famous Akani trading network of the central forest areas (in the basins of the Prah, Ofin, and Birim rivers), and other similar organizations in the western part of the Akan world, as corporate systems that interlinked traders at a broad regional level, suggesting their crucial role in the origins of the "imperial" structure of Denkyira at the end of the seventeenth century.[34]

However, it is not easy to study these social environments. This is partly because of the scarcity of previous research and the subsequent lack of material and methodologies to refer to, and partly because the available sources are usually too meager and too indirect to substantiate the dynamics they suggest. However, it is also due to the fact that involvement in this kind of analysis requires careful consideration of the complex and often elusive language of kinship. Local sources usually explain these links between groups in terms of such language. Thus the various groupings are supposed to be associated through matrilineal (matrilineage and matriclans) and patrilineal relations, or through alliances sanctioned through intermarriage.

These categories are generally accepted by historians as translations of established realities within local societies, but only recently and on rare occasions have they been freed from the "structurally" timeless approach adopted by anthropology, and analyzed within their historical dimension. A pioneering attempt at this was made by I. Wilks, in relation to the origins of matriclans.[35] Wilks suggested that matriclans were created to fulfil a function and resolve a fundamental problem of social integration, which was posed by imported labor for the development of forest agriculture in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. However, the stabilization of the new socioeconomic order deprived the matriclan of this function and weakened the significance of its institutions, while its constituent matrilineages maintained their

central role as fundamental units of social organization. The affirmation of a stronger presence by the state, as with Asante, where the central authority had the effective power to intervene in the system of matriclans, even in order to modify their number by abolishing or amalgamating them, was to have completed this process, forcing the matriclan into a vestigial position.[36] Today, this enigmatic institution appears to be extremely weak in relation to its constituent element, the matrilineage (*abusua*), but still holds on to the crucial role of being a large exogamic unit in Asante and other Akan areas (but not in Nzema, Ahanta and the west in general, where matriclans are not exogamic). According to Wilks, the matriclan is structured more as a system of alliances than as one based on ancestry.[37] McCaskie argues that this fundamental aspect is generally more typical of the history of Asante matrilineality, including matrilineage, which has decisive implications for the perception of hierarchical relationships between individuals and member groups within any given matrilineal unit, but also within society in general. McCaskie, developing the so-called "alliance theory," rejects the traditional anthropological interpretation of matrilineage as part of a larger matriclan[38] and "a constituent equality derived from the principle of descent," in favor of

> the Asante perception of the *abusua* in terms of alliance rather than descent . . . in Asante political thought these "lineages" . . . [are interpreted] . . . in terms of the premises of inequality . . . within the lineage a distinction is made between the "true" descendants . . . and the assimilated and often unfree.[39]

L. Yarak perceives this relationship as a system for mediating access to land. For him, the relationship between "free" and "adopted" members of a matrilineage is that of landlord and tenant ("adopted" members or *gyaasefoɔ*, lit. "people of the hearth," had forbears who were either unfree or foreign).[40]

Having said this, it should be added that research into the way in which these relationships operated historically rarely goes beyond the confines of restricted political and historical entities or specific "ethnic" realities.[41] "Family" links between ruling groups in contexts that are not strictly local have been examined from a historical point of view in important studies on the formation of historical and political entities in the western Akan region and the manner in which they were populated, such as C. H. Perrot on Ndenye, H. Diabate on Sanwi, E. Terray on Gyaman, and Viti on Baule.[42] It is true that this perspective is to be found to some extent in the study of the "origins"

of these political formations between the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth, but it fades out in the treatment of the later historical periods, and is replaced by an almost exclusive focus on the political, social, and economic structures within the new states, and on the history of their relations with the outside world, viewed as a traditional system of "international relations" between homogeneous political and territorial units. This is even more the case with historiography of Asante, which understandably concentrates on the developments at the center of one of the most complex states and imperial organizations in West Africa.

However, other critical elements emerge in the historical study of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which suggest that regional-wide associative networks among groups other than the state continued to be of crucial political relevance, albeit with different intensity and significance according to the specific historical context.

The situation that can be uncovered in the eighteenth-century history of the western Akan areas is particularly representative. It is clear in this case how, over a long period of time, it is extremely difficult to isolate developments in different local ruling groups from the wider and more general context, except in the case of studies into very specific events that are restricted both geographically and chronologically. Indeed, historical material in the wider sense of the term (European written sources and local "traditions") always tends to call the researcher's attention to contexts that clearly transcend the logic of territorial, political, or "ethnic" groupings on a local scale, suggesting or even openly asserting the existence of networks of relations with complex ramifications that are extremely difficult to disentangle. Neglect of this fundamental reality risks considerably restricting the academic value of local studies or "ethnic histories."

The particular nature of this situation, which relates to a vast collection of political entities that at least include the current Ahanta, Nzema, Egila (Edwira), Pepesaa, Wassa, Aowin, Sanwi, Ehotile (Mekyibo), Abure (Bonua or Bonoua), and Bassam, has been vividly described by J. P. T. Huydecoper, the Dutch commander of St. Anthony's Fort in Axim. In 1762, he attempted to explain the level of conflict between political entities and groups that were very similar and indeed closely related and interlinked:

> Among them [the natives] they are all divided into different stocks or tribes [*Stammen*], the origin of which neither they nor we know . . . but it has so much influence on their common life . . . Some of these tribes are closely attached [*verknogt*] to others, and some very strongly

> [*verbeeten tegen*] each other . . . The consequence is that . . . however great their disagreements [*oneenigheden*] amongst each other may be, they are accustomed to helping [*bijspringen*] each other against a third party. Their love of the fatherland is alone strong enough to break this bond and in the defence of the same no attention is paid [*achtgeven*] to any association [*Stam Genoodschap*].[43]

The "fatherlands" were political and territorial units from which the current "Traditional Areas" (units led by head chiefs) are more or less directly descended and represented a constant reference point in the political dynamics of the region over the following three centuries.[44]

The entities that Huydecoper defined as *stammen* (sing. *stam*) were in a position of potential conflict with this sense of loyalty, but they were to have equally fundamental implications for the construction of social, political, and economic order. The identification of *stam* with matrilineal groupings or matriclans (*abusua eku*, Twi: *abusua kɛse*) and matrilineage (*abusua*) appears more or less obvious. However *stam* may not always have been used in this way. Several local and European sources give us a good idea of the complexities of the relationships that Huydecoper summarized as *stam*, and we will see how these include a framework of relationships that are too vast, complex, and varied to be explained solely in terms of a unilateral descent system. Relations between ruling regional *mbusua* appear to presuppose a system of relations that reproduces itself asymmetrically in different territories and polities. This means that different sections of the same *mbusua* occupy dominant or subordinate positions according to the local reality in which they are placed.

This work will consider how the creation of the "Kingdom of Appolonia" as a territorial domain, a "state," influenced and indeed contradicted the rationale of the previously mentioned "network" by articulating a localized rationale of organization, growth, and development. In other words, the new ruling group in Appolonia, although an integral part of a wider regional system of political and commercial interests, also came into control of a specific territorial dominion, whose consolidation and expansion became the primary factor governing their actions. Ultimately, the establishment of the group as "sovereign" transformed and impacted upon the "network" to which it belonged. But the same argument could obviously be used for all the other components of the same regional system, which also found themselves overtaken by the rationale of the localized territorial dominion.

The historical trends unleashed by the establishment of political entities in the greater Akan region have to be seen in the light of this

constant relationship between the rationale of the "network" and the localization of the interests of its individual components. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Asante is the only case where the rationale of the "network" appears to have become markedly subordinate to the territorial one. Asante consolidated an imperial state on a previously unheard-of scale and took its borders far beyond the Akan lands, thus creating a crucial turning point in the history of the region.

The final part of this book traces the human and geopolitical history of the new polity from its birth and in particular the organization of a new center of power relations within the founding group living in the area to the east of Cape Appolonia. Special attention is given to the period in which Amihyia Kpanyinli and Boa Kpanyinli were at the height of their power. The former is in fact considered the real founder of the "Kingdom of Appolonia."

The founding group acts as the tip of a pyramid of relationships that includes both those of a master/servant nature and those of a patron/protégé nature. This system expanded along with the formation of the new political and territorial entity. Many local groups were incorporated into completely subordinate positions through conquest, while several other groups (both local and immigrant) associated themselves with the founding group in a position not only of subordinate alliance but also of cooperation in the creation and management of the political entity.

Methodological Note

This book is based on a very varied bibliography: the study of archive material in English, Dutch, Portuguese, and French (mainly provided by the trading companies of European nations operating on the Guinea Coast) and ecclesiastical material in various European countries, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast, as well as some important "fieldwork" gathering ethno-historical sources ("oral traditions") between 1991 and 2000 in the Western Region of Ghana.

Most of the Dutch documents were consulted in the volumes of J. T. Furley's massive collection of manuscripts and typescripts, which is held at the Balme Library of the University of Ghana in Legon, and goes under the name of *Furley Collection*. It is basically an English translation (with transcriptions and notes) of archive material and a small part of it has been published with the addition of a few photostats and other reproductions.[45] The notes, where possible, refer to the original document (in square brackets) and specify the pages of the notebooks in the collection where it is reproduced.

A significant part of the written material, including archive documents, can be defined as deriving directly from "oral sources," that is, based on transcriptions of facts and events concerning local groups narrated by African and European protagonists and witnesses. The nature of these narratives varies: they are often accounts given in court or during arbitration and constitute partisan interpretations; they can concern events in the distant or recent past relative to the moment in which they were gathered, and in some cases they concern contemporary events; in several cases they are formalized ("traditional") historical accounts of communities, institutions, family groups, et cetera. Material of this kind is already to be found as documentary support to historical accounts of the mid-seventeenth century: some such Dutch accounts of this period were based on oral evidence. The same can be said of similar eighteenth-century sources. But the most complex and sophisticated examples of this kind that have been used in this book were compiled during and after the late eighteenth century in the colonial and postcolonial periods. In some cases, those who commissioned or carried out these investigations wanted to know more than the contingent aspects of the case and the resolution of its specific problems (disputes over territory, inheritance, political primacy, etc.), and contributed to our understanding of more general historical and ethnological contexts.

Moreover much of the documentation of this kind comes from oral historical enquiries that I myself carried out, and the notes indicate the person interviewed, and the date and place of the interview.

Chapter 1

History and Identity

1.1 The Names for Appolonia

Convention has it that the name *Appolonia* or *Apollonia* derives from the application of the name for the area known as the Cape Apollonia to a larger political unit, the ancient "Kingdom of Appolonia," which in the nineteenth century was also called *Amanahea* (or *Amelhayia*).[1] This polity developed during the eighteenth century in the western section of the Nzema region—the territories situated between the Ankobra River to the east and the lagoons formed by the Tano and Bia rivers to the west.[2] The "Kingdom of Appolonia" grew until it covered more or less the same territory as the current *maanlema* of Western Nzema, whose capital is Benyinli (or Beyin), and Eastern Nzema, whose capital is Adoabo (or Atuabo).[3] *Maanlema* is the plural of *maanle*, a general Nzema word that describes a community as an organic whole founded historically upon a human, political, or territorial society. In this case it means country or state.[4]

This is the region that during the twentieth century determined the most widely accepted current interpretation of the name *Nzema*, whose usage often does not include the Nzema-speaking regions situated to the east of the Ankobra River.

Cape Appolonia is a chain of low hills (the highest of them is Ezia Boka at 250 m) overlooking a generally very low-lying coastline that runs in a more or less straight line from the northwest to the southeast.[5] Although these hills do not constitute a promontory and do not break up the coastline by creating any kind of indentation, they have always constituted a crucial reference point for navigation as they are isolated by a plain to the east and a slightly undulating countryside

to the west and north, hence the reason for referring to them as a "cape." The first documented use of the place-name is "serra de s. apollonia," which appears on an anonymous Portuguese map drawn around 1471 at the time of the expedition led by João de Santarém and Pero de Escobar who founded the Portuguese base in Elmina, the first on the Guinea Coast.[6] In this reference, the name is linked to the Virgin Apollonia, whose feast day is February 9. According to a tradition recorded by J. Barbot as early as 1688, the Portuguese were supposed to have sighted the hills for the first time on that particular date.[7] The explicit reference to the saint was commonly made in cartography right up to and including the nineteenth century, although it was pure supposition that the area was named after the feast of Saint Apollonia, as A. Teixeira da Mota also revealed.[8] Besides, the understandable onomastic association for the Portuguese in the fifteenth century does not prevent us from examining other possible origins for the name. Remaining within the context of an ancient Portuguese derivation, it should be noted that in this language the term *apolonias* means "a type of settlement, with large houses like farms, called *apolonias*, normally situated under large Polon trees"; *polon* or *polom* are Creole forms of the Portuguese term *pollão*, a tree known by the scientific name *ceiba pentandra*.[9]

An interpretation recorded in 1868 by J. G. Schnerr, the commander of the then Dutch fort of Benyinli, derived "Appolonia" from the contraction of Elonyi Kpole (Great Elonyi), and thus associated the name with one of the historical settlements that make up the town of Elonyi, which is located slightly to the east of the "Cape" and was once the theater of an unsuccessful attempt at establishing a Dutch settlement. According to Schnerr, the name Elonyi Kpole or Appolonia was then applied to what is now called Benyinli, where the British were later to build their fort in 1765.[10] A possible etymology based on *ɛlɔne* (army) is worthy of further study, even though Schnerr's interpretation is clearly not acceptable because, leaving aside some other objections, the word "Appolonia" was in use long before the mid-seventeenth century, when the Dutch venture in question occurred.[11]

Another possible line of inquiry into an indigenous origin for the place-name (or a parallel influence to the European one) concerns the manner in which the name turns up elsewhere in Ghana. A town called Apollonia is situated to the east of Tema Inland and a few miles northeast of Kpone (Grater Accra Region). Akpɔlɔnu (also Akpolonu, Apolonu, Aplonu) is a very small settlement in Western Nzema itself, located near Nzemetianu, on the northern edge of the strip of land that divides the Dwen Lagoon from the ocean. This stretch of water

is crossed by the border between Ghana and the Ivory Coast, and the locality of Akpɔlɔnu was well known for its smuggling activities and for the customs post that was supposed to suppress them. In this case, the name is linked locally with a verb form *apolɔ* (or *akpolɔ*), which means "to roam about with a purpose." In modern parlance, this form is considered either archaic or not entirely Nzema (the verb currently used in Nzema is *kpɔsa*), but it is known and used in some very specific contexts as *apolɔnu* or *akpolɔnu*, an area in which one wanders in search of something but also a meeting place for specific purposes.

There are several nineteenth-century recorded references to the most widely used indigenous term for the "Kingdom of Appolonia." The principal variants are *Amanahëa* (or *Amanahéa*: T. E. Bowdich and B. Cruickshank), *Amanaha* (J. Dupuis), *Ahmelyiah* and *Amelhayia* (F. Swanzy), and *Americhia* (J. G. Schnerr).[12] Both G. E. Robertson and Schnerr linked the place-name to the name of the eighteenth-century *belemgbunli*[13] Amihyia Kpanyinli, who died in 1779 and was considered the real founder of the "Kingdom of Appolonia."[14] The main spellings used by contemporary British and Dutch observers to transcribe "Amihyia" were *Amenichia* and *Ammoniah*, respectively.[15] Schnerr also mentioned the ethnic category *Americhiafu* and attributed it with the meaning "people of Amihyia."[16] Besides the creation of an adjectival form based on the famous *belemgbunli*'s name to indicate the land and people to the west of the Ankobra was recorded in Dutch documents in the early 1800s in the form *Amenichiasse*.[17] This interpretation was widely taken up in the twentieth century. According to C. W. Welman, the naming of the country after *belemgbunli* Amihyia gave rise to the term *Ämrehia* in the Fante-speaking area, and Europeans later corrupted this to *Amanahea*.[18] J. A. Essuah suggests that "Amihyiafo" was the ancient name of the country's people.[19]

G. E. Robertson indicates *Amaneahea* (or *Yea-Mynheer*) as the specific name of the town of Benyinli, whereas the larger political unit was "the kingdom of Bein, or A Bien, Apollonia,"[20] a name that stresses the central role of the Benyinli area.[21] Robertson's notation is somewhat on its own. Europeans often used variants of *Beyin* for the town during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, Robertson's assertion received support some decades later in the interesting interpretation of place-names by Schneer, the Dutch resident of Fort Appolonia who wrote that the western section of the settlement of Benyinli (i.e., the section to west of the fort) was known by the name *Americhia*, which was also applied to the whole country.[22] Currently this part of Benyinli is called Kukuenwiɔ, which

literally means "two coconut trees" and was recorded as far back as the eighteenth century.[23] This name appears to be the only one used after the complete reconstruction of this part of the town following the devastation of Beyinli during a conflict in 1870, just a few months after Schnerr had written his report.[24]

However, *Americhia* is today recorded as an archaic name for the town, although, in contrast with the information provided by Robertson and Schnerr, locals do not link it etymologically to Amihyia Kpanyinli but rather to the term *mrelehyia*, the plural form of *elehyia* (or *erelehyia*) which is the local name for "date palm," a tree that was at the time very common in the area and grows very well in such low-lying and marshy ground.[25] Besides the association of the name Amihyia Kpanyinli with Benyinli is not convincing. The residence of the *belemgbunli* up to the death of his brother and predecessor Anɔ Bile Aka was Adoabo, while the western section of Benyinli, *Americhia/*Kukuenwiɔ, was the residence of another brother, Boa Kpanyinli (cf. PARAS. 7.1 and 8.2).

In the late nineteenth century, Binger used the name *Ahua* for the entire Nzema area (from Assinie to Cape Three Points)[26]: this name was recorded as far back as the late seventeenth century among the Essuma of Assini (Ivory Coast), who still used it in the early twentieth century in the same sense attributed to it by Binger.[27] *Ahua* may derive from *ahwea* (the plural form of *twea*: dog; another plural form is *ndwea*), the name of the dominant matriclan (also called Ndweafoɔ, "dog people"). The form *Ahwianu* (*nu*: in, inside) in the sense of "in the dog country" was recorded in the twentieth century in Adoabo as a court language denomination for the country.[28] A name used in the past by the Fante for the peoples of the Nzema area was *Gwa* or *Gua*,[29] and the same name (Agua) is used in the Anyi areas of the Ivory Coast to indicate the surviving groups of the interior who relate their own origins to population who lived there before the arrival of Aowin peoples in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[30]

The "Kingdom of Appolonia" was the result of the unification in the early decades of the eighteenth century of some preexisting polities. In the seventeenth century, these units were independent. A few decades later, the enterprising nature of the patrilineal descendents of Anɔ Bile, a member of the an *abusua* associated with the Agona of Denkyira and classified as a Nvavile in the local matrilineal terminology, had created a fairly coherent political dominion that encompassed the previously mentioned units.

For over a century this polity, which had a strong central power, was able to exploit competition between Dutch and British commercial

interests on the Western Gold Coast to its own strategic and economic advantage.[31] By the times of *belemgbunli* Kaku Aka,[32] "Appolonia" had become an important coastal access for Asante and its trade, which was all the more significant for being free from European presence.[33] Because of this, other commercial concerns, and the danger of French interference, the British felt obliged to take definitive action to curb Kaku Aka's substantial independence. In 1848 a British-led military expedition, made up of troops from various coastal states, captured the *belemgbunli* and deported him to Cape Coast Castle. It thus destroyed the system of centralized power and replaced it with a weaker form of leadership headed by two of Kaku Aka's prominent subordinates, Ɛbanyenle (who had broken off relations with the *belemgbunli* several years earlier) in Adoabo, and Amakye in Benyinli. These events were followed by a prolonged situation of instability, which in 1869 erupted into a civil war, which came to an end in 1873 with a British-mediated settlement.[34] The civil conflict that confirmed the division between Adoabo and Benyinli was overlaid by events with much wider repercussions, and provided an important local backdrop to the clash of interests between the British, Asante, and the Dutch, which led to the Anglo-Asante War of 1873.[35] However, fundamental problems concerning the legitimacy of the two new royal lines, their reciprocal relationship in terms of power, and the sensitive question of political reunification continued to be an issue in local politics up to the present day.[36]

The "Kingdom of Appolonia" was undoubtedly the most consistent political expression of the Nzema world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The areas that were integrated into it developed very distinctive characteristics in relations to other Nzema areas, and this very specific identity was often emphasized in nineteenth-century sources:

> The division Apollonia or Americhia is a separate Kingdom. It forms one tribe which has its own customs, usages and language . . . when one crosses the Ancober river one already soon perceives that one has came into a country very different from the one that has been left.[37]

The history and legacy of the "Kingdom of Appolonia" are such as to influence profoundly the Nzema identity and very perception of the term *Nzema*. Indeed, during the twentieth century, Nzema was used primarily to define territorial, human, political, and administrative realities that referred back to a political entity that had been dissolved in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, the contexts

and levels of identity associated with the term are numerous and in some cases contradictory.

1.2 The Areas of Definition

The definition of what Nzema means, where the Nzemas live, and who they are must be approached with caution. The term Nzema, that has a long history, has been and is still used to describe at the same time territorial, human, and historical entities, which, although interlinked, are distinct.

During the twentieth century, Nzema (or even Nzima) has been used to describe a language, a geographical area, and a people.[38] A brief look at the first field of use allows us to delineate the most inclusive definition, and as such, used every day within the Nzema world itself and by its neighbours. *Nzema Anɛɛ* (the Nzema language) is a group of dialects spoken over an area stretching from the western portion of the current Ahanta West District (Western Region, Ghana) to the southern and southeastern shores of the Aby Lagoon, and the town of Grand Bassam, including the southeastern corner of the Ivory Coast. Since the late nineteenth century at least, there have been important Nzema-speaking communities outside this region in the mining areas of Wassa and Sehwi, as well as in Sekondi-Takoradi and the Ivorian capital, Abidjan.[39]

Nzema and Ahanta (Anrenda or Anrendenle; nz. Nyenda), very closely related languages, constitute a continuum with areas of transition whose association with one group or the other is more a question of historical and political factors than strictly linguistic ones.[40] The Nzema themselves recognize some main subdivisions within their language, distinguishing the dialects to the west of the Ankobra river area from the variants used in the Ankobra Region itself and those spoken in the extreme eastern areas that blend into Ahanta.[41] The dialects of the Lower Ankobra Region and Ahanta West are Adwɔmɔlɔ of Apatem (Akpatamu)[42] and Ɛvaloɛ of Axim (or Essim), Nsanye (Nsein), Kpulisi (Princes Town), Egyembra (also Agyembra or Ajemra), and Atinkyin (or Cape Three Points). Akooda (also Akwida or Esile), to the East of Cape Three Points, which is now Ahanta-speaking, was often mentioned in the past as the easternmost Nzema Stool, due to its historical association with Axim.[43] These eastern variants are extremely close to the Egila (Edwira) dialect and the dialect of the Pepesaa towns of Wassa Fiase (Dompem-Pepesaa, Simpa, and Nsuaem), which is spoken to this day only in Simpa.[44] Egila and Pepesaa are not defined as Nzema, in spite of their close historic links with Axim, but they place the Nzema language in a wider area of regional affinities.[45]

The Nzema-speaking areas are currently undergoing the later stages in a process of internal standardization through the predominance of a form based on the dialect of the Adoabo and Benyinli areas, the political centers of the region to west of the Ankobra from the eighteenth century up to the mid-twentieth century (fig. 1.1). Indeed, in the areas to the west of Ankobra, the differences in dialects are more of a legacy of the past than a current reality.

However, ɛvaloɛ and Adwɔmɔlɔ-Apatem (we may add also Egila) are two dialects that are still relevant to the complex political geography of the lower reaches of the Ankobra, an area in which, apart from Eastern Nzema and Egila, as many as four Paramountcies are to be found (Upper and Lower Axim, Nsanye, Apatem). Their importance has not so much to do with their actual vitality as linguistic variants, as with their role in defining meaningful local identities, which coexist in a complex relationship with the wider Nzema identity.

The uses of Nzema as a place-name (there is also an anglicized form, Nzemaland) and as an ethnic denomination are more problematic. Firstly, attention must be drawn to one glaring distinction according to context concerning the concurrent use throughout the twentieth century of the term to signify (a) all the areas in which the Nzema language is spoken and more specifically (b) the regions to the west of the Ankobra river.

Term (a) has been applied in considerably different ways according to whether it was used by outsiders or within the Nzema world. From the outside (i.e., in the more general current interpretation in Ghana and the Ivory Coast) Nzema is the region that runs along the Atlantic Coast and a few dozen kilometres inland, to the west of Ahanta, up to the southern shores of the Aby Lagoon (in Ivory Coast) and the southeast coast to Grand Bassam. As far as the current Ghanaian local government system is concerned, the Nzema area corresponds to the three districts of Nzema East, whose capital is Axim, Ellembelle (Nkroful), and Jomoro (Half Assini). The colonial Axim District, later renamed Nzema District, has been repeatedly divided up and reestablished since independence. In 1988 the Jomoro District was carved out, which coincided with the jurisdiction of the Western Nzema Traditional Council (Beyinli), and the remaining section renamed Nzema East District. This unit lost another major chunk in 2008, when the Ellembelle parliamentary constituency, coterminous with the Eastern Nzema Traditional Area (Adoabo), was created a separate district.[46] In the Ivory Coast, Nzema form the *canton* Adouvlé in the *département* of Tiapoum (Kyapum).

However, the borders of these local government units leave out significant parts of the region that can be defined as Nzema, namely, in

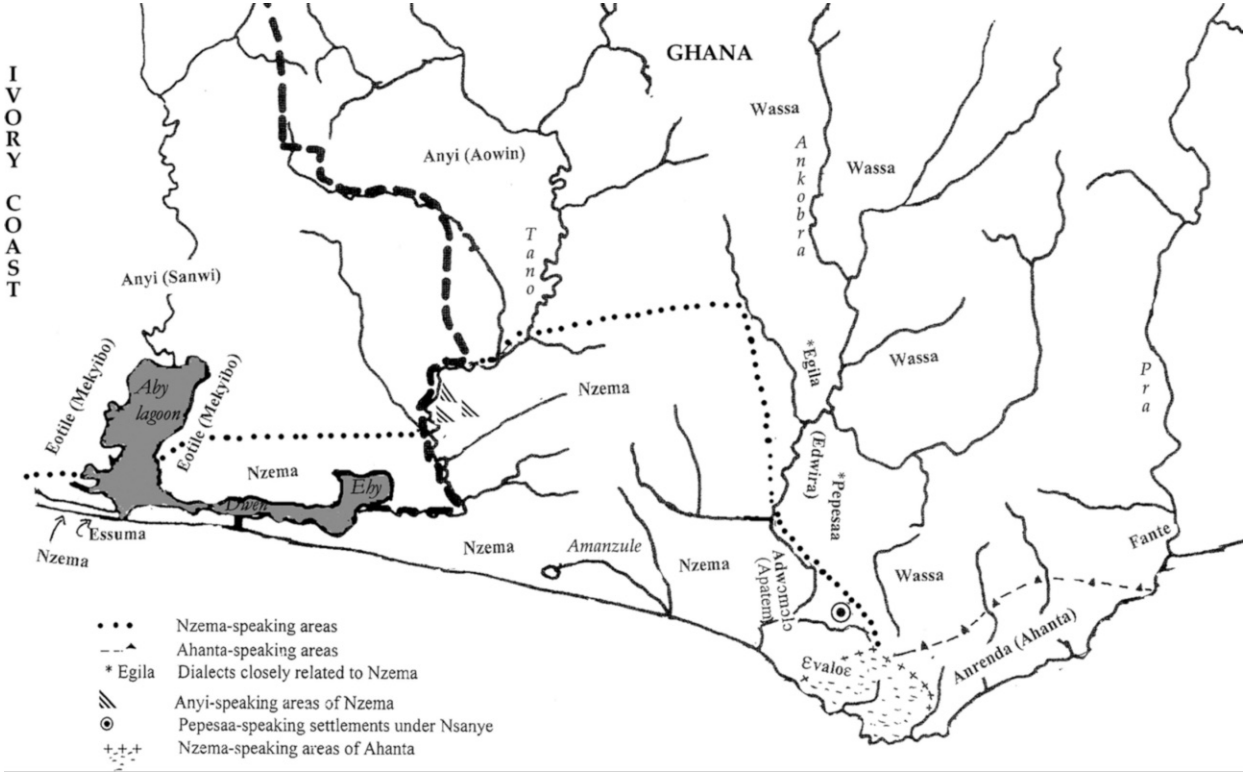

Figure 1.1 Nzema in the regional setting

Ghana, a vast area that today is part of Ahanta West District (Kpulisi, Egyembra, Atinkyin, and to a certain extent Akooda; cf. *n. 47*); in the Ivory Coast, the Nzema lands and communities in the *départements* of Grand Bassam and Adiaké. On the other hand, the Nzema East District includes Egila, which, as has already been said, cannot be described as Nzema (fig. 1.2).

The sum of these divergent external definitions of Nzema is a region that is relatively erratic as far as its boundaries are concerned, and that includes areas inhabited by groups variously defined as Nzema on the basis of linguistic, territorial, historical, and political criteria, or a mixture of these various features. With such a perspective, the term Nzema becomes a broad ethnic category when used by non-Nzemas.

From within the Nzema community, the most accurate and significant definition of the Nzema country during the twentieth century is probably a jural and political one, overlaid by the territorial dimension of chieftaincy (which in turn claims its legitimacy on the basis of the precolonial historical geography of the region) and by considerations relating to language and heritage. In this sense, the category of *Nzema maanle*, "Nzema world," corresponds in its wider interpretation to the group of *maanlema* subject to the following *mbia* (sing. *ebia*: stool): Kyapum (or Tiapoum, *chef de canton*) and Grand Bassam (*chefferie Nzima-Kotoko*) on the Ivory Coast; in Ghana the *mbia mgbole* (literally "big stools," generally translated as Paramount Stools) of Benyinli-Western Nzema, and Adoabo-Eastern Nzema, Adwɔmɔlɔ-Apatem, Bolɔfo Solo (Axim-Upper Town), Bolɔfo Aleze (Axim-Lower Town) and Nsanye, as well as Egyembra, Kpulisi, and Atinkyin (subject to the "Paramount Stool" of Busua, Ahanta). These *mbia* are all *Nzema aneɛ* (Nzema-speaking). However, within the whole Nzema area, the linguistic criterion and the political one help to bolster each other and make up for any weaknesses or insufficiencies in the other. This is particularly the case with the borderline groups. Thus the *mbia* of Egyembra, Kpulisi, and Atinkyin, if necessary, can be defined and are defined as Nzema on the grounds of language and heritage, even though their political affiliation has firmly linked them with Ahanta throughout the twentieth century.[47] Conversely, the inhabitants of the towns along the Tano: Elubo, Ghana Nugua, and Cocoa Town, in the *maanle* of Western Nzema, are linguistically defined as Anyi-Afɛnma (while, in fact, they are accomplished bilinguals), but also see themselves as Nzema, and are perceived as such by the other Nzema, given their century-old inclusion within a Nzema political framework and their current subordination to the *ebia* of Benyinli.

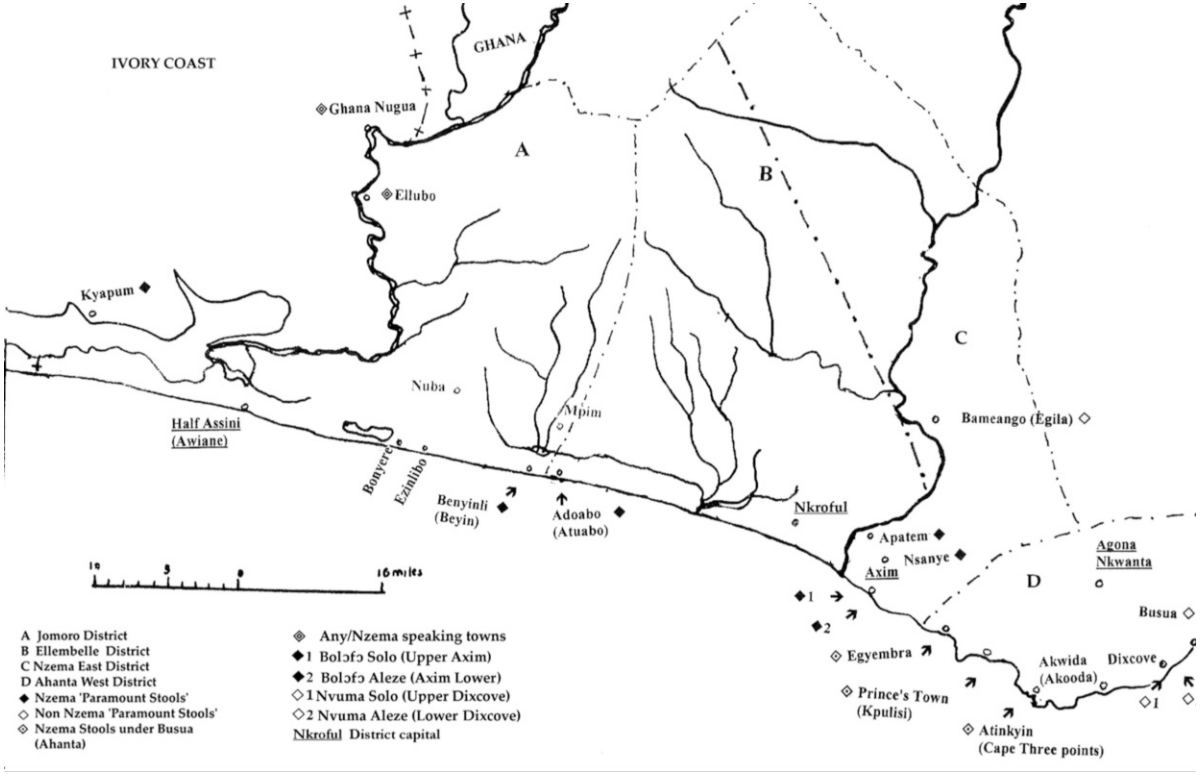

Figure 1.2 Major stools and present days local government districts

The inclusion of these communities was sanctioned in the latter part of the nineteenth century, following the establishment of the Franco-British colonial frontier in 1889, and also through the resettlement on the west bank of the Tano, that is, within the territory recognized by the government of the Gold Coast as under the exclusive jurisdiction of Benyinli.[48] In a similar way some settlements subject to the *ebia kpole* of Nsanye but located toward the border with Wassa Fiase regard themselves also as Pepesaa.[49]

According to interpretation (b) Nzema corresponds to the current *maanlema* of Adoabo and Benyinli, in Ghana, and also that of Kyapum, on the Ivory Coast. This area, which is located on the northern bank of the Tano Lagoons and which had strong ties with Benyinli and Half Assini, was assigned to the French by the Paris Agreement of August 10, 1889.[50] The name Nzema, which is currently used locally for the area, denotes the enduring bonds with Western and Eastern Nzema. These Ivory Coast Nzema style their specific subgroup as Adouvlé, a name associated with that of the Western Nzema town of Adusuazo. Indeed, closely related branches of the same Ndweafoɔ *abusua* control the *mbia* of Adusuazo, Alɛnrɛnzule, Avoleɛnu (New Town), ɛtikɛbo 1, Teleku Bokazo in Ghana, and Kyapum, Nzɛbɛnu, and Ngyeme on the Ivory Coast.[51] In this country the Nzema are still commonly known as *Apollo*.

In 1927, the colonial government introduced the official designations of Eastern Nzema and Western Nzema to replace the previous ones of Eastern Appolonia and Western Appolonia, which referred to the two "Native States" of Adoabo and Benyinli.[52] This measure, which conformed with the principle of observing indigenous onomastic traditions, satisfied the preference expressed by the local ruling groups for the name Nzema over Appolonia. The background to this development was a long legal dispute (1895–1926) in which the rights of the royal stool of Benyinli, held by Aka Anyima (1893–1919), were thoroughly challenged by a man called Nyamekɛ Kaku, who went as far as to claim jurisdiction over a large portion of Western Nzema and tried to exploit to this end the strong animosities between Benyinli and Adoabo. The dispute arose from a conflict over the control of proceeds from mining and forestry rights, but it ended up challenging the entire power balance established in 1873. Nyamekɛ Kaku's claims were finally dismissed in 1926 by a Privy Council ruling.[53]

By this time, the change of the name by which the area was known officially had became an issue for the ruling groups of Adoabo and Benyinli, because by distancing themselves from the legacy of the

old "Kingdom of Appolonia," they felt that they could better defend themselves from challenges to their legitimacy.

The adoption of the wider-ranging term Nzema as the primary official name of the two largest, most populated, and politically assertive "Native States" within the Nzema Region while the other *maanlema* maintained local names, put an official seal on an interpretation that was all the more significant because it tended to impose a more restricted definition on current usage, particularly outside the area. It did not erase the more general definition, but did push it into the background.

1.3 *Axiema* and Nzema

The combination of the various contextual definitions of Nzema Country and the registers in which the place-name was applied in the twentieth century results in an entity, the Nzema entity in its widest sense, which is backed up by considerable precedents in the previous history of the region. There is certain amount of evidence that the term Nzema was already being used in similar contexts to the modern ones in the early nineteenth century. According to the commander of Fort Appolonia in Benyinli, in 1810, the language of the region was *Ensumah*, spoken "from Axim to Assinee included."[54] The term *Zenma* appears as a place-name in 1845 in a report by Boyer, the commander of the French garrison at Assini, in which he stated that was the name used by the indigenous population for what the Europeans called "le pays d'Apollonie."[55] Mondière, a French doctor and an early ethnographer at Assinie in the 1860s, used the name *Ezemma* for the people of Cape Appolonia. At the end of the nineteenth century, Binger placed the coastal borders of the *Zemma* country, which he said was called *Apollonie* by Europeans and *Ahua* by the locals, at Assini in the west and Cape Three Points in the east.[56] From the borders of this nineteenth-century Nzema it is not difficult to recognize the territory that appears in mid-seventeenth-century Dutch documents with the assonant name of *Axiema*,[57] which designated the collection of districts over which Axim, with its European fort, exercised a kind of jurisdiction. According to the Dutch director-general on the Gold Coast, J. Valckenburgh, *Axiema* went from Adwɔmɔlɔ included, in the west, to Upper Ahanta (the western part of Ahanta) in the east.[58] The area thus described includes a large portion of modern Ghanaian Nzema.

The origin and the meaning of the name Nzema are the subject of popular etymologies, which are highly formalized in local "traditions"

and taken up in various writings on the subject. According to Ackah, there were two principal variants in the "traditions" concerning the origin of the Nzema name: (a) a derivation from the Anyi expression *menzema* meaning "I don't know," which the future Nzema were supposed to have replied to the Anyis' queries about their origins, during their migrations together; or (b) a derivation from a Sehwi expression *nzenlama*, meaning "those who had passed by." Version (a) is taken up by P. K. Aboagye in relation to the stories concerning the ancestral migration from Takyiman. B. Palumbo gives a further popular etymology that derives Nzema from *nzisam*, meaning "mixture."[59] The most thorough scientific study of the etymology of Nzema is that of G. R. Cardona. *Nzema/nzima*, which has the singular form *semanli* (a Nzema) and another corresponding plural form, *nzemama* (the Nzemas), is believed by the linguist probably to be a plural of **/sima/*, but he did not have sufficient matches to identify a possible meaning. Cardona discusses **/nzili/* as a possible alternative to **/sima/*, because it would back up the etymology suggested by U. Hintze in relation to the name of the River Nzi, on the Ivory Coast, but he considers it to be less likely. In any case Cardona refers to an interpretation of Nzema centered solely on the regions to the west of Ankobra and ignores the pre-twentieth-century accounts of its usage and the areas to which the name was applied. Indeed he cites Delafosse's reference of 1901 as the oldest.[60] But in the light of the seventeenth-century territorial definition of *Axiema*, it is possible to attribute the similarity between the ancient name and the modern one to something more than a supposition based simply on their assonance. The term Nzema thus appears to be associated with *Axiema*, both derivatives of **/sima/*, which in this case could be linked with Essim, one of the names for Axim still used by the local population.[61]

Valckenburg's *Axiema* appears to be more of a wishful projection of Dutch hegemonic ambitions than the long-standing political reality he pretended it to be (cf. PARA. 3.6). We may add that the area described by Valckenburg was still linguistically heterogenous at the beginning of the eighteenth century: Adwɔmɔlɔ spoke a language that appeared to be very different from that of the Ankobra region.[62] There appear to be some profound associations between some modern languages of southeast Ivory Coast and this ancient linguistic layer. Origins in Adwɔmɔlɔ or substantial ancestral links with this area are mentioned for groups like the Abure, the Essuma, and the Ewuture.[63] A more effective integration was to take place after the occupation of Adwɔmɔlɔ and other surrounding areas by groups linked to *Axiema*, in the early

decades of the eighteenth century.[64] It was through this process that the *Axiema* category effectively became a precursor of the Nzema one in its social, territorial, and political meanings during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

1.4 Identity Paradigms

The nature of the category defined as *Axiema* in the seventeenth century was an eminently jural and political one. The recognition of Axim's primacy, and therefore its fort's, was shared by some political units, which the Dutch described as being united in a "commonwealth," in spite of their deep differences (fig. 1.3). Similarly, throughout the twentieth century, the subordination to certain *mbia* located within the area, which had been defined as *Axiema* in the distant past, is the more general and comprehensive criterion for applying the Nzema category to the various polities (*maanlema*) that make it up. In this sense, a principal factor for assessing identity today is enshrined in a political and jural link, which refers to a long-disappeared entity. In its more limited application to the area west of the Ankobra, the term Nzema also covers some aspects of identity attached to local allegiances, which result from specific historical developments connected with the colonial period.

The study of the conceptual framework in which these multiple political and jural links were established and have evolved should make it possible to understand the process of ascribing identities, by shifting from the political communities to their constituent groups and individuals. This would amount to outlining the basic framework in which the term Nzema operates as an ethnic name.

The Nzema emphasizes the sharing of a common language as a primary and general feature in expressing a concept of *ethnos,* at least at the present. The category of *aneɛ ekpunli* (pl. *a. mgbunli*), literally meaning "language group,"[65] is employed to describe overall social groups: Nzema *aneɛ ekpunli*, Nyenda *a. e.* (Ahanta), Nzandelɛ *a. e.* (Asante), et cetera. However, more specific definitions of community membership involve the use of decisive criteria other than the linguistic one, or in other words, involve reference to institutions that the local society considers to be the fundamental features of their own organization, and to basic concepts concerning the relationship between the individual and the group.

One of the fundamental factors in determining membership of an Akan community is the inclusion within a system of kinship relations reckoned by matrifiliation.[66] Every full member of the community

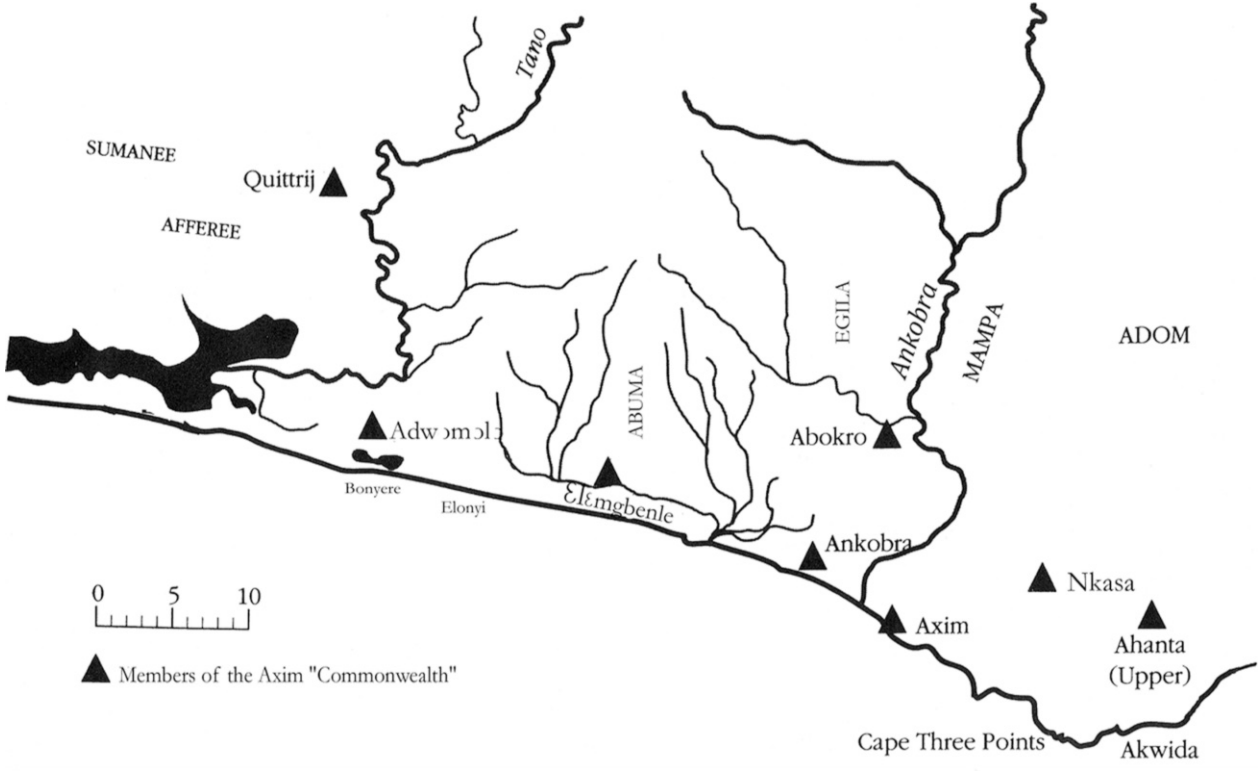

Figure 1.3 The Axim "commonwealth" in the seventeenth century

belongs to an *abusua*, a term which in the Nzema case designates both the exogamic matrilineages, which are the most immediate and influential corporate matrikin units in the life of each individual, and the larger matriclans,[67] which ideally should be seven and combine various matrilineages on the basis of a supposed original affinity. In order to distinguish between these two entities, the expression *abusua eku* may be employed to indicate the matriclan in its widest possible sense, but it is not in common use. The more immediate exogamic group can be defined in Nzema as *suakunlu abusua*. In the definition given by Grottanelli, *suakunlu abusua* means "lineage of the inner room" or of "the bedroom," and contrasts with the *asalo abusua*, which he defines as the part of the matriclan associated with the "anti-chamber" or "entrance hall." Only close relations have access to the bedroom, while guests, distant relations, and strangers are received and entertained in the entrance hall.[68]

The Nzema matriclans are Ndweafoɔ (Ndwea or Ahwea; this matriclan includes the subgroups Sewa- or Esawa- and Mahile), Mafolɛ (or Asɛmangama), Nvavile, Ezohile, Adahonle (or Madwole), Alɔnwɔba (or Alɔlɔba), and Azanwule. But this reference framework cannot be used to define membership of the *Nzema maanle* or even of the various *maanlema* that make up the *Nzema maanle*. Conversely, the matriclan per se exhibits features that cut across even the major Akan "ethnic" groupings. It is indeed a system, in which, as Bowdich said of Asante and the Gold Coast as a whole, "they class themselves still, without any regard to national distinction". The matriclan allows access to a level of identity that transcends the different *aneɛ mgbunli* and projects those who are linked to it onto the ideal plane of a wider regional community (Akan). The situation is substantially similar for the matriclans' constituent *mbusua*, which in very many cases operate as networks of alliance between geographically and historically very large groups, so that the same *abusua* can control more than one *ebia* at the same time in regions that are distant from each other, dependent on different political centers, and speaking different languages. This is the case of some closely related Alɔnwɔba *abusua* branches that control the stools of Heman, in Wassa Fiase, Bawia and Kabenlasuazo in Western Nzema, and Adjouan in Sanwi (Ivory Coast). If the need arises, these branches can succeed each other. A similar connection exists among the Ndweafoɔ/Esawa stools of Nuba and Edobo (Western Nzema), Anwia (Eastern Nzema), and Sawua (Aowin).[69] Many Nzema *mbusua* explain their history of "becoming" Nzema by the establishment of a strong link with part of the *Nzema maanle*. Thus, for example, the branches of the above

mentioned Alɔnwɔba, which are located in Western Nzema, claim that their ancestors joined the *Nzema maanle* after migrating from Wassa in the early eighteenth century: the acquisition of the new identity was marked by the adoption of the annual festival of the land, the *kundum*, and the abandonment of the Wassa *odwira*.[70] The *mbusua*, which define themselves as autochthonous or are recognized as such, are only a part of the whole group of *mbusua*, which are equally fully entitled to define themselves as Nzema, or belonging to a particular section of the Nzema world.

For the purposes of a definition of community membership, matrifiliation must be accompanied by additional information about patriliny. Indeed the paternal line constitutes the primary context for passing down social roles and duties to an individual.[71] The father as an individual is called *ɛgya*, and *selɛ* when referred to as a member of the "father's side." Patrilocality is the projection of an ideal set of rules constantly averred in local discourse. The children, *mralɛ* (sing. *ralɛ*: child) are supposed to live in their father's *aako* or *awuke*: compound (though exceptions are and were countless). According to the fundamental perception of the genesis of a human being, which is shared by the Akan groups with some differences,[72] the essential components of an individual derive partly from the parents and partly from an extra-human source. In the current Nzema-Ahanta version, which is similar to the Fante one, the mother provides the "bones" (*mowulɛ*, sing. *bowulɛ*) and "flesh" (*nwonane*), while the father provides the "blood" (*mogya*) and the *mɔra* or *sunsum*, an intangible element that determines the character of an individual and even the collective one of groups.[73] *Nyamenle*,[74] the agent of creation, is the source of a further element: *ɛkɛla* (pl. *ngɛla*), a person's essence (the term has traditionally been translated as "soul").[75] Whereas in central, northern, and eastern Akan areas the *mogya* is said to be transmitted through the maternal line and is therefore closely associated with the *abusua*,[76] its transmission is considered a paternal task (at least for the most part) in Nzema, Fante, Ahanta, and other areas, where *abusua* and *mogya* are therefore juxtaposed.[77]

Through the succession of fathers and sons, the same *mogya* continues to occupy the same *aako*. Collectively the titular occupants call themselves *meze ama* (sing. *meze ara*: literally "child of my father"), as partners in the same *mogya* and with similar *mɔra/sunsum*, leaving aside their *abusua* affiliations that could be different. The *aako* is associated with the concept of "home" (*aako nu*) and, at a more immediate level, the concept of *patria* (fatherland) is defined by the relationship with the fathers' *aako* and therefore with the community (*maanle*) in

which it is situated. In other words, it is from the paternal line that an individual derives the majority of his duties and privileges as a political member of society.

The *aako* constitutes the basic component of a *suazo* (town; pl. *azuazo*). In the case of larger settlements, several *aako* can be brought together under the one *awɔlɔne* (ward, street), acting as an intermediate organizational unit. It is through these units that the position and role of the *ezuavolɛ* (the inhabitants of the town) are defined within the framework of civil and, historically, military organization. The *aako* acts in these contexts under the guidance of its own *mgbanyinli* (or *mgbanyima*, elders; sing. *kpanyinli*) as a corporate entity, the *aakonu ama*. Historically the *aakonu ama* was perceived as a body, which included members of the *abusua*, that owns the *aako*, "sons," clients, slaves (*ngɛkɛlɛ*, sing. *akɛlɛ*), and "friends" (*agɔnwolɛma*, sing. *agɔnwolɛ*). At this level, the *aako* members' various *abusua* affiliations become of secondary importance in relation to the duty of service (*ɛzonlenlɛ*) to the fathers and, consequently, to the fathers' *ebia*. Interestingly, succession to the office of military leader (*safohyenle*) is patrilineal.[78]

In other words, the *aako* unit markedly incorporates the reintegration of patriliny and matriliny, the two primary and potentially conflicting poles in affiliations and loyalties experienced by individuals and groups. This ideal notion, which the *aako* enacts at society's elementary organizational level, is projected onto the operation of the higher political levels as the underlying ideological fabric. The *maanle* as Body Politic is perceived and interpreted as the result of a dynamic relationship between the *ezuavolɛ* (people), which is an entity defined and politically organized by patrifiliation (i.e., *mogya* or blood and *mɔra/sunsum*), and the *ebia* (stool), which embodies the principle of sovereignty attributed to the *abusua* (i.e., *mowule*: bones). The *maanle* is a vital combination of these elements and therefore *persona* in the strict sense of the term, one that possesses its own collective and distinctive *mɔra/sunsum*, and is provided with *mogya* by *ezuavolɛ* and *mowule* by the *abusua*. The *ebia kpole*, the royal stool, and thus figuratively the *belemgbunli* himself, is termed *maanle eti* ("the head of the *maanle*") in political language, while the subordinate *ebia* that provides its main support is called *ɛgyakɛ babonle* ("the foot"). It is important to stress that the principle of sovereignty represented by the *ebia* cannot be implemented outside the context provided by the *maanle*.

The interrelationship between the *maanle*'s basic components is a complex and substantially ambiguous one. The loyalties that can

be called upon by the differing affiliations, particularly *mogya* and *abusua*, that is, patriliny and matriliny, are potentially in competition, constantly on the brink of open conflict. The *maanle*, like all *personae,* therefore achieves a state of temporary and conditional equilibrium, but one with a congenital tendency to break up. The only preventive barrier is government action, *maanzielɛ*, which is a direct manifestation of the *tumi* (lit. "ability," or "power," but also "authority" and "hegemony") and directly proportional to its fullness and efficacy. The *tumi* is a fundamental attribute of authority, but especially the highest authority, the *belemgbunli*.[79] According to local political thought, the *tumi* is the catalyst that determines the establishment of a specific historical, social, and political order (*maanle*). As such, the *tumi* is quintessentially the "creator of identity,"[80] as well as being a fundamental element in the conservation and continuation of that identity.

With specific reference to the mechanisms of individual and collective identity, the category that could be defined as "fatherland" (*patria*) is ultimately the result of an overlap between a number of fundamental bonds: (1) between *mogya* and *aako*, (2) between *aako*, *abusua*, and *maanle*, and (3) between *maanle* and *abusua* in relation to the settlement and management of land (*azɛlɛ*). The first bond is immediate and automatic, while the second and third are mediated through a number of jural mechanisms centered around the *abusua*. Together, they constitute the political framework. The manner in which these bonds overlap is essentially a shifting one. They change in size and intensity in accordance with a number of environmental, social, and personal variables, as well as being influenced by the effectiveness of the *tumi*.

1.5 Layered Identities

The wider layers of Nzema identity potentially include a whole number of questions concerning internal differentiation that normally lie dormant, but can emerge as powerful expressions of specific realities within the local context.

An extremely vivid example of this complex overlaying of identities was provided in 1914 by the *ɔmanhene* Aka Anyima of Benyinli regarding Anyi-Afɛnma speaking Elubo's and Ghana Nugua's membership of the *Nzema maanle*: "The Allubos serve me but in ancient times they were Aowins. They speak Aowin [Anyi] but their blood is Apollonian blood."[81] The establishment of supremacy has the very direct and material result of a transfer of *mogya* through marriage

policies: the subordinate group, irrespective of whether it finds itself in that situation voluntarily or through compulsion, gives some of its women to the dominant group. The *mbusua* that held the Elubo and Ghana Nugua *mbia* gave their women to the *belemgbunli* or to the royal *abusua* of a *Nzema maanle*; their children therefore have Nzema *mogya* and *mɔra*, and as such are fully members of the *Nzema maanle*, but not of the *Nzema aneɛ ekpunli*. Elubo and Ghana Nugua are Anyi, given that they are Anyi-speakers, but also fully Nzema, because their "fathers" are Nzema. The state of *Semanli fɔɔmwo*, "pure Nzema," which is an expression used to denote someone who is Nzema on both his mother's and his father's sides, can on occasions lead to preferential treatment as an expression of particularly deep roots in the *maanle*, but can never be used as a category to establish who is and who is not Nzema.

In more general terms of self-perception, an individual or a group is Nzema in the moment in which he/she/it affirms, and therefore implicitly historicizes, a jural state or condition, namely the inclusion within a social body organized by some specific political entities (*maanlema*), which are linked to portions of a precise historical context whose fundamental borders are primarily territorial and subsequently linguistic in a derivative position. In this sense, Nzema becomes a "performative" category. From the fundamental perspective of local identity, this essential legal meaning is necessary for the individual and the primary group to take action within the social unit, but its establishment as specifically Nzema (and a part of one specific *Nzema maanle*) comes later than the group itself and is due to historical accident. The group comes before and goes beyond both the *aneɛ ekpunli* and the *maanle*, but it is linked to them through a relationship whose origin is conceptualized in terms of "service" (*ɛzonlenlɛ*).

The assertion of the strong possibility of the alternative in the very moment in which a boundary is being proclaimed is a fundamental feature in the local identity discourse. One of the clear expressions of this paradigm is the annual festival (*ɛvoyia*), which is called the *kundum* or *abisa*. This itinerant celebration follows an east-west route, involving all and solely those *maanlema* that define themselves as Ahanta or Nzema, starting in Sekondi and ending up at Grand Bassam. Within every specific *maanle*, the *kundum* may "belong" to a matriclan that can also be different from the royal one: the Nvavile matriclan in the case of the areas to the west of the Ankobra, the Madwole (Adahonle) at Axim, the Ndweafoɔ in various Ahanta areas, et cetera. However, its celebration is supported materially by

the *belemgbunli* and the *ebia kpole*, thus becoming a celebration of the entire *maanle*.[82] The groups that established themselves in one particular *maanle* "met" the kundum and adopted it to the exclusion of any *ɛvoyia* celebrated in any previous areas of settlement. The enactment of the *kundum* reasserts the ancestral and modern common bond between Ahanta and Nzema as territorial and social entities, and at the same time it outlines a historical map of the territory, which provides important principles in defining groups that exist within the current political sphere. The *kundum* provides a "palimpsest" upon which relations between groups and the territory, and between the respective histories of groups and the territory, are constantly rewritten. In this sense, it is an exquisitely historical dimension that defines Nzema and Ahanta, but at the same time that it defines them, the *kundum* asserts the relativity of these two identities in relation to the historical levels that transcend and encompass them.

A complete answer to the question of who is a Nzema, and what and where is Nzema Country cannot be a single one, but probably is to be found in a number of complex periphrastic formulas. The true criterion for defining identity is its total historical relativity.

Chapter 2

The Regional Landscape

To this day the region that made up the "Kingdom of Appolonia" is subdivided along historical, geographical, and dialectal lines. Azane is the area between the mouth of the River Ankobra and Aziema (Essiama), and to its northwest there is Akoamu, the subregion centered on Nwulofolɔ (Nkroful). Etile (or Eletile) covers the settlements of Ewuture origin that are located around the mouth of the River Amanzule,[1] and Bɔmuakpole marks its northern border. Upriver in the Amanzule river basin, the lake area and its inhabitants were called Anwumane.[2] Ɛlɛmgbenle goes from Sanzule (or Ekonu/Bakanta) in the east to Adoabo in the west. The name Adwɔmɔlɔ is applied to the region west of Ɛkɛbaku, and by extension to the entire *maanle* of Benyinli.[3] Afoma is the area where Anyi-Afɛnma is spoken along the River Tano.[4]

These subregional divisions constitute elements of continuity in the formation of local interests. On the whole they are the direct result of previously existing entities with specific human and territorial identities, some of which were politically autonomous in the seventeenth century and later incorporated into the "Kingdom of Appolonia," providing fundamental contributions to its formation and consolidation.

2.1 The Region in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Maps and Other Sources

Prior to the eighteenth century, we do not have a great deal of information on the region in which the Kingdom of Appolonia would develop and, as is very much the norm, information is particularly

patchy when it comes to the areas immediately beyond the coastal strip. The earliest historical data was provided by the Portuguese, who started to visit the coast in 1471 and established a permanent trading post in Axim in 1503 at the latest. However, the sixteenth-century Portuguese documents only provide fragmentary information on the area we are concerned with.

Gaspar Viegas' map of 1534 uses *praia verde* to indicate the stretch of coastline that runs from *Sierra de S. Apolonia* in the east, to *R. da Sueiro* in the west (a variant to indicate the River *Sueiro Da Costa*). *Praia verde* reappears in other Portuguese maps, such as the one made in 1537 (anonymously but attributed to Viegas)[5] and Diogo Homem's of 1558,[6] while J. Freire's atlas of 1546 uses two toponyms to describe the same stretch of coast: *rena p verta* for the section immediately to the west of *serra de Apolonba* and *praia de matos* further to the west (*mato*: forest).[7] *Praia do mato* appeared in other maps in the second half of the sixteenth century.[8] The famous late-sixteenth-century map by Teixeira and Rovelasco (see fig. 2.1) used the name *Do Mato* to cover a wide area in the interior to the west of the Ankobra, including all the low river basin of the Tano.

An anonymous Portuguese document, written in Elmina in 1572, referred to the *Alandes*, who lived on the coast "almost from the *Cabo das Palmas* till near *Axem*."[9] The *Alandes* were regular trading partners in deals concluded in Axim, who maintained good relations with the Portuguese. According to the sixteenth-century English traveler, W. Towerson, the Africans called this region *Allow*.[10] His account showed that the coastline was dotted with settlements.[11]

The map of Guinea produced by L. Teixeira and S. Rovelasco in the late sixteenth century (see fig. 2.1)[12] is particularly detailed on the the inland areas from Axim and Ahanta and the Ankobra river basin, which in the final decades of the sixteenth century became of particular interest to Portuguese explorers and traders. Teixeira based himself extensively on the map and information produced by Menda Motta, a merchant who sailed up the Ankobra in 1573 in order to reach the gold mines of Egila (*Guire*).[13]

The course of the Ankobra meanders a great deal, and consequently the navigation distances are considerably longer than those needed for traveling overland, which in turn was made problematic by the dense forest. Menda Motta's terse report mentions two localities close to the river. He places a gold-mining district, *as minas do Bogio* (Aboasi), eight leagues (about 35 km) upriver.[14]

Teixeira's map shows a town called *Bogio* between *M. de S. Aplonya* in the west and the mouth of the *Rio Mancu* (Ankobra), and some

Figure 2.1 Detail of the western Gold Coast from the map of L. Teixeira and S. Rovelasco, *Effigies ampli Regni auriferi Guineae in Africa siti*. Amsterdam University Library (BUA, OK 132). Special Collections, University of Amsterdam

distance inland. This locality evidently corresponds to the one referred to by Menda Motta and should not be confused with the other *Bogio*, which appears in seventeenth-century cartography and written documents as an important trading center *on the coast* of what is now Eastern Nzema, close to the mouth of River Amanzule.[15] The coastal

Bogio has been very convincingly identified by J. Y. Ackah as one of the ancestral settlement of modern-day Ampain (or Amgbenu) in Eastern Nzema, which was called Borazo, literally "on the island" (*bora*: island, *zo*: on), and was in fact situated on one of the small islands in the narrow coastal lagoon formed by the Amanzule. The island, which today is uninhabited, is still known as Borazo.[16]

Menda Motta indicates another gold-mining area, *Guire Serafee*, some 60 leagues (264 km) up the river and close to its banks. It was also the region's seat of political power. After having left the river and having traveled a further 30 leagues through the forest, the Portuguese merchant reached a place the natives called "o Elefante Grande" (*Corisseno de Aliphante Grande* on Teixeira's map), where there were very rich gold mines. Wilks has identified *Elefante Grande* with the ancient gold district of *Omanaso*, which is southwest of Kumase and toward the River Ofin.[17]

2.2 The Amanzule and the Country of *Abuma*

Clearly the *Rio Sueiro da Costa* on Teixeira's map corresponds to the River Tano,[18] while the Ankobra river is called *Rio Mancu*, a name also used by Menda Motta and found in seventeenth-century cartography. However Teixeira's graphic representation erroneously joined the Ankobra and Amanzule rivers into a single waterway, the *Rio Mancu* (a name apparently associated with Amanzule). This mistake may well have been caused by the fact that *Mancu* or *Mansu* was also one of the names for the Ankobra and widely used by Europeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[19] This assimilation of the two rivers by a cartographer working on the basis of indirect and probably quite sketchy information was entirely understandable and can be clearly seen from his attribution to the Ankobra river of an important geographical feature that actually occurs on the Amanzule river basin. The map shows a settlement to the north of Axim on the eastern bank of the river, which is surrounded by a lake connected to the course of the River *Mancu*/Ankobra. The settlement is called *Bumas*. This entity is often mentioned in seventeenth-century sources with varying spellings such as "the country of *Abuma*."[20] However, *Abuma* is not situated on the left bank of the Ankobra, but the left bank of the Amanzule, or in other words to the north of the narrow strip of land that the river marks off by running parallel to the coast for a few dozen kilometres. This location is clearly specified in the acts of submission to the Dutch signed by the chiefs of *Jumoree* (Adwɔmɔlɔ) and *Abripiquem*

(ɛlɛmgbenle) in 1652 and 1657. In these documents, the Amanzule river (*Abaumacure*)[21] and *Abuma*[22] constitute the northern border of ɛlɛmgbenle. *Abuma* and ɛlɛmgbenle are in turn the eastern limits of Adwɔmɔlɔ.[23] *Abuma* is represented in a very effective pictorial manner in J. Elandt's map of the Gold Coast of 1659 as a settlement immediately to the north of Adwɔmɔlɔ and ɛlɛmgbenle, and situated on a territory entirely surrounded by a river system connected to the Amanzule and the Ankobra.[24] The connection between *Abuma*'s location and the marshy and semiflooded region that runs along the course of the Amanzule is very clear, whereas the doubtful identifications of *Abuma* with Aowin and Adom, as twice argued by Van Dantzig,[25] really need to be ruled out. Variants relating to the place-name *Abuma azule* or *nzule* (the river of *Abuma*), as can be clearly perceived in the seventeenth-century river name *Abaumacure*, were widely used by Europeans and in cartography for Amanzule river and lake up until the twentieth century.[26]

The lake area immediately to the north of Benyinli provides some significant possible locations for ancient *Abuma*. In Nzema the term *buma* indicates deep water, as it is the case of Lake Amanzule.[27] Today the only permanently inhabited settlement along the lakeside is Nzulezo or Nzulɔzo (literally "on the water"), a village on stilts of Ewuture origin situated close to the southwest shore. However Ahumazo, which is located close to the northeast bank, was the site of an ancient settlement, now disappeared. Today the area of Ahumazo is one of the few that can be permanently cultivated in the territory of Benyinli beside the narrow strip along the coast.[28] The stretch land that includes Ahumazo and the village of Miegyinla is higher than the surrounding marsh, and is consequently defined as an island (*bora*) locally, which in fact it is during periods of flooding. According to historical accounts widely known in the area and made known further afield by the works of A. Essuah, the Ewuture groups, which migrated long ago from the east and are supposed to have founded Nzulezo, are also supposed to have halted at Ahumazo, where they were welcomed by a community that controlled the surrounding area.[29] The name Ahumazo means literally "on the holes/ditches" (*ahuma*, sing. *kuma*). The site is indeed covered with a truly spectacular number of circular ditches, possibly connected to some ancient gold-mining activity.[30]

In any case, various local accounts claim that Ahumazo, together with Anyelebo (literally "under the *Anyele* tree") which is just to the north of the modern township of ɛkɛbaku,[31]was the ancestral seat of the group associated with the foundation of "Kingdom of

Appolonia," namely Kɛma Kpanyinli, and subsequently Anɔ Bile and his sons, Anɔ Bile Aka, Anɔ Bɔnlɔmane, Boa Kpanyinli, and Amihyia Kpanyinli.[32] Dutch documents dating from 1657 inform us that a few decades earlier at the time that Dom Francisco Sotomaior was the Portuguese governor of Elmina, the people of *Abuma* attacked the people of Adwɔmɔlɔ, and drove them from the Cape Appolonia area. It was only through the intervention of mixed Axim and Portuguese troops that the *Abuma* attackers were defeated and the Adwɔmɔlɔ people were able to return to their homes.[33]

Sotomaior, who had been appointed governor in 1623, did not actually arrive in Elmina until mid-1624 and was still in office in 1626. João da Sera de Morais, who succeeded him on an unknown date, remained in office until 1629.[34] The expedition against the *Abuma* must therefore have occurred during this period, which inevitably recalls the arrival in Assini of the group that Father G. Loyer called the *Esiep*. According to Loyer, who was writing in 1702, some 70 or 80 years earlier the *Esiep*, a people who lived near Cape Appolonia, were attached and driven out by the people of Axim. Led by their chief called *Faï*, the *Esiep* were welcomed by the Ewuture of the western lagoons and resettled in the coastal area that would later become the new Assini, and remained there until after 1670.[35] Then relations with the Ewuture deteriorated and more people moved into the area from "Grand Issyny" (the main settlement in old Assini, a few kilometres to the west of modern Half Assini) and possibly other areas (Baesjou, suggests *Siman*).[36] They came to be known as Essuma. This forced the *Esiep* to move westward.[37]

The events and the chronology suggest that there was a link between the joint Axim and Portuguese attack on the *Abuma* and the westward migration of the *Esiep*. One further element strengthens this theory, which however has yet to be proven: it is the demonstrable role played by the Ewuture. As has been said, the Ewuture settled the area around Lake Amanzule during their ancestral migration from east to west. Whatever the differences between the competing historical accounts of how the area was settled, it is clear that there is a close link between the Ewuture and the *Abuma* people. The migration of *Faï* and his *Esiep*, who might have come from *Abuma*, was directed toward a more western area with a very similar environment and populated by communities of lagoon and freshwater fishermen similar to the Ewuture of the Amanzule river basin, who granted hospitality to the migrants. There was in fact a strong complementary relationship between the two groups, fishermen who lived in villages built on stilts and the inhabitants of dry land.

2.3 The Ewuture Component

Teixeira's map provides essential information in relation to the complex question of the movement of the Ewuture's ancestors in the western river and lagoon areas. This factor was emphasized by R. Baesjou. The map shows two successive geographic locations for the *Petirees,* a European version of one of the names attributed to the Ewuture (also Eotile, Betibe, they name themselves Metyibo).[38] Next to the region north of Cape Three Points (Ahanta), Teixeira places the wording "Caceres de ampago destruiones petirees" (*Caceres* of Ampago where the *Petirees* were destroyed), whereas the wording "Petirees destruidos pellos Caceres Dampago" (*Petirees* destroyed by the *Caceres* of Ampago) appears in the region between *Mancu* (Ankobra) and *Rio Sueiro da Costa*, to the north of *Bacoores* (Abokro, on the banks of the Ankobra). Baesjou starts with the explanation suggested by J. D. Fage for the obscure name *Cacres* (or *Caceres*), which often occurs on Portuguese maps with another much-debated place-name, Nkasa (*Incassa*).[39] The Europeans used this for at least three different areas: Great Nkasa,[40] to the northwest of Egila, which appears to be a general term for the vast forest that covers the Ankobra, Tano, and Bia river basins although apparently centered on the second river, Nkasa *Iqqyina*, a general definition for the another region still further north,[41] and Little Nkasa, a very specific area to the south inland from Cape Three Points. They were all regions that produced and traded in gold, and there appears to be a clear link between the European application of the name Nkasa and the gold trade, such as to imply that Nkasa does not so much signify an ethnicity or territory but rather a specialization of the regions in the interior: in other words, a reference to a production and trade network with a degree of institutionalization. According to Van Dantzig the Nkasa network had similarities to the much larger and more sophisticated commercial and political system devised by the Akani, who in the seventeenth century controlled the gold trade along the Prah, Ofin, and Birim rivers. In any event, the Nkasa groups never reached any political and economic coordination of the kind the Akani did manage to establish for at least a century.[42]

According to Baesjou, the place-name *Caceres Anguines*, which appears on Teixeira's map, corresponds to *Incassa Iqqyna*, which appeared on a very famous Dutch map dating from 1629.[43] *Caceres de Ampago*, on the other hand, was the region just inland from Cape Three Points, also called Old Nkasa or Little Nkasa (*Klein Incassa*). I have found further evidence in support of Baesjou's theory: even today, the place-name Nkansa or Nkasa is used to indicate a river that

runs to the north of the Cape Three Points Forest Reserve and a small settlement on its banks where it crosses the road that connects Princes Town (Kpulisi) to the main Agona Nkwanta–Axim highway. Is this settlement perhaps the heir to ancient *Ampago*?[44] Baesjou concludes that toward the end of the sixteenth century the ancestors of the Ewuture who lived in the Ahanta region were driven out by a group called Nkasa (*Caceres Dampago* or *de Ampago*) and pushed westwards until they settled inland from Cape Appolonia.[45]

The information provided by Teixeira's map is of particular interest because it suggests an Ewuture presence that was not restricted to the Tano and Aby Lagoon area, which, according to the French late-seventeenth-century sources was the land of the Ewuture.[46] In fact it documented and to some extent dated a larger Ewuture territory that included the region between the Ankobra and Tano rivers, a possibility that in effect has never been considered by academic research, except for a few brief comments.[47]

We can in fact find many historical and contemporary signs of an ancient and substantial presence of the Ewuture or peoples closely linked to them throughout the Amanzule river basin and the forest areas to the north of the lake. The historical subregion called Etile (or Eletile) includes the last stretch of the river, the coast between Azulenloanu in the east, and Ekonu (or Bakanta) in the west, and the interior as far as Ampain (Amgbenu), Kamgbunli, and the Ebi river valley. However this settlement of Ewuture from the Aby Lagoon took place in the eighteenth century under the patronage of *belemgbunli* Amihyia Kpanyinli.[48] Nevertheless this area had been affected by Ewuture migrations in the past, as had the rest of the Amanzule basin. Nzulezo, as already mentioned, is of Ewuture origin. H. Meredith wrote in 1812 that the founding group of the settlement on stilts was made up of "disaffected and ill-disposed persons" who moved in at some unknown date from Shama. He also recorded a local tradition that permission for settlement of the lake area was obtained from the local ruler (whose name he did not provide), who initially wanted to drive them away and only after earnest supplications did he allow the new arrivals to settle on condition that they built their homes on the lake and not on dry land, and that they kept themselves separate from the indigenous population.[49] The Ezohile *abusua*, which controls the *ebia* of Nzulezo, claims that the forest around Shama was their homeland before they moved west of the Ankobra.[50] In some of the accounts of the ancestral migration from the north that today have currency, Shama and Supom near Sekondi are thought to be intermediate stages.[51] After they had crossed the Ankobra river and

reached Azulenloanu at the mouth of the Amanzule, the Ewuture are supposed to have moved upriver and established ɛfoso, a settlement on stilts that no longer exists, at a crossing point north of Adoabo. They then moved to Ahumazo, which was already inhabited, and there they obtained permission from the existing population to settle on the northern shore of the lake, close to the mouth of the River Bɔsɔkɛ. The recurrence of fires in the township, a risk caused by the windiness of its unsheltered position, persuaded them to move to the opposite shore and establish the current settlement. The fact that the town is built on stilts is the supposed origin of the name Anwumane Amra, which means "those who live above (*anwuma*)" and is still used today to describe the people of Nzulezo. The group retains its distinctiveness in relation to the surrounding communities, but its dialect, which was markedly different in early-nineteenth century, has been gradually fading throughout the twentieth. An Ewuture linguistic feature survives in relation to the worship of the Amanzule *bozonle*, intimately associated with the community that lives on the lake,[52] and of the town's ancestral *awozonle*, who are believed to reside close to the early settlement at the mouth of the Bɔsɔkɛ in a place with the significant name of Nzema Angɔ, which translates literally as the expression "the Nzema do not go there."[53]

Traditions that have been collected in Nzulezo consider this migration to have caused both the Ewuture settlement of Amanzule and the creation of some of the main Ewuture communities in the southern part of the Aby Lagoon: in other words, part of the migrants continued their journey toward the west and founded Etioboue, Galoua, Akonougbe, and Assomlan in what is now the Ivory Coast.[54]

Stories of how the Ewuture settled the Amanzule region are full of references to the transformation of the Bɔsɔkɛ river into a permanently navigable waterway for canoes by dredging the bottom and reducing the vegetation along the banks, and the creation of encampments for hunting, fishing, agriculture, and gold-mining in the areas above the flooded forest close to the river, and especially to the north of the point up the Bɔsɔkɛ river where forest becomes dry in a place called Azuleti (literally "the head of the river").

The work of opening up the waterways within the forest proceeded to the north of Azuleti, and stopped, according to tradition, at the rapids (*awole zo*) of the tributary ɛtweɔkɔ, far into the forest region.[55] The Ewuture fulfilled a key role in ensuring the maintenance of waterways and the transportation of people and goods: a similar situation to the one witnessed in Assini in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. There the strategic control of the main channels of

communication put the Ewuture in a strong position to influence the Essuma of Assini, who were encircled in the narrow and unproductive coastal strip and therefore totally dependent on the population of the lagoons for obtaining food and contacts with the interior. The Essuma logistical dependence on the Ewuture is constantly emphasized by Damon and Loyer, who pointed out however that the Essuma enjoyed a considerable commercial advantage through their control of goods of European provenance.[56] J. Polet,[57] basing himself on archaeological data, argues that the Ewuture also enjoyed a dominant role in trade. It seems most likely that there was a "symbiotic" relationship between two highly specialized groups: the Essuma ensured contact with the Europeans and went out to their ships at anchor, and the Ewuture, who had no experience of the sea,[58] took responsibility for transport into the interior.

Compared with the Essuma settled on a large complex of lagoons close to the coast, the role of the Ewuture in the Amanzule region was undoubtedly less exclusive from the established communities on dry land; however their function was crucial to trade. The Bɔsɔkɛ/Amanzule basin developed as one of the principal trade routes of the western Gold Coast. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it was fundamental to communication and trade between Aowin and both Cape Appolonia and Axim. The Ewuture were specialized in fishing and navigating inland waterways, and in this area they fulfilled the crucial function of keeping the rivers navigable and allowing them to become important trade routes.

Contemporary sources emphasized the constant interaction between the Ewuture of different regions (fig. 2.2). Loyer described how the Ewuture of the lagoons around Assini maintained close relations with the Ewuture settled along waterways in quite distant regions: theirs was a relationship of mutual assistance and included military support when necessary.[59]

Relations between the Ewuture and the *Abuma* people bore crucial importance in the history of the Amanzule region. Ewuture groups took on a central role in the events leading up to the establishment and consolidation of the "Kingdom of Appolonia," whose founders had their roots in the Ahumazo/*Abuma* area.

2.4 The Geopolitical Framework in the Seventeenth Century

Information on the region in the seventeenth century is certainly more substantial than for the previous century, but there are still numerous gaps in our knowledge that are difficult to remedy.

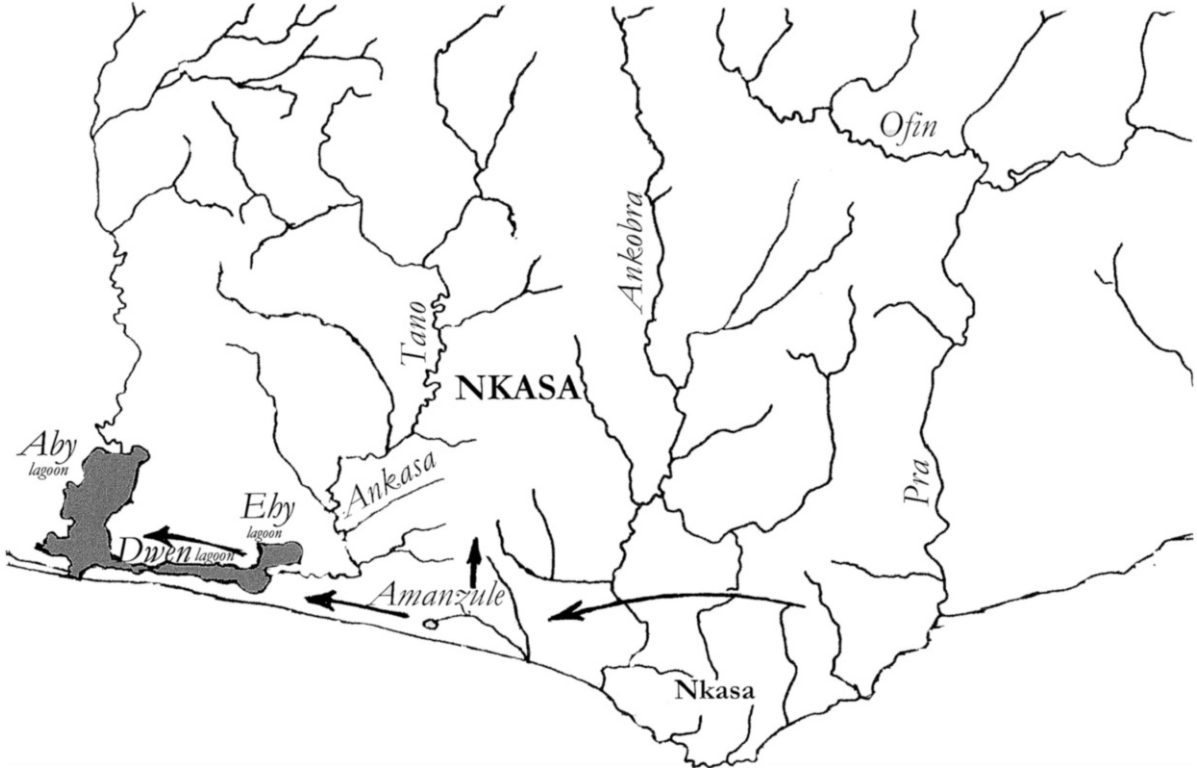

Figure 2.2 The movements of the Ewuture

During the first half of the century, the most westerly part of the region was the object of a short-lived Catholic mission, which has left some documentary evidence in the form of a few letters containing a few references to the region's political geography. On 31 July 1637, a group of Breton Capuchin friars landed "in a place called Abiany or Bené,"[60] elsewhere referred to as *Besné*.[61] The town, which was situated to the west of Cape Appolonia, was the capital of an apparently autonomous political entity, and one of the Capuchin friars, Father Colombin de Nantes, defined it as a "kingdom."[62] H. Mouezy considers it self-evident that *Abiany/Bené/Besné* corresponds to Assini in present-day Ivory Coast, and is supported by P. Wiltgen who argues the case on the basis of the available data, the most forceful of which is the distance from Axim: according to Colombin de Nantes it was 30 leagues (roughly 134 km), which is more or less the distance along the coast between Axim and modern Assini.[63] However, the Capuchin friar describes a settlement that was also home to the royal court and situated on the Atlantic coast; he makes no mention of any large coastal lagoon.[64] It is therefore almost certainly not the Assini known to the French in the early eighteenth century: a collection of settlements around the outlet into the ocean of the system of lagoons formed by the rivers Bia and Tano. This Assini, whose main settlement and seat of royal residence (Nsɔkɔ) was built on one of the islands of the lagoon, Mɔnɔbaha, at some distance from the Atlantic shore, appears to have been a late-seventeenth-century development resulting from the westward migration of groups, the Essuma, originating from a series of coastal towns collectively called (old) Assini or Great Assini to distinguish them from their later offshoots and located close to present-day Nzimitianu, in Ghana.[65] (Old) Assini was made up of two main settlements, Great and Little Assini, which were separated by three smaller villages.[66] *Abiany/Bené/Besné* was neither the Assini known by Father Loyer nor its ancestral settlement, Great Assini. *Abiany* is in fact one of the variants of the name Awiane (aka Half Assini), a few kilometres to the east of (old) Assini.[67] W. Blaeu's 1635 map of Guinea and the two maps by J. Elandt and J. Leupenius (1659 and 1664) place Awiane (*Abine*) between *Assine* (by which they meant Great Assini) in the west and Edobo (*Iobbo*, *Tobo*) in the east. These territories are represented as three autonomous polities by Elandt and Leupenius, which depict them as discrete units surrounded by waterways.[68] Mouezy's and Wiltgen's confusion between *Abiany/Bené/Besné* and (new) Assini is probably due to the fact that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources very often mention (old) Assini and Awiane (*Abine*) together—and often even Edobo (*Tobo*)—almost

creating the impression that these are twin towns or in any case closely interrelated. Clearly Europeans who traded along the coast associated the three places because of their geographic proximity and apparent membership of a single market.[69]

Abiany was in all probability the ancestral settlement of modern-day Awiane/Half Assini.[70] In any event, the mission proved to be short-lived because of the sickness among the five friars, three of whom succumbed to fever in less than a year, as well as the deteriorating relations with the locals, who appear to have been disappointed by the fact that no French ship appeared to honor the French promise at the time of the friars' landing to enhance trade in the area. The two survivors, Fathers Colombin de Nantes and Cyrille d'Anceanis, who eventually were held almost as hostages, succeeded in escaping from Awiane during the night in August 1638, and reached Axim overland, where they requested hospitality from the Portuguese.[71]

The few documents resulting from the mission provide meager information on the region it visited, but one important fact can be inferred from the report of the deaths of two of the Capuchins, Angélique de Nantes and Samuel de Campbon, on 2 and 5 April of 1638 "in a town called *Alene*," while attempting to establish another missionary station.[72] Variants of the name *Alene* appear in some later sources and, as we shall see, refer to a region to the north of modern Half Assini somewhere between the Ehy Lagoon and Ɛlɛnda, a forest town that controls the Tano crossing at the massive terminal meander of the river.

A key contribution to the reconstruction of the historical geography of the region is provided by a series of Dutch documents from the 1650s. They are mainly letters and reports by Johan Valckenburgh, a central figure in the WIC affair, who held key positions on the Gold Coast, was commander of Axim and was *directeur-generael* for two terms (1655–1658 and 1662–1666). With the intention of strengthening Dutch monopolistic ambitions for the gold trade on the western Gold Coast, which was attracting competition from other European commercial interests,[73] Valckenburgh collected documents and local accounts and traditions to demonstrate the subordination of some political entities to the fort's "jurisdiction" and established by acts of allegiance to the crowns of Portugal and Spain carried out by local chiefs.[74] These privileges and jurisdictions were supposed to have been transferred to the Dutch by right of conquest. Valckenburgh defined as *gemenebest* (commonwealth) the collection of political entities that acknowledged the primacy of Axim and its fort. This supposed union would have brought together some districts (*provincien*)

that produced and traded in gold along the coast or immediately inland.[75]

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the *gemenebest* was supposed to include eight "provinces," three to the east of the River Ankobra, namely Axim itself and, proceeding eastward, Nkasa (Cape Three Points area) and Upper Ahanta, and five beyond the western bank of the river, namely *Abripiquem, Jumore, Quittrij* (*Quitzy* or *Gattrij*), *Cobre,* and *Boucre*.[76] This was what Valckenburgh claimed, although one of the documents he produced in support of his argument was a sworn declaration by the chiefs of Axim that mentions only six of the *provincien;* there is no reference to *Quitrij* and Upper Ahanta.[77] *Jumore* and *Abripiquem* are Adwɔmɔlɔ and Ɛlɛmgbenle, respectively. *Cobre* (Ankobra) occupied the current subregions of Akoamu (around Nwulofolɔ/Nkroful), Azane (between the River Ankobra and Aziema/Essiama), and Etile (around the Amanzule River's mouth).[78] *Boucre* is Abokro, an ancient town that is today part of the small entity of Adwɔmɔlɔ-Apatem, which straddles the River Ankobra.

Quittrij was situated inland and had no outlet to the sea.[79] The geographical position of the area was defined more precisely in the 1657 agreement between the Dutch and the chiefs of Adwɔmɔlɔ. According to this document, the boundaries of Adwɔmɔlɔ were marked off by the districts (*lantschappen*) of Ɛlɛmgbenle and *Aboama* (*Abuma*) in the east and northeast, *Quittri* and *Affimba* in the north, the "lands" of *Sumanee* and *Aferee* in the west, and the ocean to the south.[80] Both *Affimba* and *Aferee* are located in the region known as Afɛnma, which includes the eastern part of modern Sanwi (Ivory Coast) and extends across the Tano into Ghana. More precisely, the first is Afoma, that is, the land along the banks of the Tano upriver from Nugua, including Alakwabo and Tanoso.[81] *Aferee* might perhaps refer more specifically to the valley of the Ehania River, where the town of Afienun is to be found, also called in the past *Effirou*.[82] The "lands" of *Sumanee* could be the region dominated by the important Agua town of Siman to the northeast of the Aby Lagoon.[83] Baesjou, on the other hand, argues that *Sumanee* could refer to the Essuma, a people, and on this basis goes on to suggest that this group was settled in the mid-seventeenth century just to the northwest of the settlements along the lagoons and coasts that it established in the final 30 years of that century.[84] A Dutch document of 1656 appears to refer to a *Sumanee* not far from the ocean or perhaps even on the coast, and it reports the punitive action taken by the Portuguese commander at Axim, L. Soares, at the beginning of the century against inhabitants of Elmina who took their boats as far as *Sumanee* and challenged the ban on sailing west of Axim.[85] However

the two hypotheses are not mutually exclusive: it is possible that in the mid-seventeenth century an extensive area between the coast and the Bia River was known as the "country of Siman," and the Essuma people take their name from this place-name (as does Assini).

It appears that *Quitrij/Quitzy/Gattrij* corresponded to Ngatakro, a town on the right bank of the Tano. In the colonial period, the settlement was moved to the left bank in British territory (Nugua was similarly affected) and is now called Cocoa Town. Ngatakro is the ancestral seat of the *ebia* of Elubo. The historical importance of this region as a trading crossroads is clearly shown by the eighteenth-century sources, which describe how merchants came from Wassa and Asante. Ngatakro was also renowned for the shrine of the *bozonle* Tanoɛ (now in Nugua), which was particularly venerated by the people of Aowin.[86] Its inhabitants, the Sohie, had their own language, which is now extinct and replaced by Anyi-Afɛnma.[87] The main *mbia* of the area belong to the Ezohile matriclan (a name that we also find in the terms Sohie), and the *mbia* of Elubo and Axim-Upper Town (Bolɔfo Solo) have a shared origin and are still in the hands of two related Ezohile *mbusua*, which is of particular interest when it comes to interpreting the historical relations between *Quittrij* and *Axiema*.

R. Kea tried to reconstruct the political and economic geography of the Tano basin during the seventeenth century.[88] His sources were mainly a letter written in 1658 by J. Valckenburgh and the reports on French activities in Assini between 1687 and 1702. The Tano, according to Valckenburgh, crossed several rich gold-producing districts well known to the Akani (*Akanist*) merchants, and these were *Enetrij, Ejami, Ellen, Afomba, Abamaj, Ahonee, Peschee, and Ahasia,* otherwise known as *Encasser Grande* (fig. 2.3).[89] Kea asserts that it is impossible to identify these places with any certainty, with the exception of *Ahasia/Encasser Grande*, that is modern Sehwi. However he suggests some possible associations, such as *Peschee* with Samreboi and *Ahonee* with the archaeological site of Nkara where the Disue runs into the Tano.[90] However, at least some of his suggestions for geography for the lower Tano are more than mere hypotheses based on assonances between old and new place-names; they are founded on more substantial facts relating to the local historical geography.

Enetrij very probably corresponds to *Quittrij*.[91] *Ejami* (cf. *Iamo* or *Jamo* on Teixeira's map) might be Gyema (or Dyema) in modern-day southern Aowin in Boin river valley. Gyema was a trading center on route to the coast.

R. Kea suggests a correspondence between *Ellen* and the ancestral settlement of modern ɛlɛnda (or Alenda) in Western Nzema/Jomoro.

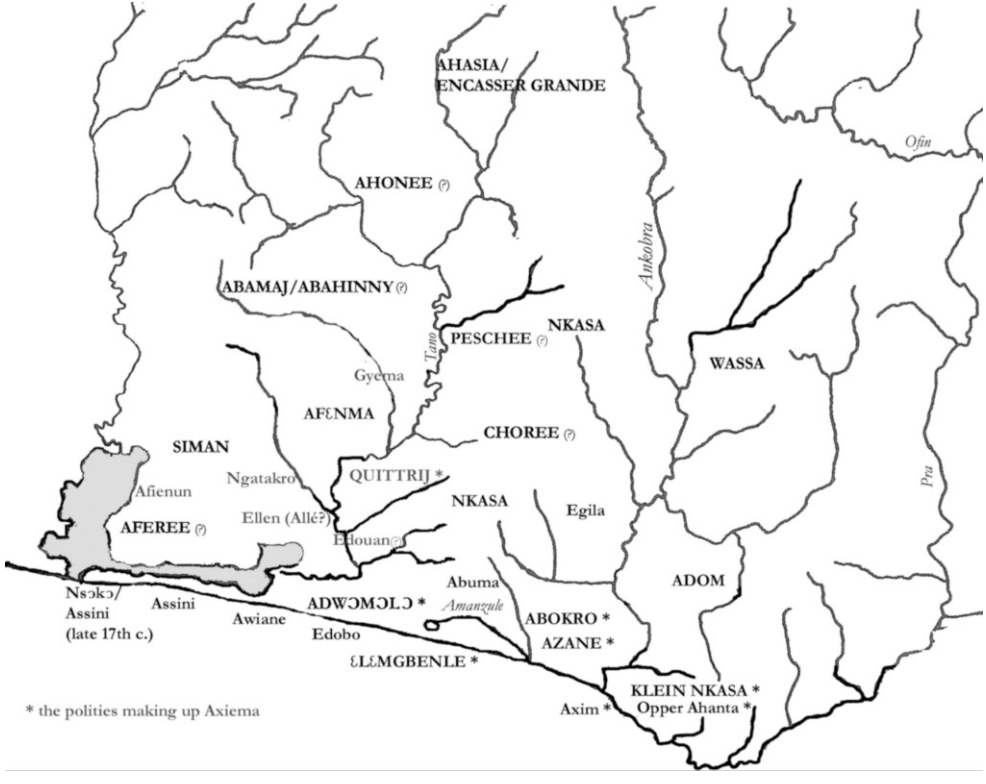

Figure 2.3 The Ankobra and Tano river basins in the mid-seventeenth century (some of the data is sketchy or even guesswork)

On one hand we can find evidence supporting this thesis:[92] the town named *Alene* was where the Breton Capuchin friars operating in Awiane in the 1630s tried to open a mission; *Chevalier* Damon mentioned the "king of Allé" as a close neighbor of (new) Assini on its eastern border.[93] On the other hand there seem to be a link between *Allé* and the "kingdom of Edoua," that is mentioned by Loyer and Tibierge as an important trading center located at 10–12 leagues from Nsɔkɔ the island capital of (new) Assini.[94] *Allé* and *Edoua* were close to each other, and probably part of the very same polity.[95]

In the gold-producing district of *Ellen/Alene/Allé*, *Edouan* constituted the central market for trade from and to the towns on the banks of the lagoon and along the coast to the west of the ports of Edobo and Awiane. This trading center, which was not mentioned in the 1658 document, probably grew in importance following Assini's shift westward during the 1670s.

We have already examined *Afomba* or *Afoma* (*Famba* on Teixeira's map). *Abamaj* was probably the *Abahinny* that Valckenburgh defined in his writings as "a district of great repute (naam)" and the principal market inland from the coast between Axim and Assini, before coming to the market at Great Nkasa/*Ahasia*.

It could be argued that *Abamaj/Abahinny* was the River Boin region, a gold-producing area.[96] A few decades later, Father Loyer would put great stress on the importance of the market at *Abahinny* in the trading system of the western Gold Coast.

Chapter 3

Politics and Trade

The available written sources provide us with an overall picture of the area's political geography in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in spite of their being somewhat sketchy and incomplete. However they do not provide information on the size, demography, organization, economy, history, relative power, and foreign relations of the communities in question. Moreover the little they do tell us is almost always communicated indirectly in the context of information concerning European residence, activities, and interests, which inevitably take on the role of the central axis around which all events in the area revolve. Unfortunately this clear imbalance in the viewpoint of European documents can only be minimally offset by information from other sources.

In the case of the areas we are examining (i.e., the region to the west of the Ankobra), there is no choice but to infer, reconstruct, and interpret events on the basis of information relating in general to the network of relations centered on Axim and particularly the European presence in its fort and in the warehouses of other coastal centers. This is by no means an unprofitable task: surviving documents often refer substantially to relations with the region of Cape Appolonia and the areas inland from it, which undoubtedly constitute an important chapter in the history of the European interests at work on the western Gold Coast.

However the sources do not help us to understand the local history and rationales that were the backdrop to European activities, except for the regular and often implicit references to clearly important events, personalities, and groups, which usually remain stubbornly shrouded in a thick fog. In short, the limitations upon our knowledge imposed

by the available sources is quite clear and probably insurmountable, although there are a few in which we have come across precious information that allows us to identify names, provenance, and population movements.

3.1 The Portuguese on the Gold Coast and in Axim

The Portuguese came to the Gold Coast in 1471, and in 1482 they started building their main stronghold, Saint George's Castle in Elmina. In 1503 they set up a trading station a little to the east of the Ankobra in a place called *Achombene*. But in 1515 they were driven out by the inhabitants and moved east to nearby Axim. Here, seemingly in 1552, they commenced work on the current fortress, Fort Saint Anthony, which they occupied until February 1642, when they were definitively displaced by the Dutch, who had already taken Elmina in 1637.[1]

The Portuguese presence in the Gold Coast forts, which lasted one-and-a-half centuries, was always a very small world. In 1482–1484, the garrison in Saint George's Castle (then under construction) was made up of 63 people, and in 1529 it was down to 55 (including the Captain-General or Governor, 13 soldiers, 2 gunners, and 4 women). A document drawn up around 1607 listed 67 people (including 12 soldiers, 6 gunners, and 5 members of the clergy), as well as crews for the galleys in continual service along the coast. This same source states that the garrison in Axim consisted of just 9 people.[2]

Axim was the most westerly of the three Portuguese strongholds (the third one was Shama, slightly to the east of Sekondi). In terms of their trading strategy, one of the principal objectives of the station in Axim, at least in the beginning, was access to gold production in the Ankobra basin. Later (certainly by the 1560s) increasing importance was attributed to trade in other goods from the Coast of the *Alandes*, to the west, such as ivory (which was cheaper than ivory on sale to the east), slaves (considered to be of excellent quality), crocodile skins, and local textiles (strips of cotton fabric in great demand among Africans and Europeans, who would sell it on along the coast). Indeed this trade came to be seen as an area of potential development for Portuguese interests, together with trade in pepper also produced in the area. The production and sale of salt grew into an important sector and provider of work for the people of Axim in the seventeenth century (salt merchants from the town established themselves in Egila and along the Ankobra), but it does not appear to have been

of importance in the preceding century.[3] The *Alandes* were regular clients of Axim and had excellent relations with the Portuguese. *Informação da Mina*, the previously mentioned anonymous document of 1572, emphasized the opportunity for expanding Portuguese trade to the west of Axim, by going to the region of the *Alandes* to trade rather than forcing them to travel all the way to the fort.[4]

However, gold remained the main, if not exclusive, trading interest. At least from the second decade of the sixteenth century, Wassa (*Assas*), the principal polity and gold producer in the region's interior, became the object of intense Portuguese diplomatic activity, particularly during the governorships of Fernão Lopes Correia (1516–1519) and Duarte Pacheco Pereira (1519–1522), who tried to develop trade between Wassa and Axim (to which it was linked by the waters of the Ankobra), Shama and Elmina itself. In 1520 Duarte Pacheco Pereira intervened to resolve a conflict between Wassa and Adom (*Aduns*), the polity that divided Wassa from the coast, in order to keep the trade route open.[5] According to J. Cordeiro Pereira's historical research, the quantity of gold obtained through Axim in the sixteenth century amounted to a significant part of the Portuguese gold acquired on the Gold Coast: in the period 1505–1506 it amounted to a yearly average of 111.508 kg and in the period 1519–1522 to 113, 422 kg, or 27.42 percent of the total collected by the Portuguese in Elmina and its dependent stations. This percentage rose to 29.93 percent in the period 1522–1523, although the annual average fell to 97.247 kg. However, a drastic reduction in the gold purchased in Axim was recorded in the period 1531–1534 (30.246 kg or 8.91% of the total), the consequence of a decline in the Portuguese monopoly over the Guinea trade and the gradual advance of French trading activities around Axim. The decline was even more marked in the second half of the century when the English arrived on the scene. The 14 kg per annum in the period 1549–1551 constituted a reduction of 87 percent in relation to the early years of the century, but the decline was irreversible and in the period 1572–1575 the quantity of gold collected in Axim by the Portuguese was just 1 kg, a tiny percentage of the total (between 0.5 and 1.5%). It was now clear that the significance of the fort in Axim was almost exclusively a strategic and military one. It was a support base for the Portuguese naval squadrons patrolling the coast as defense against European competitors and their local allies.[6]

In the 1550s and 1560s, the Portuguese lost about one-third of the total quantity of gold they would have exported from the Gold Coast, had it not been for French and English competition. However,

the declining importance of the Gold Coast in the Portuguese economy was caused by factors much further afield, namely the spectacular increase in imports of American gold by Spain, and the dramatic fall in the price of gold in Europe, while the Portuguese had a declining share of the offer. The Portuguese response to increasing competition was primarily a defensive one; they attempted to reassert the monopoly they had enjoyed in the fifteenth century by increasing investment in forts, the naval fleet, and military action against African polities that entered into relations with Portugal's European rivals. This strategy became established after the successful Portuguese naval engagement with the English commercial expedition led by W. Towerson in 1557. Yet although the French and English reduced their business with the Gold Coast without however abandoning it altogether, and devoted their energies to more profitable activities on other parts of the Guinea Coast, the Portuguese defense of their market "for reasons of prestige and out of reluctance to abandon ancient capital investment" led to a massive increase in military spending, while the proceeds from their trade on the Gold Coast continued to decline.[7]

In the early 1570s, an overall strategy was formulated as a response to declining Portuguese fortunes on the Gold Coast. Part of this was Menda Motta's previously mentioned 1573 expedition up the Ankobra in search of the goldfields of Egila and Elefante Grande. The hope was to relaunch Portuguese trade on the Gold Coast by circumventing all the intermediaries and going straight to the source of gold production. The anonymous Portuguese official writing in 1572 argued in favor of an even greater commitment and wanted to embark upon the actual colonization of the interior.[8] The ambitious plan conformed to one of the options for challenging English and French competition in the Guinea trade that were being debated by the Portuguese court at the time. The influential advisor to King Sebastian, Jorge da Silva, was the main supporter of the plan to develop a colonial settlement in grand style along the lines of the Brazilian colony that was starting to produce considerable economic benefits for Portugal in the early 1570s, and the main detractor of a reform plan to make the royal monopoly more efficient and less costly by contracting out the trade and the fortresses to private mercantile interests.[9] However da Silva's project did not take into account the enormous difference between Brazil, which had no significant indigenous polities, and the Gold Coast, which did. The imposition of Portuguese political control over the territory would have involved subjugating several local power centers of some size, organization, and military strength not only in the interior, but in the coastal region as well. For instance, attempts

to expand into the area immediately surrounding Elmina and Shama would inevitably bring the Portuguese into conflict with Efutu and Komenda, which would give rise to a financial and military commitment the court in Lisbon was unwilling or unable to provide. The solution to the question of how to run Elmina and the other bases ended up as a compromise between royal monopoly and an opening to private interests, while the idea of colonization and the establishment of a political dominion over a wider territory was completely dropped. In 1576 a Genoese merchant resident in Lisbon, Giacomo de la Bardi, entered into a contract with the Portuguese crown to take over management of the Gold Coast trade. The new settlement soon ran into trouble as the result of dramatic developments: a bloody conflict broke out in 1577–1578 between the Portuguese and the population of Elmina on one side and Efutu and its ally Akyem on the other. Portuguese victory in the field came at a high price in Portuguese dead, including the Governor of Elmina.[10]

The system of mixed management continued after the Portuguese crown passed to Philip II of Spain in 1581 (Portugal would only regain its independence in 1640). Following the expiry of de La Bardi's contract, Philip II agreed to an offer from Pero Borges de Sousa, who in 1587 signed a five-year contract, which he then withdrew from in 1589 for reasons that are not clear. He was replaced in 1589 by a new agent, Giovanni Baptista de Rovelasco, who retained the contract until 1607 when the trade returned under direct management by the crown.[11]

The bankruptcy that afflicted Philip II in 1596 introduced a period in which the Spanish imperial commitment gradually diminished, and consequently Portugal's too. The Portuguese concentrated on the defense of their most productive dominions in the Atlantic, Brazil, and Angola, and failed to protect their dominant trading position on the Gold Coast. Naval patrols were suspended and the system for supplying settlements became highly unreliable. Indeed Elmina, which was considerably off the best route for either Brazil or Southern Africa (and onto India), became something of a burden as an intermediate port and one that Portugal could ill afford to maintain. Its weakening control over the situation was accompanied by an expansion in the interests of its European competitors, particularly the Dutch, who had replaced the English and French as Lisbon's main rivals by 1600. Between 1595 and 1600 the Dutch established a small trading station in Mori (which became a fort in 1612). This base, which was their first one on the Gold Coast, was in the small polity of Asebu, with which they were in good relations.[12] In September 1606, they attempted to

take the Portuguese forts of Elmina and Axim. Both actions were unsuccessful,[13] and in the following years the situation turned into one of protracted conflict. It was by now clear that Portugal's position on the Gold Coast was precarious. Even though the Dutch had failed to dislodge the Portuguese, they now had control over most of the trade and were capable of engaging with the network of relations between the different local polities and using it as part of their anti-Portuguese campaign. In 1615, the realization that it would be impossible for the Portuguese crown to provide for the needs of the settlements led to wholesale reform of the *regimento*, the body of rules regulating the Portuguese presence and activities in Elmina, which finally abolished the royal monopoly and opened trade to all Portuguese subjects. The aim was to encourage competition with the Dutch in the gold trade and to promote travel from Portugal to the Gold Coast and the subsequent relief of the dramatic problem of providing supplies. But this change in strategy did not bring the hoped-for results because, as J. Vogt has observed, "prices of trade goods on the Mina coast were so depressed by Dutch imports by this time that reasonable profits were no longer possible."[14] A further incentive to Dutch activities in the Atlantic came in 1621 with the establishment of the Dutch West Indies Company (*West Indische Compagnie*, WIC), which undertook an aggressive strategy against the strongholds of Portuguese power in Brazil and East Asia.

However the 1615 reform did undoubtedly constitute a turning point and a wide-ranging attempt to strengthen and reorganise Portugal's presence on the coast, and introduced the energetic governorships of Manuel da Cunha e Teive (1616–1623) and Francisco Sotomaior (1623–1626?).

3.2 Axim and the Fort: A Theoretical Symbiosis

The information we have on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Axim is rather sketchy. In fact we know nothing about the structure, size, and population of this town throughout the sixteenth century. On 14 January, 1557, W. Towerson sailed by the fort of Axim and described its typical position on a rocky promontory overlooking a bay and protected by the sea and two large rocks. He wrote that a large settlement was to be found around the castle, which was called *Dondou*.[15] The place-name is unknown today, and it is difficult to establish whether *Dondou* corresponds to one of the settlements in the area of modern-day Axim. A reference to Axim as a considerable

population center by Gold Coast standards was also provided by the Dutchman P. de Marees who, while explaining the position of the modest Portuguese fort, wrote in 1602 that *Aziem* was in reality the name of the castle occupied by the Portuguese, whereas the very populous African settlement was called *Achombene*.[16] Some references in the seventeenth-century sources are less vague, although still not very precise. A document describing the ecclesiastical situation on the Gold Coast, which was written in Italian probably in 1631 and based on information released by an ex-governor of Elmina, asserted that "in the aforementioned *villa* of Axem there must be about 200 Christians and about 300 gentiles," or in other words a possible total of about 500 people resident in what was defined as a *villa* or town facing the "town" of Elmina, which effectively had the status of a royal city. It is difficult to assess the reliability of this estimate, given that we know nothing about the criteria on which it was based. There are in fact some reasons for uncertainty. The same document claims that Elmina had 800 inhabitants (400 of whom were Christians): a figure that seems decidedly low for the main settlement on the coast, particularly in the light of its claim that Shama, which was undoubtedly less important that Elmina, had "200 *vicini* (neighbors, *vizihnos* in Portuguese),' which meant free adult men who were taxpayers and householders, and just one Christian, the Portuguese collector for the tax on fishing; this would imply that Shama had a total population of 1,400–2,000 people.[17] A few years later in 1638, another source described the fort of Axim, and judged it a modest military redoubt. It contemptuously referred to the indigenous quarter, "a few straw huts" where about 150 *moradores* lived.[18] The term *morador* is more or less the equivalent of *vizinho,* and R. Kea arrived at a similar juridical and demographic conclusion by calculating that at the time Axim (Upper Town and Lower Town) was home to 150 *moradores/vizinhos* who paid taxes and that there was the same number in the town militia.[19] Even though this figure does appear excessively speculative in light of the evident vagueness of the information on which it is based, we can extrapolate a figure for the total population of between 1,000 and 1,500 people. J. Barbot, who landed in Axim on 1 January 1678, wrote that he was greeted by the Dutch commander "accompanied by more than five hundred negroes who gathered there to watch our landing" and in his description of the town, he added that it contained inhabitants "in great number."[20] In the 1690s the Dane E. Tilleman claimed that, if so required, the African settlement (*negeri*) of Axim could put together a military force of 300 armed with rifle. Basing himself on this information, Kea concludes that the population of

Axim at the end of the seventeenth century must have been between two and three thousand residents.[21]

These historical estimates only have an indicative value, given the doubtful reliability of the information on which they are based. For example we only have very vague information for this period on the actual residential patterns for the population that relied on the town of Axim, and we know little or nothing about the percentages of seasonal movement between the settlements close to the fort, which were political and administrative centers, market town, and ports for the greater part of the fishing fleet in the area, and the settlements in the forest area and along the coast that lived off agriculture, hunting, and salt production. These were home for most of the year to the majority of dependants (wives, relations, clients, and slaves) of householders resident in the town and, during some periods of the years, the householders themselves.[22] The general impression is that Axim was a small coastal community that lived off fishing and the trading and service activities associated with the fort. The Portuguese attempt to make their presence more effective, particularly in the early decades of the seventeenth century, led to the development of substantial mixing between Africans and Europeans in both human and cultural terms. Several of Axim's inhabitants were of mixed blood and many were Christian, at least nominally. However many fundamental aspects of this society remain unclear, in particular its size and the nature of its relations with the surrounding African world.

The fact that towns in the interior of the Gold Coast were more developed than those on the coast is constantly repeated in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources and is backed up by local traditions and in some cases archaeological evidence. The main centers of the polities with a coastline between Cape Appolonia and the mouth of the Volta were largely located at a distance of 5–15 miles from the coast. Sovereigns and ruling groups resided in the interior as, for the most part, did the more important African merchants and the great majority of the population. The development of the network of coastal towns was largely the product of urbanization that took place between the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth as a result of the expansion of European trading activities in the Gulf of Guinea. The coastal settlements took on the role of subordinate service centers catering for the specific needs of the much more populous capitals and towns of the interior: fishing and trade with the Europeans.[23] Teixeira's map uses a very clear graphic device, which is typical of cartography at the time, to indicate the relative importance of settlements: turreted buildings with pointed

roofs huddled together in variable numbers according to the size of the town. On the coast, only Elmina and Winnebah—not Axim—are marked as settlements of a size comparable with the towns of the immediate interior, such as the capital of Eguafo, Komenda, or Accra, and they are still considerably smaller than the capitals and main centers of the forest area.

As far as Axim is concerned, Teixeira's map obviously shows the fort, but does not give much importance to the African settlement, whereas it marks *Bogio* and more particularly *Abuma* (*Bumas*) and Abokro (*Bacorees*) as important settlements in the vicinity. They were consistently attributed with greater importance graphically, as were a set of more distant settlements in the Ankobra basin.

Sixteenth-century Portuguese sources emphasize Axim's role as the region's trading hub, but can only be the basis of very speculative conclusions on its institutional makeup and any political function it may have had in relation to the surrounding area.[24] In his introduction to the translation of Portuguese sources he published in 1942, J. W. Blake argued that when the Portuguese arrived in the region of Axim, it was a seat of political power with a degree of organization and force, a "kingdom" capable of effectively controlling the communication routes with the interior and preventing access to Europeans in order to protect its own monopoly on trade.[25] In reality the documents produced by Blake do not provide explicit details, and the assertion appears to be based on a few passages describing the great vitality of Axim's trade with the interior and particularly a letter of 1503 to the King of Portugal in which Diogo de Alvarenga explains the vulnerable situation the Portuguese found themselves in. They are already active in Axim but not yet protected by the walls of a stable settlement (these were under construction) and were therefore dependent on the goodwill of the inhabitants of the area for the protection of their goods and trade.[26]

In April 1548, all the roads around Axim were blocked off and trading with the Portuguese came to a standstill. According to the chaplain at the castle in Elmina, who provides us with the information, a certain Aka, described as a *capitão* or important chief (perhaps the principal leader of Axim or a section of the town), had rebelled for no reason and, at the head of 300 men, had become a brigand who blocked off traffic in the region and collected protection money on it.[27]

In a *carta régia* issued by John III of Portugal in 1555, there is mention of the problems (*tinha*) that had arisen with "the king of Axem," but the document does not provide any more precise

information on relations between the Portuguese and this "king," nor does it explain the nature of the disagreement.[28]

This is all, and it is not very much. When, as we shall see, the hierarchy of power in Axim was defined and documented in the mid-seventeenth century, this was done in accordance with a model that was to become a constant: the town was divided into two distinct entities, Bolɔfo Solo and Bolɔfo Aleze (Upper and Lower Axim), each under the command of a "captain" and his subordinate leaders. Occasionally one or other of the captains would enjoy a position of preeminence, probably based on seniority, but never an institutionally ratified supremacy. This situation was documented for the first time after nearly one-and-a-half centuries of European presence, which for all we know may have played a decisive role in weakening a previously strong and centralized local power. However, there is simply a complete lack of evidence, even in the local tradition. The situation in this town during the Portuguese period recalls that of Elmina, a reality that was defined by the presence of Europeans and antagonism between the rulers of Eguafo and Efutu, who shared nominal control over the coastal town. In the case of Axim a vague and distant recollection of a dominant power that preceded the arrival of the Portuguese is to be found in local stories of its origins that are still told today, according to which the ancestors of the current ɛvaloɛ *mbia mgbole* moved into the area after having obtained permission to settle from the *ebia kpole* of Ahanta, that owned the land. Moreover the latter has never ceased to claim an original primacy over the whole coastal region between the Ankobra and the River Prah.[29]

In my opinion, the representation of Axim in documents as an ancient "monarchy" before the arrival of the Portuguese owed much of its success to a famous early-eighteenth-century source, W. Bosman. He was the Dutch commander of Axim at a time when the Dutch fort was experiencing competition from the powerful fortress established by Brandenburg in the 1680s a little to the east in Kpɔkɛzo (Princes Town). Bosman held this German intrusion responsible for the territorial fragmentation of Axim, "which, as the Notion of Power runs here, was formerly a Potent Monarchy" running from the Ankobra as far as Busua. Bosman's use of the term monarchy here was clearly to mark out an area of dominion and not a description of a particular political institution. Further evidence of this can be found in the same source, when he describes the native institutions of Axim as typical of the "republican" system, whereby the power of the *caboceros* or leaders, none of whom he refers to as a monarch, is counterbalanced but not overturned by that of the *manceroes* (from the Portuguese

mancebo) or "young men," meaning commoners.[30] In other words, the community's social and political balance of power was based on interaction between the two corporate entities of "elders" (*mgbanyinli* or *mgbanyima*) and "youths" (*mgbavolɛ*, sing. *kpavolɛ*).[31]

When Bosman recorded the history of Axim's territorial powers, he was clearly referring to the important precedents in their interpretation established by his predecessors from the WIC in the mid-seventeenth century. Indeed the Dutch sources for the second half of the seventeenth century are almost entirely responsible for the presentation of Axim as a powerful polity enjoying a kind of primacy over the surrounding political and territorial entities. With the expulsion of the Portuguese (February 1642), the WIC took over control of the fort. The interpretation of the Dutch *directeur-generael*, J. Valckenburgh, of the political primacy of Axim and the Europeans who occupied the fort in relation to the surrounding region was immediately put to work in the defence of the WIC's position *in loco* against interference from competing interests.

Valckenburgh's account is the first we have that refers to *Axiema* in the sense of a conglomerate made up of Axim and a set of other areas. He defined *Axiema* as a *gemenebest*, a Dutch word that corresponded to *commonwealth* in English, and signified a kind of "republic," and he asserted that Axim's primacy was directly linked to the establishment of a Portuguese presence in a completely peaceful manner at the request of the local population, as had occurred in Elmina. The population was supposed to have voluntarily submitted to the Portuguese crown, which in return guaranteed some fundamental freedoms and autonomies. The subsequent development of the town as a market for the surrounding areas and as a terminus for trade with the interior was supposed to have persuaded Portugal to expand its political jurisdiction in the region in order to enlarge and consolidate its influence and protect itself against competition from rival European powers. For this reason, the Portuguese supposedly encouraged the migration of trusted groups and communities from Elmina into Egila and the Ahanta area (e.g., to Butri).[32]

This interpretation has been implicitly accepted by recent historical research, but opinions have differed on the antiquity of the *gemenebest* centered on Axim. Ray Kea argues that its origins go back to the second half of the sixteenth century, whereas Van Dantzig is of the opinion that the Portuguese did not attain a position of political strength in Axim until well into the seventeenth century. The *gemenebest* was, in this view, a product of a late Portuguese attempt at expansion in the early part of the seventeenth century, which was then continued

and consolidated by the Dutch. In other words, the Portuguese attempted to extend their influence in the region and were possibly assisted by a decline in the strength of Axim's political authorities, which de facto relinquished their previous monopoly over trade with the regions in the Ankobra basin. The Portuguese aimed to access the goldfields directly by circumventing local intermediaries, so as to fight off the increasing competition from other Europeans, particularly the Dutch. However Van Dantzig did not rule out the possibility of Portuguese expansion not in competition but rather with the agreement of the Axim's ruling group.[33]

Whatever the case, it appears that as a result of this policy the Portuguese commanders in the fort were able to impose a degree of control over the trading activities of the local population, and to some extent administer justice and arbitration in Axim and some of the surrounding polities.

3.3 Portuguese "Jurisdiction," Interests, and Relations in the Western Gold Coast

As has been already stated, the decade 1616–1626 marked a revival in Portuguese fortunes on the Gold Coast under the governorships of Manuel da Cunha e Teive and Francisco Sotomaior, and was a period in which attempts were made to recover hegemony over the gold trade. The game plan was the same one devised in the 1570s involving direct access to the "sources" of gold in order to channel the trade reliably into their own hands and reduce the Dutch share of the business.

According to a persistent tradition in the historiography of the area, which has not however been satisfactorily backed up by documentary evidence, the Portuguese undertook mining activity on Abrobi Hill, a few kilometres to the northeast of Komenda, immediately after their arrival on the Gold Coast. However they very quickly abandoned the enterprise, which was not very profitable compared with the quantity of cheaper gold available in local markets when the Portuguese monopoly was effective. The mining activity in Abrobi was supposedly resumed at the beginning of the seventeenth century and then definitively discontinued in 1622, when a collapsed tunnel caused several deaths. According to Van Dantzig, there is no proof that the Portuguese were actually involved in the Abrobi enterprise, its commencement or its tragic end in the seventeenth century.[34]

There is however clearer documentary evidence of the establishment of a Portuguese-fortified outpost in the heart of the Egila region in

1623, or to be more precise, on the left bank of the Ankobra close to its confluence with the River Duma, some 20 km to the north of Axim (see Fig. 3.1). A goldmine was opened in the Aboasi Hill, about 8 km to the west of this small outpost. It is not clear whether or not this mining activity was a success, and in any case the Portuguese presence provoked hostility among the local population. A. Van Dantzig claims that the outpost had already been abandoned by 1629. He bases this assertion on a caption relating the Egila region in the previously mentioned 1629 Dutch map of the Gold Coast, which implies the Portuguese trading post had already been abandoned.[35] The reason given for the evacuation refers not to the success or failure of the mining enterprise, but to the market and the increased competition from the Dutch trading along the coast, who offered much lower prices for the same goods the Portuguese traders sold upriver with their canoes.

However partial this source may be, it does appear to be quite believable in stressing the general strategic purpose of the outpost in the interior, of which mining was only one feature. The significance of such initiatives clearly lay in the desire to influence trade with the interior and either prevent or reduce its coastal outlet to the advantage of European rivals. Indeed the same source provides further information useful to understanding the overall context in which the Portuguese enterprise in Egila was operating in relation to developments affecting regions to the west of the Ankobra and the area of Cape Appolonia:

> I am informed, and (I) believe it also to be true, that the gold that comes from Atchyn and Abeny, 15 miles west of Cape Three Points, is all from Igwyra. Down at *Little Comendo* there live on the coast two citizens who both have been with a few trade goods in this country – they returned rich, but there is some danger of highwaymen on the way. Little more is said about great *Inkassa* than that (they sometimes come), occasionally passing through Adom, to sell some goods to us at Little Comendo, principally when there is on the Gold Coast, say Quaqua Coast, no ship before Assinie or Abeny.[36]

This brief note on the Dutch map provides a sketchy snapshot of the trading situation in the region centered on the Ankobra. Egila, or rather the Ankobra valley, was the principal "source" of the gold trade whose outlets were not only in Axim (*Atchyn*) but the whole coast to the west of Cape Three Points as far as Awiane (*Abeny*) and (old) Assini (*Assinie*), which was the most westerly market for gold and the first encountered by shipping arriving from Europe.[37] This was obviously only partly mined in Egila, and the majority probably

came from other areas such as Wassa (the mining districts of Tarkwa and Prestea) and the great gold-mining area northeast of Egila. The outpost in the Ankobra basin therefore had the primary purpose of guaranteeing the Portuguese a presence in the principal trading hub of the region inland from the west coast. Apart from assisting direct access to gold production (preferably by unmediated involvement in running some of the mines), the purpose of the outpost was clearly to intercept the trade routes that tended to evade control to the advantage of the Dutch. The new Dutch base in Komenda, between the Portuguese forts of Elmina and Shama, had in fact become the ultimate beneficiary of some of the trade passing through Egila (including the Nkasa trade), and more particularly Adom, a polity that entered into a preferential relationship with the Dutch market of Komenda during the 1620s, and avoided Axim whose access was unreliable due to conflicts in Ahanta.[38]

The structure of the system of territorial dominion and defense took shape under the governorships of Manuel da Cunha and Francisco Sotomaior. As far as the western section of the Gold Coast was concerned, it was based on the control of the three essential trade routes with Axim at their intersection: the coastal route from Axim to the east and toward Shama, the coastal route from Axim to the west and toward Cape Appolonia, Awiane, and Assini and the Ankobra river toward Egila.

Within this system, it is possible to identify a nucleus of greater Portuguese activity, which was made up of Axim Fort and the area on which the Portuguese were capable of exercising some kind of direct influence. Around that nucleus there was an array of territories with which the Portuguese had a relationship that was less defined, less binding, and less structured. An idea of the situation can be inferred from Dutch sources, in particular the few letters and reports based on talks with the chiefs and notables of Axim extensively referred to in previous chapters and produced during the late 1660s, the Valckenburgh period. The evident problem with these sources is undoubtedly the intent of the Dutch and Valckenburgh in particular to portray the primacy of the Axim Fort over the surrounding area as something well established, ancient, and robust, especially when it came to the trading system. The Dutch proclaimed themselves heirs by right of conquest to all the privileges and jurisdictions previously held by the crowns of Portugal and Spain. Moreover, this historical account was a means to resisting the claims of other European trading rivals. From 1649, a company flying the Swedish flag attempted to break the hold recently established by the Dutch. Given these reservations,

we need to be very skeptical about their assertions on the real nature and effectiveness of the power the Portuguese were supposed to have exercised over surrounding polities since time "immemorial."

According to the Dutch and their allies in Axim, the kings of Portugal (and Spain during the union of their crowns) were supposed to have enjoyed the position of acknowledged superiors (*opperheeren*) over the totality of the polities united with or allied to Axim, in a relationship that was described as that of lord and vassal. The king exercised this right through the governor of Elmina and the commander of Axim, and it was primarily manifested through the prerogative of supreme judicial appeal in relation to the local courts and through arbitration in disputes between the different polities. The homage rendered by the "captains" of Adwɔmɔlɔ, Ɛlɛmgbenle, Ankobra, Axim, and Nkasa upon their assuming office to the Portuguese/Spanish governors is now directed to "to the Netherlands Generals, or to the Commander residing at Axem, on their behalf."[39]

The document does not make clear when this vague right of ultimate sovereignty was actually acquired by Europeans: the only chronological reference, for what it's worth, is expressed by "always" or "time immemorial," and yet this was in connection with the period of union of the crowns of Portugal and Spain, which was from 1580 to 1640.[40] Moreover there is no mention of any dispute between "districts" in which this power of appeal or arbitration was actually exercised. Apart from asserting the self-evident nature of this "sovereignty," this document and other sources do however provide some useful and slightly more reliable information on the actual territory, time-frame, and context of some kind of political–administrative control by the Portuguese in Axim that went beyond a mere voluntary and irregular acceptance of arbitration.

The fort was supposed to have been capable of a form of direct "jurisdiction" in matters concerning trade, taxation (tax on fishing), and law (with undefined forms, powers, and limitations) over the settlements that made up Axim,[41] and over the coastline that from east to west ran from what the Portuguese called Pedra de Santa Maria—the islet of Abokwa (a large rock facing Busua in Ahanta)—to the mouth of the Ankobra. The Portuguese set up a customs post on the former at the time of the governor of Elmina, J. Roiz Coutinho (1586–1594/5), and placed it under the control of a native of Axim, *Bessen Biree* (or *Blessenbier*), who had the task of collecting duty on trade in salt, palm oil, and canoes from the Ahanta who were moving westwards toward Axim overland or by sea along the coast.[42] The coastal route between the Portuguese fortress and the customs post

facing Busua also went through the area of Cape Three Points, also known as "Little Nkasa":

> *Little Incassa*—these people are farmers—but they also fish, mostly for oystershell from a river, of which they burn great heaps for lime and bring that for sale at Atchyn, to whom they are devoted and from whom they have learnt how to burn lime, but most lime is burnt at Atchyn itself for the maintenance of both her (Portugal's) castles at Atchyn and El Myna.[43]

The people of "Little Nkasa" therefore had ties of friendship and common interest with the Portuguese fort. This relationship was established by the development of the production and sale of lime obtained from the shells fished in the coastal lagoons to the west of Cape Three Points, an activity the Portuguese encouraged. The alliance between Nkasa and the first Europeans to settle in Axim was to prove particularly strong and would have important consequences for the Dutch conquest and the consolidation of their position in the area.

Again according to sworn statements by notables of Axim in the 1656 declaration, the Portuguese were supposed to have acquired the right to collect tolls on crossing the Ankobra by placing customs barrier on the left bank of the river close to its mouth. The vendors were supposed to have been the predecessors of a certain *Entamma*, who was still alive in 1656. Moreover, the same source informs us that the shoreline of the districts of Azane (Ankobra) and Ɛlɛmgbenle was under the control of the crowns of Portugal and Spain and considered their property (*in eigendom heeft behoort*), together with the course of the Ankobra river. On taking office, the chiefs (*hooflieden*) of the two districts were supposed to receive spears from the Portuguese commander of Axim as symbols of their command in implementing the jurisdiction over their particular stretch of shoreline "in order therewith to punish those who should commit any violence or other abuses along that way." The document distinguishes between the Portuguese crown's particular and full right ("ownership") of the trade route to the west (the shoreline) and the course of the Ankobra, and its more general position as the acknowledged superior (*opperheeren*) of the collection of polities that were united and allied to Axim.[44] This assertion, which is not verifiable and is not supported in the document by any case records or historical accounts (unlike the accounts of the foundation of the customs posts), also clearly served to support the Dutch claims to jurisdiction over important trade routes.

We can then be reasonably certain that, besides the two customs barriers, tangible signs of the Portuguese presence or influence were principally produced during the period of reorganization and resurgence during the 1620s. One feature of this period was that the inhabitants of the coastal towns of Adwoa and Sekondi called on the Portuguese for assistance in their conflict against other Ahanta towns, and the Portuguese were able to set up a small military redoubt in Adwoa. In both Adwoa and Sekondi, they obtained the right to take one-fifth of the fish landed. Beyond the western limit, Portuguese influence extended in two directions. One was the course of the Ankobra, which became the communication line with the small fort established at the confluence with the Duma. The second was the coastline that extended to the west of the river mouth. Here too, as in Ahanta, the Portuguese intervened militarily to support coastal communities against enemies from the interior. This was the episode referred to in the previous chapter, which took place under Francisco Sotomaior's governorship, probably between 1624 and 1626, and involved giving assistance to the people of Adwɔmɔlɔ who were under attack from *Abuma* and had been driven from their settlements in the Cape Appolonia area.[45] The intervention of the people of Axim and the Portuguese, led by the commander of the fortress, Manuel Correia, made it possible for the people of Adwɔmɔlɔ to return to their homes, and inflicted a particularly decisive defeat on the enemy, if there is any truth in the claim that this conflict caused a substantial westwards migration of people from *Abuma* (the *Esiep*).

It would be interesting to know something about the underlying motives for the conflict between *Abuma* and Adwɔmɔlɔ. The question that springs to mind is whether the attack from *Abuma* expressed the desire of a group from the interior to direct control of the coastal market or an attempt to break the increasing hegemony of Axim and the Portuguese over trade in the region. Looking at the problem from the other end, we might ask ourselves about the real motivation behind the attack unleashed by Axim and the Portuguese against the ancient and prominent town of *Abuma*, which could have been to complete the replacement of the political and economic hegemony exercised by communities living in the interior (founded on the close relationship between the people of *Abuma* and the Ewuture) by supporting the rise of coastal groups that were becoming economically and politically independent. Unfortunately the sources do not help us to assess the validity of these theories.

To the east of Axim as with Ahanta, the attention of the Portuguese was concentrated on the coastal route that went through Adwɔmɔlɔ and

reached Edobo, Awiane, and Assini, all with anchorages that were busy with trade and to which gold from the interior of the western Gold Coast was occasionally directed.[46] Unlike in Ahanta and east of the river, it does not appear that the Portuguese ever established any permanent base to the west of the Ankobra, or exacted taxation on fishing. Nor did they ever establish any special rights over the Adwɔmɔlɔ coast, in spite of their decisive military intervention against *Abuma*. Although it clearly wished to strengthen the maximalist reading of the past Portuguese "jurisdiction," the 1656 "Declaration" does not contain any reference to the awarding of symbols of office to newly appointed chiefs relating to the power to maintain order along the coastal route beyond Ɛlɛmgbenle.

In chronological terms, the high point of Portuguese "jurisdiction" in Axim appears to have been a feature of the 1620s, obviously on the basis of an older network of relations, but whose fundamental framework was not established until the early seventeenth century or very end of the sixteenth century at the earliest. In the 1620s, the Portuguese were able to extend rights to collecting fishing tax over a considerable stretch of coastline, and fishing was an essential economic activity for the population.

Both inward and outward trade on the coast between Busua and Ankobra was controlled by the two customs posts that have been mentioned, but there must have been other stations for collecting duty that were controlled by the fortress. Axim at the very least must have been one of them. According to the information gathered by the Dutch, the Portuguese in the early part of the seventeenth century were attempting to prevent sea travel beyond Axim by inhabitants to the east and the west of the fort. The *feitor* Luis Soares even imposed the death penalty on inhabitants of Elmina caught sailing their vessels to the west of Axim.[47] The taxation on fishing was collected in Axim, as in Elmina and Shama, at the rate of one-fifth of the total fish landed over a specific length. In 1602 P. de Marees described this tax and the duty imposed on trade as essential manifestations of the assertion by all political authorities in the region of their sovereignty over the coastal strip of their dominions.[48]

However, the Portuguese, unlike the native rulers, did not possess sufficient powers of coercion to sustain their "jurisdiction" over the local society directly and autonomously. The galleys that patrolled the coast could serve as a deterrent and occasionally as an offensive weapon, but they could not make up for the extreme dearth of resources to control the territory.

With its complement of a dozen people, mostly commercial and service staff, the Axim garrison was certainly not capable of imposing

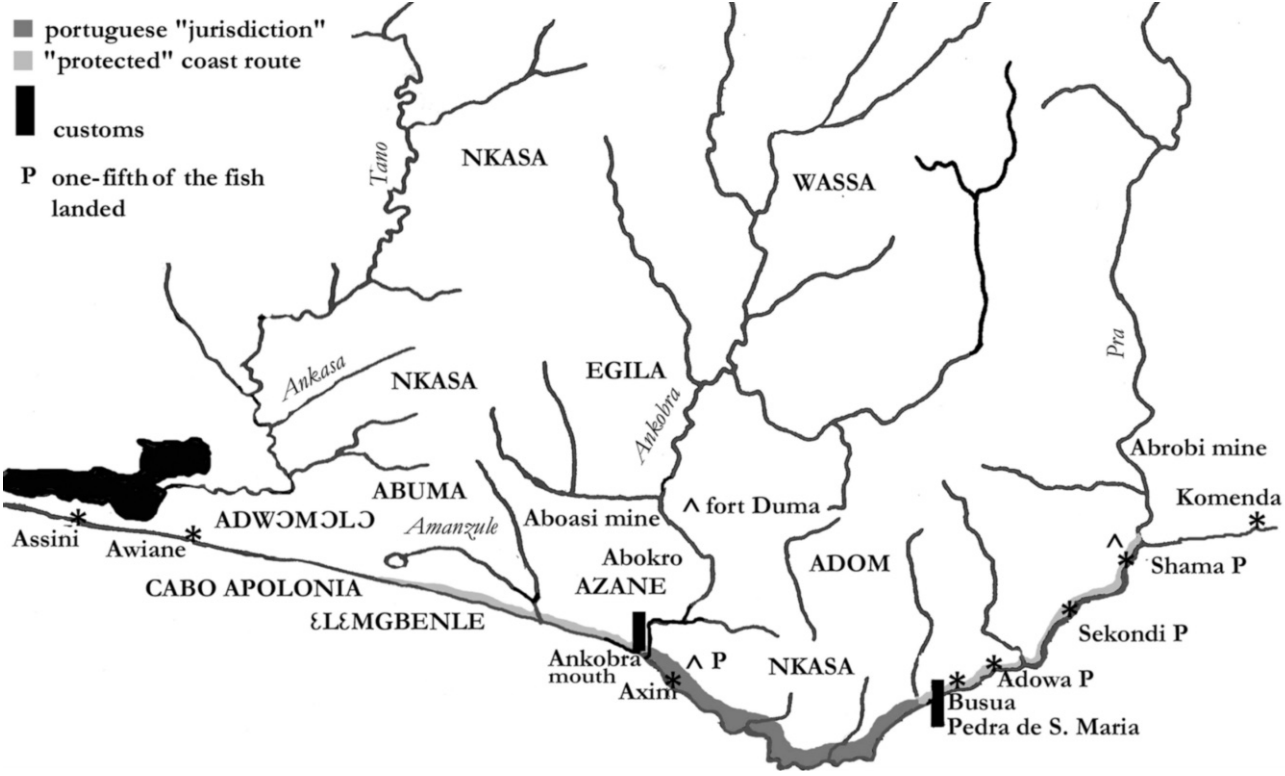

Figure 3.1 Portuguese "jurisdiction" on the western Gold Coast in the early seventeenth century

the exercise of Portuguese rights and privileges by force. Judicial questions concerning individuals or groups residing close to the fort may have been presented to the commander, but the immediate jurisdiction was held by the local chiefs. Policing and public order functions were carried out by institutions that the fort did not control, such as the military companies that recruited the *mgbavolɛ* or young men, by which they meant "commoners" (they were referred in the European sources of the time as *mancevos* from the Portuguese word *mancebo* meaning "valet," as against the *mgbanyima* or "elders" who were the notables). In the event of an attack from external enemies against the fort, these companies were responsible for the main part of the defense, just as the fort had to come to the defense of the local society in the event of war. It is very clear that the position of the fort and its occupants was largely dependent on relations with the local society, its power brokers, and its institutions.

Thus a more meaningful history of relations between the Portuguese in their fort and the surrounding town has to be based on analysis of the network of individual relations that were established over a century and a half of communal life: sexual relations, matrimonial unions and alliances, business relations, et cetera. The product of this exchange was a Eurafrican component in Axim society that carried out an essential intermediary role, and occupied an important position, although the sources are sadly rather reticent on this point and limited to a few brief references.[49]

The presence of a Portuguese castle in Elmina and its development as the principal coastal market gradually slackened the ties between the town and its ancient lords, the chiefs of Eguafo and Efutu. The Portuguese actively encouraged this process: as far back as 1486 King John II granted the status of Portuguese town to the settlement. However it is difficult to argue that the Portuguese crown managed to "take possession" of Elmina; if anything it fostered the development of a system in which local power was managed jointly by the governor and the indigenous chiefs, as both had an interest in preserving the town's special position.[50] It is significant that the crown representatives do not appear to have been capable or interested in taking part in the selection of local chiefs, who they defined as "vassals" of Portugal. They limited themselves to acknowledging the chiefs formally. The stability of the system was based on the mutual interest of the parties in its maintenance.

This was also true of Axim. It is not clear whether in the second half of the sixteenth century a local power, which in the past had been stronger and more centralized, declined to the point that the

office of the so-called "king" disappeared. In the early decades of the following century, Fort Saint Anthony appears to have fulfilled a similar role in relation to the town as that of the fort in Elmina: a division or joint exercise of local power by the Portuguese commander and the chiefs of the indigenous settlements that made up Axim. Both parties worked to maintain and extend the town's role as the dominant market on the coast to the west of Elmina, and the leaders and population of Axim appear to have actively supported Portuguese efforts to safeguard their commercial position.

It is also very significant that this balance was maintained for as long as the Portuguese had something to offer the ruling group and the population of Axim, but it rapidly collapsed once Portugal's commercial and political role on the Gold Coast was replaced by that of the Dutch. It would be the inhabitants of Axim or at least a part of them to ask the Dutch, who had taken Elmina in 1637, to come and replace the Portuguese as the necessary partners in the system of joint economic and political management of the town.

3.4 The Dutch in Axim

On February 9, 1642, the Dutch took the fort in Axim with the support of the town's population.[51] Elmina had fallen into their hands as far back as 1637, and had been followed by Shama. Portugal's position on the coast had now become so weak that the inhabitants of Axim were feeling the ill effects of the economic and commercial irrelevance of the Portuguese presence in Fort Saint Anthony. This was the reason why in June 1641 a man called Francisco was sent from Axim to Elmina with a request for General Ruychaver to take action to free Axim from the Portuguese.[52] Francisco's mission coincided with a first Dutch attempt to take the fortress, but the expedition that sailed from Elmina on 19 June was obliged to return to port because of dangerous seas. Clearly the question of which Europeans to support was dividing the people of the coastal town: part of the population was still loyal to the Portuguese and actively assisted them during the attack and engaged in guerrilla activities against the conquerors following the capture of the fort.[53] The fort's garrison resisted fiercely, and following defeat and occupation some of the Portuguese took refuge in Little Nkasa, where they enjoyed support. From there they sustained guerrilla warfare against the Dutch and their allies in Axim. The conflict dragged on till August 1642, when the Portuguese surrendered and were taken back to Portugal on an English ship.[54]

The relationship between the Dutch and the local society was governed by the treaty that General J. Ruychaver signed with the leaders of Axim a few days after the conquest on 17 February and marked the end of the hostilities between the people of Axim and the Europeans who had driven off the Portuguese. The exceptional speed with which the local population accepted the changed dominion of the fort, just 10 days after a bloody battle, is all the more surprising in light of their manifestations of hostility toward the new arrivals immediately after the flight of the Portuguese, during which two Dutchmen were betrayed and decapitated.[55] This is certainly further evidence that at least part of the local society had some time before it made its decision on which side to follow and had prepared for the eventuality. After the defeat of the Portuguese, this decision was immediately ratified by the more important authorities in the town.

The agreement of February 17, 1642, was signed by General J. Ruychaver, *Attij Ausi* and *Peter Agoeij* (Agyevi?), the latter two being defined as *caboceros* of Axim. By this act Axim's inhabitants undertook (1) to acknowledge the authority of the United Provinces; (2) to deal and trade solely with the Dutch; (3) to hand over all the Portuguese on whom they can get their hands, along with all those of mixed blood (*mamalucken*) and the slaves of the fort's previous occupants, to the Dutch who would not harm them;[56] (4) to acknowledge the jurisdiction in all civil and criminal matters of a court made up of the *caboceros* of the town and presided over by the fort's commander (however the proceeds of the judicial activity and the fines collected would go only to the chiefs, as was the custom in Elmina); (5) to support the Dutch in the event of war, in return for the guarantee of similar support in the event they should enter into conflict with any enemy; (6) to pay the Dutch a tax on fishing, as was the custom in Elmina, at the rate of one-fifth of the fish landed, as well as the head of every fish over a certain length. The tax must be paid directly by the fishermen without coercion, but refusal to pay would lead to the destruction or confiscation of the fisherman's canoe; (7) to recognize the transfer to the Dutch of property previously belonging to the Portuguese: the fort, houses, vegetable gardens, and other items. For their part the Dutch guaranteed: (8) to pay the *caboceros* of Axim collectively one ounce of gold for each cargo of goods that arrived from Holland with a further duty after receipt of the cargo (higher or lower according to the commercial outcome); (9) to grant every native who came to buy at the fort a *dash* (*dasje*, tip) to the value of one *benda* for each purchase, as was the custom at Elmina.[57] Furthermore the two chiefs of Axim undertook to maintain peace

internally and with the white men and (10) each one to hand over one of his sons to the Dutch as hostage.[58]

The type of relationship set out in the Axim agreement was probably similar to the one introduced by the Dutch in Elmina in 1637 (of which there is no surviving documentary evidence), as implied by the many references. More generally however, it can be said that the Dutch attempted to continue and develop the network of relations existing in the late Portuguese period. This was not only true of Axim, but of all the coastal bases they captured from the Portuguese.[59]

The agreement reflected a realistic principle of a privileged joint management of the market by the WIC and the local ruling group, underscored by a significant role for the fort commander in the administration of justice and collection of taxes (proceeds from the taxation on fishing was an important entry in the provisioning of the European settlement). There was however no devolvement of sovereignty by the African partner beyond a vague acknowledgment of the supremacy of the authority of the United Provinces. As Van Dantzig has observed, the treaty does not mention any Dutch jurisdiction outside the town of Axim, but only the exercise of a degree of joint authority and jurisdiction between representatives of the WIC and leaders of the settlements immediately around the fort.[60] Dutch claims on this point were to come later, and were dictated by the need to influence the market rationale with a view to fending off rival European interests. The response of WIC representatives in Axim to this challenge would produce regional policies similar to those adopted by the Portuguese in the early part of the century. Indeed the previous strategy of the Portuguese provided a script to which the Dutch explicitly referred and scrupulously adhered. Their initiatives were almost identical to those of the previous occupants of Fort Stain Anthony. However the WIC had an advantage over Portugal, in that it had greater resources to finance, sustain, and follow through these undertakings.

Relations between the population of Axim and the new occupants of the fort soon proved to be difficult. Forces and interests antagonistic to the WIC continued to operate actively in the area after the establishment of the new European presence. In some cases the anti-Dutch campaign was waged by people linked to the political and commercial network that had depended on the Portuguese presence. The cause of the conflict was the Dutch contention, as had also occurred under the Portuguese, that they could tax commercial transactions among the indigenous population particularly in the case of *Quaqua* textiles, native cotton fabrics woven and sold by the coastal communities to

the west of the Tano (thus called the *Quaqua* Coast).[61] This business appears to have been expanding very quickly in the period immediately before. According to the *directeur-generael* of the WIC, Van der Wel, it had even changed the employment structure of the population of Axim, which had transformed from a community primarily made up of fishermen into one of traders.[62] On the other hand, the performance of WIC's business in its new base was decidedly unexceptional and its profits disappointing. The company was unable to generate revenues sufficient to cover the costs of its presence in Axim. Thus control of the trade in *Quaqua* textiles became a priority. For this reason, WIC representatives reintroduced the Portuguese procedure that prevented indigenous vessels from sailing along the coast to the west without explicit permission from the fort. At the same time they prevented convoys from the west from passing Axim without permission. Thus the Dutch could buy *Quaqua* cloths at their discretion, keeping full control over the prices of the goods bartered against them (akory beads were most in demand).[63] In one case the *fiscael* H. Caerlof confiscated the goods of a group of *Quaqua* traders who went past Axim on their way to Shama without permission.[64]

In June 1645 the *directeur-generael* Ruychaver complained about the stagnation in trade at Axim, and the situation was complicated by a dispute between the people of Great Assini and Awiane that kept away traders from that part of the western coast.[65] Also in 1645 a member of the Dutch garrison was killed and two more wounded by people from Axim. By the beginning of 1647 tension had reached boiling point. After refusing to agree to the company's demand for payment of a duty of 5 *stuyvers* for each piece of cloth traded, the people of Axim decided to break off the relationship with the Dutch established by the agreement of February 1642.

H. Caerlof emphasized the way the indigenous population had ceased to bring its disputes and judicial cases to the fort, and had become completely independent in jurisdictional terms, "establishing their own magistracy (*magistraat*)," and what was worse, boycotting the provisioning of the fort by prohibiting the sale of foodstuffs to the Dutch.[66] Caerlof became the object of hostility in Axim after he impeded "illegal' trading with the *Quaqua* Coast, but it was the arrival of the *directeur-generael* Van der Wel in mid April that really caused the situation to deteriorate. Fearful of reprisals the population abandoned the two settlements (Solo and Aleze), which were burned down by the Dutch. There was then a situation of stalemate between the two sides, which was complicated by interference from the English who were interested in exacerbating the crisis. Caerlof

sought assistance from the people of *Encasser* as a means to increase the pressure on Axim and force it into an agreement. Van Dantzig believes that these allies of the company were the same inhabitants of Little Nkasa who in 1642 provided the refuge to the Portuguese and supported them against the Dutch and the people of Axim.[67]

This action by the Dutch led to a first compromise, but one that could not be sustained in the face of Axim's determination to continue direct trade with the *Quaqua* coast. However, in September 1647, a military expedition led by Caerlof against the settlements of the refugees in the forest, which was supported by the *Encassers*, persuaded the inhabitants of Axim to capitulate. They accepted the trading terms imposed by the WIC, though they were granted the right "when the Quaquas come down in February . . . like other free Blacks . . . to buy some cloths for their own behoof." Four hostages were handed over to the Dutch by both *Axims* and *Encassers* as a guarantee for the agreement.[68]

However, the crisis and the general difficulties in relations with the people of Axim had induced Van der Wel to consider the possibility of abandoning the fort and closing the WIC station. Besides the free trade conducted along the coast to the west of Ankobra by "interloper" ships was compromising most of Axim's commercial potential. For example, the inhabitants of (old) Assini and Awiane, who had usually obtained supplies of iron bars from Axim, were now obtaining them from unauthorized trade in the sea lanes and saving themselves the journey to the Dutch base. Yet the WIC decided to stay on and strengthened the garrison, whose European residents rose from 11 to 20, in order to ensure more effective control of the coastline.[69]

3.5 European Rivals and African Allies

A little over a year after the conclusion of those dramatic events, the Dutch bases on the Gold Coast found themselves in the position of having to face a new and extremely menacing threat—the attempt to build a network of trading stations in the area under the Swedish flag. The operation was financed by Louis De Geer, an important Dutch mining entrepreneur who had moved to Sweden.

The Swedish nature of the enterprise appears to have been cosmetic; in reality it was more about competition within the network of relations and interests controlled by the WIC, which was attempting to turn that control into a monopoly. The *Svenska Afrika Kompaniet* was in fact recruiting personnel among ex-officials and employees of the WIC, and their tactic was to continue to operate under a new

flag within the same system of political and commercial relations with the various coastal communities on whose creation and consolidation they had participated.

From 1649 this initiative was under the command of the same Henri Caerlof, a Pole who had served for over 10 years in the WIC and lived on the Gold Coast since 1644.[70] When in 1648 he had left the company's service and returned to Europe, Caerlof had reached the position of *fiscael* (treasurer), one of the highest ranks. Caerlof capitalized upon his long experience of the region and his personal relations with several chiefs and indigenous traders, in particular the two famous "merchant-princes" of Efutu, the Akrosang brothers (*Claessen*)[71] and some leading figures in the Axim region. In 1650, after having set up a base at Cape Coast, Caerlof took possession of the abandoned Dutch trading post in Anomabo, and established others in Butri and Takoradi (in 1653), in the area of Cape Appolonia (1654) on the hill just to the west of *Jumore,* and in Osu near Accra. In 1654 Caerlof returned once more to Europe, and left the bases under the command of a Swede called Krusenstjerna. However his relations with the court in Stockholm deteriorated, especially after De Geer's death (1655) and his heirs' withdrawal from the company.

Yet his unscrupulous career was to produce further dramatic turns. When war broke out between Sweden and Denmark in 1657, Caerlof offered his services to the Danish crown, and in 1658 he reappeared on the Gold Coast under a new flag to occupy the Swedish settlements in the name of the Danish king. This new company was also mainly funded by Dutch capital. In these circumstances the occupation of the Swedish trading posts was supported by the WIC, because during that period Holland was an ally of Denmark and in any case it did not wish to be cut out of the Baltic trade, which was much more important to the United Provinces than trade with the Guinea coast. Once again Caerlof's and his followers' close personal ties with leading figures on the Coast proved decisive. The fierce resistance put up by Krusenstjerna in Cape Coast was overcome by Caerlof as a result of the support provided by his old friend in the area, the powerful *Dey* of Efutu, *Jan* Akrosang (*Claessen*). Caerlof returned to Europe a year later, once he had completed the occupation and taken a considerable booty at the Swedes' expense. To all intents and purposes, he ceded the Cape Appolonia trading post to the WIC in return for their support.

The Swedish company returned to occupy the Cape Coast fortress in 1660, but in 1663 it was definitively driven out by the Dutch.

Caerlof however was by no means over: in 1670–1671 he was on the Slave Coast working for the French.[72]

When Caerlof turned up in the Axim region with the "Swedes" in 1649, he immediately resumed his contacts with an important local power, which were established when he was in the service of the WIC in the context of the complex events affecting the fort, the people of Axim and the people of "Little Nkasa." In 1647 Caerlof had quelled the rebellion in Axim by deploying the company's soldiers along with a decisive parallel offensive by the *Encasser* from the side of the forest, which drove the inhabitants of Axim toward the coast. It appears that Little Nkasa's alliances were dictated by their opposition to Axim's political and trading strategy and in particular that faction of its ruling group that in 1641–1642 had encouraged the Dutch action against the Portuguese and had then entered into a close relationship with the new occupants of the fort.

We cannot say whether the origin of this enmity lay in opposing factions that either favored the Dutch or the Portuguese, or went back to previous internal divisions within the region around Axim. Nevertheless the rationale of the polarization is quite evident. The chiefs of "Little Nkasa," once considered dangerous enemies, became the allies of the Dutch once the latter came into conflict with the people of Axim, and yet this new alliance did not last long once the Dutch and the defeated people of Axim settled their differences in 1647.

Hostilities were resumed probably in 1648 or 1649, which obliged Caerlof to seek out further support against "Little Nkasa" through an alliance with Mɛnla (*Mena*), an exile from a region in the interior, *Choree*, who had moved with a large following to the regions of *Quitrij* and Azane (Ankobra). The conflict with "Little Nkasa" was brought to a successful conclusion for the Dutch by J. Valckenburgh. He intervened at the request of the people of Butri and the rest of Western (or Upper) Ahanta, who were attacked by Nkasa at the end of 1652 and were forced to seek refuge close to Axim. The Dutch defeated Nkasa in two battles over a period of two years, and one of the consequences was the reassertion of their influence over Butri, which had been home to one of Caerlof's "Swedish" trading posts between 1650 and January 1653.[73]

By this time however, Mɛnla, who had been recruited by Caerlof, had failed to fulfill his undertakings to the WIC and maintain his friendship and alliance with the people of Axim. Indeed he had turned into a dangerous adversary. He had in fact remained loyal to

the bonds he had formed with Caerlof and had transferred his allegiances to the new Swedish company.

Mɛnla became an important reference point in Caerlof's strategy and then that of his "Swedish" successors in relation to the western part of the Coast, and Mɛnla's alliances would have important repercussions for Adwɔmɔlɔ and the Appolonia area.

Initially the new company had no presence in the region to the west of Cape Three Points. As previously mentioned, the small trading post in Butri was the most westerly outpost between 1650 and 1653. In any case Caerlof's tireless efforts to establish an alternative "Swedish" political and commercial network forced the WIC into a set of initiatives aimed at decisively asserting its interests and dominant position along the coast and in the interior, which followed a similar path to the policies the Portuguese had attempted to implement.

In September 1652, J. Valckenburgh, the then *fiscael* of the WIC and the most active exponent of this policy, went to Ɛlɛmgbenle and Adwɔmɔlɔ in the company of a delegation from Axim. The mission was a serious attempt to assert Dutch claims over the areas to the west of the Ankobra through a political and diplomatic initiative. Valckenburgh received oaths of allegiance to the WIC from the leaders and notables of Ɛlɛmgbenle and Adwɔmɔlɔ in which they swore to uphold the exclusive trading agreement. He also made conspicuous use of his prerogative of appeal in relation to sentences issued by local courts.

On September 30, 1652, Valckenburgh held court in the "market town" (*vleck*) of Bɔnyɛlɛ in Adwɔmɔlɔ to settle disputes. He established the innocence of some merchants from Adom, who had been captured, had their goods confiscated, and been imprisoned for a long time, and decreed their release. These acts were supposed to demonstrate the Dutch claim that:

> all the beach . . . absolutely stood under the government (*stont ten gebiede*) of him who commanded at Axem, and that this had been so from very olden times; and also that the said Commander at Axem, in the name of his Principals, was their Upper Captain, under whom they all had to submit themselves.[74]

The most demanding commitment was the establishment of a trading post in the interior up the Ankobra river in Egila (see Fig. 3.2), where the Portuguese had already maintained a warehouse (*feitoria*) in the early part of the seventeenth century.

From July 27 to August 8, 1653, Valckenburgh and another WIC employee J. Pietersen Sias carried out a diplomatic and commercial

mission to Egila for the purposes of opening new trading opportunities and making the trade route along the Ankobra more secure by establishing peace between Axim and Abokro on the one hand, and between Nkasa and *Arcabo* on the other (*Arcabo* has not been identified). They also mediated in disputes affecting the people of Adom.

The two men traveled up the Ankobra and reached *Abaqua* (*Dabaqua* or *Dubaqua*), a market town located in the middle of an important gold-mining district, which was already home to a prosperous community of salt merchants from Axim.[75] The *braffo* (chief military leader) of *Abaqua* granted the WIC a plot for the construction of a small fortified settlement. Following a survey of the mining activity in the locality and an estimate of the amount of gold being brought in from the surrounding regions, the two Dutchmen decided that *Abaqua*'s revenues from gold-related businesses could have been as high as 40 marks a month.

When he returned to Axim on August 8, Valckenburgh immediately convened representatives of Axim, Abokro, Nkasa, and *Arcabo* to arrange a peace agreement. The parties' sworn undertakings and the exchange of hostages took place in the fort on September 13.[76] *Abaqua* has been identified with the Awudua Dada site on the right bank of the Ankobra, a few kilometres south of Prestea and inside one of the main gold-producing areas of Ghana.[77]

The construction of the trading post in *Abaqua*, which took the name Fort Ruychaver, was completed in August 1654. The Dutch favored a policy of bolstering the community of salt traders from Axim and its concentration around the trading post in a purpose-built village whose population increased to around 100.[78]

The purpose of this small base, which would achieve considerable commercial success and survive until 1659, was to take at least partial control of one of the main routes by which gold was exported to the coast. Notable parts of this strategy were the diplomatic missions of 1652 (which resulted in the release of the Adom merchants imprisoned in Adwɔmɔlɔ) and 1653, and the consolidation of good relations with Adom, a military, commercial, and gold-producing entity (situated to the east of the Ankobra, in between Little Nkasa, Upper Ahanta, Ahanta, and Wassa), which was becoming increasingly important to the point where it became one of the main powers on the western Gold Coast in late seventeenth century.[79]

From its inception, Fort Ruychaver had the precise task of preventing any possible future advantage for the bases the "Swedes" were attempting to establish in Cape Appolonia and Takoradi.[80] The aims were similar to those the Portuguese set themselves in 1623 when

they built a base at the confluence of the Duma and the Ankobra in order to keep the Dutch at bay, but this time the operation was over a wider area: Fort Ruychaver was much further north of the Portuguese outpost.

3.6 Dutch Hegemonic Ambitions and *Axiema*'s Political Realities

Valckenburgh's greater territorial ambitions in relation to his Portuguese predecessors are also revealed by the wording of Dutch claims to local "jurisdiction' on the basis of Portuguese precedents. His definition of the size of *Axiema*, which was submitted to the Swedish commander Krusenstjerna in 1656, was clearly different to the one declared by the local power holders that he claimed would support his version. Indeed according to these notables, *Axiema* consisted of Adwɔmɔlɔ, Ɛlɛmgbenle, Azane, Abokro, Axim, and "Little Nkasa,"[81] whereas Valckenburgh also included Upper Ahanta in the east and *Quittrji* in the west in the territory subject to Axim.[82] In the case of Upper Ahanta, the intention was to reassert the WIC's preeminence over Butri, and in the case of *Quittrji*, it was to establish direct control over an important trade route from the regions of Nkasa and Aowin, which divided in *Quittrij* in two directions: toward the southeast (Amanzule, Ankobra, and Axim) and toward the southwest (Tano, Awiane, Assini, and the western lagoons), on the way to many different coastal outlets.[83]

Valckenburgh fully explained this geopolitical strategy in his report of 1659 to the States General of the United Provinces, which included a summary of the origins and the legal niceties of the WIC's settlements on the Gold Coast. As far as the western section of the coast was concerned, his definition of *Axiema* included the Portuguese jurisdictions that were passed to the WIC by right of conquest, as well as new acquisitions achieved and consolidated after 1642 and especially in the 1650s. In Valckenburgh's view, Dutch military assistance to Butri and Upper Ahanta in the conflict against "Little Nkasa" confirmed and strengthened the dependency of these areas on the WIC. Egila, as the *directeur-generael* acknowledged, was not part of *Axiema*, but the presence of Fort Ruychaver and the fact that to access the area you had to pass through Axim territory made it a virtual dependency of the "jurisdiction" of the coastal town and its fortress. The acts of allegiance to the WIC, which were signed by the chiefs of Adwɔmɔlɔ and Ɛlɛmgbenle in 1652 and renewed in 1657 and 1658, respectively,[84] had in Valckenburgh's opinion confirmed,

improved, and enlarged the previous Portuguese rights over the coast as far as Awiane and (old) Assini. According to Valckenburgh, these were established "a long time ago," when the beach, the river Ankobra, and the river crossing to the west of Axim, "together with the tolls which had been levied there by the private owners," were bought by the Portuguese Crown. After inheriting that ownership by right of conquest, the WIC continued the established usage of entrusting a spear ("assagaye") to the "captains" of Ankobra (Azane), ɛlɛmgbenle, and Adwɔmɔlɔ upon their assuming office:

> as a token of command and authority, in order that each, so far as the jurisdiction of his District extends, may, upon the same beach, punish all those who should commit any offence there, or wish to disturb the safety of the passage.[85]

Axiema, as defined by Valckenburgh, could be identified primarily on the basis of political and economic criteria. The so-called *gemenebest* lacked homogeneity in some significant ways. It included important Ewuture and Sohie communities, and it should be remembered that the western portion, including Adwɔmɔlɔ, spoke a different language to the eastern one.[86]

According to the WIC's wishful thinking, *Axiema*'s political geography happened to be the same as the real or potential market of Fort Saint Anthony.[87] Indeed, they hoped it would become the institutional expression of Dutch commercial interests.

Whether the other parties in the region would ever be willing to accept this interpretation was another question. In his report, Valckenburgh wrote about the taking of oaths of loyalty to the WIC, which also established exclusive trading rights, given by the chiefs and notables of ɛlɛmgbenle and Adwɔmɔlɔ in September 1652 as a Dutch "concession" to the locals, who were supposed to have presented the travellers with "importunate solicitation . . . in order to have renewals of their Letters of Vassalage."[88]

We have to ask ourselves which of the two parties was more likely to have pressed for a "renewal" of the "vassalage" to Axim and its fort. In any event the attitude of local leaders in relation to the signing of such agreements with Europeans was often colored by a large dose of pragmatic manipulation of the Europeans for contingent considerations of a commercial or political nature. Declarations of exclusive relations, references to ancient "transfers of sovereignty," declarations of "vassalage," and acceptance of protection and jurisdiction by European commanders must not give us a false view of the reality

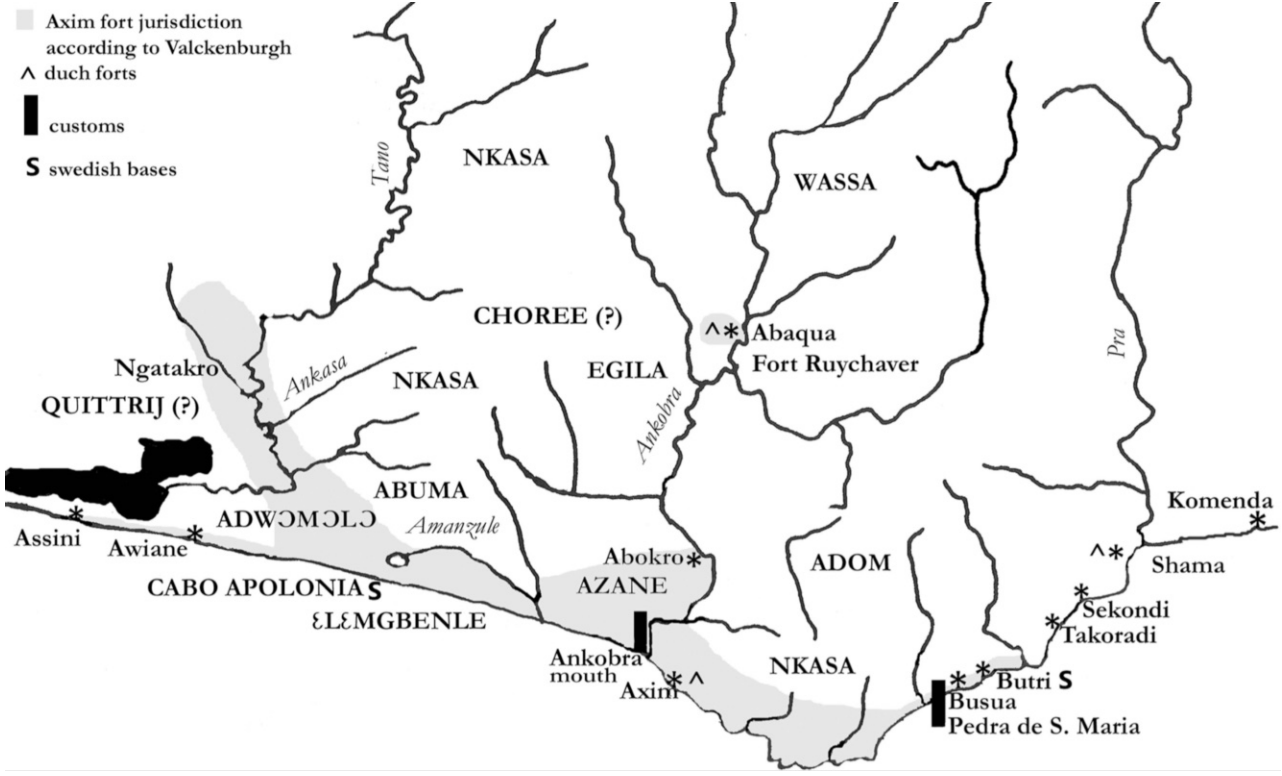

Figure 3.2 Dutch "jurisdictional" claims in the mid-seventeenth century

that was nearly always one in which the Europeans had very limited actual powers to exercise and defend their rights guaranteed by treaties or to fulfill their undertakings to local parties, particularly that of defense. This would have required military forces and equipment far superior to what was available first to the Portuguese and later to the Dutch, and above all an effective control over politics within each local polity that the Europeans were never able to achieve entirely even in Axim and were very far from achieving in the areas more distant from the fort.

In the case of Adwɔmɔlɔ, the "allegiance of vassalage" of 1652 did not prevent the chiefs and notables of the area agreeing to the establishment of a "Swedish" trading post a few years later or its transfer to the Danes after that. Then in 1658, they returned to "subjugation" to the WIC. These changes, as we shall see, were accompanied by significant upheavals within the area, which the various European interests attempted to influence and exploit to their own advantage by allying with one or other of the local protagonists. But their room for maneuver, even in the case of the Dutch, was limited to attempts to participate in existing rifts within African society and certainly never translated into real powers to influence local developments, and still less into genuine "jurisdictional" and governmental capabilities.

The concept of a greater political community, which Valckenburgh defined as a *gemenebest* or republic, was based on a high level of interaction between the different local entities that probably predated the arrival of the Europeans, although the *gemenebest* as a formalized institutional framework was probably a projection of the hegemonic ambitions of the Portuguese and later the Dutch, as well as their allies, the leaders of Axim. However, by pursuing their own hegemonic objectives, the Portuguese and the Dutch undoubtedly exploited an existing sense of belonging to a superior community. Their "imperial" initiatives and, more especially, their development of trade centered on the coastal town contributed to consolidating and extending it. It was in this expansion, particularly to the west, that the ancient entity of *Axiema* gave way to the modern one of Nzema.

Chapter 4

Changes in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century

In the mid-seventeenth century, the area between the Ankobra and the Tano was linguistically heterogeneous and divided up into several distinct political units, although there appear to have been some important shared cultural features and at least some of these units were bound by political links of some force. However, these links fell short of the formal confederal structure that Valckenburgh claimed to be in place. The glue that held together the ruling groups of the various local power structures was the shared involvement in a system of productive and commercial relations (dating from the early sixteenth century at least) that brought about an increasingly central role for Axim and its fort, and also increasing challenges to this trend from other competing European states and free trade. The latter, which was defined as "interloper" trade, was not authorized by the companies with monopolies, and was conducted by private European interests in various ports along the west coast.

4.1 Coastal Polities between the Ankobra and the Tano in the Mid-Seventeenth Century

The available first-hand information on these political and territorial entities in the mid-seventeenth century is very limited. In reality we know nothing about the structure and organization of those located in the interior, such as *Quitrij/*Ngatakro, *Allé/Alene*, and *Abuma*. We know nothing about the institutions of the Ewuture of Lake Amanzule,

but we do know that they were in close contact with the people of *Abuma*. We can only suppose that they had similar political institutions, procedures, and conventions to those of the Ewuture of the Aby Lagoon, who acknowledged a supreme leader, a "king," and four subordinate leaders.[1] We only have a few fragments of information on Abokro, Azane, (old) Assini, and Edobo.

In 1678 Barbot described Assini as a large and populous group of settlements. It was made up of Little Assini (*Isseny Pequeene*) and to the west Great Assini. In between them, there was a succession of three villages.[2] A few documents provide us with details that, however meager, have proved very precious for our understanding of the situation in Ɛlɛmgbenle, Adwɔmɔlɔ, and Awiane. They were in fact fairly different realities. The first two areas each included a group of sizeable towns with their own administrative independence, but united under a single institutional leadership. In this they were very similar to Azane, the first polity to occupy the coast to the west of the Ankobra. Awiane, on the other hand, was smaller territorially and had only one "urban" settlement, and was probably surrounded by a few satellite settlements engaged in specific activities (agriculture, salt production, etc.). Awiane's "city-state" model was shared by Edobo and (old) Assini.

Capuchin friar Colombin de Nantes provided in 1637 an extremely interesting first-hand account of Awiane.[3] The town, which was on the coast, was "populated, fertile, and busy with trade," rich in fresh water, surrounded by luxuriant vegetation (coconut trees, palm trees, and banana trees or plantains) and land prepared for cultivation. F. Colombin only provides very vague clues about the size of population (he mentions "great crowds" and "multitudes of negroes"). It would not be going too far to say that the Awiane area had a permanent or seasonal population of many hundreds, probably thousands. P. Colombin's letter does not tell us anything about the size of Awiane's domain and the possible presence of towns dependent on it either on the coast or in the interior. Awiane must have controlled only a few kilometres of coastline, as there are only 20 km in all between Edobo in the east and (old) Assini in the west. Awiane territory (a large part of it marshland) bordered with *Allé*, and probably only extended a few kilometres (between three and eight) in the interior. The population was likely concentrated on the coast.

The main settlement was also the seat of political power. F. Colombin met with the "king"—the *belemgbunli*—"a good much revered old man" who "cannot walk, being indisposed and of great age."[4] He was assisted by three orders of people, accompanying him at all times: (1) his "sons," a term that is often repeated in the letter and can mean

sons in the strict sense or more generally corps of direct dependants (i.e., what is defined as his *gyaase* in Twi); they were his main supporters in the exercise of power; (2) the "captains," a category that included the leaders of the various subdivisions of the town and its dependencies, exponents the main groups allied to the royal *abusua*, undoubtedly merchants and men of substance, each with his own numerous personal retinue and slaves, which meant they controlled considerable forces as military leaders (*safohyenle*, pl. *nsafohyenle*); the "captains" included important officials, such as the royal spokesman (*kpɔmavolɛ*), as this is implied by the order to one of the "captains" to convene the populace; (3) other significant figures ("the most notable members of the court"), probably family heads (*mbusua mgbanyinli*). This is structurally more or less the same ruling group as the one in (new) Assini described by Father Loyer 65 years later (this polity was founded by people from Great Assini, which was close to Awiane).[5]

There was a "town council" (*maanle ayia*), which was separated from the court and the royal council. The assembly, in which the *belemgbunli* did not participate, was held on Wednesdays[6]; its members were seated and carried their weapons and insignia and were presided over by one of the notables. Colombin did not specify whether this president was the same as the "first captain" of the town, who was also the brother of the *belemgbunli* and led the Frenchmen to the council session.[7] He appears to have been the official Europeans called the *braffo*, who was responsible for public order, the administration of justice, and the headship of the army.[8]

The information available to us on the organization of other polities in the area is sadly much more limited. From the agreements signed with J. Valckenburgh, we know that the territory of Ɛlɛmgbenle consisted of a narrow coastal strip clearly marked off in the east and the north by the coastal lagoons and the River Amanzule (the borders with Azane and *Abuma,* respectively), and in the west by the border with Adwɔmɔlɔ (probably a little to the east of Elonyi). It was about 25 km long and 3 to 5 km wide. It was made up of a sandy coastal strip and behind that a strip of forest vegetation, which contained areas subject to periodic flooding and higher areas where farming was possible. The settlements were concentrated adjacent to the beach. The documents mention two towns in which agreements were signed in 1652 and 1658, *Jan Sontia* (or *Jan Soutia*) and *Mabone* (or *Maboue*), respectively. The two towns, whose names are not easy to identify, were defined in seventeenth-century Dutch as *vlecken* (sing. *vleck*), a term that can be translated in this context as "markets" and indicated towns with administrative and commercial functions in relation to the surrounding

territory.[9] The previously mentioned coastal town of Borazo (*Bogio*) was in the area, but was not mentioned in the mid-seventeenth-century agreements. A document written in 1654 mentions another *vleck* in ɛlɛmgbenle, *Maforee*,[10] a place-name that clearly refers to the Mafolɛ *abusua*, which still controls much of the land in the area.

During Valckenburgh's visit in 1652, the greatest figure of authority in ɛlɛmgbenle was Nyanzu (*Jansou*), defined as the *kaptein* (captain). The names of his subordinate chiefs (*caboceros*) were not mentioned. Nyanzu died some time after Valckenburgh's mission and was succeeded by *Maqua Affoo Ausy* (or *Maquafo Ausy*), who renewed the pact with the Dutch in 1658.[11]

We have a little more information about Adwɔmɔlɔ. Its coast was about 15 km long (from Elonyi in the east to the Domunli Lagoon in the west), but going inland the territory opened out into one of the main areas of dense forest in the region and the valleys of some tributaries into the left bank of the Tano (Anweafutu, Ensue, Ankasa). This forest was crossed by the most direct path linking Aowin with the coast, and Adwɔmɔlɔ clearly claimed control over the southern stretch of this route. In the 1657 agreements with the WIC, Adwɔmɔlɔ's chiefs mentioned that their northern neighbors were *Quittrij* and Afɛnma that were about 30–40 km as the crow flies from Cape Appolonia and the strip of territory immediately inland, which was probably where most of the population was concentrated. On the size of the latter we only have vague eighteenth-century observations that it was particularly large.[12]

The first town Valckenburgh and the chiefs of Axim encountered at the end of 1652 as they arrived from ɛlɛmgbenle was the "market" (*vleck*) of Elonyi (*Ilonyi*), where they were greeted by the "captain" of Adwɔmɔlɔ, *Maniperinjou*.[13] The day after their arrival, the guests were greeted by all the notables (*groote*) of the town and then accompanied to the *vleck* Bɔnyɛlɛ (*Bongere*) where a general assembly was held by the notables (*hoofdlieden*: "main personages") of Adwɔmɔlɔ who confirmed their "vassalage" to Axim Fort on September 30, now occupied by the WIC. A similar ceremony was also held in the *vleck* called *Chiau*, located between Elonyi and Bɔnyɛlɛ, but not yet identified (it could perhaps be Twenɛne). The next pact renewing of relations with the Dutch, which was celebrated in Elonyi on January 16, 1657, provides further information on the ruling group. The document was underwritten by the "Captain" *Maniperinjou*, the *braffo*, *Poco Boury* (or *Poko Body*[14]), who was the principal military leader, and another four chiefs: Ehyimane (*Echalmina*), *Eliamme, Pardina*, and *Esenpre*.[15] This was a fairly typical polity for the region, which had a clearly defined centralized structure as described for Awiane, with a "monarch," the

belemgbunli, supported by a military leader, and notables (also called *arelemgbunli*), who were important merchants, chiefs of the main family groups, and men who controlled large numbers of dependants. However the geographical location of the political center is not clear. The *braffo* evidently resided in Elonyi or nearby (indeed the name Elonyi is transparently linked to *ɛlɔne*, army), whereas it is not clear where *Maniperinjou* resided, although there was once a settlement called Adwɔmɔlɔ (later called Azanwulenu) in the area of present-day Kɛnrɛne just to the east of the heights of Cape Appolonia. In any case, the very fact that the first signing of the pact with the Dutch was later repeated or renewed at least two more times in two different towns following the first decision of the political leadership in Elonyi demonstrates that there was demographic, political, and economic polycentrism. Some larger settlements with their surrounding areas had an identifiable territorial and political identity that apparently translated into considerable autonomy from the political center. Confirmation of this aspect can be inferred from J. Barbot, who anchored off Cape Appolonia from December 29 to 31, 1678 and on his second journey to trade in slaves in 1681–1682. In 1678 Barbot wrote:

> The cape (Appollonia) is formed by four hills (which can be seen from far-off when approached by sea from the west), on which there are four villages. The land is wooded in a manner that makes it very agreeable and pleasant to look at. There is a captain ruling over all these villages, whose names is Pieter, and he resides in the one off which we anchored.[16]

Pieter's residence appears to have been a settlement located in the area between modern-day Kɛnrɛne and Twenɛne: thus it might have been Adwɔmɔlɔ, or Nyɛmanu or *Chiau*.[17]

In a later manuscript, Barbot provides a more detailed explanation of the sequence of settlements in the Cape region, accompanied by a map. Approaching from the west, the area of Cape Appolonia was preceded by *Acaniminà*, a large settlement about half a league (2.2 km) west of the most westerly hill. The town was situated on raised ground more or less on the stretch of coast between modern-day Bɔnyɛlɛ in the west and Alɛnrɛnzule in the east.[18] It was followed by three settlements at the foot of the hills of the Cape, in a slightly raised position compared with the rest of the coastline. Moving further east, he came across *Agumené* (another variant for Adwɔmɔlɔ). On the map that accompanies the manuscript, this settlement is shown as markedly to the east of the hills and where today Kɛnrɛne and Elonyi are to be found. It would appear that Barbot's *Agumené* is Elonyi, the home

to the *braffo* of Adwɔmɔlɔ. Given its importance in the local power setup, this town is mentioned as Adwɔmɔlɔ par excellence.[19]

The description contains other points that raise questions. Barbot does not mention Bɔnyɛlɛ, clearly an important settlement in the 1650s, unless this is what he means by the mysterious *Acaniminà*. In accordance with common practice of the time, he may have annotated the ports with which the French generally dealt and ignored the others used little or not at all by his compatriots. It is also probable that different names were used from the same settlements. In any case Barbot divides Adwɔmɔlɔ up into three territorial and political components that are clearly the same as the three areas that ratified in succession the 1652 agreement with the WIC.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, new competitors for power arrived from outside, and were variously linked to rivalling European commercial interests. The human makeup—and not just the local political structure—of Adwɔmɔlɔ, Cape Appolonia, and the area in general was to be profoundly changed by these experiences.

4.2 Koloko and Mɛnla

Competition between WIC and the "Swedish" commercial enterprise under Caerlof's direction helped lead to confrontation. Caerlof, who had profound and personal knowledge of the power structure in *Axiema*, prepared the ground and insinuated himself into local society through alliances with powerful local interests. His strategy was based on close cooperation with at least two crucial political figures (Fig. 4.1).

The principal reference point for the "Swedes" in Axim was a man of whom the Dutch painted a lurid picture. He was Antonio Koloko (*Coroquo*), a native of Axim whom Valckenburgh defined as a "murderer of men and most abominable traitor and robber," and presented as some kind of vile adventurer and mercenary.[20] The men of the WIC had several reasons for feeling ill-disposed toward Antonio Koloko. The Dutch accused him of being the instigator of the 1647 rebellion and responsible for sending a delegation from Axim to the English in Kormantin to offer them Fort Saint Anthony, which the rebels promised first to free from its Dutch garrison by annihilating it. The plan was abandoned when it encountered a refusal from the English. Moreover Koloko was supposed to have only just failed in his attempt to assassinate the *directeur-generael* Van der Wel, while the latter was traveling overland from Elmina to Axim. After leaving Axim, he supposedly assisted the men of the Swedish company in their plans to establish bases in Takoradi and Cape Appolonia.[21]

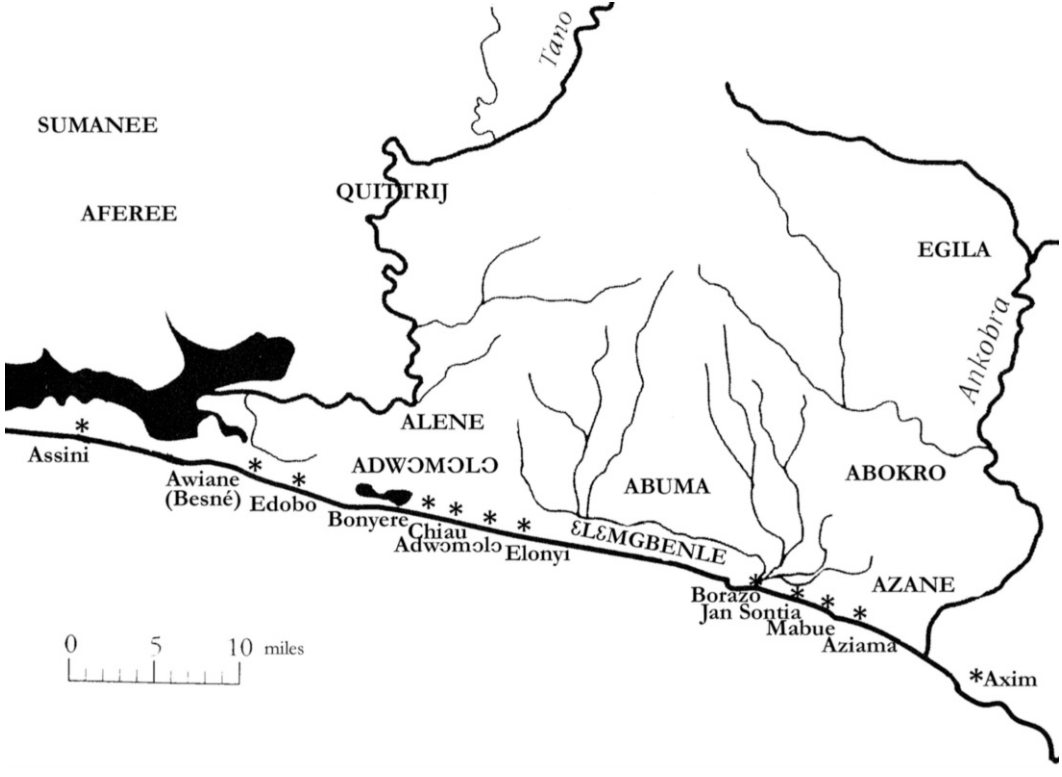

Figure 4.1 The principal political centers in the second half of the seventeenth century

However, Dutch information on Koloko's origins and social position raises doubts about Valckenburgh's absolute assertions on his criminal and mercenary lack of scruples.

> Anthony Coroquo . . . born subject of Axem, sprung from a bond lineage; his mother having been a Quaqua slave woman belonging to Maria Soares, born at Axem; which Maria Soares had herself first been a slave of the wife of her "mede" brother, Gaspar Baffo, who, for money, emancipated the same Maria into the hands of the Portuguese Fitoor Louis Soares, by which Soares she, Maria, being freed from the yoke of slavery, has afterwards possessed the mother of this Coroquo. Which Coroquo . . . [was] also emancipated by her.[22]

There must be some doubts about the actual nature of these relations described as "slavery" (e.g., Maria Soares' original state of slavery) and of the concept of "emancipation" as it is used here. However it is very clear that the network of relations in which Koloko is positioned make him an expression of the system of power that had existed in Axim at the time of the Portuguese. Koloko's direct matrilineal component was nullified by slavery, whereas the dependency on Maria Soares was central to his standing in the society of Axim and *Axiema*, because it linked him with Gaspar Boafo (*Baffo*) and Luís Soares, the fort's Portuguese *feitor* in the early part of the seventeenth century. It is entirely unsurprising that Koloko was so fiercely and actively hostile to the arrival of the WIC and its negation of all the props to his position as a member of the "upper" circle of the previous system of power in *Axiema*: he was probably a member of some importance (a "son" of the *feitor* and one of his influential women, Maria). Because of his questionable pedigree, he would have owed his personal status almost entirely to his protectors and guarantors and with their removal he could have slipped to the lowest levels of local society. Koloko fought for social and probably economic survival (he was a merchant) by leading the resistance to the new masters of the fort and mediating between the various local ruling groups in *Axiema* and other European interests that were potential alternatives to the WIC, first the English and then the "Swedish" company.

Caerlof's other influential contact in *Axiema* was Mɛnla whom we have already encountered as the person whose services the same ex-*fiscael* of the WIC engaged for the conflict with Little Nkasa. By the early 1650s Mɛnla had become a sworn enemy of Axim and the Dutch. A Dutch document of 1656 provides the Axim notables' account of Mɛnla's origins and the circumstance surrounding his arrival in the region. Mɛnla was the son of *Sirma* (Asemaʔ), the

"captain" of the "District of Choree," and "a slave woman of his, named *Agry Coccoo*" (Agyili Kɔkɔ), which fact made him "a subject of captivity by birth." Having "dared to offend" his father and other people, Mɛnla left *Choree* and moved south into the Districts of *Quitrij* and Azane (Ankobra) with a large following, where Caerlof sent for him in order to hire his forces. According to Axim's chiefs the oath of loyalty Mɛnla swore to the WIC was binding until Little Nkasa was fully subdued.[23]

Choree, which according to Valckenburgh was far beyond any "jurisdiction" claimed by WIC,[24] was situated in the interior beyond Azane and *Quitrij*, and thus in the direction followed by the trade route that linked Axim to the regions in the middle reaches of the Tano known as Nkasa and referred to as *Cacres* or *Caceres* (*C. Anguines*) on Portuguese maps and *Incassa* (*Groot Incassa* and further north, *Incassa Iqqyna*, perhaps corresponding to *Caceres Anguines*) on early-seventeenth-century Dutch ones.[25] It is not impossible that *Choree* was a variant of the Portuguese *Cacres* or *Caceres*,[26] but there are many different theories and the identity of the place-name remains a mystery beyond its very general location somewhere in the large Nkasa region.[27]

The leaders of Axim determinedly asserted that Mɛnla's mother was a slave and *Sirma*'s property. His mother's unfree status would have made Mɛnla a member of his father's *abusua* and thus a person in a highly dependent position. From this point of view, Mɛnla may well have been a politically prominent figure and more especially a crucial military leader,[28] but he would always be irredeemably marked by social stigma within a value system in which full personal status was only enjoyed by a *dehelɛ* (Twi *adehye*), a person acknowledged as a legitimate member in every sense. On the other hand, there is the intriguing fact that his mother was apparently well known to the ruling group in Axim and referred to very precisely by her name, Agyili Kɔkɔ: kɔkɔ (red) is an adjectival form often attached to persons or groups of nonfree status. It might have been a way of emphasizing a socially inferior condition, but it also suggests that those who were providing the information had good reasons for emphasizing Mɛnla's illegitimacy in relation to a specific matrilineal kinship group. The permanence of this exile and his followers in *Quitrij* and Azane would therefore have been linked to the rationale behind Mɛnla's status from his mother's side. We can infer from other sources that Mɛnla and his group were well known in Axim and related by kinship to other groups in the area. In 1654 a native and resident of Axim, *Beyentin*, declared under oath that he was Mɛnla's kinsman and recalled that the pact of "engagement—*verbont*—and frienship" with the people of Axim

that Mɛnla had violated dramatically was something distinct from his equally dishonored agreement with the WIC. Mɛnla's ancestors had been friends and allies of Axim before him.[29] Of course it is impossible to know how the relationship between Agyili Kɔkɔ and *Sirma* was established, nor can we clarify whether she was a free woman or subject to some form of personal dependency (a pawn or hostage) or even an actual slave (prisoner of war or purchased slave). Equally we do not know the original relationship between Mɛnla's mother and the system of power in Axim and *Axiema*. However, the existence of a strong ancestral link between the *ebia* of Bolɔfo Solo (Axim Upper Town) and the *ebia* of Elubo, the principal stool of the Sohie communities along the banks of the Tano, suggests an undoubtedly interesting line of enquiry. The two *mbia* belong to two very close-knit Ezohile *mbusua*, but more generally we can say that the Ezohile of Axim, the Tano, and Aowin referred back to the same ancestral roots.[30] Although as yet we have no proof that Mɛnla belonged to this network, we can assert that he moved and operated within this context.

We do know or at least can infer that following a rift with his father, Mɛnla moved away as the head of large group. This suggests that his departure was associated with an important upheaval within *Choree*. At the end of the 1640s, Mɛnla's following was sufficiently numerous and organized for it to be in Caerlof's eyes an attractive ally (or mercenary force) for the war against Little Nkasa, which in terms of the local balance of power was considered a military power to be reckoned with. The continued presence of Mɛnla's force in *Quitrij* and (later or at the same time) Azane did not involve conflict with the locals, but rather appears to have been a cooption arranged by the ruling groups in *Axiema* who evidently mediated in the agreement between the new arrivals and the Dutch in Axim.

However by 1653 relations between Mɛnla and at least part of the groups controlling power in Axim and Abokro had markedly deteriorated. On September 4, 1653, Valckenburgh wrote to the assistant factor in Axim asking him to put the local chiefs on their guard against a possible attack by Mɛnla, who had been encouraging the "Swedish" in Takoradi to take similar action to harry the eastern border.[31] It is interesting that it was the "Swedish" in Takoradi who warned Valckenburgh of the danger that was presented as the result of an agreement between local forces. Mɛnla's enemies were the people of Axim, and the Europeans seem to have been only minor players in this conflict and pawns used by the African antagonists. More time had to pass before the Dutch started to realize that their previous ally had become a dangerous enemy. It is not clear what caused Mɛnla to change his

position. Whereas the Dutch versions blame Caerlof's influence, Krusenstjerna's interpretation from the "Swedish" side in 1656 suggests that the real reason was Mɛnla's desire for independence and his deep-seated rejection of any subordination to the ruling group of Axim.[32] It is not easy to assess the reliability of this meager information and its interpretation, given the conflictual situation in which they were provided. There can be no doubt that in the light of Mɛnla's shifting positions, the alliance with Caerlof that occurred when the latter was still an employee of the WIC was to have many consequences for the regions to the west of the Ankobra, especially Adwɔmɔlɔ and the Cape Appolonia area.

4.3 The Dispute over Cape Appolonia

Around October 1653, a certain Adonle (*Adonde*), native of Axim and accompanied by two of his fellow citizens, *Acanmaffo* and *Bappere*, went to *Pocoboury*, the *braffo* of Adwɔmɔlɔ, as an emissary of Caerlof and Koloko with the proposal for the establishment of a "Swedish" trading post on the eastern heights of Cape Appolonia. On its way to Adwɔmɔlɔ, the delegation stopped in Azane to meet Mɛnla, from whom Adonle obtained encouragement for his enterprise and the promise of considerable recompense in the event of success. According to the account provided by *Beyentin*, a citizen of Axim and one of Mɛnla's relations, Adonle introduced himself as someone acting not only in the name of the "Swedish" director but also of Ahenkwa, the older of the two Akrosang brothers of Efutu.[33]

This initial meeting between Adonle and Mɛnla was witnessed by a messenger from Valckenburgh, Francisco Avo (*Affo*),[34] who was there when they greeted each other and the purpose of the meeting was publicly announced (*amaneɛ*) with the subsequent acknowledgment by Mɛnla, but he was not present at the following conversations that took place in private. From *Beyentin*'s interpretation of the events, it appears that Mɛnla looked on this new opportunity not only with evident interest but also caution. On the one hand, he was undoubtedly the main contact for the new arrivals and made a considerable contribution to their settlement in the area, and they asked him for assistance in the construction of a trading post. On the other hand, Mɛnla was careful, at least initially, to maintain his contacts with the WIC. Indeed he used the good offices of his relations in Axim, particularly *Beyentin*, to send a message to the fort.[35]

After their visit to Mɛnla, Adonle and his men continued on to Adwɔmɔlɔ. The *braffo Pocoboury* agreed to Caerloff's and Koloko's

proposal to create a permanent trading post and undertook to hand over a hostage to the delegation as a mark of his commitment. Shortly afterward, the "Swedish" party reciprocated by sending a hostage and gifts (including a large handbasin). However the *braffo* took the decision on his own without convening a general assembly of the community, as was the custom in cases of such importance. Moreover, he appeared to act independently of his superior, *kaptein Maniperinjou*. It is clear that the chiefs of Adwɔmɔlɔ were extremely divided over the appropriateness of establishing another relationship outside the commitments already undertaken with the WIC. The difference of opinions emerged when Koloko landed in Cape Appolonia, not too long after Adonle's mission, and some of the local chiefs refused to take an oath of allegiance to the "Swedish" company.[36]

For his part, Mɛnla initially behaved in a very ambiguous manner. Immediately after Koloko's arrival in Cape Appolonia, Mɛnla was the one who started the attack on the interests of the WIC by robbing merchants from Adwɔmɔlɔ on their way to Axim and blockading them in Azane. After this action, however, Mɛnla notified Valckenburgh through *Beyentin* of his intention to behave differently in the future and break off his relations with Caerlof and Koloko. According to *Beyentin*, Mɛnla actually offered to kill Koloko if Valckenburgh wanted this, in exchange for reestablishing his old friendship with the Dutch. But the *fiscael* rejected this offer and supposedly replied that he was quite capable of defending himself from Koloko's plots without Mɛnla's assistance.[37] It appears that Mɛnla was intending to use the arrival of the "Swedes" to negotiate some kind of reconciliation with Valckenburgh and his other enemies in Axim. This behavior may just have been an unscrupulous attempt to exploit his position of independence to its maximum advantage in relation to different European interests, in other words a way of asserting what Krusenstjerna defined as Mɛnla's express desire for independence from Axim. Unfortunately we do not know enough about the real reasons for the conflict, and this deprives us of the key to understanding these events.

In the following months, a series of dramatic upheavals fundamentally changed the situation. The available information is full of gaps, and some links in the chain of events can only be inferred. We have no first-hand accounts of events between October 1653 and July 1654, but we know that Koloko arrived in Cape Appolonia during that period to set up the Swedish trading post. As already stated, some of the local leaders refused to sign the agreement with Caerlof, and consequently there was an internal rift. It also appears that the activities of

Koloko and his men led to the expulsion of the dissident party from the area controlled by the *braffo Pocoboury*.

In July 1654 Koloko was in Cape Appolonia with his men and in good relations with the *braffo Pocoboury*, but under a blockade imposed by his adversaries. Apart from the local pro-WIC dissidents, Koloko also had fierce enemies in Great Assini, Awiane, and Edobo. It is clear that these polities were afraid that the construction of a Swedish base in the region would have a negative effect on their trade in the offshore anchorage.

Koloko and his allies in Cape Appolonia were in fact isolated and had no seagoing canoes capable of getting past the surf (the boats in the area had probably been put out of use by their adversaries), until they can get their own vessel. The Swedish ship *Noort Coppingh* sailed down the coast with Isaac Mevilla on board. He was the Swiss commander of the Swedish company who had taken over from Caerlof. On July 19, the ship came to Cape Appolonia where it was met by a seagoing canoe sent by Koloko with a relation (*blootvriend*) of the *braffo*. Mevilla decided to come ashore in spite of the heavy seas and attempts by the canoe's crew to dissuade him. The vessel was capsized going through the surf, and both Mevilla and the *braffo*'s envoy were drowned—the only victims. Koloko also met his death shortly after he had watched the scene from the top of Appolonia Hill in the *braffo*'s company. Two assassins, "exiles from Jumo," took advantage of the moment in which he strayed away from the *braffo*'s retinue to urinate as the party was climbing down the hill and treacherously struck him with a spear. Mevilla and Koloko were buried in the same grave, and the killers escaped to Azane.[38]

The selectiveness with which death struck the capsized canoe and the manner in which it coincided with Koloko's murder triggered a confusion of rumors concerning Dutch involvement not only in the elimination of the Swedes' main local ally in the region, something that is highly probable and Valckenburgh did not bother to deny, but also the simultaneous death of the commander of the Swedish company and an important personage closely associated with the *braffo* of Adwɔmɔlɔ, the same company's most influential partner in the area.[39]

The blow to the Swedish positions arising from the disappearance of its director general was a severe one, and locally the repercussions were even more devastating. Koloko's violent exit from the scene was perceived as a clear indication of Dutch determination not to let the situation to the west of the Ankobra slip out of control and to deal mercilessly with anyone who opposed them. This development led to a rapid and dramatic clarification of Mɛnla's position.

With Koloko's death, he almost automatically inherited the dead man's role in the eyes of both the "Swedes" and the Dutch, for whom the unreliable ally had already become an element who could be exploited by European competitors and could now be considered a dangerous obstacle. Dutch and Swedish accounts of this transition are unsurprisingly contradictory. According to the version provided by the men of the WIC, Mɛnla acted as the worst of traitors "turning his arms against those for whom he bore them." He attached unexpectedly the districts of Axim and Abokro, killing many people and seizing a number of prisoners, and then went to settle in the Cape Appolonia area. Enjoying the support of *Pocoboury*, the *braffo* of Adwɔmɔlɔ,[40] he stirred rebellion against the WIC and had a lodge built for the "Swedes," pretending that Caerlof had cleared him of his oath to the Dutch Company.[41]

The tone of the assertions made by "Swedes" was obviously somewhat different. They distinguished between Mɛnla's choice of Europeans with whom he wished to work as a free and independent agent and his position within the local power relations, and they placed the blame for the conflict squarely with the chiefs of Axim and their political ambitions, which meant that Mɛnla had to be kept in a position of dependency.[42]

Mɛnla settled with his large following somewhere close to modern-day Kɛnrɛne or Elonyi. The WIC and its local allies undertook military action against Mɛnla, which was described as full-scale warfare but did not involve serious losses on either side. For Valckenburgh the conflict was a legitimate reprisal against betrayal by an ally and protection of the legitimate rights and liberties of the groups that supported his company, including the inhabitants of Adwɔmɔlɔ who had remained loyal to the Dutch. According to Krusenstjerna, on the other hand, the operations were the last resort of the WIC, after it had killed Koloko by hiring two assassins and failing to regain the loyalty of the people of Adwɔmɔlɔ through gifts and blandishments.[43]

There can be no doubt however that Mɛnla's move to Cape Appolonia soon translated into a large-scale recovery in "Swedish" trade in the area, and now it was supported by the new arrival's considerable forces with those of *Pocoboury* at his side. In June 1655, S. Jenitsch, the *fiscael* of the Swedish company, succeeded in his plan to set up a trading station in Cape Appolonia with Mɛnla's assistance and then signed a "purchase" agreement with the locals for exclusive trading rights in Bɔnyɛlɛ, Edobo, and Awiane.[44] In reality, the "Swedes" were far from exercising complete control. There were differences of opinion within the ruling group in Adwɔmɔlɔ. The Dutchman L. Dammaert

emphasized how at least one important *caboceer* in the Cape Appolonia area, Ehyimane, remained outside the alliance with the "Swedish," but did not say anything about the positions of the "captain" of Adwɔmɔlɔ, *Maniperinjou*, who was the highest authority in the area and had signed the act of allegiance to the WIC in 1652. On the other hand, the sympathies of the leaders of Great Assini and Awiane were still directed toward the Dutch company.[45] The WIC's room for maneuver in the area remained quite considerable. So much so that on September 5, 1656, Valckenburgh informed the Swedish director general, J.B. Krusenstjerna, that he wished to send a military force to attack Adwɔmɔlɔ "in order to restore our rights there" and drive off Mɛnla and his men. He made clear that his intention was to punish the "rebels" and "not to affront Y.H.'s servants."[46] Krusenstjerna's reply is very revealing. Although he protested and asserted the rights and liberties of the locals and Mɛnla to establish relations with and sell land to whoever they wished, he concluded on the matter of the threatened military intervention: "I may well suffer that, but only if no damage is caused to the land belonging to our Company, and the lodge standing thereon." The Swedish commander gave orders to his men resident in Cape Appolonia to stay calm in the event of a Dutch incursion against the inhabitants of the area and to react only if under a direct attack.[47]

We know that Dutch incursion did actually take place and was effective, but unfortunately the documents do not refer to the timing, the manner in which it was carried out or the channels by which it was possible to neutralize Mɛnla and the anti-WIC forces. The Dutch set up their own trading post in Cape Appolonia before the end of 1656 for the purpose of containing and challenging the activities of the "Swedish" one.[48] Formally the presence of the Swedish company was not under threat, but in practice the Dutch put pressure on the locals to drive their competitors away. In a letter of January 1, 1657, Valckenburgh reported that the people of "Jumo or Cape Apolonia" had promised to force the Swedes into leaving their base and had handed over six boys as hostages to guarantee their undertaking."[49] The Dutch also obtained a formal restatement of their own "rights" of political supremacy. On January 16, 1657, the WIC and the chiefs of Adwɔmɔlɔ renewed their agreement of 1652. The signatories included the *braffo Pocoboury*, who appears to have made a u-turn. The new agreement appears to have been a very interesting example of local diplomacy. Responsibility for the arrival of the Swedes was attributed to Mɛnla and other exponents of the anti-WIC party without explicitly mentioning them, while there is no acknowledgment of the responsibility of the *braffo* and other local leaders, except to the extent that they had the misfortune to be caught up in the cunning

plots of a few "evil men." The Swedish presence was accepted in that it had now been ratified by sworn agreements that were binding on the local party to them, but it was clearly defined and restricted to commercial matters. The new instrument specified that the agreements sworn by the local chiefs and the sale of land for building a trading post did not in any way affect the ultimate superior of the land, who remained the WIC by right of conquest and the agreement of 1652.[50]

The documents do not tell us what happened to Mɛnla and his men. Valckenburgh's description of the situation in Cape Appolonia of 1659 appears to suggest that his adversary was simply driven out of the area. There is no mention of the capture or killing of the man the *directeur-generael* had described in 1656 as "our principal enemy." If such an outcome had occurred, he would surely not have hesitated to declare them as an example of the unavoidable punishment of those who betray the trust of the WIC. It is much more probable that Mɛnla and supporters of the anti-WIC party withdrew to the surrounding area and continued to be involved in its affairs.

On February 8, 1658, Caerloff, now in the service of the Danes and back on the coast in command of a Danish vessel, took the Cape Coast base from the "Swedes" and then went on to take their trading posts in Anomabo, Accra, and Takoradi, as well as the one close to Cape Appolonia. However the occupation of the trading post in Adwɔmɔlɔ by the new European arrivals proved to be short-lived. As early as June–July 1658, Valckenburgh reported that the Danes had evacuated the trading post, and to the west of Elmina, they only retained a position in Takoradi.[51]

The WIC trading post in Cape Appolonia had been established in 1656 to contain the Swedish competition and guarantee a presence in a disputed area, and not for purely commercial reasons. Once the Danes had left, the trading post ceased to have a role and the WIC had to assess its lack of commercial relevance. Although the gold traded in Cape Appolonia was of the best quality along the coast, at par with the gold of Egila and Axim, the initiative was failing to get off the ground, even two years after the trading post had been established. The year 1657 was extremely profitable for Dutch enterprises along the entire coast, but the following year saw a reversal in fortunes caused by both an increase in English competition[52] and an outbreak of conflicts in the interior. Trade on the central-western coast and particular in Cape Appolonia was seriously impeded by the outbreak of a conflict in 1658 between Twifo and the Akani network.[53] In the early months of 1658, Twifo attacked the Akani, defeated them, and pillaged their lands, but by the middle of the year the latter were capable of launching a counter-attack and inflicting

a crushing defeat on Twifo, whose inhabitants took refuge in Adom. Trade with Shama and the entire coast to the west was suspended, as was trade with the regions of the mid- and upper Tano, toward Cape Appolonia. Following their victory, Akani merchants took control of trade in this area and redirected it toward ports on the central Gold Coast.[54] Trade at Cape Appolonia became modest and mainly local, as Valckenburgh observed, and the council in Elmina discussed whether the time had come to dismantle their trading post. Valckenburgh made known his preference for keeping it and observed that an evacuation could not be carried out without risks, given the hostility that such a measure would provoke among the local population. They would in effect be deprived of both European trading posts within the space of a few months. Moreover a presence in Cape Appolonia helped reduce the losses caused by free (*interloper*) trade carried out by ships lying at anchor off the coast between Axim and Awiane and Great Assini. As the costs of maintaining the trading post were nonexistent and the base could be easily supplied overland from Axim, they were to keep an open mind and reduce the staff (*fitoor* and assistant) to just an assistant under the supervision of the commander of Axim.[55]

The dispute over commercial control of Cape Appolonia and Adwɔmlɔ can be interpreted in different ways. More immediately it can be seen as a conflict between European interests under three different national flags (the Dutch, the Swedish, and the Danish) through the pursuit of alliances with rival parties within local ruling groups, both within the individual polities and at regional level, and the deliberate exacerbation of factional rifts within local societies. According to A. Van Dantzig, strictly commercial reasons were fundamental in determining the choices of local ruling factions: the construction of alternative trading posts to the one in Axim allowed them to carry out a more favorable transaction that avoided the customs duty imposed by the WIC through the system of customs posts on Axim's borders.[56] Certainly these factors played an important part in their decisions, but they do not explain those decisions entirely.

It would be worth repeating a significant element in all this: the Swedish flag and later the Danish one served primarily to guarantee and legitimize the activities of men who actually came from the ranks of the WIC and had lived and worked on the coast for a long time. In other words the conflict was largely an internal one and circumscribed by a social environment that was very compact and uniform. It included a small number of Europeans who were employees or ex-employees of the WIC and were part of the same system of relations with the indigenous society.[57] The sources provide some very

interesting glimpses of this situation, such as the case of the "Swedish" *fiscael* Sigismundt Jenisch, who had previously worked for the WIC. He still had slaves and employees in Axim, where he maintained friendships and business relationships with local WIC officials, in spite of Valckenburgh's accusation that he was plotting in an underhand manner against the Dutch company and its top officials.[58] It is equally clear from the available sources that leading figures in local society based their alliances and strategies on general and personal factors that were much more complex than simply the rationale of profit, as is demonstrated by the hatred Koloko and Mɛnla felt for the Dutch and Axim.

In reality, all the European and indigenous parties taking part in this conflict are acting within a network of relations, interests, and alliances that cut across the jurisdictions and positions established by European companies trading on the coast, and across the geopolitical divisions within the region. Europeans and Africans alike were protagonists in a typical segmental conflict. Caerlof and the "Swedes" were the catalysts of a coalition against the WIC and the leaders of Axim, their allies, which was contingent upon deeper rifts running through local society and especially the ruling groups, without observing the boundaries between the various polities.

As far as the Adwɔmɔlɔ area is concerned, the *braffo Pocoboury* acts as the local guarantor of the anti-WIC/axim coalition's interests. This decision to set up a market in Cape Appolonia as an alternative to Axim then translated into an assertion of autonomy. Positions hardened following the murder of Koloko, the exponent of the alternative power group within the Axim area, and the leadership of this party was passed to Mɛnla, who was if anything the expression of political and commercial forces from the interior. Although Dutch intervention led to Mɛnla's departure, in practice it sanctioned a compromise whereby Cape Appolonia's autonomy from the Axim market was recognized and for a time bolstered by the joint presence of competing European trading posts.

4.4 The Autonomy of an Alternative Market

The WIC's expansion during the 1650s was to prove short-lived. In 1659 the Dutch suffered a serious setback when they lost their trading post at Fort Ruychaver in Egila, following a conflict between the *fitoor* Anthony de Liefde and the heirs of an important chief in Adom, *Jane Cona*, who had died without paying off his debts to De Liefde.

On the basis of the versions and accounts gathered by Valckenburgh, the matter rapidly degenerated partly because of the *fitoor*'s intemperate behavior. He captured some Adom hostages, which antagonized the important chief Bebu (*Boubou*, *Bobbou*) and lost him the support of the *braffo* of Egila, *Corre Chary*. When Bebu entered Egila with his own forces in January 1659 and put the WIC trading post under siege, *Corre Chary* and his men stood by and let the attack go ahead, but not before they had pillaged the settlement of the salt traders from Axim, which had been set up close to Fort Ruychaver. De Liefde first put up fierce resistance, but realized that all was lost. He then set a desperate trap by initiating negotiations with the forces laying siege, and then blowing himself up along with many of his enemies once they had entered the small fort.[59]

The disaster in Egila, which left three European prisoners and the goods stored in the trading post in the hands of the attackers, marked a turning point in the WIC presence in the Ankobra valley. The company did not have sufficient forces to carry out a reprisal, and reoccupation of the base would have involved a military campaign in the interior against a powerful enemy, Adom, and an ex-ally, Egila. The WIC had to accept defeat and a drastic reduction of its influence over Egila, Abokro, and even Azane. In the early 1680s, the Dutch in Axim were no longer able to collect duty at the mouth of the Ankobra, just a few kilometres west of the fort. The customs post had been abandoned around 1680 because of the unwillingness of African traders to pay the tolls.[60]

After the destruction of Fort Ruychaver, the Dutch trading post in Cape Appolonia survived for a few more years, when a serious dispute between the locals and the WIC led to its closure and evacuation. C. le Petit, the commander of Axim put the crisis down to increasing interference by two WIC's local representatives, Thomas Ernsthuys, and Manuel Correia, who caused the leaders of Adwɔmɔlɔ to fear the loss of their political and commercial autonomy by letting them think that the Dutch were about to build a fort in the area.[61] The abandonment of Cape Appolonia took place sometime in the second half of the 1660s (perhaps in 1667).[62] Afterward there was no permanent European presence in the area according to the Frenchmen J. Barbot (1678) and J.-B. Ducasse (1687–1688).[63]

It is a great pity that le Petit tells us nothing about the real reasons for the dispute between the inhabitants of Cape Appolonia and the Dutch representatives Ernsthuys and Correia, or indeed about which leaders and groups in Cape Appolonia became involved. However the vague implication that the causes of the conflict originated in the monopolistic aims of company officials does appear likely, although other factors may

well have been at play. Given the fierce competition with the English at the time, WIC representative in the mid-1660s may well have been contemplating the possibility of turning the trading post into a fort.[64] Following the loss of their base in Egila, a more exclusive control over Cape Appolonia would have made it possible for the Dutch company to increase its control over the western trade routes. However their ambition was disproportionate to their actual room for maneuver and was unable to overcome the local society's determination to maintain its autonomy in the choice of trading partners. From the local point of view, the presence of the WIC trading post was an undoubted advantage because it removed the need to travel to Axim, but only if it was accompanied by substantial freedom to choose alternatives, which in practice meant trading with European ships off the coast. But obviously the transformation of the trading post into a fort with a permanent military presence was a very different question, because it would lead to the creation of an exclusive market and implicitly the prevention of free trade in the shipping lanes. This threatened local interests. It appears that the anti-WIC movement gathered such a following that the support the company enjoyed was no longer sufficient.[65] This overturned Valckenburgh's decision that a presence should be maintained in Cape Appolonia in spite of its low profits, because it had political and strategic significance, and the WIC chose to withdraw.

Following this decision, relations between the Dutch and the people of Adwɔmɔlɔ deteriorated even further: le Petit noted how the Cape Appolonia area became a refuge for employees, collaborators, and African associates of the WIC who had broken off relations with the company and withdrawn to carry out trade with ships offshore and with Dutch "interlopers," outside the control of Axim Fort. The mention of African "deserters" obviously recalled the complex affair of Mɛnla and his followers. It is difficult to resist the idea that deteriorating relations between the Dutch and the local population, which came to a head with the evacuation of the trading post, in some way reflected a recovery by the anti-WIC party that had been neutralized at the end of 1656 with the expulsion of its leading exponents in the Cape area. However the source does not provide enough information to confirm this interpretation.

Competition with the English, which during the 1660s became an actual war between the United Provinces and England, inflicted terrible blows on the WIC's ability to resist, which had already been sorely tested. The high hopes of the WIC following its occupation of the Portuguese bases in the 1640s had never been fulfilled. Expectations

had already been dramatically scaled down after the first renewal of the Charter of Concession to the Company, which lasted from 1645 to 1674. On expiry of the concession the WIC's debts amounted to six million florins or five-sixths of the original capital. In this disastrous situation, the States General of the United Provinces liquidated the old company and founded the new WIC, a copy of the previous one but on a budget that was just 15% of the one for the old WIC. Previous monopolistic claims were abandoned in many geographic areas in exchange for the payment of rights (*recognitie-gelden*) by Dutch traders sailing under flags other than the company's.[66] While it is true that the Guinea Coast was one of the areas where the monopoly was maintained, there can be no doubt that the overall Dutch presence was radically reduced in terms of its means, its aims, and its ambitions. Although the company would prove in the coming decades that it could hold up against competition from other European interests, the "imperial" ambitions it had exhibited on the Gold Coast in the 1640s and 1650s was now very much a thing of the past.

Le Petit summarized the new situation with particular reference to the region studied in this book, and he revealed how, after abandonment of the trading post in Cape Appolonia, no European power or interest was able to reclaim any kind of political or jurisdictional supremacy to the west of Axim and still less exclusive control of the flourishing gold trade along this stretch of coast.[67]

4.5 Conflict and Change in the Final Decades of the Century

After the mid-seventeenth century, there was a gradual increase in the level of conflict in the regions of the Gold Coast's interior. The Akani polities in particular were engaged in a series of wars with wide-ranging repercussions, and they were the principal trading partners of the Europeans in the interior. Military requirements caused a sudden rise in demand for firearms and brought an end to the well-established customs whereby for obvious strategic reasons rifles and gunpowder were not sold to Africans, a norm that had been observed by both the Portuguese and the Dutch. This convention was broken by the English and the Dutch interlopers, which induced the WIC to relax its restrictions on the sale of arms.[68] At the end of the 1660s, this market expanded rapidly, creating a revolutionary change in warfare, with armies adopting new forms of organization, and rifles replacing cold steel.[69] The weapons market profoundly changed the commercial customs of the Akani, who ceased to demand many other European

goods. More generally, warfare provoked a situation of insecurity, and trade—particularly the gold trade—became irregular.[70]

Specific data on the area under examination during this period is very limited. We know that at the beginning of the 1670s the English of the Royal African Company carried out a great deal of business in the area. They even set up a few informal trading posts on land in (old) Assini and Awiane, although these are not marked on the maps.[71]

According to Barbot, in 1681 Great Assini, the main settlement of (old) Assini, was sacked and burnt down by *Mores de la Terre*, meaning inhabitants of the interior.[72] Attacks against the other settlements by the people of Cape Appolonia under *capitaine Pieter* were reported in 1682.[73] It would appear these attacks were events in a long conflict that caused the possibly gradual migration from the area to establish a new Assini westward,[74] which took over the important commercial role of the old town.[75] The destruction of Great Assini might have been carried out by Denkyira forces directly, as reported by the famous Map of Guinea by J. B. D'Anville,[76] or by one or more local satellites of this powerful entity. We lack clear evidence.[77]

What does become clear during this period is the increasing tendency of Cape Appolonia to set itself up as a commercial alternative to Axim. The importance of the area as a terminus for gold coming from the interior increased in the final part of the seventeenth century, along with the rise of Aowin and Denkyira as the principal powers in the western interior of the Gold Coast. In the early 1680s, the unrestricted market in Cape Appolonia had access to gold from Aowin and Denkyira in such quantities that the English decided to set up a permanent trading post in the area. However the plan did not survive the test that came in early 1683; the main obstacle was the obstinate opposition from local chiefs and rich merchants to the creation of permanent bases by any European power. In a letter dated February 1683, the Englishman H. Shears wrote that this refusal was insurmountable. The locals openly justified it as the wish to defend their role as intermediaries between the ships in the shipping lanes and the traders from the interior, who exercised a form of domination over Cape Appolonia and would have been scotched by the establishment of trading posts directly managed by European companies.[78] R. Law identified these "masters" from the interior as Adom, purely on the premise that Adom was pursuing an expansionist policy during that time.[79] Indeed there is more evidence to point the finger once again at Denkyira, which during the 1680s gained control of all the interior of the region in question and which was apparently responsible for the destruction of Great Assini. In any case the expression "masters" might refer to more than one entity.

Some distance to the north the power of Denkyira was increasing, to the northwest Aowin was expanding, Wassa lay immediately inland to the northeast and Adom in the east, beyond the Ankobra. Cape Appolonia found protection and guarantees from the powerful forces of the interior in its role as the commercial intermediary for the Europeans who sailed up and down the coast. But the Dutch in Axim resented this position, particularly when the English showed interest in setting up a trading post in this highly successful trading hub. The WIC decided upon indirect military action to regain privileged access to the area. C. le Petit, the commander of Axim, was responsible for this action. According to what he wrote, the WIC was so exasperated by its inability to access the rich market of Cape Appolonia following the evacuation of its old trading post and so jealous of the great quantity of gold coming from Denkyira and Aowin it was trading in, that in 1684 it persuaded Wassa to attack Adwɔmɔlɔ and drive off the inhabitants of the Cape area.[80]

The Dutch plan exploited their good relations with Wassa, while Adom did not enjoy good relations with the Dutch. The Wassa attack initially drove the local population off, but it did not have a lasting effect in terms of who occupied the Cape area. Le Petit, whose account was written in 1690, concluded that locals gradually returned to occupy the settlements on the Cape and revive their trade with ships offshore. In 1688, J.-B. Ducasse estimated that 150 gold marks were traded every year at Cape Appolonia.[81] Probably the trade was slightly down compared with the period before the attack.

The attack of 1684 was only the first of a series of military interventions by the Wassa that, as we shall see, would continue into the early decades of the eighteenth century. The ruling *mbusua* of various communities in the forest area to the north of the Amanzule river, along with some on the coast, claim Wassa origins. They would be integrated into the "Kingdom of Appolonia" during the eighteenth century, and become an important component within it.

The events of 1684 had fatal consequences on the cohesion of Adwɔmɔlɔ as a political entity. The success of Wassa's military campaign on behalf of the Europeans created a situation in which the Cape area, having been wholly or partially emptied of its population, was perceived as territory subject to the WIC and its Wassa allies. This situation was in fact a temporary one; no permanent occupation or annexation ensued. However the gradual return of refugees did not lead to a full reestablishment of the former political structure. The previous political leadership did not reestablish itself in its ancient seat of government. Indeed after 1684, European documents, particularly

Dutch ones, made a clear distinction between Adwɔmɔlɔ and Cape Appolonia, and described them as two separate polities.[82] The territorial relationship between the two was explained by the Frenchman Des Marchais, who sailed the region's coastal waters in 1725: Adwɔmɔlɔ was mainly an inland formation, and its coastal outlet was almost entirely taken up by the Cape Appolonia area. Adwɔmɔlɔ's access to the ocean was therefore limited to a few kilometres of coast between the western border of Cape Appolonia and the territory of Edobo, the area of the small Domunli Lagoon. The map attached to Des Marches' text shows a very definite political and linguistic border between the two entities.[83]

In any case it appears that the settlements surrounding the Cape's hills had for some time developed societal features that distinguished them from the Adwɔmɔlɔ hinterland. Le Petit emphasized how the area had become the preferred refuge for individuals and groups who had reason to get away from Axim and areas where the WIC's presence was most felt. This was particularly true of the company's former African employees, intermediaries, and correspondents and their retinues.[84] This type of immigration was certainly encouraged by local rulers because of the advantages it brought in terms of widening the network of business relations, while also strengthening the area's demography. The size of the population was important both for military and productive reasons, and for its significance as a market and therefore its attractiveness to interlopers. The considerable influx of people from regions to the east brought about (or simply accelerated) a change in fundamental aspects of local society.

Toward the end of the seventeenth century, the coast to the west of the Ankobra was increasingly affected by the expansion of commercial and political relations emanating from the Axim area, the Ankobra river valley, and Aowin. The Dutch presence is only one of the factors at play in this context; the WIC's attempts to assert greater control over the western markets did not meet with much success, and *Axiema* did not become an effective political reality, at least in terms of Valckenburgh's hegemonic plan. Nevertheless the "axiemisation" of the west continued. Cape Appolonia did not become a Dutch trading station, and indeed it retained considerable autonomy as a market. Yet the groups and interests that were formed in the area to compete with the Dutch and Axim were expressions of the same network of interests (and spread the eastern dialect). On the other hand, the indigenous groups associated with Adwɔmɔlɔ lost ground culturally (their dialect receded) and materially (they were expelled from Cape Appolonia or barred from access to the important market for trade with interlopers), and they moved to the immediate interior or to the west. Assini's

shift to the west was in many ways part of the same rationale; it was a response to the pressure from the east, which was long-term feature of the region's history.

Although this movement did involve a change in the territory's population, it did not result in the direct marginalization of the indigenous ruling groups in relation to the interests emanating from the east. Indeed the opposite was true; the rationale of the "network" tended to retrieve the components that had been driven to the margins. The rebalancing of relations usually involved a negotiated reinclusion (de facto or formalized) even of parties that had been defeated and/or forced to emigrate. Institutions that covered the whole wider region such as matrilineage, matriclan, "brotherhoods of nobles," and more generally structures that set up alliances and hierarchical relations between groups fulfilled a crucial role as agents for bringing factions back together again and pacifying the situation. The contexts in which the westward migrations of the *Esiep* and later the Essuma took place during the seventeenth century not only provide excellent examples of this reality, but also say much about how a crucial element in the growth of the "winning" system of networks was to be found in this ability to turn marginal elements into active agents in the expansion of the system itself. Having been driven to the west, the *Esiep* and the Essuma reorganized themselves in their "frontier" context and extended the outer line of this framework of commercial and political relations by capitalizing on their "symbiotic" ties with the Ewuture.

This movement of people was slow and only clearly perceptible over long historical period. However it was undoubtedly a movement of epoch-making proportions, which amounted to the triumph of an historic dynamic that pushed from the east and the northeast toward the west and the southwest, causing preexisting communities with their own distinctive characteristics to be inexorably involved, overrun and often assimilated during the eighteenth century. Some expressions of these "indigenous" societies still survive in their residual culturally and linguistically distinctive features in some of the communities of the lagoons of the Ivory Coast (Essuma, Ewuture, and Agua), but in general they were completely, albeit gradually absorbed to the point of losing their specific characteristics (such as language) and contributed to the formation of new societies, as would occur in Adwɔmɔlɔ.

Chapter 5

Warning Signs of a Shifting Balance

During the second half of the seventeenth century, the Gold Coast underwent revolutionary changes that transformed the political, human, demographic, social, and economic features first of forest areas and then the region as a whole. According to R. Kea, the old mercantile-agrarian system entered into decline due to mounting social tensions as the growing demand from ruling groups for resources to trade for imported commodities led to increased pressure on rural producers. This phase coincided with the great upheaval that took place in transatlantic trade, with slaves challenging and finally overtaking gold as the commodity most in demand for export from the Gold Coast, and Europeans preferring to deal with well-organized expansionist polities able to sell prisoners of war in large numbers.[1] The Akani loose network collapsed and was replaced by great commercial brokers residing in the coastal towns, and each was the head of a system of business correspondents in different towns around the interior.[2] The final decades of the century were a time of civil and interstate conflict. Many of the large towns in the forest interior ceased to exist,[3] and the region would become characterized by a few large political centers and very scattered and small rural settlements. The combined result of these dynamics was a new socio-economic order (imperial-agrarian), in which ruling groups achieved hegemony through the development of their military resources, and a new type of polities, larger and more organized than in the past; some, like Akwamu, Denkyira, and Asante, were genuinely "imperial projects."[4]

A crucial transitional phenomenon was the success of Denkyira, a polity that established itself within the Akani system to the west of Adanse. In the second half of the seventeenth century, it turned into the dominant power in the Prah and Ofin river basins, and in the 1680s it expanded in the interior of the western Gold Coast. Denkyira ensured control of the main gold-mining areas and the trade routes to the coast between Anomabo in the east and (new) Assini in the west. In 1698 Denkyira reached its highest point by conquering Assin, the last remnant of the Akani system. However this primacy was soon to come to an end as a result of the crushing defeat inflicted upon her in 1701 by Asante, a coalition of rebel Denkyira dependencies.[5]

5.1 New European Ambitions

In the mid-1680s, the territorial control exercised by the WIC garrison in Axim reached its nadir. It had been thrown out of Azane, Abokro, Egila, and Adwɔmɔlɔ, and to the west of the fort its "jurisdiction" hardly extended as far as the Ankobra River, where it no longer (from around 1680) collected duty on the crossing. Other European interests attempted to take advantage of this vacuum and openly attacked Dutch claims over the coast to the west of Axim. There was an attempt to set up a trading post at the mouth of the Ankobra by a company flying the flag of the Electorate of Brandenburg (*Churfürstlich Brandenburgisch-Afrikanische Compagnie*), which was established in 1682 and operated mainly along the coast of Axim and Ahanta. It too was the product of a previous interloper company set up with Dutch capital, ships, and personnel.[6] The new arrivals immediately insinuated themselves into areas associated with the WIC's historical jurisdictions and claims by setting up their base in Kpɔkɛzo (*Pokeso*, later Princes Town) near Cape Three Points, where they built the imposing Fort Gross-Friedrichsburg. The WIC attempted to minimize the impact of this new competitor that took away part of the trade coming from the northwest. In 1685 the commander of Axim had the leaders of Egila and Abokro swear that they would impede the passage through their areas of indigenous merchants on their way to the Brandenburg trading posts.[7] However, by the end of the year the Europeans working for Brandenburg had established contacts with the leaders of Azane at the mouth of the Ankobra, and put in place a plan that aimed to create alternative channels exactly mirroring those of the WIC in the area. In February 1686 an agreement was reached to build a German-fortified trading post at the mouth of the Ankobra. The base was to be built on the eastern bank of the river,

the same side as Axim, a short distance from the Dutch fort and close to a village called *Auracomanoe*. The inhabitants undertook to provide the building materials (stone, wood, and shells for lime production). But the initiative was taken very badly by the commander of Axim, J. Verdijck. His attempt to reach and capture the Brandenburg director general, J. Nieman, who went to Azane to inspect the works, was unsuccessful: the men from Axim who accompanied Verdijck on his expedition abandoned him on the way. However the angry reaction from the WIC was enough to persuade the Germans to abandon the enterprise. In 1691 they attempted once again to establish themselves in the area, but without success, given the strength of Dutch opposition.[8]

Following the episode of 1686, the WIC proceeded to reinforce its position in Azane by renewing its links with the local chiefs in an agreement of October 11, 1687, signed in Axim between the *directeur-generael* N. Sweerts and the "captain and great notable" Bonsu for Azane. This treaty was concerned with defining or redefining the WIC monopoly over the management of the Ankobra as a commercial waterway and customs barrier. The inhabitants of Azane reaffirmed their acceptance of the laws and customs of Axim, including the jurisdiction of the court set up by the commander of the fort and the chiefs of the town, but with the right in the event of an unsatisfactory outcome to appeal directly to the director general in Elmina. They acknowledged that they were not able to claim land on the eastern side of the river and therefore could not transfer, sell, or cede it to any third party. They undertook not to keep any canoes on the river, and thus granted the WIC the right to guarantee the crossing. In the case of an inhabitant of Azane being engaged in fishing, he could move to Axim and be permitted to keep his vessel there. They also undertook not to impede in any manner the passage of "traders and peasants of any nation." The company reserved the right to send a white employee and two or three Africans to reside at the crossing point.[9]

During this period, another important chapter in the history of the coastal regions to the west of Axim was opened. The *Compagnie du Sénégal, de la Côte de Guinée et de l'Afrique*, which was constituted in January 1685 at the wish of Louis XIV, attempted to establish itself at Komenda but encountered fierce resistance from the WIC, which at the beginning of 1687 drove the French from Takoradi. This episode resulted in France dispatching an expedition under the command of J.-B. Ducasse, who sailed down the coast between November 1687 and February 1688. A further attempt to establish a base in Komenda

also ended in failure, but Ducasse visited (new) Assini, where he signed an agreement with the principal chief, *Zena* (the same leader who had decided to abandon Great Assini and move to the new location), and planned the creation of a base. He sailed after having obtained two hostages from *Zena*—of the two boys, *Aniaba* and *Banga*,[10] the first was of high status and acquired fame in France—and left six Frenchmen in Assini. Ducasse developed an ambitious plan for an expansion in the French presence, which included the creation of a trading post in Cape Appolonia, but the initiative remained in an embryonic state for many years.[11] *Zena* died and was succeeded by *Akassini*. The French trading post was abandoned during the following years in the context of the war waged by France against the League of Augsburg (1689–1697). Only after the Treaty of Rijswijk in 1697 did Louis XIV decide to reengage on the Guinea Coast and send an expedition under the command of *chevalier* Damon,[12] who visited Assini and Komenda before continuing his journey to Angola and then to Martinique. In Assini, *Akassini* granted Damon the right to set up forts and trading posts and promised future access to the gold mines of the interior. On June 15, 1701, Damon returned to Assini at the head of an expedition of three vessels with the task of constructing the first French fort, where they garrisoned 30 men, including officers and a few missionaries (Father G. Loyer was one of these). Another purpose of the expedition was to convey home *Aniaba*, one of the two hostages handed over to Ducasse in 1687, who had connections with both the Essuma and the Ewuture royal stools.[13] Aniaba played a central though conflictive role in the events of the settlement; indeed his relationship with Damon, the French, and their main local supporters fell apart completely soon after landing.[14]

The history of the small settlement was short: it was attacked on November 13, 1702, by the Dutch, who were repulsed and suffered considerable losses. The fort was then evacuated in 1703, once relations between the French and the locals started to deteriorate.[15]

Although very short, the French presence in Assini had considerable knock-on effects on relations between African and European powers throughout the area. The French ambitions to establish relations along the coast between Assini and Axim induced the WIC to take precautions against any future settlements. In 1697 the *directeur-generael* J. van Sevenhuysen (1696–1702) carried out a far-reaching diplomatic initiative in the Ankobra area, with the aim of formally reasserting the fundamental elements of the old "jurisdiction" of Axim. On August 22, the chiefs of Azane, Abokro, and Egila signed a new agreement with the WIC in which they renewed their

allegiance of "vassalage." The agreement followed the same pattern as the one entered in 1687 by Azane alone, and guaranteed the WIC a primacy of control over the river and the surrounding lands. In addition the company undertook to build a fortified position to defend the waterway close to its mouth. However the administrators in Amsterdam would not approve this last point, mainly because of the substantial cost estimated by Van Sevenhuysen. This project would have to wait.[16] The French carefully considered the possibility of setting up a base near the Ankobra river mouth. Father Loyer recorded that a promise was made to the chiefs of Azane, who awaited the arrival of the French ships to start on the construction. Unfortunately he did not specify which of the previous expeditions he was referring to. He added that during his voyage of 1701, Damon made a similar promise to the leaders of Adwɔmɔlɔ, and undertook to start building the base in their territory on his next return to the region.[17] Fearing French intrusion, in 1703 the Dutch set up a trading post armed with cannon on the hill immediately to the east of the river mouth.[18]

In spite of this important recovery of a former position, the WIC found itself in the early eighteenth century with the territory of its "jurisdiction" in the Axim area markedly reduced from its achievements and ambitions of a few decades earlier. Around 1701 W. Bosman, the fort's commander, asserted that the stretch of coast over which Axim could exercise control was limited in the west by the mouth of the Ankobra, while the Brandenburg settlements in Kpɔkɛzo (now Princes Town) and the region of Cape Three Points had reduced the area under its control to the east, given that the eastern half of the old "jurisdiction" of Axim had shifted its support to the new European arrivals.[19]

In the final years of the seventeenth century, increasing competition between Europeans—particularly between the Dutch and the English—was a fundamental contributing factor to the widespread conflict on the Gold Coast. The most important theater of military conflict was that of the Komenda Wars, which between 1694 and 1700 caused Eguafo, a significant polity, to be torn apart by civil conflicts and repeated military interventions by the WIC with further involvement from the English who were challenging the Dutch for control of this coastal outlet of a key trade route. These wars also directly or indirectly involved practically all the polities on the central Gold Coast, including Fante, Twifo, Adom, and Denkyira.[20] However the flow of gold from the interior, substantially down in the final part of the seventeenth century, showed no signs of recovery in this conflictual situation that affected both the coast and the interior. The

Asante revolt, which ended in 1701 with Denkyira's crushing defeat, delivered further blows to the trade routes, and the *directeur-generael* Van Sevenhuysen, who lost no time in contacting the victors, confided that if the final outcome was the creation of a great hegemonic power in the interior, it might ensure a propitious environment for restoring trade and a supply of gold. In reality, the hoped-for recovery in the export of gold never came, and the trends that had become apparent in the local market during the last decades of the seventeenth century were now firmly established: these trends were increasing demand for firearms and increasing exportation of slaves. Van Sevenhuysen's successor, De la Palma, actively supported the WIC involvement in the slave trade and introduced a policy of strengthening the Dutch presence on the Slave Coast. But the Gold Coast itself became a major export market for slaves. Interest in the gold trade returned with P. Nuyts (1705–1708), but it would never recover the importance it once had.[21]

5.2 Vested Interests and Conflict in the Tano Basin

At the end of the 1680s, Aowin was the main power in the regions of the interior between the Ankobra and the Tano, and was also the main producer and exporter of gold on the western section of the Gold Coast. It was also expanding to the west (a process that gave birth to the Anyi polities in today's Ivory Coast). An isolated account of the expansionist policy followed by Aowin chief and military leader Anɔ Asema in our specific area of interest can be found in the documents relating to the French settlement in Assini, in which there is mention of a successful Aowin attack against the "terre d'Ahou" (i.e., the interior of the Nzema region), which was then conquered and its inhabitants captured some time between Ducasse's visit of 1688 and Tibierge's visit of 1692.[22] It would appear then that Aowin was working hard to consolidate its control over the trade routes to the coast of *Axiema*. The period of Aowin's maximum power was shortlived and it soon clashed with the expansion of Denkyira,[23] which had considerable consequences for the polities on the lower reaches of the Ankobra and the Tano. Denkyira attacked and defeated Aowin in the 1690s, and this had dramatic repercussions for the gold trade in the coastal towns. In 1701–1702, W. Bosman noted that trade along the stretch of coast from Assini to the mouth of the Ankobra had become almost irrelevant to Europeans, while nine or ten years earlier it had been flourishing. The cause of this decline was the war

Denkyira fought against Aowin, which both Bosman and Tibierge defined as the principal source of the gold traded in Assini.[24] Aowin put up a spirited defense and achieved some considerable successes, but was then defeated and gradually subjugated because, according to Bosman's observations, the fragility of its political structure, which was too fragmented and too lacking in a central authority, undermined every effort to coordinate the resistance. The defeat of Aowin created a crisis in the gold trade on the western coast; it probably caused a reduction in mining activity and certainly caused the trade to shift to Denkyira and therefore the more easterly routes to the coast, which were under Denkyira's direct control. After the campaign in Aowin, the trade from Denkyira fell considerably and, Bosman complained, the little gold dust that did reach the markets on the western coast was of little value and often actually adulterated.[25] The situation did not change dramatically even after Denkyira's defeat at the hands of the Asante, even though in the early years of the eighteenth century the WIC expected a recovery of the gold trade led by Asante and a reopening of the western trade routes and their return to being the most frequently used routes, particularly the one to Axim.[26]

The far-reaching effects of the changes in the interior interacted with the Franco–Dutch rivalry for control of coastal trade, the establishment of privileged relations with the local powers, and eventually the acquisition of free access to the markets and areas of gold production in the interior. Indeed the fundamental strategy adopted by the small entities to the west of the Ankobra was to defend their position of advantage as intermediaries between Europeans and forest countries, particularly Aowin, by preventing as much as possible direct contact between merchants from Aowin and the trading posts on the coast. This provided them with greater control over prices.

In the short term, Van Sevenhuysen was worried that the French could interfere with the WIC not only in the gold sector but also in the slave trade.[27] The Dutch strategy was to "strangle" Assini's commercial potential by creating and exacerbating conflicts, and impeding or blockading trade. In 1692 Tibierge witnessed a war between Assini and *Egban*, an important gold supplier three days walk from Nsɔkɔ; all trade in that direction was out of the question, but we have no information about any possible Dutch involvement.[28] In 1698, Damon wrote that this long conflict, now at an end, had left the areas to the north of the Aby Lagoon depopulated and weakened. He mentioned another war between Assini and the "the king of Allé," but clarified that the contenders were about to conclude a peace agreement. *Allé* was only one of the enemies the Dutch provoked against Assini,

after *Akassini*, the principal local chief, refused the WIC's gifts worth 20,000 escudos to abandon his alliance with the French, according to what he told Damon. The clashes, which started in 1696, dragged on for two years.[29] At the time of Damon's next voyage in 1701–1702, there was even clearer evidence of Dutch involvement in the increasingly conflictual situation locally. On June 23, 1701, shortly after the expedition had landed with the intention of building the French-fortified base, *Akassini* was informed by a member of his family resident in Axim territory that men from the WIC were putting pressure on two neighboring "kings" to attack Assini for the purpose of forcing it to drive out its Europeans. Moreover dangerous tensions had grown up between the French and the Ewuture. According to Damon, the Dutch had persuaded chiefs on the lagoons to boycott the building work on the French outpost by closing the waterways and impeding access to the forest areas where there were trees with high trunks suitable for the construction of palisades and accommodation. Damon wrote that he made every effort to contain the impatience of those members of the local ruling group who wanted to go to war immediately, and convinced *Akassini* to make diplomatic approaches to the adversaries the Dutch had been stirring up against the French. Sadly the French commander did not mention the names of the enemy "kings," but the fact that these were powers bordering with Assini and situated in the direction of Axim restricts the field to the now familiar names of Awiane, ɛlɛnda, Edobo, and Adwɔmɔlɔ. *Akassini* sent a mission with his proposals, and it returned to the royal residence in Nsɔkɔ within two weeks with the plenipotentiaries of his potential enemies. A peace agreement was reached against a sum that according to Damon was equivalent to 500 escudos, paid by *Akassini* but disbursed by the French to each of the opposing parties and ratified by the ceremony of *amolilɛ*, sworn agreement with the taking of a potion.[30] The hostility of the Ewuture was overcome through the good offices of *Aymont* (or *Emond*), *Akassini*'s maternal nephew, who was a close friend of one of the principal Ewuture chiefs. This move opened the way for *Akassini*'s official mission; he sent his younger brother, Nyamekɛ (*Yam Moqué*), to visit the Ewuture chiefs. During the public assembly that followed, they discussed matters relating to trade with the French and the role of the Ewuture in this activity (about which Damon provided no further information). The Europeans undertook to give presents to the four chiefs in exchange for peace undertaking and they also entered *amolilɛ*. Construction work on the fort was immediately resumed and was completed on August 24.[31]

It is quite clear that the French were instrumental, minor, and certainly not decisive protagonists in these developments in the local politics in which they found themselves involved. France's fortunes in the area proved to be ephemeral. Following the failed attempt by the *directeur-generael* of the WIC, De La Palma, to dislodge the French through his attack on November 13, 1702, the Dutch engaged in intense diplomatic activity to obtain the release of prisoners held in *Assini* (two fell into African hands and nine escaped massacre by seeking refuge in the French fort). De La Palma initially approached the French, but they were cut out of the negotiations by *Akassini*, who had control of the correspondence between the Europeans, as it was sent through him and he was able to have it read (by *Aniaba* and *Banga*). Loyer wrote that those who were in charge of the garrison acceded to *Akassini*'s request that they should hand over the negotiations to him and not respond to De La Palma, because they wanted to avoid any conflict with *Akassini*, conscious as they were of his desire to be involved in all negotiations and of the fort's dependency on him for supplies. After a series of exchange of messages between Elmina and Nsɔkɔ, a large negotiating delegation arrived at *Akassini*'s residence on January 10, 1703, led by a chief in the service of the WIC, *Kofik* (Kofi)—covered, as Loyer pointed out, with gold chains and jewellery—with the rank of plenipotentiary, and accompanied by "a great number of negroes and nobles of the kingdoms neighboring Axim," who were in effect the chiefs of the polities to the west of the Ankobra. A woman called *Afamouchou*, who Loyer defined as the Queen of Adwɔmɔlɔ, stands out in his description. On January 17, the negotiations reached their conclusion and De La Palma's ambassador, on whose exceptional abilities Loyer remarked, departed from Nsɔkɔ with the Dutch prisoners for whom he had paid no ransom. Indeed *Akassini* freed them without asking anything in return and also sent 10 gold *bendas* to the WIC's director, in order, according to Loyer, to appease him and prevent him from taking revenge. The French took no part in the negotiations. Loyer noted that in other circumstances this exclusion would have triggered a violent reaction, and observed that at least the release of the prisoners freed the garrison from the duty to share their already meager food rations.[32]

The exclusion of the French is a clear indicator of how their prestige had collapsed among the ruling group in Assini, and heralded the imminent and inglorious closure of their settlement. The end came in July 1703, when the garrison quickly evacuated the fort and effectively fled without the local sentries noticing. Things had come to a head at a meeting with *Akassini*, who had reproached the French

for not having paid the agreed compensation to cover the costs of his military support during the attack (500 gold *bendas*). By De La Palma's own admission, Dutch agents had been actively fomenting dissent within the enemy alliance.[33] But the fundamental reason was obviously the profound disappointment of *Akassini* and the Essuma with the few benefits that had accrued from the alliance. This was a common development in France's repeated attempts to set up a stable presence in Guinea during this period, and resulted from the French inability to guarantee steady trade with the mother-country that was sufficient to maintain a permanent base and to justify the granting by the African partners of a privileged trading position and above all a fortified foreign presence in their territories. In short, the French base in Assini had not only proved to be of little use in satisfying the local demand for merchandize, but had also come with the risk of outside military intervention, as the Dutch attack had proved, and a subsequent defensive requirement (the attackers had been defeated as a result of African military action). *Akassini* was already aware of this reality when it came to the negotiations over the release of the Dutch prisoners. His decision to return them without requiring a ransom was probably more to do with his wish to distance himself from the French and organize a valid alternative to their presence, than with his fear of a Dutch reprisal. It should be noted that the negotiations between the parties were carried out exclusively by Africans, something that Loyer remarked upon because the negotiations concerned the release of several white prisoners.[34] Following the ignominious Dutch rout and the feeble French performance, it was entirely understandable that the initiative was taken by the indigenous parties. The effectiveness of De La Palma's policy was his ability to make WIC interests (the release of the prisoners and the reinstatement of commercial relations) a component in the negotiations between local parties. However, it was up to these local parties to negotiate a new balance of power.

Following the departure of the French, *Akassini* offered the WIC the possibility of rebuilding their fort. De La Palma tried to convince his superiors in Amsterdam of the advantageousness of a permanent presence at the outlet of an important trade route in the revival of the gold trade from Aowin and Denkyira, which would have guaranteed at least part of the business going to interloper ships. However the tragic outcome of the military encounter in November 1702 and the fate suffered by the French were powerful discouraging factors. The directors of the WIC told De La Palma to avoid taking any initiative,[35] and pointed out the difficulties in dealing peacefully with

such an "undependable" population. In other words there were costs and imponderables in maintaining a presence that had to be continuously renegotiated with a strong and well-organized local power that was fully conscious of its own interests and its strong negotiating position.

5.3 Vested Interests and Conflict in the Ankobra Basin

Adwɔmɔlɔ played an important part in the events that have just been recounted. According to Loyer who met its "queen" *Afamouchou* in Nsɔkɔ on January 10, 1703, the Dutch were actively courting her in the hope of obtaining permission to build a fort on her land, but she preferred to enter an agreement with the French on the basis of Damon's promise (apparently made in 1701) to build a base in Adwɔmɔlɔ on his next return to the region. Loyer claimed that, on one of his visits to Nsɔkɔ, *Afamouchou* told the French she was willing to wait a little longer for the hoped-for arrival of ships from Europe before accepting De La Palma's offers.[36] The Dutch documents hint at contacts with the *caboceers* of Adwɔmɔlɔ (although they do not mention the "queen") in October and November of 1702 in relation to the possible raising of their flag and the establishment of a fort. They then record the use of the good offices of these chiefs in the negotiations to free the prisoners, for which the chiefs were remunerated with six gold ounces each.[37]

During this period, the leaders of Adwɔmɔlɔ clearly looked favorably on the presence of a permanent European trading presence. The creation of the French settlement in Assini and the strengthening of the Dutch position on the Ankobra appeared to suggest that there would shortly be a more secure system of residential posts for European trade even in the western section of the Gold Coast, which traditionally had been the domain of interloper traffic. This trade was still concentrating its operations on the markets in Cape Appolonia, which had now become autonomous from Adwɔmɔlɔ. This latter polity was therefore at risk of being suffocated commercially: it could become marginal to the trade in the shipping lanes off Cape Appolonia and could be bypassed as a market if Assini eventually established itself as the preferred coastal outlet for the more westerly trade routes to Aowin. An integral relationship with one or more of the European trading posts in the area therefore became an important strategic factor in negotiations, and the bargaining power of the ruling group in Adwɔmɔlɔ could benefit from keeping negotiations open with two

competitors at the same time. They could play off the WIC against the French, whose position was now decidedly weaker.

However the closure of the trading post in Assini meant that once again there was everything to play for. As we have seen, once there was no danger of competition, the WIC did not feel it was necessary to invest in the expansion of its permanent presence to the west and it preferred to concentrate on developing its base at the mouth of the Ankobra. The coast to the west, including Adwɔmɔlɔ, was once again the exclusive domain of interloper trade, while the concentration on the Ankobra placed the Dutch in a highly competitive situation with the trade directed to the coastal markets further to the west. The company made every effort over a wide area to consolidate at least two main trade routes toward the trading post on the Ankobra: one route from Aowin and another from Asante (an emissary from Osei Tutu, the founder of Asante, arrived in Axim in 1706).[38]

In the early eighteenth century, relations between Aowin and Azane were not good, which was demonstrated by the preference of Aowin merchants for the trade route to Adwɔmɔlɔ and Cape Appolonia rather than the one to Ankobra and Axim (it is difficult to know whether this was cause or effect). In 1706 this friction became so serious that the chiefs of Azane asked the WIC to change their trading post at the river mouth into a small stone-built fortress capable of ensuring effective protection for the locals. They also implied that in the case of a refusal, they would have driven off of the Dutch company's employees and invited the English or the Brandenburgians.[39] J. Landman, the *fitoor* of the WIC in Axim, sent one of his more junior officials to accompany a mission of Azane chiefs to Aowin with a proposal for peace and the opening of a stable and direct trade route to the trading post on the Ankobra. The proposal was immediately greeted with approval from the Aowin chiefs, who responded by sending an impressive diplomatic and trade mission to the Dutch trading post, made up of 300 members with a cow and other gifts for Landman. But in August 1706, the group found its way to Cape Appolonia blocked by local people, and only part of it could continue to the mouth of the Ankobra, where it arrived on September 1 with a large amount of gold to trade. A few days later Landman's envoy to Aowin returned to Axim with a gift of nine gold rings (with a value of 10 marks) from the principal chiefs of Aowin, who had declared the most direct route from Aowin to Azane through the forest interior was now open and secure after a peace agreement, and they intended to start using it regularly. This would have meant avoiding the routes to Adwɔmɔlɔ and Cape Appolonia. Landman expressed his hope that they would be

able to maintain their undertaking when interloper ships anchor off that stretch of coast.[40] During the following months there was a considerable increase in trade on Ankobra Hill, and even by September the *fitoor* was going to the trouble of sending the Aowin chiefs two ceremonial rods with silver pommels (probably decorated with the WIC coat of arms) for use as a badge to distinguish the groups of merchants moving along the route between Aowin and Ankobra. The purpose of this was to ensure that employees of the Brandenburg company did not make use of the new trade route and attempt to penetrate the trade between the WIC and Aowin. In December, Landman noted that the trading situation was particularly favorable both at the mouth of the Ankobra and in Axim, where the positive response to an Asante approach led to a large group of merchants being sent by Osei Tutu. The *fitoor* observed that demand for rifles, cloth, and mirrors was so high that the supplies guaranteed by the company were insufficient, which meant the loss of reliable profits. There was a massive upturn in the gold trade along this section of the coast and, as the English governor of Cape Coast Castle observed, the WIC's revenues in Axim and Ankobra (70 marks every two months) exceeded those for all the other Dutch trading posts on the Gold Coast put together. At the end of December, the WIC council in Elmina decided to resume the work on transforming the trading post on the Ankobra into a proper fort, in part to avoid any disaffection among the locals and their subsequent search for other European partners.[41] The WIC directors were fully aware of the fragile nature of this state of affairs. In 1707, for example, trade with Aowin underwent a sudden fall,[42] and the attractions of interloper trade were by no means exorcised by the agreements over the new forest route, just as Landman had feared. In early February 1707 the *fitoor* of Axim recorded that a large caravan of merchants from Aowin had used the old route and halted at Cape Appolonia, and then on leaving for Ankobra, it had stopped and returned to the cape as soon as locals informed them that an interloper ship had been seen. In other words, this was a system in which the indigenous merchants maximized their profits from trade and exercised an effective downward pressure on prices imposed in the Dutch trading post.[43]

The strategy implemented by Landman and the *directeur-generael* Nuyts in order to stabilize satisfactorily the Dutch trading position in the western areas of the coast was based on the Ankobra hub and was backed up diplomatically in at least two ways. On a more general level they made an approach to Wassa, the great political entity to the north and northeast of Egila. In this phase the principal chief of

Wassa, Gyetua (*Jetuan*) adopted a soft approach in his resistance to Asante expansionism, which was finalizing its replacement of Denkyira, and he put himself forward as an ally in the southwest in an attempt to gain Asante support for an attack on Twifo. Landman came up with the idea of supporting Gyetua in this enterprise by providing a loan for the costs involved in purchasing arms and Asante support. This was to increase the profitability of the Ankobra-Wassa-Asante trade route. The upheavals caused in early 1707 by hostilities between Asante and Denkyira made it impossible to meet the Wassa chief to negotiate the loan, which meeting according to Landman's plans had to be held in Egila, where Fort Ruychaver had previously stood. Relations with Wassa and Asante emerged as the key to Dutch regional policy.[44]

In the more immediate area, Landman's policy was to relaunch the traditional alliance and physical presence in Egila and the other small polities along the river. On July 13, 1707, J. Landman sailed up the Ankobra with the chiefs of Axim and Azane as far as Abokro, where he met the leaders of the area, that is, the chiefs of *Sur Jumoré* (today Adwɔmɔlɔ-Apatem) and the principal chiefs of Egila. A general assembly confirmed and renewed the mutual undertakings in the 1697 agreement, which was read and translated publicly. The chiefs of Axim and Azane were the guarantors and witnesses of this new agreement.[45] These aims, although restricted to Axim Fort's more immediate area of activity, were not any easier to implement effectively than the more general plans. Indeed the WIC's local partners, over whom it had only very limited influence, tended to exploit continuously their considerable freedom of choice, and were only nominally bound by the agreements entered into with the company. Their most common expedient was to keep open channels of communication with other European interests in competition with the Dutch, if for no other reason than to increase their bargaining power with the WIC. Besides, local chiefs had every reason to complain about the failure of the Dutch to fulfill their own undertakings. Indeed, in line with a well-established economic principle, the WIC's efforts and investments to preserve control of a market position that was proving extremely fruitful remained extremely contained in spite of the demands, the irritation, and the repeated threats of the chiefs of Azane. The company failed to initiate the transformation of the Ankobra trading post into a fort.[46]

In the early years of the eighteenth century, the chiefs of Azane began to think of the English and the Brandenburgians as possible alternative partners to the WIC. In September 1709 Sir Dalby Thomas, the

Agent-General in Cape Coast Castle for the Royal African Company of England, wrote that the chiefs of Azane had asked him to have the English build a fort or at least a commercial base in the area, but he had declined because he did not want to compromise his relations with the WIC, with whom the English company had reached a *modus vivendi* after a long period of bitter rivalry.[47] Dalby Thomas added that things would obviously change if the always difficult relationship with the Dutch were to break down. An English trading post close to the river mouth would have caused serious damage to the WIC, which was making considerable profits from the trade controlled by Ankobra Hill. In any case, Dalby Thomas sent an emissary, Captain Clark, to contact the leaders (*the Cabbashires*) of Cape Appolonia to discuss the possibility of creating a base that might prove the most profitable English base on the entire coast.[48] This initiative did not however produce any concrete results, and the Royal African Company's competitive challenge to the WIC remained little more than a threat along this section of the coast.

5.4 Adwɔmɔlɔ and Cape Appolonia in the Early Eighteenth Century

Over the entire period described in this chapter, Adwɔmɔlɔ and Cape Appolonia continued to be the preferred coastal outlets for trade from Aowin and to be frequently visited by interlopers, as these areas did not have territorial bases belonging to European companies operating in the region. These companies did consider establishing a permanent presence or alternatively reducing (if not entirely neutralising) its competition with the trade routes they controlled, but they only managed to pursue such policies intermittently and without producing any lasting results. The leaders of Cape Appolonia and Adwɔmɔlɔ, who no longer constituted a political unit after the Wassa attack of 1684, held different views on whether or not they should accept the location of European trading posts on their territory: the former were against it, as they had found a satisfactory solution in the free offshore trade, whereas the latter were open to the possibility because they had only a very short stretch of the coast and based their success in trade on their control of the final tracts of the trade routes from the interior, and they used this leverage to strengthen their position in relation to Cape Appolonia and particularly Assini and Azane, the other outlets for trade from Aowin.

The few available sources do not provide much information on the situation in Adwɔmɔlɔ, and prefer to dwell on the unusual woman

who ruled this polity in the first part of the eighteenth century. Loyer was one of these sources:

> Guyomray is a kingdom located in Cape Appolonia to the east of Issyny . . . At the moment, a woman is its queen, or rather in questions of valour this is an Amazon who personally goes into battle, and commands and disciplines her armies. She is called Afamouchou, and succeeded her only brother who had been king but never wanted to marry. There is nothing womanly about her. She walks in a somber and proud manner, and her appearance and behaviour have a martial and intrepid air that inspires respect and veneration. When she walks, she is preceded by ten of her women or courtesans, and followed a guard with an equal number of armed soldiers.[49]

Afamouchou was a *belemgbunli raalɛ*, which meant a female chief who, to all intents and purposes, has inherited the position from the previous chief. This status was characterized by the markedly manly traits required of a chief and the suppression of the office holder's womanhood. She was clearly an important figurehead in the region and her rule was a long one. It appears then that *Afamouchou* was still in office 20 years after her meeting with Loyer.[50] As late as 1721 the Englishman J. Atkins repeatedly met the "queen" to discuss trade, and she lived near Cape Appolonia. According to his records, she was a well-known personality and, on their second meeting, was completely absorbed in military affairs, as we shall see.

The sources do not mention the name of any settlement in new Adwɔmɔlɔ, nor where the court of this "queen" was located. They do not even tell us whether it was on the coast or in the interior.[51] On the other hand, they do emphasize the importance of trade in the area of the main commodities of interest to the Europeans:

> The Kingdom of Guiomeré . . . is . . . very rich and has much trade; whether it has its own goldmines or whether gold is obtained from other countries that do, the fact is that this metal is very common. There is also a great deal of trade in ivory and slaves, who are prisoners the Queen took during wars with her neighbours.[52]

The *belemgbunli raalɛ* managed to concentrate effective government and military power in her hands, and the latter was under her personal command because of her aptitude for warfare. Her political power, which granted her control of gold production and the acquisition of ivory, and her military power, which meant she could dispose of the prisoners of war as she wished, turned her into the leading merchant

in her dominions. Loyer wrote of *Afamouchou*'s natural bent for trade and Atkins was a witness to how this "queen" of Adwɔmɔlɔ carried out her commercial transactions; for instance, she sent a large sum in gold to the English merchantman as a present to encourage good business.[53]

An important account of the Cape Appolonia area was provided by N. Uring, who sailed on an English merchantman, and in 1710 came ashore to one of its settlements, Abolezo, in the company of Captain Forster. They stayed there for two days as guests of one of the leading merchants in the town. Uring's brief description of the excursion provides us with rare first-hand information on the area and the organization of local society.

> The land is moderately high, making in several hills; at the foot of which, close by the Sea-side, stands six large towns, the farthest distance between them don't appear to be above two miles, the names of them are Ponjura, Abrosoe, Adjusan, Yamanoe, Guanboe and Apolonia by the side of which last a fine river falls into the Sea.[54]

It is not difficult to identify five of the six towns mentioned by Uring. They are listed from west to east: *Ponjura* is Bɔnyɛlɛ, *Aborosoe* is Abolezo (an area that is currently uninhabited and was located at the top of a small hill on whose slopes Alɛnrɛnzule is now located),[55] *Adjusan* is Agyeza (which still exists), and *Yemanoe* is Nyɛmanu (which no longer exists).[56] The name *Guanboe* is not so easy to interpret, although it was undoubtedly somewhere in the territory of modern Kɛnrɛne and ancient Adwɔmɔlɔ. Perhaps *Guanboe* is an approximation of Adwɔmɔlɔ.[57] There is no doubt that *Apolonia* was Elonyi Kpole (Great Elonyi), the main settlement that gave rise to modern Elonyi, which is situated just to the east of the river mouth of the same name.

Writing about Abolezo, Uring mentioned some chiefs (*chief men* or *cabocers*) of the place, as well as his host, whom he described as an important businessman but whose position in the local hierarchy he did not identify.[58] However in Uring's other observations on the political organization in the Cape Appolonia area, it becomes fairly clear that power was shared within the group of big-men and there was no emphasis on dominant figures at the top of hierarchy:

> By what I could learn, this town as well as the other five adjacent towns before-named, were independent of each other, and each town was a little commonwealth, their cabocers being of the best families and richest among them. When any dispute arose, they met and heard their

> complaints, . . . and if they found any powerful enemy had any design to attack them, the six towns came into a confederacy.[59]

The system described is a structure with dispersed and decentralized power, whose forms of coordination were irregular and related to their needs to defend themselves. Uring did not mention any "royal" figure who extended his jurisdiction over the entire area. This does not mean of course that it was impossible to choose a joint leader in the event of a military emergency; such a position would have been comparable with the *braffo* referred to in Dutch documents in the mid-seventeenth century.[60] However, the upheavals of 1684 and the subsequent political fragmentation led to the demise of the superior chief of whom we have evidence from a few decades earlier, although even then power was not particularly centralized. This royal figure did not disappear, but was restricted to Adwɔmɔlɔ; indeed it was the main expression of the primacy of its ruling group in relation to the other groups in the area for historical reasons associated with its ancestral occupation of the land. But it lost this role by abandoning its capital near Cape Appolonia and migrating elsewhere. The immigration of substantial and well-organized groups with their own commercial interests and their willingness to unite with the local population, and the plurality of competing trading centers on the coast of Cape Appolonia, each with a considerable number of important merchants, was not conducive to the strengthening of a central power and hence one was not reconstituted after the ruling group of Adwɔmɔlɔ went into exile.

Uring visited a well-organized society with a large population, the great majority of which was engaged in fishing and agriculture, while a small group of notables controlled extensive trading concerns.[61] The main crops were plantains and yams ("roots"), but there was also a certain amount of maize ("Indian corn") and calabashes (*calevances*).[62] A decade later, Atkins recorded that maize was the main agricultural product and noted that much of the land around the Cape had been reclaimed from the bush and cultivated with this crop (maize was the main staple crop for slaves. Expansion in its production usually indicated a growing slave trade).[63] Gold, ivory, and slaves were the main goods purchased by Europeans. The slaves sold in this area, Uring wrote, were brought in from locations several hundred miles inland and were traded at higher prices than in the markets further to the west on the *Quaqua* Coast.[64] Cape Appolonia, which was not a local market but rather the terminus for a large export route, was a particularly important slave market at the time of J. Atkins' visit.

His brief portrayal of local society described it as more refined and complex than any other society to its west, and much more open to trade and relations with the outside world in general:

> At Cape *Apollonia*, the Natives are of a jet black, very lively and bold, accustomed to trade, and better fetished than their Neighbours; have cleaner and larger *Tomys* [huts],[65] wear Amber Beads, Copper Rings, Cowrys, and their Wooll twisted in numberless little Rings and Tufts, with bits of Shell, Straw, or Gold twisted in them. They have all a Dagger † cut in their Cheek, and often in other Parts of their Body: a Custom preserved among a few, down to the Gold Coast . . . All we learn is, its being a very ancient Custom and distinguishes them from the Country, who they *Panyarr* and sell for Slaves.[66]

This recalls Uring's assertion, "the Natives of Cape Apolonia are much more civilized than those of the Quaqua coast, and traded in a good decorum."[67] Atkins also provided interesting information on prices and commercial procedures. Slaves were sold for four ounces of gold each and a real average cost to the European buyer of eight pounds sterling. On top of this sum, the chiefs imposed a duty of 20 shillings, while 10 shillings went to the broker or *palaver-man*; these percentages were considerably higher than the more westerly markets and Atkins inferred that organized enslavement must have been a trade particularly cultivated by the local ruling group. Brass handbasins were among the goods most traded with the European traders, along with those universally traded along the Gulf of Guinea such as weapons, gunpowder, tallow, alcohol, sheets, and cotton fabrics of various kinds, and those in greatest demand on the western section of the coast (including crystalware, coral, and machetes with brass decoration).[68]

Chapter 6

Big Men, Imperial Dynamics, and Local Powers

The power vacuum created in 1701 by the Asante victory over Denkyira strengthened the role of polities like Aowin and Wassa in the western Gold Coast. However Asante lost little time in making its influence felt in regional questions and asserting its own strategic interests in the tangle of interests and rivalries among large and small powers. In the area that concerns us here, this introduced a period marked by repeated outbreaks of fierce warfare that was to have dramatic consequences on the political structures and demography.

The power structures were affected by the appearance of leaders who pursued plans to extend their hegemony far beyond the socio-political realities they belonged to and in whose existing order they had deep roots. They did so by attempting to maintain control over whole sectors (both geographical sectors and market sectors) crucial to trade between the coast and the interior.

Like their predecessors for the previous century (such as Mɛnla and Koloko), these personalities had very close links with the Europeans.[1] In some cases, they were the commercial brokers who acted for European companies, although they often also acted against the interests of their partners. Unlike their predecessors, however, the so-called "merchant-princes" of the eighteenth-century coastal areas, at least in some cases, had a greater ability to control and mobilize human and financial resources, and created much more extensive, efficient, and lasting power structures. This development was the necessary response to the changes in and scale of

the power dynamics of the region following the formation of new "imperial" state entities in the forest areas, as well as the growth in slave trade.

The concentration of power in a reduced number of centers in the interior resulted in a similar reduction in the number of important coastal intermediaries and a considerable increase in their turnover and their political and military power. As had already occurred with the Denkyira ruling group but to a lesser degree, the Asante ruling group developed their trade in accordance with the needs and rationale of their political and military expansion, which drove them to prefer formally agreed trade routes under strict control from the center ("state commerce"), and this involved lasting agreements with their European partners. It became essential for the really powerful coastal African traders to have access to a sufficient number of market outlets. This was because the new powers in the interior tended to change them according to the contingencies of war and tactical opportunities, and it was therefore important to be present, preferably in a dominant position, in various coastal markets at some distance from each other. At the same time, this policy of the coastal brokers aimed at maintaining a turnover in business sufficient to sustain their position as attractive partners for the great imperial powers of the interior, and at exercising effective forms of control over prices. Moreover trade in human beings on a large scale requires an organized "production" of goods, which is more rigid and exclusive than, for example, the gold trade. This "production" was in practice the result of war or, in any case, activities like the administration of justice that are mainly controlled by the political top.

It must be emphasized that the credit system was of much greater importance to the new eighteenth-century "merchant-prince" as a type than to his seventeenth-century predecessors. As R. Kea has pointed out, interest rates, which were around 25 percent per annum during the second half of the seventeenth century, rose to 100 percent by the 1730s.[2]

Politically these processes were at the very root of the creation of more concentrated and centralized power structures based on wealth, which often *de facto* incorporated more existing political and territorial units, and either integrated the old ruling groups into themselves or simply replaced them.

Some historians have considered the so-called merchant-princes to be a new form of social hegemony with clear oligarchic characteristics—one might say a kind of "buyer aristocracy"[3]—and emphasize the individual power of the entrepreneur–politician,

which was built by bypassing the loyalties of groupings like the *abusua*, the matriclan, the local political entity, et cetera.[4] On the other hand, everyone has ignored the way these leaders positioned themselves within the networks of relations between groups that ran across the boundaries of local communities and polities. These networks are key elements in the region's socio-political organization. This viewpoint must always be borne in mind in any historical analysis, given that it makes it possible to understand better fundamental strategic decisions by putting them in their proper context. This is of particular importance to this study as the creation of the "Kingdom of Appolonia" marked the success of a group of "merchant-princes" at the same time as the failure of similar attempts in the same region by other exponents of the same social type.

6.1 The West Coast during *Jan Conny* Years

Between 1711 and 1726 local events were markedly influenced by the famous "merchant-prince" of Kpɔkɛzo (today's Kpulisi-Princes Town), Kɔne Kpole, who was known to Europeans as *Jan Conny* or *Dikke Jan* (*dikke*: a Dutch word for fat).[5] From 1711, *Conny*, a broker for the Brandenburg company, started to acquire a *de facto* control over the three company's bases (Fort Gross-Friedrichsburg and the two minor forts at Atinkyin/Cape Three Points and Akooda), and he ended up dominating trade in the entire Ahanta area. He encouraged trade with interlopers and seriously harmed the business of the English in Dixcove and the Dutch in Axim.[6] During the 1710s and 1720s, *Conny*, who was at the center of a highly complicated story of rivalries and conflicts, managed on several occasions to obtain the support of Wassa, Twifo, and Aowin and also attempted to involve the growing power of Asante on his side. *Conny* enjoyed considerable support to the west of the Ankobra and was capable of influencing with varying degrees of success the internal balance of power within local polities, which throughout this complex story were occasionally in favor of *Conny* and occasionally against him, as the alliances were frequently reversed and overlapped with collateral and internecine conflicts among the various protagonists.

The events concerning *Conny* have been recounted in a few historical works on the Gold Coast.[7] However it has to be said that this figure has only been studied in terms of traditional political and diplomatic history, without examining the socio-political context. On this point, it is worth mentioning that the speed with which *Conny* became a commercial and military power feared by the Europeans can

only be explained by the widespread support he could rely upon over a wide region: not only Ahanta and Wassa but also *Axiema*, particularly the communities of Azane, ɛlɛmgbenle, Cape Appolonia, and probably Adwɔmɔlɔ, Awiane, and (new) Assini. Local tradition conserves a clear memory of *Conny*'s network and expresses it in terms of "kinship," putting great emphasis on the ascription of *Conny* to the Mafolɛ matriclan, many of whose *mbusua* claim him as one of their ancestors, particularly the large Mafolɛ group that today includes an important section of the population of Adoabo and Benyinli, and controls much of the surrounding land.[8] Tradition holds that the Mafolɛ are particularly skilled in accumulating wealth, and associates them with business activities.[9] This matriclan is also called Asɛmangama after an ancient commercial hub in Wassa. Asɛmangama did not have good relations with the Dutch, who were pleased when, in the beginning of 1728, the town was attacked and conquered by Ntsiful, the main leader of Wassa and an adversary of *Conny*, causing an exodus of the population in various other areas that were clearly already part of a system of relations with Asɛmangama at its center. These emigrants linked up with the Mafolɛ in the southwest.[10] This context of powerful regional relations with branches stretching in many directions was undoubtedly the one in which *Conny* was able to build his success.

At the beginning of 1711, a dispute broke out between *Conny* and Akpole (*Appre*, *Appree*, *Apperry*; nicknamed *de Paap* by the Dutch), an important notable in Axim and an intermediary (*makelaar*) for the WIC. It concerned a woman, Adwoba, whom Akpole claimed as one of his slaves and who had sought refuge with *Conny* and asked his protection as he was a relation. The dispute, whose terms and procedures were entirely typical of the local language of power, was an assertion of primacy between personalities who both represented conglomerates of interests in fierce competition with each other. Both the contenders could count on a wide range of supporters configured geographically in order to "strangle" the adversary. The "friends of Akpole" had their strongholds in Axim and Dixcove, which therefore put pressure on Kpɔkɛzo from both the east and the west, and also had the promise of assistance from the Dutch in Axim. *Conny*, who could boast several allies in Ahanta and Wassa,[11] enjoyed solid support in Azane, as well as Butri and Dixcove itself (through the two notables *Obim* and *Nanta*, respectively) and was therefore capable of acting on several fronts. The inevitable trial of strength was triggered by Akpole, who unsuccessfully attacked Kpɔkɛzo and was forced into a disastrous retreat. *Conny* then inflicted a terrible blow on Akpole's supporters by driving them from Dixcove with *Nanta*'s support.

These developments alarmed the English in Dixcove and in particular the Dutch, who organized an impressive coalition of forces against *Conny*, but war did not break out and in October 1712 an agreement was reached with the mediation of the English and the Prussians. The dispute between *Conny* and Akpole was taken to a joint court of elders of Axim and Kpɔkɛzo, which condemned *Conny* and his allies to pay considerable reparations to the English and the Dutch. In practice, however, *Conny* was the victor in this clash. In a short time, he had taken control of Ahanta; he "protected" the Brandenburg presence, which was now a shadow of its former self, and his military force, which had been strengthened by operational agreements with contingents from Wassa, was the largest of those controlled by a single power on the Gold Coast. He would never pay all the reparations stipulated in the peace agreement.[12]

Conny enjoyed strong support in Azane. At precisely this time, there had been a deterioration in the tense relations and commercial competition between Axim and the communities on the Ankobra; paradoxically the success of the trading post at the mouth of the river was the main cause of this increasing tension. The WIC personnel living at the new base openly competed with the WIC fort in Axim. The two markets, which were only a few kilometres apart, were taking customers away from each other. While local traders took advantage of this situation to increase their contractual power and influence prices, it was equally true that this unique competition between two units of the same European company offered excellent opportunities for exploitation by coalitions of power and competing interest to form within the local society. The alliances that lined up with the outbreak of the dispute between Akpole and *Conny* made all this clear to the WIC directors who attempted to lessen at least one of the causes of the fracture in the local power structure by unifying the leadership and commercial management of the trading posts in Axim and on the Ankobra.[13] This measure came too late, and in any case was insufficient to remedy the flagging business activity. Trade in Axim and Ankobra had been practically halted for two reasons. The first was competition from *Conny*, who was capable of maintaining his commercial hegemony by using his effective political and military clout along with the harassment inflicted by his Wassa allies on his neighbors and rivals. The second was the deterioration in relations between Cape Appolonia and Azane, which continued because of the intrinsic competition between two important markets. As early as the beginning of 1714, Cape Appolonia had resumed its blockade on merchants traveling to the trading post at the mouth of the Ankobra.[14]

However, the change in the administrative status of this trading post and its return to a more cooperative approach to Axim's commercial position did in time produce significant results: it undoubtedly helped to improve relations between Azane's leaders and Axim with its fort, thus distancing them from *Conny*'s strategy of encirclement and bringing them over to the WIC plan that aimed to recreate the old block made up of Azane, Abokro, and Axim (these were the years in which H. Haring was *directeur-generael* and W. Butler *fitoor* of Axim). This recovery of the Dutch position came to a head in 1715, when there was a split between *Conny* and the principal chief of Azane, Bɛnga (*Pinga*). Once again, the various options for alliances were based on a jurisdictional dispute over subordinates. At the beginning of 1715, two members of *Conny*'s personal retinue, *Bossum* and *Cra*, fled and sought refuge with Bɛnga.[15] The latter refused to return them to their master, but because of his fear of attack, he entrusted them to the Dutch commander of Axim who, with the agreement of his superior, exploited the situation to force *Conny* to complete the payment of reparations decreed by the 1712 arbitration. These developments reignited the conflict. Bɛnga established an alliance with Akpole, *Conny*'s old adversary, and *Conny* rejected the Dutch demands for payment. He insisted that his men be handed over and increasingly backed this up with acts to demonstrate his power. He captured inhabitants of Elmina and Axim as hostages, put an enormous price on the heads of Bɛnga and the fort commander, and imposed a blockade on Axim using his Wassa allies, which prevented all supplies getting to the town and fort overland. Inside Axim, moreover, there was a split between *mgbanyima* (chiefs and elders) and *mgbavolɛ* (youths): the latter, who constituted the majority of the military force, were opposed to conflict with *Conny* and favored an agreement with this popular figure.[16]

But at this stage, a limited local dispute had become an important part of a game for much higher stakes, distinguished above all by a clash between Asante and Aowin. During this period Aowin was a formidable obstacle to Asante expansion to the southwest and pursued a policy of military control over the markets of the middle reaches of the River Tano, but in particular it was the main area of settlement for migrants from the east and the main destination for a great number of deserters, dissidents, and elements generally unhappy with their situation in Asante, Wassa, Denkyira, Twifo, and other areas. The Aowin authorities welcomed the migrants and favored their settlement in the vast and underpopulated forest region. However this provoked resentment among their western neighbors.[17] Around March or April

of 1715 Aowin troops were fighting on two fronts: against Nsɔkɔ (*Socco*), which is the (new) Assini region,[18] and Great Nkasa in the southwest.[19]

Asante would decide to attack Aowin by the end of 1714, with the support of Wassa and Twifo. The two main Wassa chiefs, Gyetua (*Jetwan*) and Agyepa, were summoned to the Asante capital, Kumase, in December 1714, apparently to determine the terms for joint action.[20] At the beginning of 1715, we find Wassa forces building up in Azane and Abokro, where they were used by Bɛnga in his conflict with Cape Appolonia. These Wassa, whom Bɛnga was clearly unable to control fully and who acted with a wide margin of autonomy, repeatedly blocked or extorted levies from groups of Aowin merchants heading for Axim after leaving the hub constituted by the district of Motwekrom.[21] These were clearly actions aimed at striking Aowin's strategic supply lines; indeed, as Butler has noted, Aowin merchants were only buying arms and gunpowder during this period. Moreover they avoided paying in gold dust, which was generally hoarded during periods of conflict (partly because of the possibility of having to pay ransoms, reparations, and other liabilities imposed by warfare), and they preferred to pay for munitions with slaves, a commodity they clearly possessed in large amounts as a result of the fighting. The blockade of this market, which provided important supplies, created considerable difficulties for Aowin, especially since access to Cape Appolonia had also become difficult following the outbreak of a conflict between the Cape and a section of Aowin. These actions by the Wassa effectively caused the near total suspension of trade in Axim and the trading post on the Ankobra, given that Aowin merchants were the only ones who went there, as during this period the merchants from Wassa and Asante preferred the Brandenburg trading posts controlled by *Conny*. Asante's war plans created serious commercial problems for the Dutch, which went far beyond short-term losses: as H. Haring has shown, the gold arriving in Axim from Aowin exceeded that coming from Asante in quantity, and there was also danger of an invasion, with all that meant in terms of demographic dislocation, depopulation, and economic destabilization. This could have completely disrupted the gold trade along the entire western coast, just as had happened 15 years before with the war between Asante and Denkyira, which was followed by a failure of this trade to recover for many years.[22]

In this complex situation, *Conny* and Bɛnga/Akpole acted as catalysts for two opposing and extremely heterogeneous alliances that appear quite incongruous until you consider the strategic priorities of

the various protagonists very carefully. On the western front, where the local dispute related to control of the outlets for Aowin trade, *Conny* could still rely on the support of forces from Cape Appolonia, as well as the support its leaders enjoyed among the Aowin who had a preference for their market. However, Bɛnga also had allies in Aowin, a diversification that evidently allowed Aowin as a whole to keep their options open as far as access to important strategic markets was concerned. The Wassa, who in Ahanta were allied of *Conny* and put pressure on the regions of the Upper Ankobra to close off access to Axim, were at the same time helping Bɛnga in its dispute with Cape Appolonia by pursuing a general policy of encirclement and blockade of Aowin in line with plans agreed with Asante. It is clear that Gyetua of Wassa's interests happened to coincide with *Conny*'s, and he was happy to make use of him, but he had no intention of ruling out future cooperation with the Dutch and the people of Axim. He appears to have been mainly interested in strengthening his position financially and militarily so that he would have sufficient resources to sustain not only a war with Aowin but also to deal with any unexpected moves by his powerful and mercurial ally, Asante. Indeed there was a rumor that Kumase was actually planning to get rid of both Aowin and Wassa by fomenting conflict between them and then occupying Wassa lands, which were close to the western coastal markets.[23]

Conny proved successful in this trial of strength; indeed Bɛnga and his heir apparent, ɛzane (*Asjanni*), put a great deal of pressure on Akpole and the Dutch to obtain the return of the two fugitives in order to hand them back to *Conny*. They argued that the latter would then be willing to establish a lasting reconciliation with Akpole without requesting further reparations. The transfer of the two from the fort's protection to Akpole was agreed by a board decision in Elmina. Akpole then turned them over to Bɛnga and ɛzane, who returned them to *Conny* in early March (together with 9 *bendas* of gold from Axim and 10 from Azane). Once he had obtained satisfaction however, *Conny* did not fulfill his adversaries' expectations and made the reconciliation with Akpole conditional upon a further payment. A few days later, Bɛnga and ɛzane were appealing to the WIC for help and claiming that *Conny* was threatening to attack Azane with Wassa support, while also relying on joint action from the west involving fighters from Cape Appolonia and troops from Aowin. His supposed plan was to take over the area and close off the trade routes of the interior to Axim, thus gaining complete control over the region's coastal markets. By the end of March, war appeared inevitable and

Axim, Azane, Abokro, and Egila prepared themselves for the blow, now united as they had freed themselves of most of the Wassa troops used by Bɛnga against Cape Appolonia, who had proved difficult to control and indulged in plunder and oppressive behavior toward the peoples of Azane and Abokro. For his part, the *directeur-generael* Haring made it known that the WIC did not intend to get directly involved in any fighting.

However there was a shift in *Conny*'s camp. The Wassa expelled from Azane met up with Kpɔkɛzo on the way back to their lands, and joined up with *Conny*'s Wassa allies under the leadership of *Tekkie Ammana.* Problems concerning their relationship with the local population became so serious that *Conny* drove these troops from his own town. They attempted an attack on Akooda, and then returned to their homeland. However the rift between *Conny* and these precious allies occurred at a time when their military role was no longer essential. In fact, *Conny* could not attack his adversaries who had closed their ranks around Axim because Kpɔkɛzo's chiefs and elders had decided against an action that would have constituted a direct challenge to the WIC, for at least as long as Haring held office in Elmina, given that they had entered into an agreement with him in 1712. This development led to a truce and a partial compromise involving a mutual payment of reparations, although *Conny* was negotiating from a position of strength and could maintain his constant pressure on his adversaries with the threat of a return to hostilities. Moreover, he continued, much to the disappointment of Haring and the WIC, to equivocate over the payment of the remaining 30 *bendas* of gold that he had owed the Dutch since 1712.[24] *Conny* very cleverly exploited this suspension of the agreement, to which the Europeans attributed the failure to pacify the region permanently.[25] The position of the "big man" of Kpɔkɛzo was now stronger than ever, and in spite of the truce, he continued to heighten the potential for conflict against his adversaries. However the deterioration in his relations with Gyetua appears to have created a break in the network on which his power was based, and opened up the possibility of a clash between these two former allies. The Dutch, in particular, were hopeful that this would be the outcome, as they saw it as an opportunity to settle some old scores with *Conny.* In fact Kumase appears to have come very close to allowing Gyetua to attack Kpɔkɛzo as punishment for the insult he had suffered. The Asante decision to invade Aowin, however, forced Gyetua to mobilize on another front and to reach a compromise with *Conny* that postponed the settlement of their dispute.[26]

6.2 The Asante Campaign of 1715 against Aowin

The Asante attack on Aowin, which started at the end of September 1715, was led by *Bantamahene* Amankwatia I, one of the great strategists of Asante expansion. The campaign was to have dramatic consequences for Aowin and the historical repercussions would be extensive. The invasion accelerated the process of territorial, demographic, and political displacement to the west of the people of Aowin, and led to the creation of the Anyi polities in what is now the Ivory Coast, including those small entities which would eventually form Ndenye and in particular Sanwi, a powerful and stable formation that came together in the areas around the Aby Lagoon. It did this by gaining access to the coast by occupying the (new) Assini area in 1725 (and very soon entering into competition with Adwɔmɔlɔ and Cape Appolonia).[27]

Amankwatia was counting on the fact that the invaded country would be undefended as most of its military forces were engaged in the conflict against Nsɔkɔ and Great Nkasa. As was the case with later Asante ventures in the southwest, Wassa forces, which invaded the country from the east, were to play a crucial role.[28] There was a large presence in Aowin of exile communities from the enemy countries, particularly emigrants from Asante, Denkyira, and Akani (Assin). According to a refugee called *Domma* who arrived in Axim on October 9, Aowin authorities demanded oaths of loyalty from these groups. Some time before the attack, those foreigners who were refusing to give undertakings to be involved personally in the defence of Aowin or were taking measures to escape could be imprisoned and concentrated in a village allocated for that purpose, where they were held under strict surveillance. The Aowin plan was to eliminate foreigners under surveillance as soon as the attack began and to evacuate the local population to Nsɔkɔ and Great Nkasa, where they could be defended by the Aowin troops deployed in those areas. Some refugees took other routes, which did not always turn out to be successful. *Domma*, for example, left Aowin at the head of a group that included approximately 200 women on their way to Bɛnga so that he could protect them during the war, but the people of Motwekrom held them and shared them out, allowing only their guides to continue on their way. According to Butler, the hunt for refugees from Aowin was prosecuted very thoroughly during this period by the inhabitants of Egila, Abokro, Azane, Ɛlɛmgbenle, Motwekrom, and Cape Appolonia who captured them and reduced them to slavery.[29] But on the other

hand, the behavior to refugees conformed to the logic of the existing alliances, which caused different Aowin groups to enter into one or other of the opposing alliances in the Axim region. According to *Conny*'s men, Cape Appolonia, where the big man's most reliable allies lived, was so full of Aowin women who had been sent away from the dangers of war that food became scarce and a request for supplies of cereals was sent to Kpɔkɛzo. However during this initial phase of the invasion, there was very little information in the coastal areas about what was going on in the interior. Throughout October, the Dutch were not even sure that Asante troops had already started their attack. They knew, however, that the Wassa army was completely tied down in military operations concerning the invasion. On October 28, Butler recorded the fact that Aowin resistance had achieved unexpected successes and had forced the enemy to withdraw into its own country.[30] There were even unverifiable and probably groundless rumors that the Asante court knew nothing about these events and that the attack on Aowin was devised by Amankwatia and Gyetua alone, as they were in search of booty to pay for the high debts they incurred as a result of the recent war against Twifo.[31]

Whatever the truth, news of Amankwatia's approach provoked a situation of great uncertainty in the regions around Axim, where there were widespread fears that the Asante would enter the coastal areas to recover the refugees from Aowin and above all to ensure direct access to the western market outlets.

On October 13, Butler asked for instructions from Elmina on how to respond to the leaders of Egila and Abokro, who were requesting a prior guarantee of protection from the fort in Axim, should the Asante attack force them to abandon their settlements along the Ankobra. As a result of the recent conflicts between *Conny* and Akpole, Egila and Abokro had not renewed their formal agreements with the WIC, and therefore they intended to draw up an alternative plan to withdraw to *Conny*'s bases around the Brandenburg fort, should the Dutch let them down. But the chiefs of Abokro were also the bearers of a similar request for WIC protection from some Aowin chiefs, who were convinced that their country would not be able to resist the invasion for very long. In his letter, the commander of Axim argued that the requests for protection should be agreed to, and pointed out that should the countries bordering with Axim fall into Asante hands, this extremely powerful polity, which was entirely impervious to European intimidation, would have constituted a much more serious threat to the security of the Dutch base than the squabbling between the existing small and fragmented polities. In Elmina the

board decided to guarantee protection to its traditional allies, namely Egila, Abokro, and Azane (having obtained this assurance, the latter polity repaid the debts it had incurred with the company during the conflict with *Conny*). However, the company refused to give undertaking to support Aowin. Moreover, it instructed its allies to keep themselves out of the conflict and avoid giving Asante the opportunity to demand reparations as a pretext to invade.[32]

One of the effects of these dramatic events taking place in the regions to the north was a diminution in the hostilities between Cape Appolonia and Azane, which was favored, according to Butler, by the existing *de facto* truce and shared interest in profiting during this phase from the exodus of refugees and assets from Aowin. In early November, a delegation from Cape Appolonia arrived in Azane to ask the chiefs ɛzane, *Ousie Kwa, Ammo,* and others to act on their behalf to bring about a reconciliation with Bɛnga.[33]

During the following weeks, the course of the war in Aowin remained uncertain, with rumors of a victory for the invaders followed by denials and even assertions that Aowin had got the better of its enemies. In December, Amankwatia and his allies did in fact decide to withdraw to the lower Ankobra region to avoid clashing with the Aowin army that was advancing from the southwest after having been reorganized under a leader Butler called *Dinkje*.[34] This was not a personal name but the appellation *adehye*, which was applied to persons of royal blood.[35] At least part of the Asante and Wassa troops remained in the Axim region for several weeks, where they created considerable problems for the local population. During that period, the military situation in Aowin remained fairly static (or that is what appears to be the case going by the sources not directly involved). On the other hand there was a sudden shift in the negotiations that led to a sudden compromise. On January 23, Butler received the news that Amankwatia and Gyetua had reached an agreement with the Aowin, by which the latter undertook to pay the enormous sum of 300 *bendas* of gold to Asante and Wassa. While effectively a capitulation, this does not mean that it resulted from a total defeat of Aowin; indeed it is interesting to note that the sum was collected through a poll tax of 2.5 *engels* of gold exacted on all the Asante refugees who had settled in the country. Butler wrote the sum obtained from this tax could easily have reached 300 *bendas*, because Aowin supposedly contained up to a quarter of the total population of Asante.[36]

The military operations in Aowin directly affected the area that concerns us. Cape Appolonia was an important base behind the battle lines, where a great number of refugees, particularly women and

noncombatants, had sought refuge. It was also able to supply arms and munitions to its northern neighbors, and Haring suggested that it also supported them in military actions.[37] In early December of 1715 the area was attacked and laid waste. According to the information immediately collected by Butler, the attack took place at dawn and was the work of Asante, Wassa, and Twifo troops who systematically plundered the area. Early reports suggest the capture of the mass of the population except for a few fugitives, and the drowning of *cabboceer Croa* (probably Kɔlɔra) while he was making a desperate attempt to escape by sea. It is not clear whether the action affected the whole of the Cape area or just one or some of the settlements.[38] However the information that Butler received a few weeks later scaled down considerably the entity of the defeat suffered by the people of Cape Appolonia. In spite of the bombastic claims of total triumph by the attackers, the reality was that they only managed to take a few prisoners who were unable to flee in time, while the great majority escaped and returned in January to their houses, where they built a system of fortification with a double palisade. Even the story concerning the death of *Croa* appears doubtful (an eminent personality of this name was still alive and holding office in the years that followed).[39]

The attack on Cape Appolonia took place at the same time as the withdrawal by Amankwatia and his allies to avoid an encounter with *Dinkje.* During this temporary retreat, the attack on Cape Appolonia was not only strategically desirable in that it was a further strike against Aowin resistance, but also because it was a profitable diversion that offered the opportunity of booty to troops that for too long had been engaged in pitched battles without great success or satisfaction.[40] This second reason appears to have been crucial in taking the decision to attack. Moreover the attack was mainly the work of the Wassa whom Bɛnga had already engaged to fight Cape Appolonia and who, as the Asante would complain a few weeks later, had kept their allies in the dark so that they would not have to share the booty.[41]

In any event, news of the attack caused consternation in the region around Axim, which feared the approach of the Asante and Wassa contingents. *Directeur-generael* Haring reassured Butler that the fort and its immediate vicinity, a key area of commercial interest to the Asante, had nothing to fear. However, this optimism was not shared by the big men of the area. Bɛnga was informed by the chiefs of the Wassa contingent, *Quahuba* and *Bo Coffy,* of how the attack against Cape Appolonia had been carried out to satisfy his previous request, which had not been implemented because of opposition from the people and the subordinate chiefs of Azane, the majority of

whom preferred friendly relations with Cape Appolonia. In spite of this assurance along with a promise to hand over three or four of the more important prisoners, Bɛnga who was tired and unwell, hurriedly evacuated his residence to west of the right bank of the Ankobra on December 10, and joined his heir apparent, ɛzane, on the left bank where he lost no time in building a settlement with a double palisade in which he concentrated Azane women and children, and a considerable defense force, which included 200 men armed with muskets. The old chief of Azane compensated the Wassa for the work in Cape Appolonia and received from them two prisoners and several severed heads from the defeated side. He sent some of his own men to assist the Wassa in their pursuit of fugitives. However he never left his redoubt close to Axim Fort and Dutch protection. There can be no doubt that this old ally was also fearful of the Asante and Wassa forces of Amankwatia, Gyetua, and Agyepa now in the region and already active in operations against Egila and Abokro aimed at taking as many Aowin refugees in those areas as possible.[42] His fears were to prove well-founded; during the following weeks, Wassa and Asante forces subjected the people of Azane to abuse, plunder, and seizure of slaves and even free men and women, although the Asante and Wassa always blamed each other for carrying out these actions.

In early January 1716 however, the occupiers cease their harassment of the local population and even renewed their friendship agreements with the chiefs of Azane. The inhabitants of Abokro continued to suffer violence and abuses of power inflicted by the Wassa: one of the chiefs of Abokro, *Ouwensie*, was brutally murdered and many people sought refuge close to Axim Fort.[43] The key to the Asante and Wassa dispute with Abokro was the presence of refugees from Aowin led by Emu (*Enoe* or *Amoe*). The latter was a native of Abokro who had moved to Aowin, from where he had returned after having fought alongside the host community against the Asante invasion, and had been welcomed back by his compatriots. It was Emu who requested protection from Axim Fort in January 1716, and settled in its surrounding area with a retinue of 100 men armed with muskets and 200 women and children. *Conny* had also repeatedly offered him protection, and had suggested they meet up in Kpɔkɛzo, while providing guarantees against reprisals from Kumase. The Asante and Wassa attack on the refugees was for the moment avoided as a result of Akpole's mediation and the fact that Emu handed over 10 slaves to the enemy. The whole matter was then resolved in early February through negotiations in which the Dutch and the chiefs of Axim, Asante, and Wassa obtained complete

satisfaction from Emu, who paid a further compensation of 8 *bendas* of gold.

The compromise led to a rapid shift in the local situation, and the Asante and Wassa contingents started to leave the region, although for a while Gyetua kept some troops in Egila.[44] The Dutch made no secret of their desire for these forces to be immediately deployed in Ahanta against *Conny*, but they were to be disappointed. Following his dispute with Gyetua, there had been persistent rumors that he was going to bribe the chiefs of Twifo to invade Wassa while its forces were in Aowin. Kumase carried out an investigation into the matter, but *Conny* was completely exonerated, whatever the truth behind those accusations. This was another great disappointment for the WIC and probably also for Gyetua of Wassa, who was desperate for revenge. Besides the offer of protection to Emu, the main target of the Asante advance on Axim demonstrates how *Conny*'s close ties with the main power of the interior (and his strong contractual position) remained in place throughout this period. Kumase big men had now become loyal customers of the "Brandenburg" trading posts of Ahanta, whose commercial importance for Asante had increased considerably because of the crucial strategic role they had taken on in the early 1720s, when these markets provided the munitions used in the campaigns of *Asantehene* Opoku Ware I. The success of the trading posts of Ahanta, veritable thorns in the sides of the Dutch and the English, was due to the clever pricing policy adopted by *Conny*, who was able to sell European goods at 20 percent below the prices in the other coastal markets.[45]

When peace returned, the area was however deeply scarred by the brief occupation. For the moment, security was the absolute priority for the leaders of Cape Appolonia, and they appeared to be willing to come to a comprehensive compromise with the vested interests and powers centered on Axim. They entered into a peace agreement with Bɛnga, which was in effect a capitulation. They agreed to pay the massive compensation of 46 *bendas* of gold.[46] The traumatic nature of the attack they had recently suffered is very evident in the statements made by the leaders of Cape Appolonia at the end of January 1716, in which they not only abandoned their previous rejections of any relationship with the WIC, but actually made an explicit request for a Dutch fort to be built on their territory as a guarantee of protection. This was the content of a discussion by the board in Elmina on February 2:

> Reading a letter from Butler, dated Axim, 2nd February, concerning a request from the Cabo Appollonia Negroes who ask the Company

> to build there a fortress, in order that they may live in peace under the protection of the Dutch Company, to which they offer the entire country, and be liberated from the robberies of all those to whom it pleases to persecute them, demonstrating that during the last 6 years they have hardly more than 2 months lived in quietness.

The request was politely turned down in line with recent company directives to reduce costs.[47] Besides experience had shown that the construction of trading posts and forts did not stop the locals from trading with interlopers at sea "because the entire beach of that area may serve as a huge bay to which goods from the interior can be brought secretly."[48] The greater amenability of the merchants of Cape Applonia to the interests and directives of the WIC would not last long, possibly because of this Dutch rejection or possibly because new business opportunities proved more powerful than the specters of the past. By 1717, Blenke, the new commander of Axim, was already complaining that English ships were buying gold and slaves at the Cape, while business was slack in Axim. Moreover, the chiefs of Cape Appolonia had welcomed Manuel and *Dunquam*, two merchants who had left Axim with their people after a serious rift with the WIC and Akpole. Their business activities were now causing significant damage to Dutch trade. In an attempt to deal with this situation, Blenke threatened to send Dutch ships to arrest the chiefs of Cape Appolonia and obtained at least a sworn undertaking to send on the majority of the buyers from Aowin to Axim, when they came as far as the Cape markets.[49]

6.3 The Southwest in the Face of Asante Power

The conflict of 1715–1716 was the first direct clash between Asante and the area that concerns us. From this time on, the great power of the interior would become a constant presence that for some periods was friendly and for others was hostile, but always dominant in local affairs.

Asante's active intervention in the region caused or speeded up the radical shift in the balance of power that had been so fundamental in the past. The most striking consequence was the political, demographic, and territorial restructuring that affected Aowin. Although it had not been completely defeated in the war of 1715, Aowin lost land to Wassa to the east of the Tano, and underwent an irreversible displacement of a large part of its population to the southwest: toward the Aby Lagoon. In May 1716 the commander of Axim recorded

that the Aowin had found refuge in the land conquered for them by *Dinkje*. The refugees were reluctant to return to their native areas and preferred to settle on these new lands in the region of *Siman*.[50] The first mention of a recovery in Aowin's trade with the coast came in a letter of March 10, 1716, in which Butler reported news from Cape Appolonia that Aowin merchants were returning to the market and intended to go to Axim as soon as the Wassa had completely left the region.[51] In the following months, trade with Axim gradually recovered, but the Aowin were almost exclusively interested in munitions; clearly these were preparations for the victorious campaign waged by the Aowin *caboceer Adjoema* during 1717 against the district of Asafo to the north (today it is part of Sehwi Wiawso).[52]

Before leaving the region, Amankwatia brokered an agreement between *Conny* on one side and Axim, Azane, and the Dutch on the other in an attempt to resolve all outstanding questions. On the basis of this agreement, *Conny* was supposed to pay the WIC 30 *bendas* of gold, which he had always owed, and receive 41 *bendas* from Azane and Axim by way of reparations. In reality however, the dispute shifted to the question of how the debts should be paid, as the Asante had left, and there were repeated requests for Kumase to arbitrate. This meant that the ancient dispute stubbornly continued to be unresolved and the tension remained.[53] For the moment the only result was that the alliances were sustained by an internal dispute in the town of Butri in Ahanta throughout 1717.[54]

An event that was to have wide-ranging implications occurred around September and October of that year: a massive military campaign against Akyem ended in a disastrous defeat for Asante, in which the first *Asantehene*, Osei Tutu, died.[55] News of the Asante rout caused considerable anxiety in the region of Axim and fear that Gyetua would once again occupy the region in force, now that he could no longer be restrained by his powerful ally in the interior. The chiefs of Abokro and Egila appealed for Dutch protection and even decided on the mass evacuation of their population and their relocation to sites closer to Axim and Bɛnga's fortified settlement on the Ankobra.[56] However this fear never became a reality, and events would take a very different direction.

Asante dependencies and satellites such as Aowin, Sehwi, Wassa, and Twifo rebelled and attempted to reassert their autonomy by exploiting the breakdown in the Asante power structure caused by its defeat by Akyem. While the new *Asantehene*, Opoku Ware, was again engaged in military action against Akyem, Kumase was attacked in March 1718 by forces from the southwest, in particular from Aowin

regions, under the command of *Ebiri Moro.* Asante suffered massive human and material losses, and several members of the royal abusua were captured. Following this further national disaster, Opoku Ware concentrated his activities for the moment on reversing the blow inflicted by Aowin, and he postponed the scores he had to settle with other rebellious areas.[57] The following years witness a series of Asante military campaigns in the western regions. In 1718 and 1719, Asante Ahafo was conquered and annexed as far as the River Bia. Using this as a solid base, Asante waged further campaigns that led within a few years to the defeat and subjugation of Aowin and Sehwi.[58]

On the coast, the ongoing dispute between *Conny* and the WIC had suddenly become more serious, following Prussia's formal sale of its African bases to the Netherlands in November 1717. *Conny* refused to acknowledge for the transfer of ownership on the basis that he considered Brandenburg to have only leased the property from African authorities and he prevented the Dutch from taking possession of the forts under his control. The WIC failed in its attempt to put together an army of troops recruited among *Conny*'s enemies, particularly in Axim, Azane, and Butri; there was too much fear of the merchant-prince. The Dutch then developed a plan to land at Kpɔkɛzo and occupy Fort Gross-Friedrichsburg, and in June 1718 they put it into action with disastrous results. They were driven back into the sea and lost 37 men, while their bombardment of the town only caused very limited damage. They left, and *Conny* remained the undisputed master of all the important markets of Ahanta. He maintained his iron grip in the years to come, and would not yield to English overtures to purchase the forts. He continued to trade with the French and the Portuguese. In 1722 the Dutch finally managed to reach an agreement on the bases, but very much on his terms: he relinquished control in return for a monthly payment, other annual gratuities, a preferential status in the purchase of commodities and, most importantly, the right to appoint the commander of Gross-Friedrichsburg.[59]

Deep apprehensions over the possible outcomes of the precarious situation in the interior were troubling leaders of the areas to the west of Axim. In 1718, the chiefs of Azane were once again talking of building a genuine fort on the hill to the east of the mouth of the Ankobra, which they saw as a guarantee of protection for when, as they feared, the Asante would return to the region once the war against Akyem was over.[60] There was further talk of fortifying the hill above the Ankobra in 1720–1721, when W. Butler was the *directeur-generael*, and this time it was part of a more ambitious plan to build fortified trading posts in Abokro, Egila, and even Wassa, as well as the commencement of

large-scale mining along the lines of the attempted seventeenth-century European expansion along the course of the river. But the preliminary activities provoked unfavorable reactions from the local population. In 1721, fighting broke out between Wassa, Twifo, and Adom on one side and Ahanta and *Jan Conny* on the other, and this forced the WIC management in Elmina to concentrate on defensive measures against possible attacks by *Conny*. In the end the plan was abandoned.[61]

The markets of Cape Appolonia continued to be key outlets for the Aowin trade. In 1718, transactions increased both because of Aowin's need to obtain arms and munitions to prosecute the war against Asante, and because of the need to sell off slaves and booty following the sack of Kumase. However the region was deeply affected by the instability that had returned with the anti-Asante rebellion. In the latter part of 1718, Wassa contingents transited the area on their way to Aowin to support the resistance that was being prepared there against the Asante reaction. The passage of armed men created such fear in Cape Appolonia that at least part of the population temporarily abandoned its coastal settlements to seek refuge in the marshy areas of Amanzule.[62]

Throughout 1721, the Asante unleashed an offensive on Aowin. The scale of the defeat of Aowin forces and their Wassa allies became clear between August and November, when routed troops making for the coast requested asylum of Axim Fort. Wassa chiefs in particular requested WIC protection in event of Asante demands that they be handed over.[63]

These events had immediate repercussions in the coastal region, especially Cape Appolonia. This supply point of strategic importance to Aowin was attacked by Asante forces. This, at least, is the version of events provided by the Englishman J. Atkins, who berthed there on two occasions in 1721. He stopped there on June 6 and engaged in excellent trade with the Queen of Adwɔmɔlɔ, but when he returned on October 20 he found she had been compelled to take refuge in (new) Assini with her people, fleeing an attack by Asante forces. According to Atkins, the attack was a reaction to "the frequent Depredations and *Panyarrs* of the *Apollonians*" against Asante traders, who were very active in the region and particularly on the route toward Anomabo. However the people of Adwɔmɔlɔ blamed *Jan Conny* "their neighbor and competitor" for having instigated it. In Assini Atkins sold arms and munitions to the refugees, who were preparing to take revenge against *Conny*.[64]

Conny was now one of the major trade operators in Azane at the mouth of the Ankobra. It is thus quite possible that he had become a competitor of Cape Appolonia where only a few years earlier he had had some of his most loyal allies.[65] It should however be pointed out that Atkins's observations explicitly concerned a particular section of

the ruling group in the area of Cape Appolonia, namely Adwɔmɔlɔ and its "queen." Following the collapse of the seventeenth-century political unity, Adwɔmɔlɔ had become just one of the local powers. The Englishman does not give an account of the other commercial and political centers in the area with degrees of political autonomy.

The scale of the Asante attack of 1721 was such as to inflict a terrible blow on Aowin and speeded up the population shift to more secure areas, primarily to the west and southwest, but also toward the coastal regions we are concerned with. An immediate result of the conflict, which affected the main mining areas, was the prolonged cessation of the gold trade with Axim and the neighboring markets. The crisis in trade was a general problem for the European trading posts: the only goods traded even a year after the Asante advance were slaves and these were prisoners of war sold by the victors. But even this trade was on the whole limited; clearly Asante needed to make up for its considerable losses over the preceding years by absorbing the great majority of the prisoners. The few transactions there were took place in Elmina, Cape Coast, and Anomabo.[66]

Once scores had been settled with Aowin in 1721–1722 and Kumase's area of control extended to the regions in the northwest, where in 1723 the politically and commercially important entity of Takyiman was also conquered, Opoku Ware turned his attention to Wassa. Apart from revenge for the part Wassa played in the plunder of Asante during *Ebiri Moro*'s attack, Kumase had some strategic reasons for bringing Wassa territory under more effective control and gaining an important access to the coast. Another outbreak of fighting in the ongoing conflict relating to the power of *Conny* provided Opoku Ware with the pretext he needed.

In 1724, Wassa, Twifo, and Adom attacked *Conny* with the support of the Dutch. Axim and the regions to the west were directly affected by this crisis. Egila and Abokro were allied with *Conny*, while Azane split into two factions. One, which the Dutch called *Klein Ancober* (Little Ankobra), was made up of many chiefs and in particular Azia Kpanyinli, who was the second most important after Ɛzane. They were followed by a large part of the population and came out decisively in favor of *Conny* (he spent enormous sums guaranteeing their loyalty). They amassed their forces on the western bank of the river. The other faction, which was led by the principal chief, Ɛzane, claimed that it wanted to stay out of the conflict, but in reality it was close to the WIC and Akpole of Axim. During the conflict, *Conny*'s relations with Cape Appolonia became of such importance that he attempted to settle the disagreements that for a few years had divided him and

some of the leaders of this area. There was a clear strategic reason for this development: the "big man," having barricaded himself in Fort Gross-Friedrichsburg, used Cape Appolonia for importing the large quantities of cereals needed to feed his troops and the enlarged population resulting from the inflow of refugees from the areas the enemy had invaded (according to local accounts that are difficult to verify, *Conny* had about 30,000 people with him).[67] However, as the besieged found themselves in an increasingly precarious situation, the anti-*Conny* party acquired new and important supporters among the groups not closely linked to the "big man" who previously had been fearful to oppose him openly. In October 1724, Aowin informed the Dutch that it was ready to take action in Azane and "exterminate" the local population so that it could cut out local intermediaries and trade directly with the Europeans on the Ankobra and in Axim. The supplies of arms and gunpowder provided by the Dutch were essential for Aowin, which was now in the final stage of its enormous struggle to reorganize and expand into the region southwest of the Tano.[68] At the same time, five chiefs of ɛlɛmgbenle and at least one of Cape Appolonia openly rejected *Conny*'s generous offers designed to entice them onto his side. Instead, they sought an alliance with the WIC, in the event of the company asking them to attack the Azane forces loyal to *Conny* from behind. The Dutch documents provide the names of the chiefs who distanced themselves from *Conny*: they were *Crawa* (Kɔlɔra) in Cape Appolonia,[69] Emu in ɛlɛmgbenle whom we already know, *Nanouma, Unungre, Agruibre* (who have not been identified), and *Avancoran*, almost certainly the person referred to in other documents as *Anconno*, who lived at the Amanzule river's mouth, probably in Borazo, and who imposed levies on local trade. The Dutch asked their new allies simply to keep an eye on the Azane forces and to block their retreat to the west. *Conny*'s weakening grip on the region immediately led to a reemergence of the persistent underlying frictions. In this context, the initiative was taken by a network of commercial interests associated with Aowin, which at local level was centerd upon Emu, and this political move signified that he was putting himself forward for a leading position once *Conny*'s star had fallen.[70]

A turning point occurred when Fort Gross-Friedrichsburg fell to the Dutch on November 15. *Conny* fled Ahanta and sought refuge with his considerable retinue in Azane, the stronghold of the forces still loyal to him. For some weeks large contingents of his men, including his supporter Azia Kpanyinli, had abandoned Kpɔkɛzo and reached the area, where they prepared a fortified position on an island on the Ankobra river.[71]

The immediate concern of the Dutch was now one of completing their adversary's isolation. They wanted to prevent *Conny* from settling in the (new) Assini area, where he appeared to enjoy substantial support and could reorganize his anti-WIC strategy. To achieve this they made every effort to create a cordon by using the leaders of Ɛlɛmgbenle and Cape Appolonia, who were to block his way,[72] and by providing indirect support (the sale of arms and gunpowder) to Aowin forces in their conflict with Assini. In 1725 a large Aowin army under the command of Aka Siman Adu (14,000 men according to the Dutchman Steenhart) moved against the Ewuture of the Aby Lagoon and besieged the Island of Mɔnɔbaha (where Nsɔkɔ stood), which was defended by only 2,000 men-at-arms. The outcome of the conflict was pretty much a foregone conclusion, partly because the Essuma of Assini decided no longer to share their destiny with the Ewuture: the principal Essuma chief, *Damboo*, *Akassini*'s successor, left his residence in Nsɔkɔ, and in practice sided with the invader. As he confided to Steenhart, he was simply waiting for Aowin's forces to complete their conquest so that he could resume his former position but within the context of a new system of power.[73] With the fall of Mɔnɔbaha, the new polity of Sanwi acquired its direct access to the ocean, although it would exercise this new capability through the Essuma community to whom it attributed a preferential role.

The WIC found this considerable shift in the balance of power in the western areas to their agreement, if for no other reason than the damage it did to *Conny*'s remaining hopes. However, the latter still had enough resources to guarantee his own survival. He had been requesting Asante's help since the very beginning of the conflict, but no military support was forthcoming. Opoku Ware was willing to assist in a negotiated settlement, and after the fall of Fort Gross-Friedrichsburg, he put very considerable pressure on the Dutch to reach a peace agreement with *Conny*. As the *directeur-generael* Valckenier wrote in July 1725, the WIC was practically forced to cease hostilities immediately and reach an agreement with *Conny*, and this was Opoku Ware's precondition for a substantial resumption in trade. Business did indeed undergo a startling growth immediately after a peace agreement was concluded.[74] With the withdrawal of the Dutch from the coalition, the war was temporarily brought to a halt, partly because Wassa and Twifo were completely dependent on the WIC for their supplies of arms and munitions.[75]

As a result of this astute policy, Opoku Ware had prepared the ground for the next move, which was to replace the role of Wassa and other local allies in the Europeans' strategic plans, thus opening the

way to get his revenge. And this was to follow very shortly. In January 1726, Asante forces moved against Wassa who were led by Ntsiful, and obtained total victory within a few months.[76] The victors pursued their fleeing enemy into Twifo country, while Ntsiful temporarily took refuge in Abrem.[77]

While the Asante army was attacking Wassa, the question of *Jan Conny* was also being resolved. Peace lasted only a few months. The big man, who had settled in Azane, managed to build a solid power base within this small polity by strengthening his ties with ɛzane, who had been fairly close to WIC and Axim during the war, but now joined up with Azia Kpanyinli on the western bank of the Ankobra in support of *Conny*. Nevertheless, *Conny*'s isolation was increasing: even his allies in Egila and Abokro had abandoned him for the opposing coalition. In February 1726, his stronghold on the Ankobra river was attacked by a force led by Akpole of Axim, with some support from ɛlɛmgbenle, Egila, and a section of the people of Azane itself. On February 20, news of *Conny*'s flight reached Axim.[78] He first sought refuge in Fante territory and then in Kumase, where he unsuccessfully attempted to obtain Opoku Ware's assistance in regaining his lost coastal bases.[79] *Conny*'s eventful and spectacular career had come to an end.

At the end of the conflict, those chiefs of Azane who had supported *Conny*, particularly ɛzane and Azia Kpanyinli, asked the Dutch for permission to return to their homes on the Ankobra river, and this was granted on the condition that they settled on the eastern bank, where the WIC could keep them under greater scrutiny.[80]

We do not have a great deal of information on events in Cape Appolonia, apart from mention of the fact that groups in this area encountered serious problems in their relations with Asante during 1727. In September of that year, the Commander of Axim, Ockers, recorded, "Cape Apolonia people again had war with King Pokoe of Ashantee; and that the Ashantees had panyarred most of the C. Apolonia Caboceers." We only know that during this period the strategic importance of Cape Appolonia for Kumase was mainly a result of its difficult relations with Aowin. However, it was a very serious dispute, which led to direct military intervention by Asante, and the expression *panyarring* used by Ockers suggests a precautionary confiscation to guarantee the payment of a debt or compensation.[81] We can certainly affirm that during this period at least part of the groups settled around Cape Appolonia maintained very close relations with ɛzane and Azia Kpanyinli, who had been brought together by shared interest in trading with the English and a hostile attitude to Akpole of Axim and *Ajeba Manfoe* of Abokro.[82]

Conny's removal obviously brought about a significant change in the overall regional situation, not only in Ahanta but also to the west of Axim. The Dutch and their allies had succeeded in ridding themselves of the most ambitious plan ever pursued by a local power for large-scale hegemony over that stretch of coast, but a set of other local and external interests and powers immediately put themselves forward in an attempt to occupy the vacuum left in various places by *Conny*. For example, two personalities were consolidating positions of considerable power just to the west of Axim. These were Emu in ɛlɛmgbenle, and Mea Takyi of Amankolaso in Egila, an important *big man* who belonged to an *abusua* called Esawa. Mea, who played a crucial role in the attack that forced *Conny* to abandon his position on the Ankobra, rapidly became one of the WIC's principal and most trusted local partners.[83]

The region continued to be unstable for the rest of the 1720s, simply as the result of the highly complex situation of generalized instability affecting the central and western sections of the Gold Coast at the time. Fante, English, and Dutch attempts at mediation failed to reestablish peace between Asante and Wassa, and this was extremely damaging to trade. Even the long-established alliance between Wassa and Twifo crumbled when Twifo troops joined the Asante in their attack on Wassa in 1726. As a reprisal, Ntsiful carried out a successful raid on Twifo in 1729.

On the other hand, there was further outbreak of hostilities between Asante and Aowin, and a series of military clashes occurred in 1730. At the beginning of September, Ockers recorded the news that Aowin had been completely overrun and a portion of its population has sought refuge in Wassa.[84] From there, the Aowin continued to wage war against Asante with the active support of forces from the Wassa area of Amenfi. In October and November, an Asante army marched through Denkyira and completely overcame the defensive positions set up around Amenfi. Ntsiful initially withdrew to Akyem and then evacuated the heart of the Wassa lands. He transferred the majority of the population to the south in areas bordering with Fante, where he established a new political and territorial entity (Wassa Fiase) in a position from which he could exercise effective control over the trade routes with the coast.[85] However, a considerable part of the Wassa population escaped the Asante onslaught by fleeing to Aowin lands in the west, and some of the refugees even fled to Azane.[86]

The pursuit of fugitives again brought the troops of Kumase to the southwestern coastal regions around Axim and Cape Appolonia, just as in 1715, and as before Emu was one of the main targets for Opoku Ware's men.

6.4 The Rise and Fall of Emu and the Appearance of a New Local Power

Following the agreement between Asante and Wassa reached in 1716, Emu had abandoned the Abokro area. Indeed relations with his fellow countrymen were no longer good, probably because his anti-Asante activities and his return had caused them difficulties. However, he remained in the region and settled on the ocean shore, where he joined those whom the whites called "beach people," a category that included the part of the indigenous population with whom they had most frequent contact and their more profound and complex relationships, as opposed to the "bush people," who were less accessible, more autonomous, and more distant, both physically and culturally. As stated in a Dutch document, Emu went and established himself with his followers not far from Abokro on the coast "between Cape Apolonia and Ancober," which meant Ɛlɛmgbenle. The Nzema tradition specifies that the settlement was Baku, a few kilometres to the east of modern Adoabo.[87] We soon find his name among the main *caboceers* of Ɛlɛmgbenle.[88] Emu became one of the most important traders in the area, and he worked very closely with the Dutch as their main intermediary for trade with Aowin and as such he was directly involved in the consequences of the new and crucial phase in the conflict that affected the region in the late 1720s.

By now Emu's most bitter enemy in the area was the principal chief of Abokro and fellow-countryman, *Ajeba Manfoe*, who had been Emu's ally during the events of 1715. However, relations had deteriorated since Emu left Abokro and the Ankobra valley, and settled on the coast as commercial rival. In 1727–1728, the two emerged as the leading exponents of two opposing alliances that were forming from the principal political and commercial interests in the region following *Conny*'s expulsion. The two camps were formed after the killing of Azia Kpanyinli, in which both *Ajeba Manfoe* and Akpole were implicated. Emu was the leader of the so-called "friends of Azia," who found support and allies along the whole coast to the west of Axim, whereas *Ajeba Manfoe* was attempting to put together an alliance of forces in Axim, Abokro, Butri, and other towns in Ahanta. The two factions openly fought each other, and thus created a situation of widespread insecurity that the Dutch saw as harmful to trade and Ockers repeatedly attempted to resolve by promoting peace negotiations, but without success.[89]

The rivalry between the two camps had very clear implications for the general political situation in the region. Emu's close relationship with Aowin and his commercial and political interests contrasted with those

of *Ajeba Manfoe* and his allies, who had Asante connections. During 1729–1730, Emu was the intermediary for the purchase of a great quantity of arms and gunpowder by Aowin as part of its rearmament.[90]

When the war broke out in 1730, a massive Asante campaign in the southwest overcame Aowin and Wassa. Aowin was completely ruined. An Asante army reached the Ankobra region in December 1730 and, before demanding that the Dutch hand over the Wassa refugees in the Axim area, it carried out a punitive expedition in ɛlɛmgbenle against Emu and his supporters, using as a pretext Emu's hospitality to Wassa refugees and his refusal to hand them over to their pursuers. The big man of Baku was defeated and captured. The action was evidently part of a more general plan to strengthen Asante influence along the western coast, but according to the Dutch, it was *Ajeba Manfoe* who requested Kumase's intervention against Emu and the "friends of Azia" in ɛlɛmgbenle and Azane.[91]

Once Emu had been eliminated, an army of 8,000–10,000 Asante and Twifo took up positions around Axim for some time in order to recover the Wassa fugitives. The compensation imposed by the victors on Emu's supporters to resolve the dispute was extremely onerous: 320 *bendas* of gold. The "beach people" accepted this, but had to turn to the Dutch who imposed as a condition an acknowledgment of their subjugation to the WIC (which in practice meant a more exclusive trading arrangement); they also undertook to pay their debt in slaves and gold.[92]

According to Nzema tradition, Emu was kept prisoner in Kumase with his sister Emu Bɛneɛ, without ever revealing to his jailers the whereabouts of the great quantity of gold he had buried not far from Baku and which the *Asantehene* wanted to get his hands on. He even managed to get some of his people to recover part of the treasure.[93]

The events surrounding Emu's demise were an important turning point in the history of the area, as they were closely associated with the birth of the new *maanle* of Appolonia. Various traditions explicitly connect the founding group of the "Kingdom of Appolonia" with a strategy directed against the power and wealth of Emu with the aim of replacing his dominant role in local commerce by exploiting Asante interests in the area and the bad blood between Emu and the powerful lords of the interior.[94]

A complex tradition that was recorded in the early 1960s provides a version of why Asante took action against Emu. According to this story, local rivalries were one of the major causes of the invasion, and Baku was a flourishing commercial center that the Asante much preferred to Adoabo, because of its advantageous prices. For this reason, the people of Adoabo artfully provoked a conflict between Emu and

his customers by attacking and robbing groups of Asante traders and putting the blame on Baku. The Asante reaction, which took the form of a punitive expedition, forced the part of the population linked to Emu to seek refuge around the lagoons to the west. However, the fierceness of their attack was much worse than the inhabitants of Adoabo had expected, even though they actively sided with the invaders. They too were threatened with capture and had to seek refuge at Ahumazo on Lake Amanzule. Emu's capture along with his followers irreversibly weakened Baku's position and made it possible for the rival town to assert its position and the power of its big men.

According to this account, these events occurred at the time of Anɔ Bile, who appears in the story as the successor to Kɛma Kpanyinli, who in turn is seen in many traditions as the leader of the ancestral migration into the area. But this account also mentions of such figures as Anɔ Bile Aka, Anɔ Bile's son and successor in violation of the matrilineal principle, and Anɔ Bɔnlɔmane, who was effectively the chief of Adoabo at the time when the inhabitants of that town were stirring up Asante hostility toward Emu.[95]

Indeed the tradition of a direct involvement by members of the founding group of the "Kingdom of Appolonia" in the events of December 1730 is significantly corroborated by a contemporary Dutch document. When writing about Emu's defeat and capture after he had refused to hand over the Wassa fugitives, Ockers, the commander of Axim Fort, recorded that the Asante first completely destroyed Baku, and then took by surprise and captured Emu and some of his leading followers and supporters in the village of *Nobbre Akka*. The harshness of the Asante action induced the *cabboceer* Boa to enter into negotiations for the handover of the Wassa fugitives.[96] The first name mentioned by Ockers corresponds to Anɔ Bile Aka, whose residence was Benyinli. He is remembered as one of the first *arelemgbunli*, and is mentioned in the Dutch sources as the principal chief (the *oudste-regent*, senior ruler or even *koning*, meaning "king") of Appolonia at the end of the 1740s. His corulers were his brothers Boa (the second name mentioned by Ockers) and Amihiya Kpanyinli.[97] Local traditions, as has already been remarked, mention another name which is ignored in the European sources: Anɔ Bɔnlɔmane, who is generally considered to have been one of the brothers. Ockers does not name Anɔ Bile and we have no evidence that he was still alive in 1730 other than in local tradition.[98]

The defeat Asante inflicted on Emu left the group around Anɔ Bile and his sons as the dominant local power in the area between Cape Appolonia and the Ankobra. This development, a corollary of the conflicts affecting the southwest more generally during the first half

of the eighteenth century, represented the end of a process of radical change affecting the area's political and commercial structure, and to some extent its human geography. The region lost some of its population as a result of military operations, but there was also resettlement within the area, reallocation among the various political entities and emigration to other areas. There can be no doubt that the Ankobra river basin suffered greatly from the conflicts that marked the first part of the century, and it was also damaged by the political and economic growth of the Appolonia area, which attracted population. The density of settlements and population along the banks of the lower Ankobra (in Azane, Abokro, and Egila), which were recorded on Teixeira's map and corroborated by Bosman in late seventeenth century,[99] changed considerably during the 1730s, when the populous riverside towns mostly disappeared or shrank in size.[100] Conversely the region as a whole and the areas to the west of the Ankobra in particular experienced a period of consistent immigration. This reached a peak during the conflict between Asante and polities such as Aowin, Wassa, and Twifo, and probably modified the demographic makeup of the area (although this cannot be quantified) and its linguistic and cultural features. In particular there must have been changes in the political balance of power and in the composition of the ruling groups of such polities as Adwɔmɔlɔ and ɛlɛmgbenle. The examples of *Domma* and Emu, which have already been discussed, are typical of this phenomenon.

In the 1760s, the process was complete with the establishment of a new political framework. The situation of the area was considerably simplified in relation to the beginning of the century. Even by the 1740s, entities that had previously been clearly autonomous had lost their distinctive political identity in the eyes of the Dutch in Axim. Abokro was a case in point, as it lost all previous demographic and political centrality, while the territory and population of Azane, where *Jan Conny* made his last stand, were broken up and shared out between Axim, Egila, and ɛlɛmgbenle.[101] Adwɔmɔlɔ was completely crushed, as we shall see more clearly, between the consolidation of the new power in Appolonia and the Sanwi expansion in the region of the lower Tano and the lagoons.

In 1765, the year in which the English founded their fort in Benyinli, many entities had in practice been absorbed into the two powers that fought for primacy in the region: Egila to the north of Axim and Appolonia to the west of the River Ankobra, which now covered the seventeenth-century polities of *Abuma,* ɛlɛmgbenle, Adwɔmɔlɔ, Edobo, Awiane, *Quitrij,* and much of Azane. The "Kingdom of Appolonia" had now been formed.

Chapter 7

The New *Maanle* of Appolonia: Development of a Network

Nzema historical traditions recorded in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,[1] which are confirmed by local accounts gathered by the Dutch back in 1763 and 1765,[2] all indicate that the "Kingdom of Appolonia" resulted from the military, diplomatic, commercial, and financial activities of four leaders belonging to the same generation. They are Anɔ Bile Aka, Anɔ Bɔnlɔmane,[3] Boa Kpanyinli, and Amihyia Kpanyinli, who were active through the eighteenth century up to 1779. These four are often referred to as *mezeama* (sing. *meze ara*), that is, brothers on the father's side. To be precise, their biological father was one Anɔ Bile. Therefore they were blood relations in the fullest sense, in Nzema conceptual terms (the transmission of *mogya*, "blood," is a specific attribute of the father; cf. PARA. 1.4).

When Anɔ Bile died, his sons inherited his assets and power in the area covering ɛlɛmgbenle and Cape Appolonia, and centered on Lake Amanzule; they therefore extended their control all over the region to the west of the Ankobra River, and set themselves up as the main commercial players in the area. However, their business interests and their influence extended much further, and reached as far east as the further bank of the River Prah.[4]

Following the death of Anɔ Bile Aka (in 1752 or 1753), Amihyia and Boa gradually set themselves on a collision course with the Dutch, and in the early 1760s, they were the protagonists of a series of political and military upheavals in which they were to prove victorious. They managed to confirm and enlarge their power base, and to neutralize the hegemonic ambitions of the WIC and their local allies.

Their ability to manipulate English aspirations to increase trade contributed considerably to this successful result. Building work on Fort Appolonia commenced in 1765, and its location in Benyinli made it the most westerly of the British fortresses on the Gold Coast. This sealed the success of the new "Kingdom of Appolonia" in consolidating its role as the principal player in the region.

7.1 The Origins

The information contained in the area's traditions on the establishment and development of the founding group can be compared with the information based on accounts collected in Axim and Egila, and recorded in 1765 by the Dutch commander of Axim, J. C. Fennekol, when some of the persons referred to were still alive and continued to hold power. Fennekol provides an account of the region's historical geography and how it had been changed by events of the previous few decades. When questioned by the Dutchman on this subject, the *cabboceer Pay Boa* and other leading figures (*grooten*) in Axim and Egila provided important data on the first *arelemgbunli* and the birth of the new *maanle*.[5]

Anɔ Bile (*Annubbrie*, *Annubrue*), whom *Pay Boa* defines as his "cousin," came from the interior (a *matte neger*, "a bush negro," as Fennekol terms it) and for a time, he lived on the coast close to the Europeans. He later moved to the Cape Appolonia area. There he exploited the annihilation of Adwɔmɔlɔ as a result of wars, and consolidated his position by sharing out the spoils with the *caboceer* of Assini.

The information collected by Fennekol does not mention where Anɔ Bile came from, except for the vague indication of the interior. There isn't even any explicit information on the date of his arrival in the region and on the location of his temporary sojourn on the coast "close to the whites," before he moved to Cape Appolonia.

The traditions of the Nvavile *abusua,* whose members include Anɔ Bile among their ancestors, are certainly much more forthcoming. These stories, which were however not recorded until the twentieth century, link Anɔ Bile through his maternal line with a group that came from Aowin during the reign of Anɔ Asema, thus referring to Aowin's intense and predatory military activity in these coastal areas, which is also confirmed in the French sources on Assini during the years 1688–1692 (see PARA. 5.1). The stories of the Nvavile tell in great detail of the initial settlement in the area of Adwɔmɔlɔ and Cape Appolonia by their ancestors, and how they had started with

a base in Alɛnrɛnzule, near Abolezo. They then moved on to the area of Benyinli and Ahumazo, and joined up with the local population, which was dominated by the Ndwea/Esawa *abusua* of Kɛma Kpanyinli. Using Ekpu and Atweabanso as bridgeheads, they subjugated the groups settled along the coast to the west, after having defeated their military leader, *Awiele*, who lived in Awiane.

All these events are dated by tradition to the time of Anɔ Asema. Indeed, the Nvavile stories claim that Anɔ Bile was the direct successor to Anɔ Asema in the Nzema area.[6] Before occupying a position of power, Anɔ Bile is supposed to have spent his youth in Mpoho in Ahanta, where he learned the trade of carpenter (the royal *ebia* of Mpoho is closely linked to these Nzema Nvavile).[7]

Fennekol' sources clearly state that Anɔ Bile was the "true carnal father" of Anɔ Bile Aka (*Acca*),[8] Boa Kpanyinli (*Boa Penien*), and Amihyia (*Amonicchia*), who, following their father's death extended their power and influence by taking possession (*bezetten*) of numerous towns in the region. On the death of Anɔ Bile Aka, the two surviving brothers continued to reside in the Cape Appolonia area: Boa took over from his dead brother by setting up his residence in Benyinli (*Beijn*), while Amihyia continued to live in Adoabo (*Attoambo*).[9]

According to the way the Nzema perceive these terms, Anɔ Bile and his sons, who were committed to the work of creating the new *maanle*, are described as a *fane*, namely a society, association, or company that had set itself clearly defined tasks. The term, from the root *fa* (to take), emphasizes the concept of the implementation of a collective force, and is especially used to describe the common life, interests, work, and other matters shared by fathers and sons.[10]

The political structure was typified and ratified by the geographical breakdown of the system of power established by Anɔ Bile.

According to various traditions, the group's original residence was Ahumazo/*Abuma* on Lake Amanzule. However, the affirmation of the group's political and commercial role was clearly dependent on the decision to reside by the coastline.[11]

Anɔ Bile Aka is referred to in several local traditions as the founder of Benyinli,[12] and Boa Kpanyinli as the founder of ɛkɛbaku. Adoabo, a short distance to the east, was founded by Amihyia Kpanyinli and, lastly, Anokyi was founded a few kilometres to the east close to Baku by Anɔ Bɔnlɔmane.[13]

The settled area developed along a few kilometres and occupied the coast midway between ɛlɛmgbenle and Cape Appolonia. In 1688 the entire stretch of coast between Adwɔmɔlɔ (*Agumene*) and Borazo (*Bogio*) at the mouth of the Amanzule River had no settlements that

were visible from the ocean. On this point, the information provided on Barbot's map is categorical. Even in 1710 Uring makes no reference to any trading ports to the west of Elonyi, although this does not preclude the existence of settlements.[14] In other words, there are various factors that tend to confirm the traditions when they claim that Benyinli, Ɛkɛbaku, Adoabo, and Anokyi were founded by Anɔ Bile's group. If there were any preexisting coastal settlements, they must have been very small and probably no more than tiny encampments for fishing or salt production. The founding of these towns must therefore date back to the early decades of the eighteenth century.

The new *maanle* was the product of the crisis in the previous power structure and its constituent elements: a crisis that had been caused by outside intervention more or less directly relating to the expansion of Aowin and later Asante.

One example is the decline of Adwɔmɔlɔ, which was triggered by the arrival of refugees from Aowin moving to the south and the west. The statements collected by Fennekol link this particular development to the beginning of the expansion by Anɔ Bile's group, which shared out the spoils of Adwɔmɔlɔ with the new power center that was being formed closer to the Aby Lagoon, the Sanwi of Aka Siman Adu (aka Aka Esoin).[15]

As has already been made clear, Adwɔmɔlɔ and Cape Appolonia were undoubtedly the final destination of successive and substantial waves of migration from Aowin. We have referred to how Anɔ Bile's Nvavile had moved into the area, the same Aowin expansion included for instance the Azanwule. Their ancestor *Efwi Komfo* is supposed to have broken off from the main body of the Aowin migration down the Tano valley. His people halted and settled for a period in Gyema and later moved on to the coast, where they initially settled next to the Domunli Lagoon, which was the short stretch of coast that constituted Adwɔmɔlɔ's outlet to the ocean. Still later, they settled in Ezinlibo and therefore moved into Adwɔmɔlɔ's ancient heartland, just to the east of Cape Appolonia (it was therefore named Azanwulenu).

This group's tradition also mentions that they entered into an alliance, which gave them a subordinate role, with Kɛma Kpanyinli of Ahumazo, who is supposed to have granted them permission to settle on this final area.[16] Kɛma is supposed to have established the boundary on the Elonyi stream between the Ndweafoɔ and the Azanwule.[17] Moreover the latter established very close relations with the groups settled to the west, particularly the Alɔnwɔba in the Awiane/Half Assini area.[18]

It is not clear whether Anɔ Bile asserted his power over Adwɔmɔlɔ and the Cape towns gradually or as the result of a sudden event. These polities had undoubtedly been weakened by the successive Asante and Wassa attacks in 1715, 1721, and 1726. The final blow to the towns of the Cape came with the attack by Aowin forces in November 1740. The people of the Cape were completely overwhelmed and forced once more into flight. The Aowin in question were in fact forces linked to the new polity of Sanwi, which was consolidating its position around the Aby Lagoon and expanding into coastal areas.[19]

In any case, it appears fairly clear, at least in the light of nineteenth- and twentieth-century traditions, that the power of Anɔ Bile and his followers over Adwɔmɔlɔ translated into an alliance with the Azanwule who descended from *Efwi Komfo* and occupied crucial positions in that region and around Cape Appolonia.

This alliance encountered problems in the 1750s, when a conflict broke out between Amihyia Kpanyinli and Gyabili, one of *Efwi Komfo*'s successors. However the dispute was settled and in the early 1760s, Gyabili fought alongside Amihyia Kpanyinli in the war against Mea of Egila and the Dutch, and contributed a substantial force (including 12 cannons). According to tradition, Amihyia is supposed to have charged Gyabili, once they had resolved their dispute, with the task of keeping a close watch over the Cape Appolonia hills and the area to the west and defending them against the Sanwi threat.[20]

The demise of Adwɔmɔlɔ was such that in the 1760s the use of this place-name became the cause of some confusion among the WIC directors, who now considered it an old name that had fallen into disuse and they were no longer sure where to place it in the regional context.[21]

The beneficiary of the ruin of Adwɔmɔlɔ and Cape Appolonia was Anɔ Bile who, after having brought ɛlɛmgbenle under his power as result of the fall of Emu, was now in a position to assert control both over the flourishing trade with the interloper vessels offshore and over the terminus for trade with Aowin. More particularly, Anɔ Bile came to control the very busy trade with Aowin and Sehwi in the salt produced in his coastal settlements.[22]

Tradition emphasizes the rise of Anɔ Bile to position of the main commercial broker to the west of the Ankobra, which made it possible for him to establish a privileged relationship with Asante, thus obtaining Kumase sanction of his political and economic role.

A pact of close alliance (*amonle*) was entered into by a delegation sent to Kumase, and the relationship with the *Asantehene* was ratified by their gift of a ceremonial sword (*adabelaka*) to Anɔ Bile.[23] These episodes are

often referred to in local historical narratives as the founding moment of an important and very particular relationship of joking kinship (*tɛne*) between the Nzema and the Asante.[24]

7.2 The Identity of the Founders: Accounts and Traditions

As we have seen, the names of the founders of the "Kingdom of Appolonia" appear repeatedly in European sources, and they appear as a result of the demise of Emu and Baku. Through the paternal line, they descended from a single individual, Anɔ Bile, who may have been an immigrant and a new arrival, but their matrilineage had been established in the area for a long time. Ahumazo was the ancestral settlement. This was the ancient area of *Abuma*, the important and populous town that was antagonistic to the people of Cape Appolonia, their Portuguese allies, and Axim. Quite suddenly in the early 1720s a group based in *Abuma*/Ahumazo was capable of extending its control over the corresponding stretch of coast and successfully replacing Baku's commercial hegemony. It therefore took on a prominent role in the coastal area of Ɛlɛmgbenle.

Leaving aside his uncertain (indigenous or foreign) origins, Anɔ Bile was part of the local system of power through his alliance with the *abusua* of Kɛma Kpanyinli of Ahumazo. A wife of Anɔ Bile came from this group, and she would be the mother of Anɔ Bile Aka, Boa, and Amihyia. These three (and possibly also Anɔ Bɔnlɔmane) were therefore members of the *abusua* of Kɛma Kpanyinli, and this provided them with full rights in terms of belonging to an identity with powerful local roots.

It is not currently possible to establish whether Kɛma Kpanyinli and Anɔ Bile lived at more or less the same time, and therefore whether the latter was able to form a personal alliance with the former or with his descendents. Various modern traditions place Kɛma Kpanyinli in a more remote period in the formation of local society, and thus associate him with a mythical phase of ancestral migration from somewhere vaguely to the north or more specifically from the Takyiman region (Abron), which was responsible for the first settlement of the lagoon area.[25] In these narrations, this personage belongs to a prehistoric dimension, his features are decidedly out of focus, and his role is limited to that of bringing people into the area and settling them there. His death is supposed to have occurred soon afterwards, and marks the beginning of the genuinely historical narrative, which is obviously the history of the new order that emerges with the "Kingdom of Appolonia."

The histories of other important groups in the region are not sufficient to historicize this almost mythical figure. For example, the dominant *abusua* of Eikwe, associates Kɛma with their ancestors' arrival in the area and their need to obtain land to settle. Then there are the stories of the Azanwule we have already mentioned.[26] In 1768 Amihyia Kpanyinli mentions the name of the ancestor in connection with a past marital alliance with Wassa: Kɛma is supposed to have given away his sister in marriage to the Wassa king. But it is not clear from this source whether the event refers to a distant ancestral dimension or to something more recent.[27]

Kɛma is therefore strongly associated in the collective Nzema memory with the arrival of the founders of the new *maanle*, even though they attribute Anɔ Bile with the principal paternity of the coastal settlements close to Cape Appolonia and the initial consolidation of the new entity.

Clearly, the possibility today of reconstructing the identities of the people and groups mentioned is considerably affected by the manner in which they are represented to us in the available eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources, and by the fact that claims to legitimacy by competing local factions on the basis of the pre-1848 power system have dominated and still dominate political debate in the area in question.

The way the identity of these historical figures is treated by local sources picks up a motif that is extremely popular in western Akan areas. This is the motif of an ancestral link between the ruling groups of the principal regional political entities, particularly Aowin, Sanwi, Nzema, Egila, Pepesaa, Wassa, and Sehwi Anhwiaso.[28]

During the twentieth century, an *abusua* belonging to the Nvavile matriclan, which maintains that it constitutes the legitimate matrilineal descent from Anɔ Bile, has constantly put forward claims to the separate stools of Adoabo and Benyinli, which have been occupied by *mbusua* of the Ndweafoɔ (or Ahwea) matriclan practically since the time of Kaku Aka's deportation. The genealogies accredited by this Nvavile *abusua*,[29] whose ancestral seat is Awiaso in Eastern Nzema, portray Anɔ Bile, the Agona royal line of Denkyira (Boa Aponsem's Stool, presently at Dwukwa) and that of Mpoho (Ahanta) as all belonging to the same matriline.[30] On the other hand, these same sources closely associate Anɔ Bile to the famous Anɔ Asema, the founder of the royal Ɔyɔkɔ *abusua* of Aowin and a central figure in the region's history in the period between the final phase of Denkyira's hegemony and the Asante campaigns of 1715–1721 in the southwest. Anɔ Bile would therefore have been an *adiema* (brother, pl. *mediema*) of

Anɔ Asema.[31] This ancestral link between Ɔyɔko and Nvavile is also confirmed in the historical accounts provided by the royal *abusua* of Aowin, which also places Amɛnlɛma Anɔ, the founder of the ɔyɔko element in the royal house of Sanwi, in the same maternal line, as one of the matrisiblings.[32] But even the traditions of other important Nzema *mbusua* emphasize the centrality of the Aowin connection. For example, the memoirs of the *ebia* of Awiebo record a close matrilineal bond between Anɔ Bile and Bonzo Kaku, the leader of a migration from the Aowin town of Bengyema Ngatieso, that started after the war between Asante and Denkyira (which ended in 1701). Consequently it occurred when Anɔ Bile was already settled in the region. Bonzo Kaku was a Navile.[33]

As can be seen, the historical framework in which the Nvavile of Awiaso legitimized their original claims to the royal stool, calls into question all the main protagonists of the events linked firstly to the Denkyira expansion to the southwest in 1680s and then to the displacement and reestablishment of the Aowin polity in the early decades of the eighteenth century, one of the effects of Asante expansion. To be precise, they refer to a network of Agona–Nvavile–Ɔyɔkɔ, alliances forged during these episodes.

The Nvavile versions assert that the four *mezeama* were also *mediema,* that is, sons of the same mother,[34] one of Anɔ Bile's domestic slaves. The calling name (*mgbayelɛ*) attributed to this woman in the Nvavile versions was Efia Neka, which literally means "Home Boxes" (a reference to Anɔ Bile's previous occupation as a carpenter close to some European settlement) and emphasizes her condition of *akɛlɛ* (an acquired slave or prisoner). Her unfree status would thus have rendered void the *abusua*'s affiliation through the maternal line, and therefore the brothers would be assimilated into the paternal *abusua*. In this manner, the relations between the persons concerned became a purely internal question within the Nvavile *abusua*. The succession to the father, as well as their reciprocal succession, both historically documented, are thus rationalized and justified in terms of the dialectic between the "authentic" line (*dehelɛ*) and the slave element that was assimilated into the *abusua*. This version clearly betrays the intention to assert the predominant right of the Nvavile to the inheritance of Anɔ Bile and therefore the *ebia* of Appolonia, against the claims of the matrilineage (or perhaps matrilineages) of the four sons.

On the other hand, an account gathered in 1960s, which supports the attribution of the ancient *arelemgbunli* to the Ndweafoɔ matriclan, claims that a *tweani* (a member of the N.) wife of Anɔ Bile was a free woman, who in this case was called Adwa Manza and was

the mother of Anɔ Bile Aka, the eldest brother. This source does not specify the matrilineage of the other brothers. The Dutch sources, however, provide some hints as to Amihyia Kpanyinli's maternal line. Anɔ Bile was said to have fathered him through a union with a woman belonging to a sept of the group of *mbusua* called Esawa, which had settled in Egila and had been assimilated locally into the Ndweafoɔ matriclan.[35] Other references would lead us to conclude that Boa Kpanyinli also belonged to the same matrilineal situation.[36]

The name Esawa has at least two meanings in the region we are concerned with. In the Anyi areas and Western Nzema it is the name of one of the two great *fane* (or *fa*: society, association), which we could call the two "halves" in which the community was divided: *esawa* (or *asawua*) is the *fane* of the "youth" (also called *mgbavolɛ*), as opposed to *mulusue* (also called *mgbanyinli* or *mgbanyima*), the *fane* of the "elders" and nobility.[37] But the same name is used to designate a large group of *mbusua* present in a vast part of the western Akan world. In this case, the current traditions tend to credit the origin of the name Esawa to the Asante town of Saawua, historically a town of political and commercial importance situated close to Kumase.[38]

According to the area in which one lives, the Esawa *mbusua* are associated with different matriclans: Aduana in Sehwi and Aowin, Asona or Bretuo in Ahanta,[39] Ndweafoɔ in Egila, ɛvaloɛ country and Nzema areas to the west of Ankobra,[40] where however they are also closely connected with the local Azanwule matriclan, especially in Western Nzema.[41] At the end of the nineteenth century, the Esawa of Egila constituted a group of *mbia* that principally included those of Bamianko, Banso, Tomento, and Essuawa, as well as those of Salman, Kekame, and Anwia in Eastern Nzema. Moreover the Esawa of Bamianko are closely linked and exchange heirs with an *ebia* of Akatakyi in Ahanta and an *ebia* of Kwawu in Aowin. The succession of each individual *ebia* is potentially guaranteed by the different *mbusua* that constitute the network. However this is not all. Individual *ebia* can obtain heirs from *mbusua* that are not defined as Esawa and that acknowledge family links only with one or a few components of the Esawa group. The *mbusua* in question established these particular links in the form of sworn agreements and consolidated them through matrimonial exchange practices. Esawa is therefore a network, or more correctly a hierarchy (not necessarily a rigid one) among different subnetworks, each one the product of specific historical circumstances.[42]

We are dealing here with a galaxy made up of a series of solar systems with planets and satellites, some of which are engaged in different

matriclan orbits at the same time. In other words, the language of kinship in the case of Esawa very clearly expresses a layering of relationships of varied nature. Primarily, it is the historical formation of equal and unequal alliances between groups, underscored by specific marriage strategies. A recent and highly significant example was provided in 1995 by the succession to the royal *stool* of Bamianko, Egila. A member of an Azanwule *abusua* in Western Nzema has occupied this Esawa *ebia*. The relationship between Azanwule and Esawa appears to have been established in the first half of the eighteenth century through an *amonle elilɛ* ritual, which is an irrevocable alliance ratified by a "blood pact."[43] The logic that underlies these pacts was summarized in 1920 by an ex-*ɔhene* of Bansu (Egila):

> The families become one, when the member of one family sits on the stool of the other and vice versa [. . .] when families have made one, they don't separate. There are families of one blood, and families of the same name but not of the same blood.[44]

7.3 "Blood" and "Family": How a Network of Alliances Works

The framework of kinship and political links, in which the eighteenth-century Dutch sources placed Anɔ Bile Aka, Boa, and Amihyia Kpanyinli, proved particularly useful in charting out the more general historical context in which these events occurred. At one level, there were the relationships determined by "blood" and "family," terms apparently used to indicate both membership of the same *abusua* and a close patrilateral relationship. This band includes relationships that connect the three figures to each other and those kinship relations that Europeans would define as "cousins" on the maternal side (i.e., members of the same matrilineal context), such as Anɔ Aka, the main chief of Egila and two important *makelaar* (broker, trade intermediary) for the Dutch company, Mea Takyi of Amankolaso, in Egila (WIC ally in the final expulsion of *Jan Conny*) and Bekoa Anɔ of Asɛnda, in Azane.[45] In some cases, the European sources emphasize that the affinity created by the common membership of a matrilineage or matriclan can also be strengthened by the establishment of sworn alliances. This was true of the close relationship between the brothers of Cape Appolonia and Aka of Upper Dixcove, a prominent member of the Ndweafoɔ *abusua*, who was the main intermediary in trade with the British in Ahanta.[46] On the other hand, similar relations existed with the ruling group of Dompem-Pepesaa, while a "common link of

family and origin" was supposed to have existed with the royal Abure stool of Bonua in what is now the Ivory Coast and the *stool* of Sanwi.[47] Relations between the Cape Appolonia group and the strategically fundamental royal lines of Aowin, Wassa, and Ahanta were seen by the Europeans as sworn alliances.[48] In the case of Wassa in particular, it should be remembered that Kɛma Kpanyinli had given away his sister in marriage to one of the occupants of the royal stool.[49] There is also evidence of an alliance between Amihyia and Asare Abrampa (or Abrinpomba), one of the most important chiefs of Wassa, who was a prominent figure in the Wassa Civil War in the 1760s. Amihyia's wife was Asare Abrampa's classificatory sister ("cousin").[50]

In many instances, the groups mentioned acted fairly coherently as a vast whole, and in particular displayed institutional structures for mediating internal conflicts.[51]

Seen in its wider context, this framework of relationships involving the historical figures in question and their Esawa group brings us back to the historical context portrayed in the previously mentioned Nvavile versions. However there is a major difference: Denkyira and his royal Agona *abusua* do not play the central role as they do in the Nvavile stories, and the pivotal historical reference appears to be the system of alliances built around the later Aowin power and the ɔyɔkɔ of Anɔ Asema. To me it appears very significant that many of the groups mentioned resorted to a key institutional instrument: a *ndane* (twi: *ntam*), which is a form of oath, closely associated with the Aowin royal *stool*. The *ndane* formula was *Ɛlɛka mieza* (or *Ɛlɛka nsa*, *Nnɛka nsa*, *Alaka nsa*, etc.), meaning "three coffins" or "three deaths," which, to date, I found evidence of in Aowin, Sanwi, Sehwi Anhwiaso, and Egila.[52] These are the angles of a great triangle with Aowin at its center, on which the network of relations between Esawa groups, their associated groups, and the group of Anɔ Asema was built. To this day, the use of this *ndane* is explained in relation to an ancient military alliance between groups of different origin.[53]

Thus the historical context of the transition from the Denkyira's "imperial" phase to the reconstitution of Aowin power reemerges as the original reference point for the associative networks and alliances among the dominant groups in the region during the first half of the eighteenth century. It is essential, from a historical point of view, to pay due attention to the examination of this reality in the area, and this requires a critical analysis of the categories of kinship used to describe the framework of relationships. There is a clear impression that, if we were able to break down this framework into its constituent parts, we would find substantial indications of the

different political and institutional layers documented in the preceding history of the region, interspersed in contexts that expressed themselves in terms of matrilineal kinship.

For example, the corporate behavior of the "big men" within each individual local political entity, irrespective of differences in matriclan affiliation or geographic origin, bring to mind the operational models of those "brotherhoods of nobles" that Ray Kea describes as "horizontal" social organizations, which were gradually replaced by the new model of "vertical" social grouping constituted by the matriclan.[54] But the same could be said of the continuation, in forms expressed in matriclan terminology, of the system of corporate links between merchants on a large regional scale, as for example those communities of *Akanist* merchants that Van Dantzig suggested could have been one of the basic components of the power groups that initiated Denkyira's expansion.[55] Esawa was an example of this phenomenon.

The clear historical persistence of "networks" and their operational logic obliges us to reexamine critically Kea's theory that "brotherhoods of nobles" were replaced by matriclans during the seventeenth century, as the structures for organizing ruling groups. In reality, *mbusua*, patrilineal descent and "brotherhoods" operated in eighteenth-century networks as components that intertwined with others and also included ancient systems of "fraternity," which probably have to be reread in a wider context of alliances established and then reestablished in accordance with different procedures. The situation does not appear that different from the one in the seventeenth century (or even perhaps in the century previous to that).

We can now see how these alliance networks, as I have described them, worked historically in relation to the ascendancy of the group created by Anɔ Bile and his sons, and the events surrounding the establishment of the "Kingdom of Appolonia" in the first half of the eighteenth century. These developments occurred within a regional context marked by competition for control of the trade through the final stretches of the trade routes linking the forest areas, where Asante power had by then been consolidated, and the west coast. At this time, there were two principal access routes for trade with Axim for those coming from the interior. The more westerly one went through Aowin and was therefore directed toward the coast west of the mouth of the Ankobra, using the final stretch of the Amanzule River and its tributaries.[56] The more easterly one passed through Wassa and the Ankobra Valley.[57]

It has to be remembered that the allusion to the period of Aowin ascendancy certainly had a legitimizing role for the Cape Appolonia

group and Esawa in general during the 1760s, but it no longer reflected any real and accepted political authority. While the dominant position of the Agona of Denkyira within the region political and economic network had been compromised by the defeat of Feyiase in 1701, the subsequent leading role of the ɔyɔkɔ of Aowin was profoundly shaken by Asante invasions in 1715 and 1721. The final collapse of Aowin influence in the coastal regions occurred in 1730, following the Asante campaign that overran this state and Wassa, and reached Axim and Cape Appolonia. The emergence of the Esawa of Egila in this context appears connected to the eclipse of other groups linked to the power of Aowin, such as the one led by Emu. The removal of this figure led to his friends and supporters being weakened and completely compromised. Locally they were referred to as Nvavile/Anona, which was the same matriclan context as Anɔ Bile's.[58] Dutch sources relate that, around 1731, Amihyia violently expelled the eminent *cabboceer Pay Boa* from his residence located to the west of Ankobra (probably Boa Kpanyinli, not to be confused with Amihyia's brother). *Pay Boa* was a maternal "cousin" of Anɔ Bile.[59] Following various misadventures, *Pay Boa* found a welcome in the domains of *Entier* of Busua, the Ahanta "king," to whom he was linked by the same matriclan membership (Nvavile/Anona).[60]

It appears that groups linked to the Esawa of Egila successfully replaced those who had lost positions of political and economic power in the area. Besides, this process was favored by links with the Dutch, which were particularly strengthened in 1726, when the Esawa of Egila actively supported the Dutch in their final offensive against *Jan Conny*.[61] Following his final expulsion from the region's political and commercial scene, the Dutch had practically complete control over the trading centers on the Ahanta and Nzema coast, with the exception of the British settlement of Dixcove. After the destruction of Wassa power in 1730, Asante became in reality the principal commercial player in the region.[62] From the 1740s, the group centerd on Egila became practically the only intermediary with Axim for traffic along the final tracts of the southwestern trade routes. However, the influence of the Cape Appolonia "brothers," first Anɔ Bile Aka and then Boa and Amihyia, was increasing within the Esawa group.

Following Anɔ Bile Aka's death toward the end of 1752, Boa Kpanyinli in Benyinli and Amihyia in Adoabo took over joint control of the levers of power. Or rather, Amihyia, who was already extremely wealthy from his business activities over a wide area, acquired control of the majority of his dead brother's assets and de facto seized power. When discussing Boa and Amihyia, the English defined the latter as

the "acting man," although "he does nothing without consulting Abbuy."[63]

By the 1750s, Amihyia was the main commercial intermediary for the Nzema-Ahanta area. Through his control of trade and a skilful credit policy, he found himself at the pinnacle of a pyramid of alliances and patronage with all the "big men" of Ahanta and Egila, many of whom owed him money. Amihyia had the full support of the Aowin sovereign, was in good relations with Wassa, and saw his position sanctioned by an agreement with the Dutch signed on Feb. 13, 1753.[64] By the middle of the decade, his business activities extended beyond the River Prah. His slaves and employees distributed his goods even in the region just behind Elmina, and they collected massive quantities of gold and ivory.[65]

The key to the construction of Amihyia's business empire was his position as the important indigenous broker in the sale of imported Portuguese tobacco on the western Gold Coast.[66] On the basis of the peace terms of 1661 between Portugal and Holland, the WIC allowed Portuguese ships to trade along the coast where there were Dutch settlements in exchange for payment of a duty (*recognitie*) of 10 percent of the value of the cargo. This tax was generally paid in kind, which in most cases was Brazilian tobacco. Moreover the WIC imposed a payment of one roll of tobacco for every slave purchased. Brazilian tobacco was in great demand on the African market (particularly tobacco produced in Bahia and, if not, then in Pernambuco and Paraiba), and the proceeds of the sales became increasingly important for the Dutch company, and after 1734 they became essential. Having been forced in that year to relinquish its monopoly following pressure from private Dutch mercantile interests, the WIC then operated mainly as a broker in the slave trade, providing services to private commerce, in which its own employees were also involved. The proceeds from the sale of tobacco acquired through the *recognitie* not only constituted a crucial source of income for maintaining the forts and trading posts, but also served to cover a series of irregularities in the balance sheet due to the large-scale confusion between private interests and the management of the company.

However, Appolonia constituted a huge impediment to Dutch control over the sale of tobacco: Portuguese ships were stopping there and freely carrying out their first transactions and purchases of slaves on the Gold Coast before proceeding to Axim and Elmina. In Appolonia the first Brazilian tobacco entered into circulation on the Gold Coast outside WIC control, and was dispatched immediately by Amihyia's men not only to markets in the interior but also to

the immediate surroundings of the Dutch forts. This was a serious economic setback for the company, and the principal reason for its resentment of the big man.[67]

However the Dutch began to perceive the growing prominence of Amihyia as a serious threat, when the expansion of his business activities to the east led him to strengthen his relations with the British based in Dixcove. The Cape Appolonia group became an important contact for the British, through the extremely close links between the three brothers and Aka of Dixcove.[68] Moreover, in 1751–1752 S. Stockwell, who had been Governor of Cape Coast Castle, lived for several months at Cape Appolonia, with the intention of opening a trading settlement and the Dutch feared he might build a fort.[69] Stockwell established a strong link with Anɔ Bile Aka and Amihyia Kpanyinli by marrying one of their women.[70]

The very circumstances of Anɔ Bile Aka's death were bound to deteriorate relations with the WIC. The surgeon of a Dutch ship attempted to carry out a painful operation (probably a bleeding) on the big man who was seriously ill, but he caused excessive bleeding that killed the patient. Amihyia Kpanyinli held the Dutchman responsible for his brother's death and had him arrested along with another member of the crew. They were held in captivity for a considerable period.[71]

However it was not until the early 1760s that the WIC implemented a coherent strategy to deal with these developments that were damaging its position. They took action to weaken the network of local alliances and exploited potential divisions.

7.4 The Esawa Crisis: Conflict and Redefining Relations

The direct confrontation with Amihyia was initiated by J. P. T. Huydecoper,[72] who arrived in Axim as fort commander in 1760.[73] Huydecoper, an important trader in his own right, immediately resented the competition from Amihyia and in October 1761, he argued in a long letter to the *directeur-generael* that they had to act quickly and decisively to destroy the overbearing power of the dangerous *negotiant* of Cape Appolonia, a "second *Jan Conny*," in order to reestablish the profitability of Dutch trade not only in Axim but along the whole of the western part of the Gold Coast. But the Commander of Axim emphasized, he enjoyed considerable power due to his many relationships with important regional figures and particularly his command of a vast money-lending network.[74]

This situation was extremely dangerous, because it allowed Amihyia to exert his influence very effectively over Axim and even the fort. On this point Huydecoper mentions an episode that occurred in 1761, when the big man of Appolonia acquired the entire production of cereals in the Axim region in order to deal with serious shortages in his own lands: this transaction caused enormous problems in supplying the Dutch garrison. However Huydecoper's virulent detestation of Amihyia was based on something entirely personal: the Dutchman owed Amihyia 13 rolls of Brazilian tobacco for a purchase of slaves.[75]

A potential for conflict within Amihyia's *abusua* was apparently due to a dispute over questions of rank and precedence that had existed between him and Mea Takyi of Amankolaso since the 1750s. This gave Huydecoper the opportunity to cause Amihyia's partial political and military isolation from his clients and allies.

Amihyia, Huydecoper wrote, "had taken away two women from him [Mea] by force, and given them to another."[76] In 1752 the two were on the point of war.[77] In the following years there were other episodes involving jurisdictional disputes, generally concerning persons given to Amihyia as a pledge for a debt, and over which Mea could claim some kind of parallel right. In other words the dispute evolved into a chronic confrontation between two powers. In order to explain verbally his preeminence over Mea and all the big men of Egila to the commander of Axim, Amihyia proclaimed that he was the only cockerel in the region, whereas the others from Egila were merely "his hens." Indeed the Dutchman wrote that the big man of Appolonia had had a cage built in which to imprison Mea when he finally captured him: it was a giant replica of a henhouse.[78]

However, Huydecoper could also exploit another conflict involving another powerful neighbor of Appolonia, Sanwi. Relations were already strained at the time of Anɔ Bile Aka and Aka Siman Adu. In 1750 there was a joint attack on Grand Bassam by a coalition of Cape Lahou, Petit Bassam, and Sanwi. There were considerable fears in Appolonia that if their ally, Grand Bassam, fell into the hands of Aka Siman Adu, then the latter would move on to attack Anɔ Bile Aka.[79] This did not happen, but subsequently relations between the two big men were difficult due to disputes over jurisdictional claims on individuals and groups, particularly runaway slaves moving from one territory to the other. A serious dispute broke out between Amihyia and Amandufo, Aka Siman Adu's successor, following military hostilities between the Sanwi and the Ewuture before 1756. These actions challenged the close relations between the people of

Abuma and the Ewuture, particularly the sworn agreements that bound Anɔ Bile Aka and then Amihyia to the leaders of the people of the lagoon. Many Ewuture sought refuge from the big man of Appolonia, who granted them his protection. The return of refugees to their homes, argued for by Amandufo in order not to leave the lagoon areas without sufficient population, was the cause of long disputes that engendered bitter enmities. According to the commander of Axim, Walmbeek, Amihyia consented to handing over the refugees against the guarantee by Amandufo that all the defeated people "should proceed again to their krom or place and dwell there unmolested, as hitherto." However seven Ewuture chiefs refused to leave without Amandufo swearing an express oath "that he also would do them no injury." But Amandufo did not accept this condition, and the seven Ewuture leaders remained with their people in Appolonia.[80] Amandufo settled a large number of the returnees at Bianuan, at the mouth of the River Bia on the Aby Lagoon, and turned this community into an important part of the system of defense and communications for the Anyi component of Sanwi.[81] Those who chose to stay with Amihyia took on a parallel role to that of the repatriated comrades in the context of the new *maanle,* which was being set up (see PARAS. 8.1, 8.3).

The dispute between Amandufo and Amihyia went beyond the case of the Ewuture and more generally concerned control of the communities and territories situated between Cape Appolonia and the Tano River. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this area became home to various groups with Aowin connections, and the Sanwi leaders were constantly claiming jurisdiction over these people. Amandufo challenged the protection Amihyia had granted to the people of Adwɔmɔlɔ, who were defeated many years previously by the Anyi and Aowin.[82] Leaving aside the contingent interests, the question of relations with the communities that lived in important trading areas or on important trade routes close to the coast and the Tano river basin clearly constituted a crucial aspect within the wider framework of the struggle for commercial hegemony between the two newly formed powers: Appolonia and Sanwi.

During 1761 the tension between Amihyia and Mea turned into open conflict.[83] The pretext for the clash was provided by a case of adultery between one of Mea's women and one of the sons of Kɛma Betu of Kekame, an important town close to Asɛnda (Azane). Kɛma Betu rejected Mea's order that he should decapitate the guilty son, and he asked assistance from Amihyia Kpanyinli, while preparing to resist.[84] During the dispute, Mea captured nine of Amihyia's employees who

were working in the tobacco trade. Rather than accepting arbitration on this matter, Amihyia took the opportunity to go to war.

The big man of Appolonia prepared the terrain very carefully by entering into secret agreements with other important figures in Azane, particularly Bekoa Anɔ of Asɛnda, a man who for 20 years had been one of the WIC's principal *makelaars* in the area. Amihyia sent off 1,500 men to attack Mea, and counted upon his adversary's isolation, given that, according to Huydecoper, the latter had a military force of no more than 150 men in Amankolaso. However, Mea managed to resist very effectively after the initial disarray. He evacuated and destroyed the settlements in his own area and withdrew his population to the forest. Using the techniques of guerrilla warfare, he inflicted hundreds of casualties on the invaders, and forced them to retreat. Bekoa Anɔ assisted Amihyia in the retreat, but Mea's unexpected reaction to such a powerful force caused many of his supporters to return to his side, even though they had abandoned him under pressure from Amihyia. At this stage, Mea's strategy was to mobilize the forces of neighboring potentates around his own camp in order to close in on Amihyia from all sides. The latter was attempting to obtain guarantees of Dutch neutrality in the event of a counterattack, while Mea was openly soliciting the WIC to assist him in definitively crushing the big man of Appolonia.

Naturally Huydecoper's formal position of equidistance between the two belligerent parties was not enough to conceal his clear preference for Mea, who for a long time had been company's loyal ally. For instance in November 1761, Huydecoper actively assisted Mea in sending a diplomatic mission by sea to Amandufo in order to convince him to attack Appolonia from the west, opening up another front against Amihyia. Huydecoper and Mea worked together in building up the widest possible coalition and undermining their enemy's extremely powerful network of support, up until the serious military setback at Amankolaso. In January 1762, Mea moved with his people to the eastern bank of the Ankobra, not far from Axim, and from there he launched a series of attacks against the communities allied to Amihyia, which were only possible because of the military supplies they were obtaining from the Dutch. Mea was counting on Amandufo's parallel military intervention from the west, but this never materialized.

Amihyia implemented his own counterattack on a massive scale by moving his troops across the Ankobra on March 2, 1762. This came as a considerable surprise for both Mea and the Dutch, as the offensive took place during an *anlɔnra* week, the one in the ritual month that

was considered inauspicious for warfare and other kinds of *negotia*.[85] Amihyia obviously wished to take advantage of his enemy's unpreparedness and obtained a resounding victory. He pushed his forces forward as far as the gates of Axim, and placed the town under siege for a couple of days. Axim was only able to defend itself because of the artillery in the fort. The open challenge of attacking Axim induced the board of the WIC in Elmina to declare war on Amihyia as a rebel leader, and thus took the decision that Huydecoper had been urging for some time. Most importantly, the company officially mobilized it allies against the big man of Appolonia, and shouldered the expense of the military offensive.[86]

The organization of the anti-Amihyia front proved extremely laborious. The forces were primarily made up of troops from Egila (whose principal chief, Anɔ Aka, supported Mea Takyi) and Axim, with the support of contingents from other towns with Dutch forts along the coast as far as Elmina. Huydecoper and Mea also launched a genuine diplomatic offensive, aimed at winning over the active or implicit support of Amihyia's oldest and most powerful allies, such as Asare Abrampa and Ntiakon of Wassa, but also the leaders of Ahanta and the principal chief of Aowin, Awazi Panin of Enkyi, a great friend of Amihyia and particularly important for his strategic position in the interior and his control of gold production. Boa, the important Nvavile *big man* driven out by Amihyia in 1731, was the go-between who persuaded *Entier* of Busua, who was the highest chief or "king" of Ahanta to break his alliance with Amihyia and join the coalition, but this was to cost the WIC a massive sum (160 ounces of gold). Amandufo was the central target of Huydecoper's diplomatic efforts: around June of 1762 the military leader of Sanwi became renowned for the harsh blow he inflicted on Amihyia, when he repelled the raid the latter ordered against areas to the west of the River Tano.[87] The WIC entered into an alliance with Amandufo, which was guaranteed by the presence of envoys from Awazi Panin of Aowin, whom the warlord of Sanwi had persuaded to abandon Amihyia. According to the provisions of this agreement, Amandufo undertook to attack Amihyia within two weeks of signing it, and agreed to become a "subject" of the WIC. After he had occupied Appolonia and driven out Amihyia, he would grant the Dutch the right to to build a fort there, and would regularly collect the fees (*kostgeld*) from the company for that concession.[88] The Wassa chiefs Asare Abrinpomba and Ntiakon initially appeared to have joined the coalition, but Amihyia found an effective way to neutralize the former: he captured his appointed heir. In any event, the bond between Asare and Amihyia

was very strong, and both Mea and Huydecoper suspected that there was a secret agreement between them. Indeed Asare's men who were billeted in Egila were more of a hindrance than a help to the anti-Amihyia coalition, and in the end, the Dutch asked the principal Wassa chief, Enemil (who succeeded Ntsiful in 1752), to recall Asare. Huydecoper's envoys to Enemil attempted to obtain his support in the war, and then moved on to the residence of Owusu Bore of Denkyira. These two alliances would, however, have involved a price that the WIC simply wasn't willing to pay: both Enemil and Owusu Bore asked, in exchange for their support against Amihyia, a similar Dutch commitment to support them against Asante.

Amihyia was extremely effective in his response to this frenetic coalition-building with the aim of isolating and destroying him. In his wide-ranging diplomatic counteroffensive, he rebuilt his relationship with Asare Abrinpomba, and liberated his appointed heir. He sent large payments to Ntiakon and Awazi Panin, obtaining their de facto neutrality. Awazi Panin persuaded Amandufo to cease his raids on Amihyia after the latter had assured him that he had reached a peace agreement with the Dutch.[89] The big man of Appolonia also pursued the avenue of courting the English: to obtain their assistance, he asked Governor C. Bell in November 1762 to build a fort close to Cape Appolonia, and this move generated considerable interest among the English and considerable concern among the Dutch.[90]

Leaving aside Huydecoper's grand designs of a regional war, Amihyia had to play his hand on the basis of more immediate strategic interests, which meant the balance of power as it had developed in the areas directly affected by the conflict. Here Amihyia's position remained extraordinarily powerful, because of a fracture that had occurred within Azane. The population of Asɛnda was divided into two opposing camps, and the WIC was hit hard by the defection of the *makelaar* Bekoa Anɔ of Asɛnda, who for 20 years had been one of the Dutch company's principal brokers in the Azane area. At the beginning of 1762, he joined Amihyia's forces after having declared that he was moving his men to join Mea's troops. This example was then followed by Mozu, another important big man in Azane from the eastern bank of the Ankobra, not far from Axim.[91]

The concentration of allied troops in Axim was a process that took up all of 1762, complicated by logistical difficulties and a general lack of enthusiasm. Huydecoper was only ready to move off with a few thousand men in late January 1763, and took up his position with artillery on the heights above the Ankobra, where there had once been the Dutch trading post. He crossed the river, and the first

battle took place near Aziema on January 29. Amihyia's forces came out of it worse; some of his commanders lost their lives, and he was wounded. However the victors failed to take advantage of their position, and hurried back to the Ankobra, frightened by an unfounded rumor that the Wassa were on the march to assist Amihyia. Moreover Amandufo, who according to the agreements was supposed to have attacked from the west at the same time, had not made a move. It was not until March 22 that Huydecoper was ready to advance once again: the core of his fighting force was made up of 2,000–3,000 men from Egila and Ahanta, who were accustomed to marching and fighting in the coastal area. Having driven back his adversary's advance guard, he reached the Amanzule. Amihyia's forces had taken up position on the other side of the river mouth. A system of palisades cut across the sandy tongue of land that divides the final lagoon on the river from the ocean, close to Borazo. Amihyia had raised the British flag on the fortification. After a complex assault with artillery backup, it was discovered that the enemy forces simply evacuated these positions and withdrew to another fortification further back (Ekonu/Bakanta). Although the invading forces inflicted serious damage, destroyed fields of rice and cereals, as well as several settlements, and killed many people, the military campaign lacked the target for driving Amihyia and his followers out of Appolonia, and was getting bogged down in the useless defense of positions on the empty tongue of sand, with their retreat impeded by the river and subject to enemy attacks from the surrounding forest. In spite of Huydecoper's efforts to maintain a united front, the desertions of entire contingents returning to their homes became a daily occurrence. Even the squads sent off to collect provisions simply failed to return, and on April 17 the Dutch commander evacuated the field and withdrew to Axim.[92] He continued to hope for a rapid resolution of the conflict in his own favor. The attack had undoubtedly inflicted damage on his enemy, and Huydecoper was counting on this having compromised the solidity of the enemy coalition.[93] But in reality, the campaign against Amihyia had completely run out of steam. Mea Takyi, the WIC's great ally and leading figure in the anti-Amihyia front was now old and extremely sick. He died on August 1, 1763.[94]

Huydecoper pinned his hopes of another offensive on military action by Amandufo's forces, but once again the Dutchman was to be disappointed, because, apart from the odd skirmish, the WIC's new ally did not undertake any resolute action. However, around April of 1764, a large joint force from Aowin and Wassa, which was also reinforced by men from the settlements along the Tano river, crossed

the river and struck the forest communities subject to Amihyia, as well as the Ewuture who had fled the lagoons and settled along the coast. The invaders, who destroyed crops and captured 300 women and children, were led by an Aowin *safohyenle* called *Adoebon*. The effects of the attack were so devastating that they caused a serious famine. For a little time, the enemy presence forced Amihyia to remain closed up in his fortified settlement in Adoabo. This was retaliation for a raid Amihyia had led some time before against the area of Ngatakro (*Quittrij*). During this raid, Amihyia had been responsible for killing the chief custodian of the Tanoɛ *bozonle* (now in Nugua), which was particularly revered by the Aowin people. This place was also an important meeting place for merchants from Wassa and Asante.[95] Huydecoper then hoped that the deathblow to the big man of Appolonia could be inflicted by Amandufo's forces. As late as October, the latter was claiming to be ready to launch the attack with an army that, according to Captain Prehuysen, counted 10,000–11,000 men.[96] But nothing decisive occurred. As Baesjou makes absolutely clear, another power, which previously had kept out of the conflict, manifested its opposition to Amihyia's removal from the region's political landscape, and that power was Asante. Kumase brought considerable pressure to bear on Awazi Panin of Enkyi and, through him, on Amandufo, who was to reach some kind of accommodation with the big man of Cape Appolonia. Although he refused to conclude a formal peace, the warlord of Sanwi took the warning and the possibility of a large-scale invasion of Appolonia from the west became unrealistic as far back as 1763, although friction along the border continued with the occasional skirmish.[97]

The fact is that the WIC's war against Amihyia was a failure: the big man was still in power, his position had not been weakened in any appreciable manner, and his network of relations and alliances had substantially held together. But as though this were not enough, the conflict had determined an extremely serious development for the Dutch: it had strengthened relations between Amihyia and the British, and created the conditions for establishing a permanent British presence on the soil of Appolonia. Indeed, Amihyia and Boa signed a treaty of friendship with Great Britain in 1765, in which they granted permission for the construction of a fortified commercial outpost in Benyinli: Fort Appolonia.[98]

For some time, authoritative voices within the British company had been arguing for a permanent presence in the area in order to open up direct access on the western coast to Asante trade to the west (through Aowin) of the blockade imposed by the anti-Asante alliance

of Akyem Abuakwa, Twifo, and particularly Wassa, which since the 1730s had been detrimental to trade west of Elmina, and in particular to British business in its trading posts in Komenda, Sekondi, and Dixcove.[99]

Amihyia's decision was the consequence of more general developments in regional politics, particularly Asante's defeat of Wassa, Twifo, and Akyem Abuakwa in the campaign fought in 1765 by the new *Asantehene* Osei Kwadwo, in alliance with the Fante. Akyem Abuakwa was completely overrun; Wassa and Twifo were routed.[100] Amihyia feared that the Dutch would encourage Asante, with whom they had friendly relations, to continue its offensive in the southwest, thus assisting Elmina, where the Dutch had their headquarters, in a renewed attack on Appolonia.[101] It was in the light of this prospect that Amihyia joined the offensive and defensive alliance formed in 1765–1766 between Twifo, Wassa, and Fante, who once more had broken with Asante.[102]

The structure of the *maanle* di Appolonia was deeply affected by its conflict with Mea and the WIC. All the traditions emphasize the seriousness of the demographic crisis that followed the war, especially during the period of the most violent clashes with Mea in 1761. Several stories claim that Amihyia, who was concerned about the clear reduction in the population, bought a great number of slaves from the Kru regions in modern-day Liberia and resettled them in his own dominion.[103] The most devastated areas were Azane and those that bordered with Egila. When the hostilities came to an end, the parties soon showed their willingness to reach some kind of compromise that would at least allow their displaced people to return home. This was necessary to a resumption of normal productive activities and, in the case of the WIC and the indigenous commercial interests, a reestablishment of normal market conditions.

However the peace negotiations proved to be extremely problematic. Amihyia had to reject the claims made by the chiefs of Egila, with Dutch support, to the coast between the Ankobra and Amanzule as their historical right. They also claimed that the eastern border of Appolonia had to remain fixed at the second river.[104] The dispute effectively revolved around the crucial question at the end of the war of what to do with the two former *makelaars* of the WIC, Bekoa Anɔ and Mozu, along with all the other deserters from company service. Indeed the Dutch demanded that Amihyia hand them over as a condition for a complete peace settlement. On the other hand, Amihyia could not fail to honor a commitment to protect these men who, along with their followers and dependants, had sustained most

of the military action,[105] and continued to guard the borders. The negotiations were drawn out and laborious, partly because of the obstacles to rapprochement between Amihyia and the WIC imposed by the British, who were now installed in Benyinli. In 1767 a truce was agreed. Amihyia agreed to put an end to the outstanding questions in exchange for a symbolic gesture on part of Huydecoper, who was now the *directeur-generael*, and this was the payment of the 13 rolls of tobacco the Dutchman owed him. The payment did actually take place, but only after Huydecoper's death, which occurred on July 11 of that year.[106]

However the fundamental questions concerning the men the Company considered deserters and the British presence remained unresolved and a final peace agreement was never reached.[107] In the first quarter of the following year, Bekoa Anɔ, Kenyia, and Mozu made it known to the Commander of Axim, Fennekol, that they would much appreciate a solution to the dispute between WIC and Amihyia that would allow them to cross the Ankobra and resettle their people in their previous homelands, which were now in ruins, unpopulated and uncultivated. But until there was a complete normalization of relations between the parties to the dispute, any resettlement was out of question and Fennekol told the petitioners that any effective pressure they could bring on Amihyia to finish the negotiations would make it possible to pardon the deserters from the WIC, and allow their safe return to their old settlements and even the reinstatement of Bekoa as *makelaar*. But the impasse continued and the forest settlements of the interior that were emptied by Mea's men and other Egilas during the war remained deserted until the end of the 1760s, in spite of a few attempts to return.[108]

At the beginning of 1770, the commander of Fort Appolonia, E. Williams, considered it opportune to ask Bekoa Anɔ and the chiefs of the towns between Adoabo and the Ankobra river formally to renew their oaths of allegiance. The swearing ceremony took place in Benyinli on January 18.[109]

Once relations with the surrounding powers had settled down again, Amihyia proceeded to consolidate his position within Appolonia. The bitter and costly conflict and very probably some of the big man's strategic decisions, such as inviting the British into the country, had provoked opposition within his own *abusua*, his retinue, and the ruling group in Appolonia. Sources recorded a situation of high tension, but provide few details. However, they do record the action the big man took against subordinates and members of his retinue whom he knew to be or suspected of being opponents. As Amihyia himself

told Fennekol, the commander in Axim, a hemorrhagic disease had convinced him that he was a victim of vampirism or witchcraft. He organized an extensive trial by ordeal to discover the guilty parties, who must have been hiding within his more immediate circle of followers and dependants. A potion was prepared with the bark of the *Ɛnlonle* tree, and it had to be drunk by a large number of persons, including several chiefs and lastly his appointed heir, Koasi. He was absolved of all suspicion, as were another two important *nsafohyenle*. Nevertheless some 30 or 40 people died in what appears to have been a vast purge of the upper ranks of the ruling group in Appolonia.[110]

The formal reestablishment of the trade routes to the interior, which had been closed off for years by war and instability, took place in September 1768, when delegations sent from Aowin and Wassa to Amihyia and the British were welcomed at the new fort then under construction in Benyinli.[111]

This British settlement was in any case to block the monopolistic commercial and political ambitions of the Dutch to the west of Dixcove for over a century, until the shortlived exchange of bases between Holland and Great Britain in 1868, when the Dutch presence on the Gold Coast was coming to an end.[112]

We can say that this development, although not decisive in the formation of the "Kingdom of Appolonia," did contribute in a significant manner to the territorial and political nature of the new entity, and helped it to define itself more clearly in relation to the surrounding powers and particularly the ancient "network" of Esawa.

The Anglo-Dutch commercial rivalry provided the context in which opposing alliances were formed among forces competing for hegemony within the Esawa group in the regions surrounding Axim. The underlying logic of this adjustment to the alliances and balances of power remained substantially unaltered throughout most of the nineteenth century. In their relations with Kumase, on the one hand, and the coastal Europeans on the other, the local figures who competed for power tended to create alliances that could be loosely defined as pro-British, pro-Dutch/Asante and, after 1844, also pro-French. Overall, the Esawa group was to use its influence consistently to maintain favorable conditions for access to commercial traffic on the coast. Following the transfer of the Dutch possessions to Britain (1872), the Esawa were therefore to become important exponents of maintaining good relations with the British.[113]

During the final years of Amihyia's life, he developed good relations with the Asante and merchants from that country frequented his market. In more general strategic terms, the interest

taken by the great power of the interior in Appolonia during this period of the eighteenth century was basically limited to two factors: one was the guarantee of access to coastal trade, which in times of necessity could act as an effective alternative to the ports in the east, and the other was Appolonia's potential as a military base to deal with the unruly dependency of Aowin. A series of funeral rites to mark Amihyia's death provided an opportunity for the *Asantehene* to send a delegation and establish closer relations with the British garrison.[114] In 1785–1786, following the defeat of an anti-asante alliance of Wassa, Aowin, and even Appolonia,[115] more than 300 Aowin refugees led by three chiefs sought protection at the fort. This caused intense diplomatic activity over what to do with the refugees, some of whom settled permanently in Appolonia.[116]

But it was only in 1808 that a form of effective inclusion of Appolonia within the Asante imperial system was set up with the placement of a resident in the area, who had political, administrative, and commercial duties.[117] Kumase, which in the previous year had invaded and occupied Fante, was organizing a comprehensive administrative framework for its southern dependencies.[118]

7.6 Fathers, Sons and Heirs: Succession and Consolidation of a New Legitimacy

The history of the "Kingdom of Appolonia" after the establishment of a British presence is not part of this study, which halts at the threshold of this period in the region's history. However, it would be useful to outline the manner in which the new power became institutionalized and capable of continuing down through the generations, and more particularly the conceptual framework that local society used to interpret this transmission of power.

We can see how the sources placed their historical origins in the "sons'" occupation of their "fathers'" *aako*. As has been said, Anɔ Bile Aka, Boa, and Amihyia succeeded their father in order of seniority. This fact undoubtedly presents some problems, when examined in the light of the matrilineal stereotypes that usually typify local historical narratives.[119] Some traditions get round the problem by failing to mention Anɔ Bile and attributing his first successor, Anɔ Bile Aka, with an ill-defined and strictly autochthonous genesis in the forest of Appolonia and claiming that he was the first human being to populate the area.[120] However, many authoritative versions confront the question and acknowledge that, in practice, the matrilineal line of Kɛma Kpanyinli also took control of the inheritance that should have gone to the Nvavile *abusua* of Anɔ Bile.

In terms of the Nzema (and more generally Akan) rules of succession,[121] the absence of eligible uterine heirs is a common accident of history that can cause long periods of temporary appointments of regents (*ebia sinzavolɛ*) provided by the paternal line of the deceased. This could lead to temporary or permanent usurpations. In this specific case however, the exclusion of the legitimate line appears to have been due to a drastic split between Anɔ Bile and his own *abusua*.

Tradition claims that the event occurred after Emu's removal. Anɔ Bile is supposed to have had a business dispute with the Asante and was condemned by *Asantehene* Opoku Ware I to pay a very large fine in gold. Faced with his father's *abusua*'s refusal to contribute to the payment (Anɔ Bile's matrikins held him and his son Aka wholly responsible for having caused the dispute), Anɔ Bile Aka took action to assist his father. His position as a creditor, together with conflict with the paternal *abusua*, made it possible for him later to put in a strong claim to Anɔ Bile's inheritance.[122]

Documentary evidence on an important conflict between Anɔ Bile's sons and members of their father's *abusua*, the Nvavile, is in the previously mentioned source that tells the story of how *Pay Boa* was driven out of ɛlɛmgbenle. This important Nvavile *big man* was then provided refuge in Ahanta by *Entier*, a member of the same matriclan. If it is true that the expulsion of the Nvavile from the legitimate succession goes back to this period, it is then clear that there was a close link between events concerning the actions Asante took against Emu and the heavy fine imposed on the chiefs of ɛlɛmgbenle,[123] or in other words the circumstances that led to the demise of a local hegemony linked to Aowin, which we have defined as Nvavile/Anona, and the establishment of an Esawa primacy.

The power of the "fathers," the Nvavile, was attacked and destroyed by the "sons" or the "young men": the Esawa. It should be remembered that Esawa, apart from being the name used locally for a few Ndweafoɔ *mbusua*, was also the name of the "half" made up of "young men" within the community.[124]

Anɔ Bile' sons ruled jointly. Power was only held by a single figure when Boa Kpanyinli died in 1778 and Amihyia survived him for less than a year.[125] From the time when Anɔ Bile Aka was still alive up to that moment, the brothers were constantly referred to as co-rulers (*mede-regenten*), as a hierarchy based on seniority.[126] Koasi Belempone, the *awozoa* (maternal nephew) of Amihyia Kpanyinli, succeeded him in 1779, after a long period as heir apparent.[127] He presented himself to the British as the only *agyadivolɛ* (heir) of both

Amihyia and Boa.[128] He established his main residence in Adoabo,[129] Amihyia's town, but as the heir to Boa, he also maintained a court in Kukuenwiɔ, the western section of Benyinli, where he would regularly take up residence. Koasi entrusted this residence to Bile Kpole, very probably a "son" (either his or his *abusua*'s), thus creating a new "son" *ebia*. This office became central to the power structure of the *maanle* of Appolonia, because it was the main supporter of the *belemgbunli*.[130] The eastern section of the town, on the other hand, remained under the control of the descendants of Adu, the "son" of Boa and Amihyia Kpanyinli.[131]

Koasi Belempone (1779–1800)[132] was the first occupant of what had become the *ebia* of a new *maanle*, the "Kingdom of Appolonia," the result of the work done by Anɔ Bile, Anɔ Bɔnlɔmane, Anɔ Bile Aka, Boa Kpanyinli, and Amihyia Kpanyinli. It was of great ideological importance to make Koasi Belempone the "seal" of this line of succession and the initiator of a new legitimacy, which however could be traced back to an ideal reference model. The transferral of Anɔ Bile's property and office to his sons took place in exceptional circumstances, marked by the collapse of the previous political order and the creation of a new one. On the other hand, Koasi's succession to the founding brothers occurred in a stable context: the new *maanle* was already established and there was a "legitimate" (in terms of matrilineal orthodoxy) transfer of property and power within his own maternal line by the last (or the last two) surviving among the brothers. The brothers had increased and transformed that property and power into a new sovereign entity, the *maanle* of Appolonia. Koasi was able to impose this interpretation by neutralizing the "sons" of Boa Kpanyinli and Amihyia Kpanyinli, whom he marginalized and eliminated systematically.[133]

In the basic ideological terms of local political discourse, succession to one's "fathers" does not cause too many problems in itself, as in the case of the claim to the succession by Anɔ Bile's *abusua* as against his sons' matrilineage (or matrilineages). Neither of these circumstances was aberrant in a context where the conflicting claims of paternal and maternal ancestry almost constitute a structural feature.

Reference to one's father's *abusua* was central both in terms of spiritual and military affiliations,[134] and the succession to the father was customary for the sons of a *safohyenle*. This theme (of sons taking over from their fathers) became an essential element in narratives that explain the genesis of the *maanle* in terms of a development from war. When considering the "traditions" relating to the birth of the "Kingdom of Appolonia", it was Anɔ Bile and his group's status and

military role on behalf of whatever authority might have sent them to the region (Denkyira or Aowin) that provided them with fundamental historical legitimacy.

In reality a key concept is the fact that the *maanle*, as such, was created by a corporate force, a *fane*, of "fathers" and "sons." Thus local political rivalry becomes centerd on the dialectic between the groups that make up the *fane*, and its aim is to manage the product of the common endeavor. In this sense, Anɔ Bile's succession by his sons and the idea that these sons are *mediema* or even brother-germans (cf. PARA. 7.2) obviously had important political implications. As such, these elements were used (and still are) both to legitimize established power and to contest it. For example, the group (Nvavile) that claims the *stool* as descendants of Anɔ Bile's *abusua* tends to give greater importance to historical formulas that maintain matrilineal orthodoxy and therefore represent Anɔ Bile Aka, Anɔ Bɔnlɔmane, Boa, and Amihyia as full brothers and sons of a woman who did not enjoy free status, which would have made them *ipso facto* members of the father's *abusua*, namely Nvavile. Conversely, those who stress the matrilineage (or matrilineages) of the sons (Ndweafoɔ) resort very significantly to narratives centerd on the overturning of the popular myth of Abu concerning the origin of matrilineality. In variants of this model, the right of succession passes from the paternal to the maternal side as a result of the support offered to Abu by his relations on his mother's side in the payment of a debt. However, an authoritative Nzema account of the origins of the *maanle* of Appolonia claims that one of Anɔ Bile's sons, Anɔ Bile Aka, established a strong right to inherit his father's wealth by having helped him to pay the heavy fine in gold imposed by Asante, while the members of Anɔ Bile's *abusua* refused to contribute. In other words, the sons attained the rights of succession through the financial support of their father in the settlement of a debt.[135]

Clearly there are many ways in which such a version of this story could be interpreted, and these could lead to many possible readings of the actual historical relationships between the groups concerned. For instance, it could be argued that the acceptance of responsibility for paying the debts contracted by a "big man" or a *abusua kpanyinli* (*k.*: elder, senior) was a basic tribute of the *gyaasefoɔ* in relation to their part unfree or foreign ancestry being assimilated into the matrilineage.[136] In short, it was evidence of their subject status. Such an interpretation would again raise the question of the complex relationships between Esawa and the Agona-Nvavile-Ɔyɔkɔ of Anɔ Bile during the period of Denkyira's and Aowin's hegemony. However

the possibilities of reliable verification are, for the time being, decidedly limited.

The clearly established historical fact is that Koasi Belempone's accession to the stool confirmed the exclusion of Anɔ Bile's *abusua*, and this development would weigh heavily on the subsequent history of the "Kingdom of Appolonia," and would constantly influence the alignments of factions and alliances in power struggles within the local establishment. The successions that came after Koasi's would experience periods of conflict on basis of claims and counterclaims challenging this initial deviation.[137] The victorious contestants for the royal *ebia* during the first half of the nineteenth century are described as either Ndwea or Nvavile, according to the particular bias of different historical narratives, and any attempt to establish an absolute attribution would currently be very difficult. Possibly a less direct approach to the problem could prove more productive for our understanding of this highly complex historical context.

Rather than the dichotomous and "mono-legitimist" interpretations currently being proposed, we could adopt a line of investigation based on a more inclusive perspective of relations between the two groups over a long historical period. There is, for example, a perspective that emerges from the sources, which makes it possible to unearth the Nzema ruling group's marriage strategies in the period between Anɔ Bile and Kaku Aka (the beginning of the eighteenth century and the mid-nineteenth century). These materials emphasize the crucial importance of the marriage alliances between maternal lines that claimed to descend matrilineally from Anɔ Bile and were seen as Nvavile, and segments of the Esawa/Ndweafoɔ group of Egila. These two groups switched positions as "fathers" and "sons" with each passing generation.

The individuals who find themselves occupying positions of power can thus refer back to different orders of important social obligations, in their capacity as heirs to one of the two *mbusua* or as their trustees or "sons." They are still legitimate, irrespective of the original question of which of the two *mbusua* has a right to claim control over the creation of Anɔ Bile and his sons.

The dialectic between "fathers" and "sons" is a basic metaphor in the local political discourse. This model continued even after the dynastic change and political division that followed Kaku Aka's deportation. New players took over the positions of the previous protagonists in the power dialectic, defined in terms of union/rivalry between Ndweafoɔ and Nvavile. In many circumstances, there is a tendency to portray the former, the Ndweafoɔ, as "indigenous"

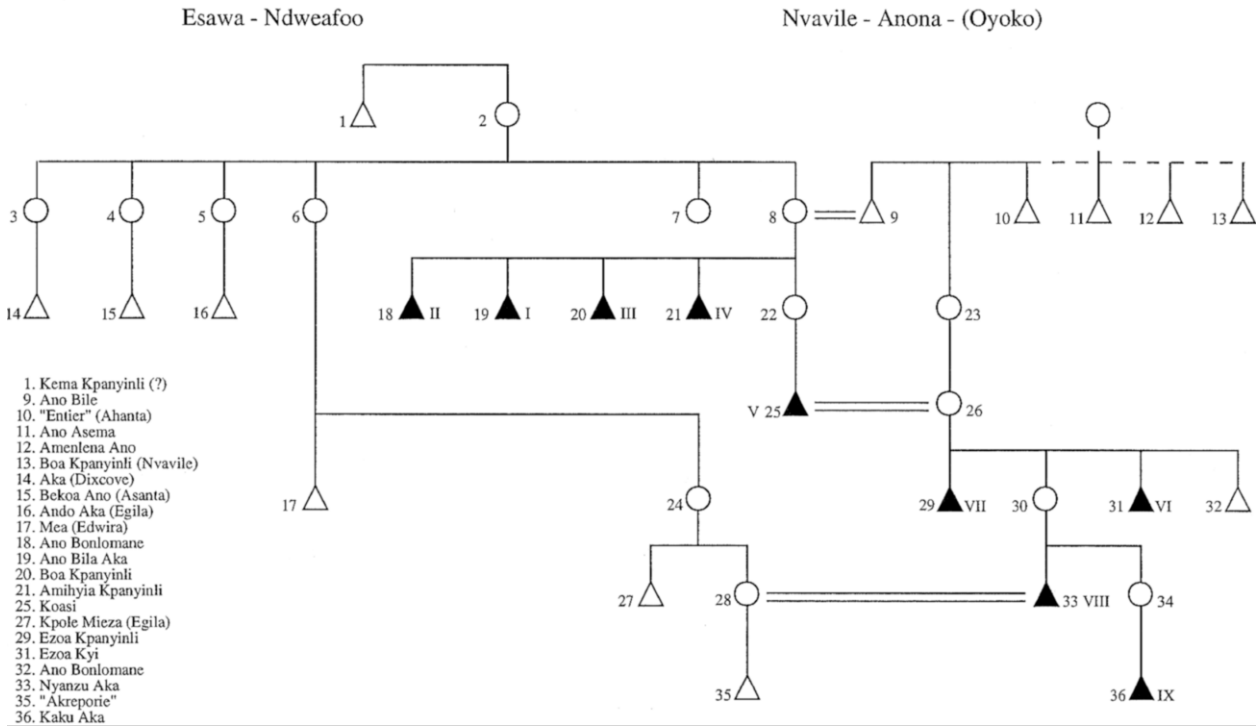

Figure 7.1 The succession to the *ebia* of Appolonia. Outline of relations based on kinship and alliances

and children of the land, and the latter, the Nvavile, as those who arrived later. An interesting representation of this relationship can be seen in the *kundum* (or *abisa*) festival of Benyinli and Adoabo. In the third week of the cycle structured like a funeral ritual, the relationship between the sovereign, provided by the Ndweafoɔ, and the *kundum* drum, *edomgbole*, which is owned by the Nvavile, is represented as the relationship between a widower and his deceased wife. The Nvavile "own" the *kundum* but "carry it" (i.e., entrust it) to the *belemgbunli* so that he supports them in the celebration, above all from a financial point of view. However, the *belemgbunli* also acts as the "son" who, on the third day of mourning, honors and "feeds" the *ebia* of the Nvavile "fathers." It should be noted that in this situation, the Nvavile *abusua* that owns and provides the *kundum* is considered a "son-*abusua*" of the current royal line. The most trusted "fathers" are one's own "sons."

Chapter 8

The Framework of Hegemony

8.1 Occupation and Reorganization of Space

Events during the eighteenth century led to the consolidation of a territorial, demographic, and political entity that was extremely compact and cohesive. In 1765, Amihyia and Boa, who were defined as "Brothers and Sovereigns" in the agreement stipulated with the British, sanctioned a fairly precise geographic definition in English miles of the "Country called Appolonia," the territory over which they claimed dominion:

> extending from Cape Appolonia, thirty seven miles to the Eastward as far as the River Cobre or Ancober, and about thirteen miles to the Westward of said Cape, and fourteen or sixteen miles inland.[1]

The stated distance between Cape Appolonia and Ankobra is much greater than the reality, which is around 28 miles along the coast (this suggests that the "thirty seven miles" in this copy is a transcription error for "twenty-seven" in the original). However, the 13 miles to the west of Cape Appolonia take the border to roughly where modern Awiane/Half Assini stands, the area where local traditions place the forward position of the "Kingdom of Appolonia" against Sanwi. If you take away the coastal strip further to the west of this point (which was disputed with Sanwi practically throughout the nineteenth century),[2] the territory outlined in the instrument of 1765 coincides pretty much with the territory of modern-day Eastern and Western Nzema together. This is also true when it comes to the distance inland of about 14–16 miles, which meant as far as the forest regions that are still the northern borders of the two areas.

The heart of the new *maanle* was just to the east of Cape Appolonia. It was a small area centered on Lake Amanzule. But the coast was where the main settlements of Benyinli, ɛkebaku, Adoabo, and Anokyi were to be found and also where Anɔ Bile's sons had their preferred residence, most of the population lived, and the commercial and administrative work was done. The new political entity was built around this heartland, and included both new and preexisting territorial and social units, which it reordered and reorganized on the basis of the strategic interests of the center.

Relations with the communities immediately to the west (i.e., Cape Appolonia, Adwɔmɔlɔ and the lands even further west as far as Awiane) evolved, as we have seen, as one of dominance mediated through alliances with important local groups, and started to do so as far back as the early eighteenth century; the military support provided by the Ewuture and the Azanwule *mbusua* settled in these areas played a decisive role in the war against Mea.

The new *maanle*'s initial expansion into the interior affected the region immediately to the north of Ahumazo (ancient *Abuma*, residence of Kɛma Kpanyinli). Here there were a series of towns populated by Wassa groups or in any case controlled by members of ruling elite of that area. Wassa activity was demonstrated by the attack carried out by them in 1684 against Cape Appolonia with Dutch approval and later by the conflicts affecting Aowin in the eighteenth century. Their presence in this forest region just next to the coast made it possible for the Wassa to reach and, if necessary, cut the southern overland route between Aowin and the Axim region.[3] It is entirely possible that the settlement of consistent Wassa communities in these areas in the context of the movement toward the coast had occurred long before the attack of 1684.

The legacy of this ancestral component of the *maanle* is embodied in a long arc of communities running from the border with Wassa as far as the coast to the west of Cape Appolonia. We are mainly talking here of the *mbia* of Anyinasie and the towns that for a long time had been subject to it (such as Basakɛ) and, further west, those of Bawia and Kabenlasuazo, located on the coastal dune separating the Domunli Lagoon from the ocean, a strategically significant position for controlling the overland coastal route. Current historical traditions in these communities tend to emphasize the peaceful contractual aspects of the methods of establishing relations with the new *maanle*. The stories of the large group of Alɔnwɔba *mbusua* that control the *mbia* of Bawia and Kabenlasuazo, but also Heman, in Wassa Fiase and Adjouan in Ivory Coast, make a point of arguing that their main founding ancestor, Bilewue Kadamgbo (ɔkandangoo), asked for permission to settle in the

area of Bawia from Anɔ Bile of Ahumazo, or from Anɔ Bɔnlɔmane, Boa Kpanyinli, and Amihyia Kpanyinli, which was the period between the end of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth.[4] However, accounts collected in the nineteenth century speak of periods of open conflict: more specifically, Amihyia Kpanyinli is said to have established himself as a young warrior and conqueror by subjugating Wassa towns to the north of the Amanzule.[5] The reason for this self-censorship concerning conflicts in Alɔnwɔba narratives about ancestral settlement in the Nzema region is certainly attributable to the particularly strong relationship that was later established between these communities and the new local political center. All this area of the interior, together with the communities in the lagoon area (including the Ewuture), came to provide the essential support to the political center, second only to the towns of residence of the *arelemgbunli*. This was particularly true when it came to military questions, as they provided the great mass of the forces mobilized in times of offensive warfare.[6]

ɛlɛmgbenle played a crucial role linguistically as well as politically in the formation of the *maanle* of Appolonia: it was its dialect that would become common to the various groups of the area and would also conquer the most westerly areas. This historical function is clearly demonstrated by a popular etymology that, in order to emphasize the linguistically and politically unifying role of the inhabitants of ɛlɛmgbenle, explains the ancient local ethnic name *ɛbram* as "those who embrace," who welcome one in.[7]

The group of founders acquired complete control over ɛlɛmgbenle after Emu had been removed. Strategically the crucial part of this region was the mouth of Amanzule River and its coastal lagoons, which constituted an intersection between the river from the interior and the coastal track. It was also the location of the ancient market of Borazo. The war that opened with the conflict with Mea and continued with the Dutch invasion turned this area for many years into the frontline defended by the *maanle* of Appolonia. It became border country with fortifications and military garrisons.[8] After the period of frontal attacks in which the inhabitants abandoned the area, Amihyia implemented a policy of repopulation and entrusted the highly strategic area to western groups that had supported him in the war against Mea. These people came from Adwɔmɔlɔ. Various traditions recall the alliance between Amihyia and Gyabili, chief of the Azanwule *abusua* of Adwɔmɔlɔ/Azanwulenu (see PARA. 7.1). But an important component of these Azanwule who settled at the mouth of the Amanzule was made up of Ewuture refugees who fled the pressure Sanwi was bringing to bear on areas of the western lagoons. They sought refuge with their

matriclan associates in the Cape Appolonia area (cf. PARA. 2.3, n. 48). These resettled groups developed a particularly strong attachment to the *maanle*'s rulers and, like the Ewuture of Nzulezo, they came to occupy a crucial position in servicing the interests of the *arelemgbunli* as guardians of the Amanzule crossing.[9] The new structure of settlements came under Ekonu/Bakanta and Amgbenu (Ampain), which occupied the same area as ancient Borazo. This wave of immigration brought about a clear change in the population of the area, which became known as Etile, after the name of the Ewuture who now lived there and became distinct from ɛlɛmgbenle, the region of which it had once been central core.

When war broke out between Amihyia and Mea, Aziema (Essiama), Kekame, and Asɛnda (the main settlement of Azane) were the main towns in the region that runs from the mouth of the Amanzule to the mouth of the Ankobra. Kɛma Bɛtu of Kekame, who came into conflict with Mea and the chiefs of Egila, took side for Amihyia and remained staunchly loyal to the big man of Appolonia. Mozu (*Moussou*), the other former ally of the WIC, who with Bekoa Anɔ turned his back on the other chiefs of Egila and Huydecoper, settled in Aziema, where Kenyia Mozu (*Kinjan*), another of Amihyia's principal supporters, was also living. Aziema therefore allied itself with Amihyia and joined in the resistance to the Dutch attack of 1763.[10] During the hostilities however, these towns were destroyed and the population sought refuge to the west.[11] Although the region between Amanzule and Ankobra was considered part of the Amihyia's territory in the treaty with the British of December 1765, the situation of this area was still highly unstable. During the year, forces under the command of Bekoa Anɔ carried out hit-and-run attacks on the people of Egila, who had withdrawn to the eastern bank of the Ankobra, and in August–September Bekoa settled the area of Asɛnda with 200 men and some canoes he used for military action along the Ankobra.[12] The settlement, called Kotokulo, was a few kilometres to the west of the river mouth, and constituted a defensive bridgehead and an offensive base for actions against Axim. It was fortified very effectively with a system of palisades. For a long time, the British referred to it as Pallisadoed Town or River Town, because of its role in controlling the Ankobra.[13] Later the town Asɛnda would be rebuilt next to this stronghold.[14] The number of armed men living there in 1765 suggests that there must have been a population of over a thousand. The British would consider Bekoa Anɔ and his successors to be the most important chiefs in Appolonia after those of Benyinli and Adoabo.[15]

However a genuine process of stable resettlement of the groups that fled west of the Amanzule during the war only took place after

the partial peace agreement between Amihyia and Huydecoper in 1767.[16] This coastal strip between the Ankobra and the mouth of the Amanzule would take on a central strategic role for the new Nzema entity, both militarily and commercially, whereas its loss was for a long time a thorn in the side of the WIC.

Just to the north of Aziema and Kikam, a group led by Bulumia Twum, of the Ndwea matriclan, came to play an increasingly important role in managing the region that bordered with Egila, on behalf of the new *maanle* of Appolonia. The group's traditions assert that they entered into a pact of friendship at the time of Anɔ Bile Aka. Pewuakɔ was their main settlement, and in the nineteenth century Nwulofolɔ (Nkroful), meaning "new town," was founded in response to the demographic growth and the political and military importance of the district, known as Akoamu.[17]

The area of Ngatakro (*Quittrij*), a strategic hub on the River Tano and the overland route to Aowin, as well as an important gold-mining area, was attacked, defeated, and plundered by Amihyia in 1764, during hostilities with Sanwi.[18] But it would be going too far to say that it was annexed. The reality was that throughout the nineteenth century, it and the many forest and coastal areas between Appolonia, Sanwi, and Aowin were part of a large, porous border area where powerful influences from the surrounding powers coexisted with substantial local autonomies. This made it very difficult to assign political identities and exclusive jurisdictions.[19] But similar considerations could also have applied to border areas with Aowin, Wassa, and Egila.

The creation of the new maanle implied a process of restructuring the demography of the area, with a considerable degree of immigration. Some of the waves of new arrivals created a series of settlements, while others swelled the populations of existing ones, entering into direct relations with the new political order established by Anɔ Bile's group. They often acted as the agents for spreading and consolidating the new authority, and replaced the previous centers of local power (this is what occurred in the case of the Ewuture at the mouth of the Amanzule or of the groups of Wassa origin). But in some cases, these demographic movements did not involve immigration but changes to the patterns of settlements of existing groups within the region. This often meant changes in political loyalty and internal migration (as in the case of Bekoa Anɔ's people on the Ankobra). The chiefs of the new arrivals formed an alliance (*amonle*) with one of the *arelemgbunli* and continued to rule their own people.[20]

Overall, the basic geography of the settlements conserved a considerable continuity with that of the previous century. Generally, the new towns tended to superimpose themselves on the ancient ones,

expand upon them, or simply replace them. This is what happened in Azane, ɛlɛmgbenle, Cape Appolonia, Edobo, and Awiane. The identity of the original constituent units was not expunged in the new context, which tended to organize itself using the previous territorial structure. The strongest supporters of the new *ebia* ruling over Appolonia were the principal *mbia* in territorial and political subunits that were more or less the same as before.[21]

The data on the mobilization of military forces during the conflicts of the 1760s allow us to extrapolate some credible theories on the demographic consistency of the new *maanle*. In the war against Mea Takyi of 1761, Amihyia was capable of launching an attack outside his own territory using between 1,500 and 2,000 men, a figure that constituted his offensive capability throughout this period.[22] On the basis of the accepted demographic multipliers for precolonial Akan societies, it is argued that a force that could be mobilized for an offensive campaign was about half of that on which you could rely upon in a defensive war, and therefore in this case a contingent of 3,000 or 4,000 men. The ratio between men capable of bearing arms and the overall population adopted for eighteenth-century Akan societies is about 1:4 or 1:5 (the ratios were to be much lower in the following century). By applying the first ratio we obtain a population of between 12,000 and 16,000, and by applying the second we obtain a population of between 15,000 and 20,000.[23] The overall population of the Gold Coast (coastal region and the southern forest strip) in the first part of the eighteenth century has been estimated at 656,000, using the same criteria.[24]

These estimates are of course entirely approximate and open to challenge. It might be argued that the men Amihyia put into the field did not constitute all or nearly all the offensive capability of the dominion of Appolonia at the time: Boa Kpanyinli, for example, did not take an active part in the attack on Mea and appeared conspicuous by his absence in the subsequent military exploits, and it cannot be excluded that this situation was also true of other big men with large retinues or other communities within the territory.[25] The fact that Amihyia had on top of his slaves a number of dependents that was considered exceptional in the region, leads us to think that he had an extremely high ratio between his potential forces and the mass of the population he controlled. On the other hand, the two objections just raised could be interpreted as reestablishing the balance: Amihyia did not mobilize his total offensive capability in the dominion, but mobilized a very high proportion of those directly under his control. Moreover we know that a crucial role in supporting Amihyia's military campaign was played by the Ewuture who left the lagoon areas invaded by Sanwi, and it was

precisely the business of the war against Mea that strengthened the subordinate allegiance of the people of Adwɔmɔlɔ to Amihyia, and opened the way to the effective integration of the western areas into structure of the *maanle* he was building.

These varying and occasionally conflicting estimates do, however, give a figure that appears in line with general demographic trends on the Gold Coast at the time. Besides, a population of 16,000–20,000 seems reasonable when compared with the estimated population in the "Kingdom" of between 20,000 and 25,000 souls, which was suggested in 1810 by J. Fountaine, the commander of Fort Appolonia.[26] Although it refers to a period half a century later, this figure refers to a society that had not changed markedly in social and productive terms. In 1810 Appolonia was emerging from a prolonged conflict with Sanwi, with the ensuing movements of refugees and migrations of entire groups on both sides (Fountaine observed that the population appeared to be diminishing): it was probably a situation not that different from the one in the 1760s, and the hierarchy of dependency within local society was still comparable with that of 1761.[27] Given that the distribution of the population over the territory had evolved since 1761, and the territory of the "Kingdom" had slightly increased by extending east of the Ankobra and west of Awiane, the figure of 20,000–25,000 compared with 16,000–20,000 in 1761 could indeed represent the result of a tumultuous half century.[28]

8.2 The Center of Power

A British map dated 1766 provides details of the heartland of the "Kingdom of Appolonia." The map is very clearly based on surveys carried out while exploring the region. It is extremely precise and corresponds almost completely to modern maps. It is no exaggeration to say that this document is of exceptional importance, because it provides a very clear snapshot of a crucial turning point in the development of the new *maanle*.[29]

The region shown on the map (fig. 8.1) is the stretch of coast between the mouth of the River Amanzule and the hills of Cape Appolonia and follows vertically the intersection between the road from Aowin and the Amanzule river basin. The path from the interior enters the area of forested swampland close to the modern town of Azuleti, and becomes a waterway (Bɔsɔkɛ Stream) that leads to Lake Amanzule. From here it was possible to reach the coast at Benyinli or to continue down the final course of the river to the ocean, and from there a coastal path led to the Ankobra and then to Axim.[30]

The main towns shown on the map are Adoabo and Benyinli. Adoabo, the residence of Amihyia Kpanyinli, is highlighted graphically

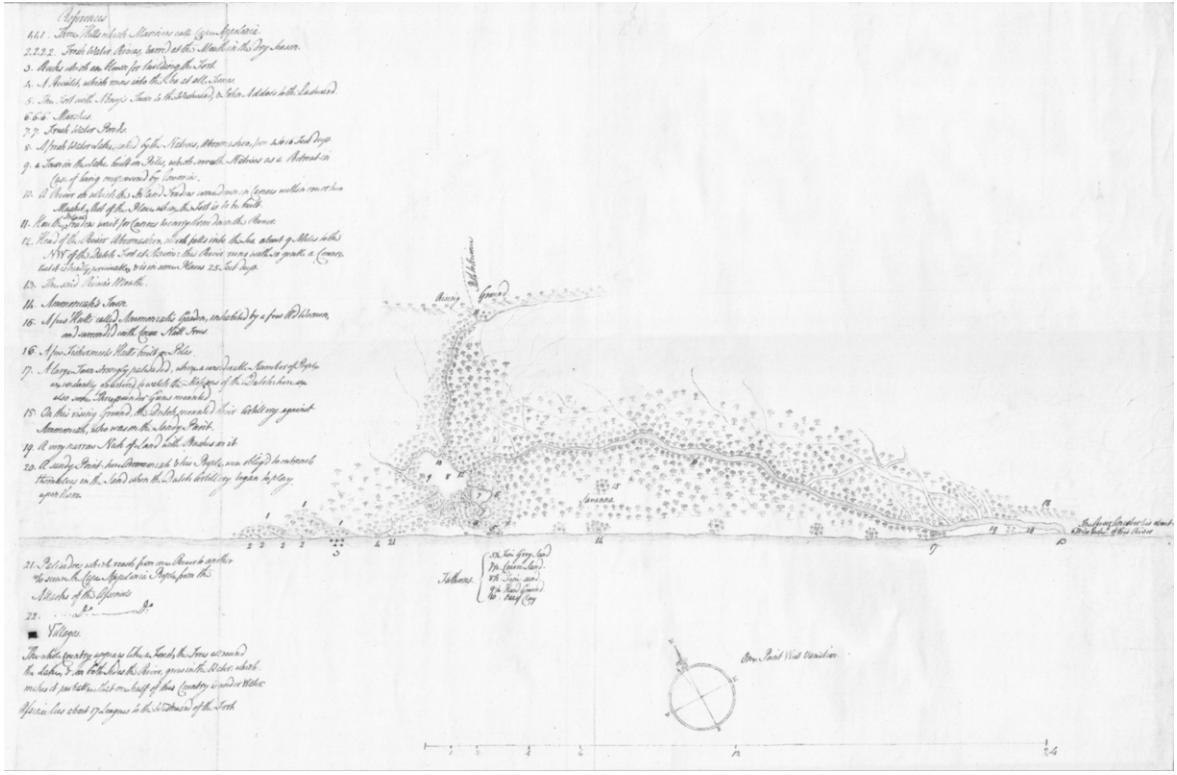

Figure 8.1 Map of Appolonia of 1766. TNA CO 700/Gold Coast (1D), *Map of Cape Appolonia*, Dublin 1766

in relation to the other towns; it is in fact the largest single settlement in the region. The town, which was laid out in a square as indeed were all the coastal settlements, was surrounded on three sides by areas planted with coconut trees and the beach to the south. We have a very brief description of Adoabo going back to 1764. It was provided by a British doctor who was sent to treat a wound Amihyia had suffered during the Dutch offensive of the previous year. The doctor, who visited the town on two occasions, describes it as surrounded by a fortification made up of two parallel palisades. The space between the two palisades was filled with earth and tree trunks to form a raised platform along which the troops on guard duty could constantly march around the town. There were two gates, one of which was kept open to allow movement in and out of the town. The settlement had many cattle and goats, but there was a shortage of agricultural produce because of the war. For the same reason, trade was limited to small amounts of textiles.[31]

Slightly inland from Adoabo, a small settlement ("a few huts") has been built on dry and raised terrain, which the map defines as savannah. It is surrounded by coconut trees and is the center of cultivated land belonging to Amihyia ("Ammoniah's Garden"). This place, which corresponds to modern Aliekro, was permanently tended by some of the big man's wives ("a few old women").

Benyinli, which is situated a short way from the marshland that makes it possible to access Lake Amanzule very quickly,[32] was the most direct and easy point along the path from Aowin to get to the ocean. For this crucial reason, it was chosen as the site for the British fort. The town was made up of two large and quite distinct settlements, which were in fact considered two different towns: to the west the "town of Boa Kpanyinli," also known as Kukuenwiɔ (cf. PARA. 1.1, n. 23), with the *belemgbunli suanu*, and to the east the "town of John Adu," which corresponds to the modern area of Ahunlu. Adu was a "son" of Boa and Amihyia, and their main *safohyenle* (cf. PARA. 7.6, n. 131). The fort was built in the space between the two settlements.

The origin of the town's division is supposed to go back to the time of Anɔ Bile Aka, who resided in the western part and founded the eastern part for the express purpose of housing his many slaves, servants, and dependants. Even in the second half of the nineteenth century, according to the Dutchman Schnerr, this was the part of the town that could properly be called Benyinli, a name coined by its founder, and was where the servants [*lijfeigenen*] of the *belemgbunli* lived.[33] In other words, it was home to the *gyaase*.[34] Indeed, at the time of Boa and Amihyia, the settlement was administered by one of their more important "sons."

British sources of the time only say that Adoabo and the twin towns of Benyinli were large by local standards. We have no information on their populations, which must have been in the order of several thousand in both cases. It should be remembered that the great majority of trade flowed through these towns, which were also the permanent seats of power and their related retinues.[35] There were very few minor settlements in the immediate area.

Between Benyinli and Adoabo, the map shows the much smaller settlement of ɛkɛbaku, where Boa Kpanyinli had resided before transferring to Benyinli, the seat of his brother and predecessor Anɔ Bile Aka. Moving along the coast a few kilometres to the east of Adoabo, it shows Anokyi, the residence of Anɔ Bɔnlɔmane.

The powerful link between these four coastal towns remained unchanged throughout the subsequent history of the area, even after the events relating to the demise of the "Kingdom of Appolonia" in the second half of the nineteenth century. The sacred topography of the area provides a potent symbolization of this link. Close to the ancient site of ɛkɛbaku (the current settlement is about 1 km to the west), there is a sacred area called Nyamenle Ade, an ancestral burial ground that is mythically associated with the origins of humankind in the region: here the first ancestors descended from the sky in a basin (*ayera*; according to other variants in three basins, one within the other), which was suspended from a golden chain (a mythical theme common to the wider Akan region).[36] ɛkɛbaku was also on the crossroads between the coastal road and the path from the interior, the area of Anyenlebo, and, beyond that, Ahumazo and areas further inland. Crossroads are particularly charged with sacral meanings, and Nyamenle Ade, located at the junction between two fundamental communication lines, was a most momentous site in the sacred geography of the "Kingdom of Appolonia." It still retains such position in the current power structure of the area and plays a central role in the rituals of the *kundum*, the Nzema annual festival. During the celebration Nyamenle Ade is the meeting point of Eastern and Western Nzema, reasserting their ancestral unity in spite of their political division, which occurred in the nineteenth century. The *ayera* of Nyamenle Ade (which today is no longer visible, at least to my knowledge) is closely associated with the two similar basins in Benyinli and Adoabo, of which we have accounts. Many eighteenth-century documents refer to the cult of the *ayera* in Benyinli, whose most important celebration was *Nyamenle ɛnlankɛ* (literally "the cow for Nyamenle"). This ceremony involved the public sacrifice of a cow provided by the *belemgbunli*, some time after the *kundum*. The participation of all subordinate power holders in this

celebration was required as a reassertion of their allegiance to the royal *ebia*: a crucial moment in the legitimization of power in Appolonia and the building of consent.[37]

Lake Amanzule is at the geographical center of the 1766 map. The ponds to its south were important reservoirs of the water for Benyinli (and the fort), whereas the settlement on stilts of Nzulezo is referred to as a place of refuge during attacks on the coastal towns. The map shows a small settlement that exactly corresponds to Ahumazo. It is the area of Ahumazo and Nzulezo to which Jb. C. Bacot referred in 1749, in relation to commercial role and strategic position of Anɔ Bile Aka and his brothers:

> some miles inland 5 cannons lie on an island, which lies in a large river, and belongs to the Caboceers. This island they keep as a stronghold, and place of refuge, in times of war, to go there for safety.[38]

It is highly improbable that this fortified position, which was equipped with artillery, was located in the village on stilts. It is much more likely that it was situated in Ahumazo.

The lake was an area of refuge, but it was also used for communications and trade. The leaders of Appolonia were able to manage these three functions because of their special relationship with the Ewuture community of the area, which was in a position of clear subordination to the group of *Abuma*/Ahumazo. We find a clear reference to this subordinate position in a nineteenth-century description of this very particular settlement on stilts:

> The inhabitants of this village are careful in retaining their primitive language, and have no further intercourse with the Appolonians than a trifling trade will admit of; which only consists of fish caught in the lake, and for which they get corn and rice in exchange. Their situation is favourable to tranquillity, and no part of a family can move abroad without some difficulty; which affords no opportunity of using malpractices, and, fearful of incurring the displeasure of the king, they must be strict in their behaviour and conduct.[39]

To the west of Benyinli, the map shows Ngelekazo, which according to local stories was founded as a settlement for the production of salt. Then there are the three distinct settlements that form Elonyi, close to the sandy point formed by the final bend in the Elonyi river before it flows into the ocean. This is marked off by a palisade that runs north-south between the river and the coast, blocking the coastal route. It is in fact an important defensive barrier that closes off the center of the *maanle* to the west. A little way beyond that, the hills of Cape Appolonia

rise up and two towns are shown in the area of modern-day Kɛnrɛne: they are Adwɔmɔlɔ/Azanwulenu and Nyɛmanu. An important follower of Amihyia and one of the fort's main customers lived in this area, and was known to the British as Billy Stone. He provided the stone used in the construction of the fort, and the stone came from a vein of rock (very rare in the area) that runs from the coast into the shallows of the ocean opposite Nyɛmanu. Billy would appear to be a corruption of the name Bile. However, the person mentioned in the Day Books cannot fail to recall Gyabili of the local traditions and leader of the Azanwule of Adwɔmɔlɔ, who was a crucial ally of Amihyia in the war against Mea and responsible for controlling the western areas of the *maanle*.

Moving eastward beyond Adoabo and Anokyi, there is a substantial town, which must be Baku, and then there are Sanzule (or Anyanzinli) and Ekonu/Bakanta. The latter settlement is referred to in the map's notes as "a large town," surrounded by an imposing system of palisades and built at the beginning of a narrow strip of land between the final reach of the Amanzule River and the ocean. Ekonu/Bakanta, situated behind the defensive positions at the mouth of the river and on the small islands of the lagoon, acted as a second line of defense for Amihyia's forces during the war against the Dutch. Even after the invaders had withdrawn, a considerable number of guards were constantly garrisoned in this fortified position to keep an eye on the enemy's movements.

Lastly, the map shows some small settlements in places where the paths from the interior crossed the Amanzule, particularly the small village on stilts called ɛfoso, which was the ancient Ewuture fishing village to the north of Adoabo.

The political center of the new *maanle* of Appolonia, which is the area shown on the 1766 map (fig. 8.2), was the least favorable part in terms of its agricultural potential and human settlement. As the document's caption makes clear, about half of its territory was covered with lakes, rivers, forested swamps, and sandy land. Apart from the coast, the areas suited to human settlement were very few and still less could they be cultivated. Fishing and the production of palm wine were the population's principal means to earn a living, while sectors such as the production of sea salt and trade with Europeans were controlled by the ruling group, who employed their own dependants.

8.3 Builders of the Future

Unification created a political center of considerable strength; indeed that degree of concentration of power was exceptional when compared with other political entities on the Gold Coast in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (fig. 8.3).[40]

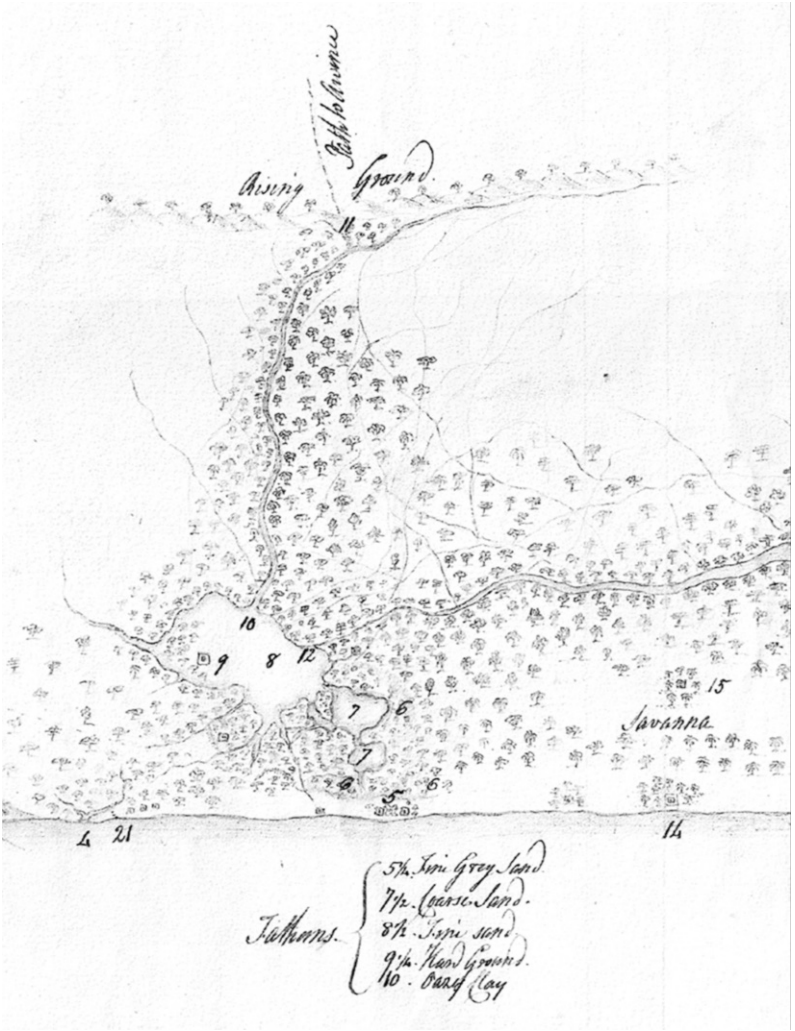

Figure 8.2 Map of Appolonia of 1766 (detail)

Of the names handed down by tradition and evidenced by the written sources, that of Amihiya Kpanyinli emerges as unchallenged dominant figure in the *maanle*'s collective memory. Amihyia was undoubtedly the principal agent in bringing it to life, and because of the duration and intensity of his career, he left a deep mark on this polity as it consolidated its position during the eighteenth century. In this sense, it is more than

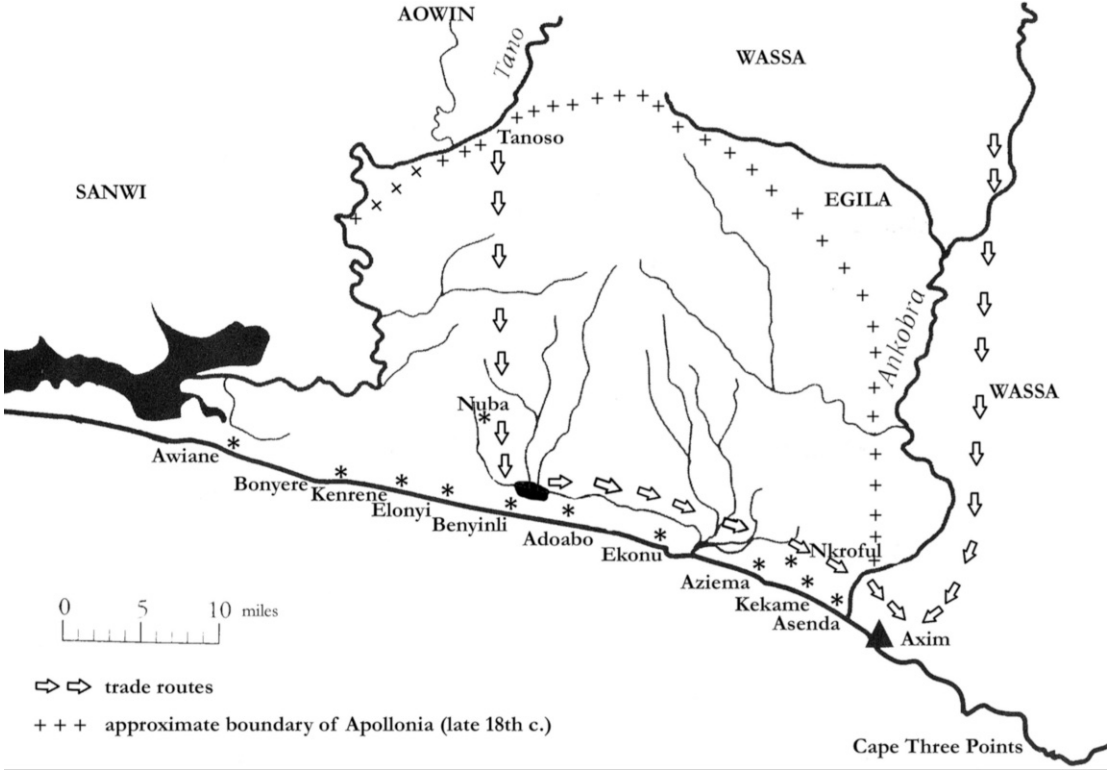

Figure 8.3 The "Kingdom of Appolonia" in the late eighteenth century

understandable that according to local tradition the name *Amanahea* (or *Amelhayia*), as the country was known in the nineteenth century, derived from Amihyia Kpanyinli (cf. PARA. 1.1). It is is almost certainly a popular and very arguable etymology, but it does do justice to the fact that *Amanahea* was primarily a creation of Amihyia.

European contemporaries described Amihyia Kpanyinli as a figure with clear Caesarean characteristics, and contrasted him with his brother Boa Kpanyinli, who was peace-loving, diplomatic, accommodating, and "timid." In some cases, they emphasized Amihyia's unconventional and audacious behavior, which they considered rare in a highly conformist society. Huydecoper, for example, attributed great importance to his decision to attack Mea Takyi during the period of *anlɔnra*, which was the "unpropitious" part of the ritual cycle, and considered it to be the result of a critical and rationalistic view of most people's "superstition."[41] It is a very interesting comment, but it would probably be mistaken to accept it at face value. The reality that emerges from the meager descriptions of some episodes in the life of the big man is that he was part of a complex and entirely coherent power game in which recourse to the "protection" of spiritual forces and the ability to unleash them on those supernatural powers that guarded rivals and enemies was one of the normal procedures for conserving and increasing one's own *tumi* (strength, authority, power; cf. PARA. 1.4).[42] The principal problem is not to assess Amihyia's degree of belief or skepticism, nor is it to argue over the nature of his impiety (as suggested by, e.g., his attack on and murder of the custodian of the Tanoɛ *bozonle*); it is rather to understand that he was probably convinced he could mobilize powers in his favor that were strong enough to neutralize any reprisals from other entities that he was challenging with such serious transgressions.

Amihyia was the quintessential embodiment of eighteenth-century coastal merchant-prince: extremely wealthy, militarily powerful, part of a vast network of relationships. He managed to set himself up as the principal broker in Brazilian tobacco on the western Gold Coast, and increased his turnover by exploiting the network of relations his father had already set up, when he was selling sea salt in the regions of the interior. Together with his brother Boa, he controlled the great majority of the lucrative business activities in Appolonia.

Detailed records of business transactions carried out through the British fort are very scarce. There is practically nothing on the trade with other commercial operators. As a market supplying African slaves, the area only occasionally played a significant role in the latter part of the eighteenth century.[43] In any event, transactions with

Europeans involving slaves were very clearly dominated by the leading figures in the local hierarchy. Boa and Amihyia were the only names of suppliers who were explicitly mentioned in the 1760s and the 1770s. In the available documentary fragments, there is no mention of any of the other big men of Appolonia engaging in the sale and purchase of human beings, even though they were constantly trading with the fort.[44]

Appolonia was, however, a significant market for gold,[45] and the two big men had large stakes in the gold trade. The conflict with Sanwi came down to a struggle to control the areas of the Tano river basin that were important for gold-mining, such as those around Ngatakro (*Quittrij*). The production of salt, rice, and other cereals were important economic sectors of the majority of the population, and Boa and Amihyia benefited greatly from these as well, through their control in the trade of surplus production: Appolonia was in fact an important supplier of provisions to the European forts.[46]

As the owner of many personal slaves (*ngɛkɛlɛ*) and enormous number of livestock,[47] the big man of Appolonia in the early 1760s was "the richest in gold throughout all Guinea," according to what the British governor of Cape Coast Castle, J. Hippisley, wrote. He also added, "his spirit for trade is equal to his wealth."[48]

Amihyia reinvested most of his massive proceeds in the purchase of dependants through credit mechanisms. He demanded one or more persons as pawns (*awoba*) from his debtor or from his debtor's group (the debtor himself could be the *awoba*). According to Huydecoper, Amihyia offered refuge to any insolvent individual from a neighboring region, and would provide him with gold, a woman, and a servant, while holding him as an *awoba*. On the debtor's death, Amihyia (or his successors) in practice inherited the credit and the interest accrued, and the dead man's relations had to either pay the debt or extend the loan, which tied them even more closely to Amihyia or his successors. This business activity of Amihyia's was so extensive that, Huydecoper observed, even in Axim you could not find "six negroes who are free and independent from him."[49]

Incorporation in a big man's *gyaase* involved processes like the one described by Huydecoper.[50] A member of the *gyaase* assumed various responsibilities to his master: he farmed his master's land as a tenant he prospected for gold on his master's behalf, he traded and fought for his master, served in his master's house, and on death he left his assets to his master.[51]

Boa's and Amihyia's *gyaase*, dependants, followers, and slaves were mainly concentrated in and around the big men's residences (*aako*).

Together with their children, they constituted the big men's *aakonu ama*, meaning members of the household (cf. PARA. 1.4).

The core of the *maanle* was therefore characterized by the preponderance of a population subject to bonds of direct subordination. This kind of allegiance was very clearly defined in the case of the Ewuture of Nzulezo and those who had been resettled at the mouth of the Amanzule. But many other subordinate groups were settled in more distant areas, as in the case of the communities "protected" by Amihyia, who hunted and fished in the forest areas of Adwɔmɔlɔ.[52] According to a British document of 1776: "the whole of the people settled at Appolonia are either slaves to or dependents on one or other of these Cabboceers [Boa and Amihyia], who are brothers."[53]

The *gyaase*, which was the central element of this system of dependency, provided the big men with domestic, management, and administrative services at different levels in the power system. In this sense, the *maanle* of Appolonia as a coherent political entity could be seen primarily as an emanation or projection of the *aako*—the "house"—of its *arelemgbunli*.[54]

The political and the economic were always closely related and often intertwined, so an observer is almost inevitably obliged to use interpretative categories in terms of patrimonialism. Local sources contribute to interpretations of this kind, and tend to emphasize the role of debt in the material framework of relations between the big man and his subordinates.

The fact that both the highest political authority and the control of wealth-creating mechanisms were almost one and the same, and concentrated in the figure of the *belemgbunli* and restricted sections of his ruling group, meant that the leadership of Appolonia was a particularly strong institution. Various European sources in the first half of the nineteenth century emphasize the extremely high degree of power and authority exercised by the man they defined as the "king" of Appolonia, in comparison with nearly all the chiefs on the coast. They described this power as verging on autocracy during the reigns of Koasi (1779–1800), Nyanzu Aka (*c.*1816/1818–1832) and Kaku Aka (ca. 1832–1848).[55] In 1787 Koasi Belempone was considered one of the five most powerful "Principal Cabboceers" of the Gold Coast seaboard:

> The people who are most popular and bear the greatest sway at the Waterside are Quashie Cabboceer of Appolonia, Aggery and Botty at Cape Coast, Amooney Coomah at Annamaboe, and Coffee Acrassie at Accra.[56]

In 1813 εzoa Kyi (1805–1817/18) was one of the four chiefs of the Gold Coast on the payroll of the African Company of Merchants, to whom the title of "King" was attributed.[57]

8.4 The Masters of Appolonia

Very probably in the sixteenth century and without doubt in the seventeenth, the region with which we have been concerned contained a congeries of small powers that were more or less equal to each other. This was also true of the European powers, whose sporadic attempts at establishing larger territorial hegemonies proved to be extremely short-lived.

Local societies were certainly typified by forms of extremely hierarchical political organization and by "monarchical" institutions. However the prevailing institutional framework was segmented horizontally into corporate organizations based on seniority (classes of age, "halves", etc.), type of trade (canoe crews, fishermen, ritual specialists, etc.), wealth, and social status (such as "brotherhoods' of merchant-nobles).

Occasionally more solid, compact, and extensive power formations established themselves in the region, and were usually founded on individual initiatives that successfully mobilized resources and bonds within particular groups. But these were *de facto* powers and, according to F. Viti's acute definition, "weak powers" that lacked legitimacy in relation to the formal context of local institutions: the strong personalities of those who built up these centers of power tended to operate outside these institutions, which they did not reject or struggle against, but did keep at arm's length.[58] However, the institutions tended to recover their role as the principal reference points for local society, once the big man had died or at least his personal power had started to decline.

However, the creation of the new eighteenth-century polities, which reflected the widespread transformation of the socio-political balance within the regions of the interior (the establishment of the states and "empires" of the forest, particularly Asante), undoubtedly triggered important processes of restructuring and reorganization of the region's demographic, military, administrative, and productive realities. At the political level, there was undoubtedly a process whereby central power was strengthened to the detriment of society's other institutions.

In the history of the area we have examined, the creation of the "Kingdom of Appolonia" represented an important attempt to halt the historic alternation between the great economic and political areas that

were squeezing the Amanzule river basin in the middle: to the east there was the pole of attraction based on the Ankobra River and Axim, and to the west the other pole was the valley of the Lower Tano. The creation of Anɔ Bile's sons aimed to capitalize on Appolonia's potential as an alternative market to the neighboring regions, and channeled trade between the interior (particularly Asante) and the western Gold Coast through its own territory.

As a result, the political fragmentation of the area in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whereby many big men ruled in many different towns in positions of considerable autonomy from each other, evolved into a single polity with a powerful center but administered with the cooperation of various peripheral centers.

The new power was certainly very different to the previous one both in terms of its size and its ability to mobilize men and resources. A macroscopic consequence was the exceptional development of the section of society that came under the immediate control of the ruling group through very strong bonds of dependency.

The system of power of the *arelemgbunli* of Appolonia was structured on related but distinct levels: the first was a massive and well-established regional network of relations and common interests based on trade, and the second was the territorial base of power, namely the "Kingdom of Appolonia." The latter was in turn a composite creation, made up of a center that was the personal "estate" of the *arelemgbunli* and their group, and a system of dependencies that were the historic local, political, and territorial units. The central, "patrimonial," entity imposed itself on the existing units and took on the role of higher level of authority, but this did not cancel the specific characteristics of those units, which retained substantial forms of autonomy.

The center was a tight network of relations between master and servant or slave and between patron and client, and this network was ordered and governed by a *fane*, which was a de facto power grouping made up of the *arelemgbunli*, their *abusua*, their sons, some important allies, and some of the high-ranking servants that were close to them. As far as the social composition was concerned, the center included the large numerical component constituted by the members of the *gyaase* and the slaves (*ngɛkɛlɛ*). However there was unquestionably also a component of groups and individuals who had no wealth or power and could technically be defined as "free" (in the sense that they were neither slaves nor *gyaasefoɔ*), but they were to some extent bound to the *arelemgbunli* through the mechanisms of obligation and clientship.

The chains of dependency extended and partly widened themselves beyond the center of the country and included the leading groups of the surrounding entities, which were subject to powerful bonds of obligation and subordination to the *arelemgbunli* of Appolonia, but were in turn at the head of similar networks of dependency, although more modest ones. There can be no doubt that the methods for integrating new immigrant groups subject to approval of the center or internal migrations it promoted (e.g., the Ewuture Amihyia settled at the mouth of River Amanzule) were the tools used by the center to increase its control over peripheral communities. However, these retained their margin of autonomy when it came to their own internal power structures (this autonomy was probably stronger in Azane, and weaker in Adwɔmɔlɔ).

However, the territorial dominion was only one feature, albeit an important one, of a system of power that included a galaxy of satellites (we could call "branches"), which were associated by ties of common interest. These were spread over vast areas and made up of groups and individuals joined by kinship, alliance, or dependency, but integrated into very different territorial, political, linguistic, and cultural realities that were often geographically very distant from Appolonia. Indeed the power of the big men of Appolonia was not primarily judged by the size, military strength, and demographic significance of their territorial dominion, but rather by the spread and prestige of their *ndane*, the oath that gave access to their jurisdiction.

Theirs was a power that primarily operated in relation to a specific network and then in the context of relations between networks.[59]

The consolidation of territorial positions and the control of a sufficient number of subordinates in the area of residence undoubtedly constituted the fundamental step toward building a base that guaranteed the business activities on which the big man expanded his power and, in the event of some threat, it provided a defensive entrenchment for the central management of those activities.

However the powerful logic of the network determined the dynamics whereby the political entity created by "patrimonial" power tried to develop greater autonomy and strength. A good example of this was that Amihyia vehemently asserted his independence from WIC and the Esawa group, and at the same time invited the British into his dominion and, after the war, attempted to reestablish good relations with the Dutch and on several occasions claimed still to be a "subject" of their company. This behavior was entirely analogous to that of *Jan Conny*. After having defeated the Dutch in 1718, the big man of Kpɔkɛzo did, in fact, recall them in 1722 without having any apparent need, and he accepted their offers of peace. However his decision, which some

historians have interpreted as simply a failure to assess properly his own strategic interests, naivety, a deceitful plan, or ignorance of the Europeans' true intentions,[60] appears to have been an unavoidable necessity when it is examined in light of the bonds and relationships between the powers in which both *Conny* and Amihyia were so entangled.

In reality, the power structures created by these personalities and more generally by the merchant-princes of the Gold Coast in the eighteenth century were not aiming at the exclusivity of sovereignty, but rather their significance was understandable within the context of a constant dialectic that acknowledged a shared network of power relations over the wider region. This went far beyond the confines of the single geographic, political, and "ethnic" entities.

For this reason, it is better to talk of "big men" rather than "kings" and of "estates" rather than "states" in the cases of both *Jan Conny* in Ahanta and of Anɔ Bile's sons and successors in Appolonia.

But unlike the power of *Jan Conny*, the power of the big men of Appolonia was to survive them and, during the last part of the eighteenth century, its position was consolidated and became relatively stable. When Koasi took power, the "Kingdom" really did become a solid entity that was clearly defined and recognized as such by the neighboring powers and Asante. This reality was perceived by the local population as a reference point to which they felt loyalty and with which they identified, together with other levels of identification that retained considerable force, such as the matriclans and other forms of association. The latter continued to act as crucial institutions for mediating between groups and individuals, and guaranteeing potential channels for overcoming and reintegrating conflicts at a level clearly above territory and "ethnicity."

Notes

Introduction

1. Taken as a whole, the Akan region covers a large part of southern and central Ghana and southeastern Ivory Coast. The River Volta in the east and the River Bandama in the west can be taken its current approximate borders. See Valsecchi and Viti, 1999, pp. 9–20.
2. See Arhin, 1967, 1970; Daaku, 1970a; Fynn, 1971; Goody, 1965; McCaskie, 1974, 1995; Perrot, 1982; Reynolds, 1974; Terray, 1995; Wilks, 1975.
3. See, in particular, Kea, 1982, and Daaku, 1970a.
4. See, for example, Kwamena-Poh, 1973; Chouin, 1998; and Daffontaine, 1993.
5. In particular, E. Cerulli, V. L. Grottanelli, V. Lanternari, M. G. Parodi da Passano, B. Palumbo, M. Pavanello, G. Schirripa, I. Signorini, and A. Wade Brown. For a comprehensive list of Italian anthropological studies on Nzema, see http://meig.humnet.unipi.it/. For an extensive bibliography on Nzema see Valsecchi, 2002, pp. 329–343 (*passim*).
6. See Ackah, 1965; Baesjou, 1998; and Valsecchi, 1986, 1994, 1999.
7. The inverted commas thus suggest "so-called by Europeans," without however implying any value judgment.
8. In particular, Wilks, 1977, 1982a.
9. According to Kea (1982, pp. 321–323), the period that ran from the late fifteenth century to the very early eighteenth century witnessed expansion in trade, demographic growth, urbanization, monetization, and consolidation of slavery in production. The merchant class attained hegemony by the joint control of the means of administration, destruction, and production. Independent polities were numerous and roughly equivalent in terms of strength, though networks of trade towns (especially the Akani system) provided forms of regional unification.
10. Kea, 1982, pp. 321–326.
11. Ibid., pp. 90–94.
12. Wilks, 1978. For a critical alternative to Wilk's reconstruction of Akan origins, see Klein, 1994, 1996.
13. For the debate on these definitions, see Claessen and Skalník, 1978; Claessen, van de Welde, 1987; Eisenstadt, Abitbol, and Chazan, 1988; Viti, 1998.
14. See Kopytoff, 1987.
15. Perrot, 1982; Viti, 1998.

16. See Bosman, 1705, Letter IX, p. 130.
17. See Perrot, 1982; Diabate, 1984; Deffontaine, 1993; Terray 1995; Chouin, 1998.
18. See Valsecchi, 1999b.
19. See Amselle, 1990, p. 22–28; Ranger, 1989, pp. 118–150; Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991, chap. 7.
20. Amselle, 1995, p. 87.
21. Lentz and Nugent, 2000.
22. For various analyses of Asante, see Wilks, 1975, 1993; Yarak, 1990; McCaskie, 1995. For a study of the Gyaman state, see Terray, 1995.
23. See Viti, 1995, on Baule; Rathbone, 1996, on Akyem Abuakwa.
24. See Ackah, 1965, app. 1, "Information given by the *ɔmanhene* of Eastern Nzema," arguing for an origin in Takyiman, and PRAAD ADM 11/1/1699 *Notes of Evidence taken before an Inquiry . . . into the Constitution of Apolonia, 1914*, pp. 25–27; "Kwasi Hawba, Head Linguist, Beyin 13 march 1914," pp. 44–53; "Yamike Kwaku, Sekondi, 19 March 1914" (on the ancestral origins in *Anwea Anwea*).
25. See Essuah, 1962, I, p. 115; Aka and Perrot, 1972, p. 111, n. 4; Daaku, 1973a; Niangoran-Bouah, 1965, pp. 56–58; Perrot, 1982, pp. 40–52. For Wassa, see PRAAD ADM 11/1/1703, *Wassaw Enquiry, 1913. Notes of Evidence by F. Crowther*, p. 23, "Omanhene Kwanina Bassayin of Wassa Amenfi, Kwajo Adu, and Kwasi Danso, Akropong, 9 Sept. 1913."
26. Van Dantzig, 1977, pp. 58–59; Niangoran-Bouah, 1965, pp. 56–58, Perrot, 1982, p. 42.
27. For the Nzema pantheon, see Grottanelli, 1978, especially Chap. 2. *Bozonle* corresponds to the twi *ɔbosom*. For an examination, see McCaskie, 1995, p. 276.
28. Ackah, 1965, p. 61, n. 13.
29. My interviews: *nana* Ala Kpanyinli II and *maanle mgbanyinli*, Elubo, Oct. 24, 1995; *nana* Whajan Kpanyinli IV and *maanle mgbanyinli*, Adusuazo, Nov. 23, 1995. See also PRAAD ADM 11/1/1699, *Notes of Evidence taken before an Inquiry . . . into the Constitution of Apolonia, 16th Jan.–11th April 1914*, pp. 11–13, "Nkuma Nkatia, ohene of Allubo, 4 March 1914."
30. Davies, 1967, pp. 205, 283, 290; Daaku, 1971, pp. 34–37; Van Dantzig, 1977, pp. 57–62; Chauveau, 1978, pp. 20–21, 27.
31. Kea, 1982, pp. 21–23, 74, 79.
32. See, for example, Hans Propheet's map of 1629, which shows the different districts of the Gold Coast, in ARA, *Collectie Leupen* n. 743, "Caerte des Lantschaps van de Gout Kust in Guinea, Mouri, Dec. 25, 1629."
33. Kea, 1982, pp. 92–93, 364–365.
34. Van Dantzig, 1990.
35. Wilks, 1977, 1982a. For historical insights of Akan (Asante) matriliny, see also McCaskie, 1985, 1995.
36. Wilks, 1977, 1993; McCaskie, 1985.
37. Wilks, 1977, pp. 522–523.
38. Cf. Rattray, 1923, 1929; Fortes, 1950, 1969.
39. McCaskie, 1985, p. 169. See also Amon d'Aby (1960, pp. 127–136) for the Anyi-Nzema area and J. M. Sarbah (1897, pp. 8–11, 45) for

nineteenth-century Fante accounts of the unequal relations within the *abusua*.

40. According to Yarak, who attempts to reinterpret the Asante state through a Marxist analysis, this relationship "constitutes a distinct mode of surplus appropriation in Asante, a 'coercive rent-taking' or 'feudal' mode of production that was subordinate to the tax-raising mode" (1996, p. 235).
41. Wilks (1977, p. 522) observes in relation to the matriclan: "Historically, clan affiliations seem not to have been such as to transcend local political allegiances, and in various internecine struggles fellow clansmen found themselves quite naturally aligned one against the other."
42. Perrot, 1982; Diabate, 1984; Terray, 1995; Viti, 1998.
43. FC (Furley Collection, Balme Library, University of Ghana) N49 (A-f), *1757–1762 (E)* [ARA WIC 963], pp. 63–72, Oct. 15, 1762: *Letter from Axim (Huydecoper), 12/10.* The words in brackets are in the original manuscript by Furley.
44. A comprehensive idea of the political geography of early eighteenth-century western Ivory Coast can found in the map drawn by J. B. B. d'Anville in 1729 (*Carte particuliere de la partie principale de la Guinée, située entre Issini et Ardra*), and published by J.-B. Labat in 1731, 2: facing p. 1. For the internal subdivisions of the Nzema area, see also Van Dantzig, 1979; Kea, 1982, pp. 74–83; Valsecchi, 1994.
45. For the *Furley Collection* and its merits and limitations as a historical source, see Van Dantzig, 1987. The Dutch section of the collection (marked with the letter N), which is by far the largest, consists of 124 notebooks.

CHAPTER 1

1. For an examination of the different names attributed to the region throughout history, see Ackah, 1965, pp. 4–8.
2. According to Grottanelli (1977, 1, p. 34), in the past *Apolonya* was a comprehensive denomination that included Axim and the Ɛvaloɛ areas. This interpretation reminds us of the *Apollo* in the Ivory Coast to indicate all the Nzema, as well as Binger's definition of Apollonia as the entire Nzema-speaking region from Assini to Cape Three Points (Binger, 1892 [1980], 2, p. 323), However, in historical sources that concern the eastern part of the Nzema region the name Apollonia by either Europeans or locals always refers very clearly to an entity located to the west of the Ankobra.
3. A local form for Benyinli is Bɛntenlebo (Essuah, 1958, pp. 11–19; Ackah, 1965, p. 7).
4. The term *maanle,* which corresponds to the Twi *ɔman*, is applied in the same manner at every nonelementary level of community, irrespective of its relative hierarchical position: a small village (e.g., *Miegyinla maanle*), an important town (*Awiane maanle*, i.e., Half Assini), a Paramountcy (*Adoabo maanle*), and all larger entities (Nzema *maanle*, Ghana *maanle*, Africa *maanle*). In specifically political terms, *maanle* can mean "the people," in the sense of the community as a whole as opposed to its chiefs.

5. The hill closest to the ocean, called Ewakonu, separates the modern towns of Kɛnrɛne and Twenɛne, but in the past there were settlements at its base that have since disappeared, such as Nyɛmanu, Azanwulenu, and the important ancestral site of Adwɔmɔlɔ, a name that was later used to designate the western part of Nzema. The highest point on Ewakonu is home to a sacred grove supposedly defended by a swarm of wasps, which is a manifestation of the local *bozonle*. The *awozonle* Ezia Boka and Ewakonu are thought to be associated as male and female, respectively (Mr. M. B. N. Nyanke, *abusua kpanyinli* of the Ndwea *ebia*, Kɛnrɛne, Oct. 29, 1995).
6. Teixeira da Mota, 1950, p. 266.
7. Barbot, c. 1688, 2, lettre 3me.
8. Teixeira da Mota, 1950, p. 266.
9. Donhela, 1977, pp. 326–327, 433.
10. "Extracts from Report on Apollonia District, 1869," FC N86 *1870–1872 Journal*, pp. 42–48, [ARA NBKG 642, Jan. 31, 1870, "Annual Report Appolonia, by J. G. Schnerr"].
11. On the attempted settlement, see Van Dantzig, 1978, pp. 63–64 (Municipal Archive, Rotterdam 1262; Attestation C. le Petit).
12. Bowdich, 1819; Dupuis, 1824; Cruickshank, 1853, 1, pp. 41, 47; TNA CO 96/27, F. Swanzy, "Narrative of the Expedition to Appolonia, from Cape Coast Castle, in 1848 (from the 'M. S. Magazine' of May–June 1850)" (*Amelhaya*); BPP 1842 C551-I, *Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on West Coast of Africa*, F. Swanzy, Apr. 29, 1842 (904) (*Ahmelyiah*). "Extracts from Report on Appolonia, 1869" FC N86 *1870–1872 Journal*, pp. 42–48, [ARA NBKG 642, Jan. 31, 1870].
13. The term *belemgbunli* (pl. *arelemgbunli*, cfr. the Twi *ɔbirɛmpɔn*) means generally chief or "king." In the case of "paramount chiefs" the Fante-Twi title *ɔmanhene* is currently preferred.
14. Robertson, 1819, p. 105; FC N86, *ibid*. Schnerr obtained his information from "various old members of the Native Government but particularly their linguist who is a living archive." The *kpɔmavolɛ* (linguist) mentioned by Schnerr was Bile Kofi. See ARA NBKG 1101, Report by Schnerr, Jan. 18, 1870 (quoted in Baesjou, 1988, p. 68, n. 83).
15. Other contemporary forms were *Ammenichia*, *Amminichia*, *Amnichia*, *Amenigia*, et cetera for the Dutch, and *Amoniah* and *Amonihier* for the British (Meredith, 1812, p. 64).
16. FC N86, *ibid*.
17. FC N65, *1802–1810, IV: Journal 1803–1810*, "Corr. with Outforts," [ARA RKWI 135] p. 147, Feb. 14, 1805: letter from Axim (Konig).
18. Welman, 1925, p. 21. Welman's interpretation was taken up by Cardona (1977, p. 97).
19. Essuah, 1959, p. 126–127.
20. Robertson, 1819, pp. 104–105.
21. The most widely held local etymology links the place-name Benyinli (Beyin in current usage and in cartography) to the Twi term *abɛnyin*, made up of two words *abɛ* (palm tree) and *nyin* (male). See Ackah, 1965, p. 7.

22. "Extracts from Report on Apol. District, 1869", FC N86 *1870–1872 Journal*, pp. 42–48, [ARA NBKG 642].
23. The *Day Book* of Fort Appolonia mentions *Coconue*, *Cocoana* and *Cocoanee* (TNA T70/1001, C. Godfrey, Oct.–Dec. 1786; C. Godfrey, Jan. 1–Feb. 10, 1787).
24. FC N86, *1870–1872*, pp. 75–77, [ARA NBKG 643], "Correspondence from Outforts, May–Aug. 1870," Commander of ship "Het Loo" at Elmina, May 1, 1870.
25. My interview: J. S. Ackah, a.k.a. Kanra Attiah (Koasi) Aka, *bianwuo ralɛ kpanyinli* (elder son of the stool), Benyinli. Coconut trees, which today are the main cash crop in the area, appear to have been widespread along the coastline at the end of the seventeenth century. See Bosman, 1705, Letter XXII, p. 493; Barbot, 1688, lettre 3me; 1746, III, p. 148; Meredith, 1812, p. 55.
26. Binger, 1892, 2, p. 323.
27. Tibierge, 1692 in Roussier, 1935, p. 67: *Ahou*; Delafosse, 1904, p. 106: *Aüa*.
28. Arthur, 1977, p. 169.
29. Cardona, 1977, p. 97; Delafosse, 1904, p. 106.
30. On the Agua of the Ivory Coast, see Tauxier, 1932; Mouezy, 1953; Rougerie, 1957; Diabate, 1984.
31. Valsecchi, 1986, 1994.
32. He reigned from around 1832 until 1848, and he died a prisoner in Cape Coast in 1851.
33. The British fort at Benyinli, founded in 1765, was abandoned in 1821.
34. On the events of Kaku Aka's removal from power, see Valsecchi, 1987. Ackah (1965) provides a reconstruction of the Nzema civil war.
35. See Brackenbury, 1874, pp. 291–319; Dyer, 1876, pp. 84–198; Ackah, 1965; Baesjou, 1979.
36. Since the 1920s an *abusua* of the matriclan Nvavile, which claims the succession to Kaku Aka, has contested all the successions to the royal stool of Adoabo up to the present one.
37. FC N86 *1870–1872, Journal, Correspondence with Outforts 1870, Jan. to April* [ARA NBKG 642], "Extracts from Report on Apollonia District, 1869." The emphasis on linguistic differences was an exaggeration, at least according to early nineteenth-century sources maintaining that Axim and Appolonia had a common language (TNA T.70 1 590. *Questions proposed by H.M.'s Commissioners T. Ludlam and W. Dawes Esquires to J. Fountaine, Governor of Appolonia and his Answers thereto*, J. Fountaine, Appolonia, Sept. 1, 1810).
38. Cardona, 1977, p. 98.
39. Paulme, 1970, p. 189; Aboagye, 1973, p. 11.
40. Ntumy, 1995, pp. 42–57. Nzema and Ahanta form the Southern Bia Sub-Group that together with the Northern Bia (Anyi, Baule, and Anufo) and the Akan (Twi, Fante, etc.) Sub-Groups constitute the Central Comoé Group of the Volta-Comoé Language Family, which in turn belongs to the great Kwa family of languages. See Cardona, 1977, pp. 100–104; Dolphyne, 1974; Dolphyne and Kropp Dakubu, 1988, p. 51; Kropp Dakubu, 1977; Stewart, 1966, pp. 54–58.

41. Kropp Dakubu, 1985, p. 194; Mock, 1969.
42. This Adwɔmɔlɔ, which includes the communities subject to the *ebia kpole* of Apatem, on the left bank of the Ankobra, must not be confused with the name Adwɔmɔlɔ, which applies to most of Western Nzema and is found in the denomination Jomoro District.
43. Welman, 1930: 8; Furley Collection, Balme Library, University of Ghana (henceforth FC) N112 (1831–1859), n. 10 and 11, *Population of Axim Division*, 1859.
44. See PRAAD ADM 11/1/1703, F. Crowther, *Wassaw Enquiry, 1913, Notes of Evidence*, p. 49, J. Ben Kofi, Banso Sept. 24, 1913.
45. The two variants are closely linked to the Aowin (Anyi) language (PRAAD ADM 11/1/1700, F. Crowther, *Ahanta Enquiry, 1911–12, Notes of Evidence*, p. 66, Kobbina Ntiri II, Ohene of Bamianko, Axim, Jan. 16, 1912).
46. With a total area of 1,344 sq km, Western Nzema (Jomoro District) had in 2000 a population of 111.348. The Nzema East District, which in 2000 had 142,959 inhabitants over 2,194 sq km, shrank in size dramatically with the creation of the Ellembelle District in 2008 (data derived from 2000 National Census as reported in the independent website ghanadistricts.com). In 1984 Half Assini had 8,816 inhabitants, 1,410 Benyinli, 13,109 Axim, and 1,779 Adoabo (Republic of Ghana, 1984, pp. 1–9).
47. For the situation of these *mbia,* see Welman, 1930; PRAAD ADM 11/1/1703, F. Crowther, *Ahanta Memorandum.* 1912; PRAAD ADM 11/1/1700, F. Crowther, *Ahanta Enquiry,* 60–65.
48. TNA CO 879/19, n. 142, 1884 *Assinee Boundary Commission, Palavers*; TNA CO 879/37 Africa (West), n. 435, 1894 *Further Correspondence respecting the Assinee Boundary, Gaman and Neighboring Territories*; also TNA CO 879/25, 1886. On the Tano group, see also Mouezy, 1953, pp. 59–60; Daaku, 1973.
49. PRAAD ADM WRG 24/1/276, *The Native Courts (Colony) Ordinance, 1944, Ahanta-Nzima District*, minute by A. Q. Kyiamah, Aug. 4, 1945.
50. For the specific break of this area's allegiance toward the *mbia* of Benyinli, see PRAAD ADM 11/1/1, Colonial Secretary to T. E. Fell, Travelling Commissioner, Accra, June 9, 1902; A. T. Neil, for Commr. Western Province, to Secr. of Native Affairs, Sekondi, Dec. 17, 1904; PRAAD ADM 11/1/1468, Bd. 7A, Captain Lang to Governor, Aburi, July 9, 1892; also Adjaye, 1931, p. 16.
51. My interviews: Nana Gyangue II and elders, Alɛnrɛnzule, Oct. 28, 1995; Nana Whajan Kpanyinli IV, *ɔsɔfo* Musu Kwame and elders, Adusuazu, Nov. 23, 1995.
52. PRAAD ADM 11/1/982, SNA case 82/1909, *Orders by the Governor n. 56 and 57 of 1927*, Dec. 3, 1927.
53. For a discussion of these events, see Valsecchi, 2001, pp. 406–410.
54. TNA T.70 1590, "Questions proposed . . . to J. Fountaine, Governor of Appolonia and his Answers thereto," J. Fountaine, Appolonia, Sept. 1, 1810.
55. AN-OM, Sénégal IV, 35(b). "Rapport de Boyer," Fort Joinville, 1 avril 1845.

56. Mondière, 1880, p. 623; Binger, 1892, p. 323.
57. The variant *Axieme* also appears in the same text and can be found elsewhere: see, for example, FC N11, (1662) *Directors of WIC to the States General*, June 29, 1662 (St. Gen. Loket Kas, Zweden, 38).
58. FC N8 (1658–1659) *Resolutions States General* 1659 (St. Gen. 3229). "Remonstrance or Deduction by the Director General J. Valckenburch" (n.d.; original in St. Gen. Secreete Kas, ARA WIC 1), reported to States General on Sept. 20, 1659. See also FC N11, (1662) *Directors of WIC to the States General, 29 June 1662* (St. Gen. Loket Kas, Zweden, 38).
59. Ackah, 1965, p. 7 and app. 1, 3, 4; Aboagye, 1973, pp. 8–9; Palumbo, 1995, pp. 137–138.
60. Cardona, 1977, p. 98; Hintze, 1949, p. 9; Delafosse, 1901, 1904. The theme of the ancestors of the Nzema having stopped on the River Nzi during their migration can be found in a story collected by J. Y. Ackah (1965, app. 4).
61. The various spellings of Axim to be found in previous writings include: *Aziem*, *Achem*, *Achim*, *Atzijn*, *Acsim*, *Axim*, et cetera. See de Marees, 1602 (1987); Barbot, 1688; Bosman, 1705 (1967). *Essim* is a form used locally to indicate the town, along with the more common *Bolɔfo*. For a possible link between */sima/* and *Siman,* see Valsecchi, 1994, p. 83, n. 6, and Palumbo, 1995, p. 147. In the mid-seventeenth century, a town called *Siman* (*Sumanee* or *Summani*) controlled the region to the northeast of the Aby Lagoon (cf. PARA. 2.4).
62. Bosman, 1705, Letter IX, p. 130.
63. See Niangoran-Bouah, 1973, pp. 202–320; Baesjou, 1988, pp. 1–83.
64. Valsecchi, 1994. For an eighteenth-century source on the occupation of Adwɔmɔlɔ, see FC N51, *Journals 1765 (2)*, [ARA WIC 966], Dec. 13: letter from Axim (Fennekol), n.d.
65. Aboagye, 1992, p. 232. The expression is currently also used to translate the English "tribe."
66. See Rattray, 1923, 1929; Fortes, 1950, 1969.
67. In the Nzema case matriclans are not exogamic, unlike the Asante case. For the matriclan in the Nzema area, see Grottanelli, 1962, 1977, pp. 36–39; Ackah, 1965, pp. 69–70, n. 113; Kadja Mianno, 1978, pp. 21–32; Asilijoe, 1992, pp. 27–30. These works deal particularly with the regions to the west of the Ankobra, while the eastern regions use significantly different names. The attribution of specific subgroups to one or another matriclan vary according to the area. For the different matriclan affiliations of the Esawa group, see PARA. 7.2.
68. Grottanelli, 1977, p. 42.
69. Cf. my interviews: *abusua kpanyinli, tufuhene* and elders, Nuba, Nov. 3, 1993; chief, *abusua kpanyinli* and elders, New Kabenlasuazo, Oct. 25, 1995; Nana Ngotobia Catoe I, Bawia, Nov. 1, 1995. For another Ndweafoɔ case cf. n. 51.
70. According to the traditions of this group, the migration took place in the times of *belemgbunli* Anɔ Bɔnlɔmane (nana Ngotobia Catoe I, Bawia, Nov. 1, 1995). On Anɔ Bɔnlɔmanle, see Chap. 7, n. 3.
71. This is generally the case among southern Akan groups. See Christensen, 1954, Chaps. 4, 5; Amon d'Aby, 1960, pp. 130–131; Grottanelli,

1961, pp. 3–4; 1977, pp. 56–62; Chukwukere, 1982, pp. 61–68; Palumbo, 1995, pp. 184–200. On the role of patriliny in Asante, see McCaskie, 1995, pp. 166–199. Grottanelli (1977, pp. 59–60, 93) investigated the possible existence in Nzema of formal institutions defining consanguineity in patrilineal terms, comparable to the Asante *ntɔrɔ* groups. However, his results were unsatisfactory. For Nzema kinship terminology, see also Palumbo, 1992; Pavanello, 1996; Signorini, 1978.

72. Danquah, 1944; Amon d'Aby, 1960, pp. 20–21; Grottanelli, 1960, pp. 392; 1978, pp. 16–21; Chukwukere, 1978, pp. 135–148; McCaskie, 1995, pp. 166–172, and app. 2 (passim). For a philosophical interpretation, see Gyekye, 1987, pp. 85–103.
73. For *mɔra,* see Grottanelli, 1961, pp. 3–4.
74. Grottanelli, 1978, pp. 64–79. *Nyamenle* is also the name used for the God of the Bible.
75. Grottanelli, 1960, p. 391; 1961, pp. 3–4; 1978, pp. 17–18; Chukwukere, 1978, pp. 135–148.
76. McCaskie, 1995, pp. 168, 312.
77. Chukwukere, 1978, pp. 138–139.
78. Amon d'Aby, 1960, p. 131; Grottanelli, 1977, pp. 71–72.
79. The term *tumi* can be used to express a general concept of strength, as a synonym of *anwosesebɛ* (strength). On *tumi,* see Perrot, 1982, pp. 103–113 and passim; McCaskie, 1995, pp. 48, 314.
80. For an example of an Akan narrative interpretation of history and identity as a manifestation of *tumi*, see Perrot, 1982, pp. 16, 298.
81. PRAAD ADM 11/1/1699. F. Crowther, *Constitution of Apolonia,* p. 17, Omanhene Aka Ayima, Beyin, March 11, 1914. Cf. also n. 48.
82. See Valsecchi, 1991.

CHAPTER 2

1. From Azulenloanu in the east to Nyanzini (Anweanzinli) in the west. But some believe that Ekonu/Bakanta was also part of the subregion.
2. From *anwuma* (above), whose meaning appears to be "those who live above the water" (a reference to the settlement on stilts called Nzulezo). See Grottanelli, 1977, p. 34.
3. The same name is used for the administrative district that comes under Half Assini: Jomoro District. R. W. Sanderson (1925, p. 107) had ɛlɛmgbenle end at Anokyi, and Adwɔmɔlɔ start from Adoabo included: a clear record of the era prior to the end of a unified "Kingdom of Appolonia."
4. For the internal divisions within Western and Eastern Nzema during the twentieth century, see Sanderson, 1925, p. 107; PRAAD WRG 24/1/276, *The Native Courts (Colony) Ordinance, 1944, Ahanta-Nzima District*, minute by A. Q. Kyiamah, 4 Aug. 1945; Grottanelli, 1977, pp. 33–34; Ackah, 1965, *passim.* According to Sanderson (*ibid.*), the name *Tripu* covered all the villages situated in the Eastern Nzema hinterland with the exception of those included in all the settlements in Western Nzema hinterland named after the town of Mpim.

5. Cortesão and Teixeira da Mota, 1960, 1, "Estampa/Plate 44," "Estampa/Plate 47C." For an analysis of the river name *Rio Sueiro Da Costa*, see Baesjou, 1988, pp. 15–19.
6. SGI, Cart. Z. 1/10[1], *Africa, Extrahido do Atlas M. S. feito par Diogo Homem em 1558, existente no Museo Britannico Publicado pelo Conde de Lavradio em 1860.*
7. Cortesão and Teixeira da Mota, 1960, 1, "Estampa/Plate 75."
8. Ibid., 1960, 1, "Estampa/Plate 93: Anónimo—Livro de Marinharia, c. 1560"; see also "Estampa/Plate 5" (s.d.).
9. See Brásio, 1953, 3, p. 93. This anonymous document ("Informação da Mina, 29-9-1572") is held by the Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, Fundo Geral, 8457, ff. 100v-110. A translation into English can be found in Teixeira da Mota, Hair, 1988, pp. 73–88.
10. Hakluyt, 1589 (1971), p. 99. R. Baesjou examines a variant of this name, *Costa dos Alaws*, that appears on the map of Western Africa drawn by Luís Teixeira around 1600. According to Baesjou, *Alaws* is a more ancient form of *Adaows*, of which we find repeated use in the late seventeenth century as the alternative name for the stretch of coast known as the *Quaqua Coast*. Another name for the region is *Sokko* or *Soco*. Baesjou (1988, pp. 20–23 and 49 and nn. 81, 83, and 87) suggests a possible connection of *Alaws*, supposedly related to the Portuguese *alão* meaning "Great Dane" (here in the sense of very large dog), with the Ndweafoɔ *abusua* (*ndwea*: dog, pl. *ahwea*). The anonymous document of 1572 does not specify how close the land of *Alandes* is to Axim, but Dutch cartographers of the early seventeenth century show its eastern boundary, the *Sueiro Da Costa*, to be the series of lagoons between the Comoé River in the west and the Tano river in the east (Baesjou, 1988, n. 81).
11. Hakluyt, 1589 (1971), p. 99. English ships sailed past this region on January 12–13, 1557. No indigenous vessel appears to have engaged in trade on 12th and the following day Towerson approached the coast in a launch and noted several small towns. He received invitations to berth from three of these towns, but was unable to do so because of the powerful surf. Towerson only saw boats in one of these towns, and one of these capsized in an attempt to meet up with the Europeans, causing one of its occupants to drown.
12. For the map produced by Teixeira and Rovelasco, see Cortesão and *Teixeira da Mota,* 1960, 3, pp. 67–70); Baesjou, 1988, p. 64, n. 60; Kea, 1982, pp. 24–26. Two original copies of the map are held at the British Museum (Catalogue of printed maps dl. 7, kol. 86) and the of Univ. Amsterdam Library, Oud. Kart. 132. There is a reproduction in Cortesão and Teixeira da Mota, 1960, 3, plate 362D.
13. Kea, 1982, pp. 24–26. The document containing a brief account of Menda Motta's journey was published by L. Cordeiro (1881) in his *Memórias do Ultramar.Viagens explorações e conquistas dos Portuguezes; collecçô de documentos. 6: 1516–1619: escravos e minas de África* with the explanatory frontispiece "'16 . . . A Mina e o Castelo de Axem—Exploração do Mansu (Rio da Cobra?) e do país dos Ashantis." For this work, references are to the later edition of 1935 (Cordeiro, 1935, pp. 364–367).

14. Cordeiro, 1935 (1881), p. 366. This is the hill with gold deposits of Aboasi (see PARA. 3.3, n. 35). However, the expression *minas do Bogio* that appears on the map clearly alludes to the old Portuguese *bogio* (whose modern spelling is *bugio*), which was taken from the Algerian city of Béjaïa (Bugia in Italian, Bougie in French) and is the name of a species of primate (macaque).
15. Barbot, 1688, 2e partie, lettre 3me, fo. 3; 1746, 3, p. 148.
16. Ackah, c. 1992.
17. Wilks' interpretation corrected his previous theory that *Elefante Grande* was Mali. His reinterpration is based on a more realistic assessment of the distances claimed by Menda Motta (Wilks, 1994, pp. 6–7). The Portuguese traveller claimed he had covered 90 leagues (i.e., about 400 km) in his journey from the mouth of the Ankobra to *Elefante Grande* (Cordeiro, 1935, p. 366). Van Dantzig (1990, pp. 207–208) suggests that it might be *Borbor Fante*, the historical heartland of the Fante region to the east of Elmina. However, this interpretation does not conform to the Menda Motta's itinerary.
18. Kea (1982, p. 24) argues that the *Sueiro da Costa* on Teixeira's map is Comoé, but it seems more likely that this river is the *Rio de Mayo* (Baesjou, 1988, p. 16).
19. Baesjou, 1988, p. 16 (see in particular pp. 15–20) for the complex and ambiguous interpretations of the historical river names in this region); see also Cordeiro, 1935 (1881), pp. 364–367.
20. Other versions include *Buma*, *Abouma*, *Aboama, Abonma, Ambouma,* and *Aboimo.*
21. FC N5, *1648–1652 (V)*, p. 164, "Act of Vassalage granted by the Fiscal Valckenburgh in the name and on behalf of the Director General Jacob Ruyghaver to the District Abripiquem, 26 Sept. 1652 [ARA VWIS 1162, pp. 223–225]."
22. FC N8, *1658–1659*, p. 32, "Renovation of the Act of Vassalage . . . of the District Abripiquem, 6 Aug. 1658 [ARA VWIS 1162, pp. 452–454]"; also in ARA NBKG 222, "Renovatie der acte van vassalagie door verleend aan de inwoonderen van't Landschap Abripiquem, Maboue, 6/8/1658"; English translation in FC N8, *1658–1659*, p. 32, "Renovation"; French copy in TNA CO 388/54, letter K, "Renouvellement." According to the text of the agreement, *Abripiquem* country bordered in the north with the *onthout plaatse* of the people of *Abuma*. Kea (1982, p. 82) translates *onthout plaatse* as "the capital."
23. ARA OWIC 13, "Dedicatie van Jumore, 10/1/1657"; ARA NBKG 222, *idem*; English translation in FC N7, *1656–1657, VII*, p. 60, "Act of Cession and Transfer of the District Jumoree, 16th Jan. 1657"; French copy in TNA CO 388/54, letter H, "Acte de cession du Pays de Jumora, Ilony (or Icony), 10(?) janvier 1657," attached to "Lettre du Representant de Son Altesse Serenissime et des Directeurs de la Compagnie des Indes Occidentales, Amsterdam, 4 dec. 1766 (sent by Earl of Shelburn, Whitehall, Feb. 2nd 1767)" and English copy in Daaku (1970, pp. 186–187, app. III); FC N8, *1658–1659*, p. 32, *ibid.*
24. ARA VEL 149, J. Elandt, "De Goudkust in Guinea." Cf. Baesjou, 1988, pp. 6, 25, 59 (n. 26).

25. Van Dantzig, 1979, p. 230; 1980a, p. 42.
26. For example, from the beginning of the early eighteenth century, *Abomaso, Abou Massou, Aboemasoe, Abomesoe, Abmussou, Abu-mehsu, Ebomesoe,* et cetera. The *Gold Coast Survey Map* (Sheet 72. P.III–72.V.I.) of 1908 uses the name *Abomesu.*
27. Aboagye, 1992, p. 52.
28. Ahumazo was the location of a village (*namule*) that came under Nzulezo until the early fifties when the occupants of the last three compounds moved to Nzulezo, Nzulezo 2 (a settlement on dry land) and Benyinli.
29. See Essuah, 1962, pp. 115–116; see also Meredith, 1812 (1967), pp. 53–54; Ackah, 1965, p. 12, app. 2.
30. Ackah, 1965, app. 2, "Information by Mr. Tayi Avo (alias Nyamekeh Avo) of Ayinasi"; app. 8, "Information by Blay V, ex-omanhene of Atuabo."
31. This Anyelebo should not be confused with another locality of the same name near present-day Ngelekazo (cf. PARA. 7.1 n. 11).
32. On Ahumazo and Anyelebo as ancestral capitals before Benyinli and Adoabo, see Sanderson, 1925, p. 96; Ackah, 1965, p. 158 and app. 2, 3, 6, 8, 22. See also PRAAD WRG 3/1/35, *Ackah Ayimah vrs. Yamikeh Quacoe*, "District Commissioner C. A. O'Brien: evidence by Yamikey Quacoe, Oct. 4th 1895" (Ahumazo is referred to as *Kumasoo*, the seat of Kɛma Kpanyinli); "Aka Ayima in the hearing of 7 July 1896, Supreme Court held at Elmina, Chief Justice W. Brandford Griffith"; NAGA ADM 11/1/1699 *Notes of Evidence taken before an Inquiry... into the Constitution of Apolonia, 1914*, pp. 25–27, "Kwasi Hawba, Head Linguist, Beyin 13 march 1914."
33. FC N7, *1656–57, VII*, pp. 22–47, "Deduction of Johan Valckenburgh, Director General over the North Coast of Africa, upon the Reply served upon him, and on behalf of Mr Johan Philip Kruysenstern, Commandant of the Swedish African Company in Guinea on the 16th September 1656 [ARA VWIS 1162, pp. 322–388; copy also in ARA WIC 116, fol. 782]," particularly p. 35; ARA OWIC 13, "Dedicatie van Jumore, 10/1/1657." See also Van Dantzig, 1979, p. 230.
34. Vogt, 1979, pp. 178, 215; also Furley, 1956, pp. 61–62; Furley, Cremona, 1958, pp. 212–214.
35. Loyer, 1714 in Roussier, 1935, pp. 186–187. According to Loyer, after a period of concord, relations between the *Esiep* and the Ewuture deteriorated, but the *Esiep* had the technological advantage as they had access to firearms through their trade with Europeans, and this prevented the Ewuture from freeing themselves of the incomer until, around 1670, they took in another wave of migration from "Grand Issyny" (Assini), slightly to the west of modern Half Assini/Awiane (for the location of ancient Assini, see Baesjou, 1988, particularly p. 24). This group was apparently in movement because of conflicts with the people of Adwɔmɔlɔ. They united with the Ewuture to drive the *Esiep* to the west, and took their place. They gave the name of Assini to their new homeland.
36. Baesjou, 1988, p. 31.
37. G. Niangoran-Bouah (1965, pp. 60–66) considers G. Loyer's *Esiep* to be the ancestors of the Abure Ehê (ɛhɛ) of modern Grand Bassam; according

to H. Diabate (1984, 1, pp. 511–513, 529–530) the Ehê left their ancient seat of ɛnɔhuan on the northern shore of the Ehy Lagoon only after they had been attacked by the Anyi in the 1750s, from where they moved to Adiaké. There they joined up with the Abure and adopted their language. Together they settled the Grand Bassam and other areas.

38. In Nzema they are also called Etile or Ewutilema. Retord (1970, p. 57) argues that the name this group adopted for itself—*Metibé* (metyibo) from *me* (palm tree) and *ti* (head)—could mean "those who were born in the palm trees." He observes that the names given to them by their neighbors—Etile, Eotile (Anyi), Vete (Abure)—correspond to the word "head," possibly with the meaning "the first arrivals" or "the most ancient."
39. Fage, 1980, p. 54.
40. Dutch documents from the mid-seventeenth century define it as a region (also called *Ahasia*) through which the River Tano flows upriver from Aowin (KITLV, Leiden msc. H65 b. "Extract uyt messive van der Generael Jan Valckenburg: leeter dd. Elmina, 10 Juni [Juli?] 1658"). K. Y. Daaku (1971, p. 33) identifies Great Nkasa with modern Sehwi. However Nkasa still means the region between the lower Ankobra and the lower Tano: both rivers have a tributary called Ankasa flowing through this territory. The dialect spoken on the right bank of the Tano (now part of the Ivory Coast) west of modern Elubo was referred to as *Casse* (Nkasa) by a French visitor in the mid-nineteenth century. *Nouassou*, which no longer exists, was the capital of this area called *Anka* (and its people *Aãñgamã*, see Delafosse, 1904, p. 107), and ruled by a woman named *Ankara*. The dialect spoken by the Afoma, further upriver was also called *Casse*. See AM-OM Sénegal et Dep. IV, 36(a), "Rapport sur l'Exploration de la riviére Tendo ou Tanoé, Duburquois à Bouët-Willameuz, 4 decembre 1849."
41. Daaku and Van Dantzig, 1966b, pp. 15–16. To the north Nkasa *Lągyina* borders with *Wanquie* (Wenchi), probably the important town north of Takyiman in modern Brong Ahafo. However, the name Wenchi was also used in the past to refer to the most ancient Sehwi polity, Anhwiaso, which believes itself to originate from the other Wenchi (Daaku, 1971, pp. 34–35).
42. Van Dantzig, 1990, p. 208. The names of *Acanes Grandes* and *Acanes Pequenos* were already recurring in sixteenth-century documents by the Portuguese, who also distinguished between *Acanes Portugueses* and *Acanes Castelhanos*, according to the business ties between the Akani groups with the Portuguese on the Gold Coast or with the Spanish trans-Saharan gold trade (Van Dantzig, 1990, p. 206). Akani is a generic historical term that is applied to a vast forest region that was the heart of the modern Akan world: Adanse, Akyem, Assin, Twifo, Denkyira, and Asante were originally all part of it. According to Van Dantzig (1990, p. 205), Akani was a "network" system based on shared interests in the gold trade, which in political terms led to a gradual consolidation of these links and institutionalized them in a kind of loose league. The components may have been preexisting polities, and groups of a commercial diaspora,

like the substantial communities of "Akanists" merchants living in the ports of the central stretch of the Gold Coast (east of Axim and west of Accra), where they were the leading gold traders. Wilks, 1993, p. 91; Daaku, 1970a, pp. 146–149; Van Dantzig, 1990, p. 205. For insightful discussions of Akani identity and political and economic organization, see Kea, 1982; Van Dantzig, 1990; Terray, 1995, pp. 138–142. By the end of the seventeenth century Akani had come to mean more specifically the commercial network based in Assin (Kea, 1982, p. 86).

43. ARA VEL 743, *Caerte des Lantschaps van de Gout Kust in Guinea, Mouri, Dec. 25, 1629.*
44. Modern Nkansa is in the territory subject to the *ebia* of Abora, a town in the Ahanta West District that speaks Wassa but is subject to the Ahanta paramount stool of Busua.
45. Baesjou, 1988, p. 81, n. 144. *Ampago* is supposed to have been the capital of Nkasa (Kea, 1982, p. 34).
46. See Tibierge, 1692; Damon, 1698; Loyer, 1714, in Roussier, 1935.
47. As far as I know, they consist simply of a few references to the Ewuture origins of a few communities along the banks of the Amanzule in Ackah, 1965 and Grottanelli, 1977.
48. Sanderson, 1925, p. 107; Grottanelli, 1977, pp. 33–34; Ackah, 1965, p. 11 e app. 4, 5. Cf. PARA. 7.4.
49. Meredith, 1812 (1967), pp. 53–54.
50. PRAAD WRG 24/1/263, *Western Nzima Affairs*, "Nzulezu Ezohiley Family per Amihere Nyanzu Petitioner versus Baili Kwesi and 6 others, the Oman of Nzulezu. State Council of Western Nzima, 24-9-1937." The *ebia duma* (stool name) of the *ebia* of Nzulezo is Takilika.
51. An account of the migration, which in some parts is clearly influenced by Essuah's book (1962), was given to me by *nana* Takilika IV, *ɔhene* of Nzulezo (Tikobo II, Nov. 3, 1995). This version mentions Saa (Shama) and then Supom as stages in the ancestral migration. *Nana* Takilika does not however mention *Anwea Anwea*, which Essuah (1962, p. 115) claims was the place where the Ewuture originated. According to information gathered by J. Y. Ackah, the founders of Nzulezo were Asebu refugees from Efutu (Ackah, 1965, App. 1, "Omanhene of Eastern Nzema," App. 2, "Mr. Tayi Avo of Aiyinasi").
52. According to A. B. Ellis (1887, pp. 31–32, 67, 114), the worship of Amanzule was closely related to that of Bɔbɔ Arisi who was worshipped along the entire coast and whose cult was centered on Winnebah. Amanzule, a female *bozonle*, was a wife of his (*yelɛ*).
53. According to H. Meredith (1812, p. 54), "The inhabitants of this village are careful in retaining their primitive language." To my knowledge, a documented research into the ancient language of Nzulezo has never been carried out. Apparently a number of words survive in the local usage of Nzema (my interview to *nana* Takilika IV, *ɔhene* of Nzulezo, Tikobo II, Nov. 3, 1995). The last recorded person to be fluent in the ancient tongue was the regent of the *ebia* of Nzulezo and *kpɔmavolɛ* (spokesman) of the *bozonle* Amanzule, Nyamekɛ Boatuo who died in 1950s or 1960s.

The *bozonle* Amanzule still expresses herself in Ewutile. The interpretation into Nzema is supposed to be carried out by a neighboring *bozonle*, Nzema Angɔ, who in this case acts as the *kpɔmavolɛ* for Amanzule (my interview *tufuhene* Ata of Nzulezo, Benyinli, Sept. 10, 1998).

54. *Tufuhene* Ata of Nzulezo, Benyinli, Sept. 10, 1998 (my interview).
55. A detailed account of the Ewuture's journey up the Amanzule, the creation of the settlement on stilts, the opening up of navigable streams and the development of farming, hunting, and fishing can be found in Essuah, 1962, pp. 115–122. Essuah claims that Axim and not Shama was where the group from the north met up with the ocean. It left *Anwea Anwea*, halted at Takyiman after crossing the River Volta and turned toward the southwest. See also my interview with *nana* Takilika IV, *ɔhene* of Nzulezo, Tikobo II, Nov. 3, 1995.
56. See Damon, 1702 and Loyer, 1714, in Roussier, 1935, pp. 97–100, 178–181, 187.
57. Polet, 1987, p. 296.
58. See Labat, 1731, I, p. 199.
59. See Loyer, 1714, in Roussier, 1935, p. 179.
60. PF SOCG 83, f. 379v; the document has also been published in Brásio (1960, 8, pp. 462–467), "Carta do Frei Colombino de Nantes ao Prefeito de Propaganda Fide (26-12-1640)."
61. PF SOCG 247, ff. 211–214, "Lettera del R. P. Colombino di Nante scritta dalla Guinea al R. P. Giustino Capuccino nel convento di San Malo, alli 7 Agosto 1637," in "Copia della lettera del R. P. Giustino al R P. Superiore dei P.P. Capuccini di Nante, San Malo 2 di giugno 1638."
62. PF SOCG 247, *ibid*.
63. Mouezy, 1953, pp. 21–22; Wiltgen, 1956, p. 37, n. 24; PF SOCG 83, f. 379r.
64. PF SOCG 247, *ibid*.
65. Loyer, 1714, in Roussier, 1935, pp. 186–188; Baesjou, 1988, pp. 23–24.
66. Barbot, 1678–1679 (1978), p. 20 (276); Barbot, 1688, 2e partie, lettre 3me, fo. 3.
67. R. Baesjou (1988, particularly pp. 6–13) has produced a complex interpretation of the historical geography of the Awiane/Half Assini area and examines variants of place-names used in European cartography and document from the seventeenth century to the twentieth. He lists 24 variants, from *Abiany* to *Ewianoe*. If we also take into account the sources produced by the Capuchin friars of Saint Malô, it is time we added *Bené* and *Besné* to the list.
68. Baesjou, 1988, pp. 6, 15. The graphic device used on Elandt's and Leupenius' maps appear to emphasize the significance of minor rivers and small lagoons just inland from the coast, because they were also the borders for many of the settlements.
69. See Baesjou, 1988, p. 27. Interestingly O. Dapper (1686, p. 303) reported on the missionary expedition of 1637–1638: "In the year 1637, the French set ashore five Capuchin friars in *Assine* and *Albine* to preach the Christian faith."
70. This does not exclude the possibility that the current settlement has a different location to the ancient one: the town might have been moved

several times (Baesjou, 1988, p. 31). However, there is still a problem with identitying Father Colombin's *Abiany* with the current settlement of Awiane: the friar recorded the distance between his mission and Axim as 30 leagues (75 km or 17 leagues along the coast). Either the Capuchin friars overestimated the distance or Wiltgen's theory cannot be rejected out of hand.

71. PF SOCG 83, ff. 379–380; Wiltgen, 1956, pp. 32–42.
72. See *Documenta*, 1906, p. 215.
73. This was an attempt to set up a rival trading network under the Swedish flag. See PARA. 3.5.
74. A more detailed examination of these events can be found in PARAS. 3.3, 3.6.
75. See Van Dantzig, 1979, 1980a, 1990; Kea, 1982, pp. 79–85. Van Dantzig claims this was a kind of loose confederation under Portuguese control (Van Dantzig, 1980a, p. 194).
76. FC N7, *1656–57, VII*, "Deduction of Johan Valckenburgh . . . 16th September 1656 [ARA WIC 116]." See also Kea, 1982, pp. 82–83.
77. FC N7, *1656–57, VII*, pp. 74–76, [ARA OWIC 12] "Attestation by Hogenhouck and van Steelant, Axim, 25th Nov. 1656 [ARA WIC 116 "Extract uyt de Declaratie over de Limitscheydinge van't Lantschap Axem"]."
78. 1656–1657 Dutch documents mention the stream Bialɛ, which enters the ocean about 5 km west of the Ankobra, as the coastal border between the "province" of Ankobra and the territory of Axim. In practice, Axim and its fort were trying to claim complete control over the use of the Ankobra crossing (there was a customs post on the eastern bank) and a stretch of land further west. See FC N7, *1656–57,* VII, pp. 74–75, *ibid.*; FC N8, *1658–1659* [ARA SG 3229; ARA WIC 1], "Remonstrance or Deduction by Valckenburch, n.d., reported on 20 Sept. 1659"; FC N51, *Journals 1765* (2), [ARA WIC 966] Dec. 13, 1765: letter from Axim, Fennekol, n.d.
79. Of *Axiema*'s 'provinces' to the west of Ankobra, only Azane, ɛlɛmgbenle and Adwɔmɔlɔ are on the Atlantic coast. FC N8, *1658–1659*, *ibid.*
80. ARA OWIC 13, "Dedicatie . . . 10/1/1657"; ARA NBKG 222, *idem*; FC N7, *1656–1657, VII*, p. 60, "Act of Cession, 16 [*sic*] Jan. 1657."
81. Teixeira's map shows a region called *Famba* on the Tano's right bank. For a nineteenth-century account of a visit to the region of *Afuma* by a French officer who went up the river from Assini, see the AM-OM Sénegal et Dep. IV, 36(a), "Rapport sur l'Exploration de la rivière Tendo ou Tanoé, Duburquois à Bouët-Willameuz, 4 décembre 1849."
82. See, for example, TNA CO 879/19, pp. 232, 243, 247.
83. *Siman*, which is now an archaeological site, fulfilled an essential role in the settlement and expansion of the groups from Aowin who founded Sanwi. See Tauxier, 1932, pp. 155–156; Mouezy, 1953, pp. 47–48; Diabate, 1984, vol. 1.
84. See Baesjou (1988, pp. 31–32 and nn. 88, 118). The name *Sumane* appears on Elandt's mid-seventeenth-century map just to the north of Assini, Awiane, and Edobo (ARA VEL 149, J. Elandt, "De Goudkust in Guinea").

85. FC N7 *1656–1657, VII*, pp. 74–76, [ARA OWIC 12] "Attestation by A. Hoogenhouck and A. van Steelant, Axem 25th November 1656."
86. FC N106 (C), *1760–1764, 1767,* [ARA WIC 492] pp. 24–25, "Report by J. Prehuysen, 15 May 1764."
87. See Tauxier, 1932, p. 153.
88. Kea, 1982, pp. 74–76.
89. KITLV, Leiden msc. H65 b, "Extract uyt messive van der Generael Jan Valckenburg: leeter dd. Elmina, 10 Juni (Juli?) 1658." There is a summary of this document in English (which I used for the quotation that appears in this text): FC N8, 1658–1659, pp. 9–12, "Extract from the letter from Jan Valckenburgh, written from Guinea to the Assembly of the XIX, dato 10th June (July?) 1658, sent by the ship *Swarten Arent*, arrived home at the end of October."
90. Kea, 1982, pp. 74–75, map 2.6; Daaku, 1971, p. 3.
91. On his map, Kea speculates on the location of *Enetrij* close to the right bank of the Tano, more or less at the point where it is joined by its tributary, the Ehania, and close to the Sohie town of the same name. Kea, 1982, p. 75, map 2.6. Binger's map of 1889 (in Perrot, 1982, p. 55) puts a *Eutiribonsa* (bɔnza: valley) to the northwest of this area.
92. Kea, 1982, p. 75, map 2.6. This town is situated a short distance to the southwest of the Tano, along the main access route to the river for anyone travelling from Cape Appolonia. ɛlɛnda controlled one of the main crossings of the lower Tano. According to J. A. Essuah (1962, pp. 130–135), the place-name ɛlɛnda comes from *ɛlɛne dabene* meaning "where the canoes lie at berth" (*ɛlɛne* means pirogue or dugout canoe). I was told of a variant with the same meaning: *ɛlɛne da* (my interview: *abusua kpanyinli* of the Ndweafoɔ-Mahile royal *abusua*, *tufuhene*, *maanle mgbanyinli*, ɛlɛnda, Oct. 8, 1993).
93. Damon, 1698, in Roussier, 1935, p. 77.
94. Loyer, 1714, in Roussier, 1935, p. 189; Tibierge, 1692, in Roussier, 1935, p. 62.
95. At the turn of the eighteenth century *Edouan* was the main market for the merchants sent by the Aowin (*Adouemy)* king Anɔ Asema (*Anasheman*). See Perrot, 1982, pp. 42–43. R. Kea (1982, pp. 74–75, 77) places *Edouan* on the Tano close to Aowin, while according to H. Diabate (1984, 1, pp. 347 ff., 511–512, 529–530), *Edoua* was ɛnɔhuan (Nuamou) on the Ehy Lagoon. Another town, Adusuazo (also known as Edu or Adu), is to be found a short distance up the Tano from ɛnɔhuan. However ancient ɛlɛnda was not that far upstream, and close to its site there is a settlement called Adyan (or Adjuan), which could be another candidate for *Edoua*. See TNA CO 700/Gold Coast 22, *Map showing the Towns and Villages visited by the Assinee Boundary Commission in December 1883 and January 1884*; L. G. Binger's map of 1889, which is reproduced in Perrot, 1982, p. 155; *Gold Coast Survey Map,* 1908: Sheet 72.P.III.–72.V.I.
96. FC N8, *1658–1659*, pp. 85–125, [KITLV, n. 65] "Report of the General Valckenburch, made in September 1659." Van Dantzig (1990, p. 216, n. 46) puts forward the idea that it is Hwerebo, an Abron town near Bonduku in the Ivory Coast.

CHAPTER 3

1. Van Dantzig, 1979, pp. 225–227. For the location of *Achombene*, see A. Van Dantzig and A. Jones in De Marees, 1602 (1987), p. 102b (203 and n. 4). On the Portuguese in Axim, see Ballong-Wen-Mewuda, 1993, 1, pp. 378–388.
2. Vogt, 1979, pp. 45–47; Birmingham, 1970; Cordeiro, 1935 (1881), pp. 287–290 ("IV. 1607. Estabelecimentos e resgates portugueses na costa ocidental de África, por um anónimo. Capitania da Mina"). According to this source, the garrison in Axim around 1607 included a captain or *feitor* with his two assistants, a secretary with his assistant, a customs officer, an army captain, a gunner, a housekeeper, and a nurse. The caravel attached to Elmina Castle and the two galleys patrolling the coast had a crew of 78 free men and 144 galley slaves.
3. See Kea, 1982, p. 84.
4. Brásio, 1953, 3, p. 93 ("Informação da Mina, 29-9-1572").
5. Vogt, 1979, pp. 83–85; Ballong-Wen-Mewuda, 1993, 1, pp. 102–103. See Kea (1982, pp. 86–88) for the identification of *Assas* with a part of Assin, but it appears doubtful as it is based on an incorrect reading by Brásio (1953, 3, p. 110) of *Asãees* in place of *Acanes*. See also Ballong-Wen-Mewuda, 1993, p. 107, n. 167.
6. Pereira, 1990, pp. 191–193. J. B. Ballong-Wen-Mewuda (1993, 1, pp. 385–388) provides figures calculated for the same periods that differ only slightly from those of Pereira. See also Vogt, 1979, pp. 98–99.
7. Teixeira da Mota and Hair, 1988, pp. 32–33.
8. The plan provided for colonization of the interior starting with the region of *Caia*, or *Cara,* (some identify it with Accra), which had just fought a war with the Portuguese, who attacked and destroyed it. A new Portuguese capital on the Gold Coast would be created, in which all Africans with the exception of slaves would be banned from residing. See Brásio, 1953, 3, pp. 111–113; Ballong-Wen-Mewuda, 1993, 1, pp. 114–116; Teixeira da Mota and Hair, 1988, pp. 73–88; Vogt, 1979, pp. 125–126.
9. Brásio, 1953, 3, pp. 114–119, "Lembrança de Jorge da Silva a el Rey D. Sebastião, 22-08-1573"; English translation in Teixeira da Mota and Hair, 1988, pp. 88–91.
10. Vogt, 1979, pp. 121–126.
11. Ibid., chapters 5–7; particularly pp. 151–158 for an assessment of the experience of the system of contract management.
12. Ibid., pp. 144–147. Dutch naval resources were superior to those of Portugal. Moreover the Dutch controlled the sources of production of the consumer goods in demand on the Guinea Coast, particularly textiles and metal goods. Throughout the sixteenth century, Portugal sourced these goods in Antwerp.
13. Ibid., pp. 155–157. The Dutch had 600 men. In Elmina the garrison repulsed the attack with the assistance of the town's population, but the Dutch maintained a naval blockade until January 1607. In Axim the *feitor* Luis Soares only had eight soldiers in his garrison, but he could count on the support of the local population. Moreover the attackers immediately

found themselves in difficulty when they attempted to land, because of the rocks that surrounded the fort, and they had to withdraw.

14. Ibid., pp. 167–169. An entirely new element in the amended *regimento* was the clause that made it possible to enslave African residents beyond a boundary placed at least 10 leagues from the Portuguese settlements.
15. Towerson, in Hakluyt, 1589 (1971), p. 100. No one recalls the name *Dondou* in the area today.
16. de Marees (1987 [1602], p. 16 [7b].
17. PF SOCG, vol. 99, fls. 14r-14v, published in Brásio, 1960, 8, pp. 44–46. In 1621 it was estimated that Elmina included 300 "neighbors" (*vizinhos*) and a permanent town militia of 200 men (Kea, 1982, p. 39). By "neighbors" they meant free male adults with full rights as citizens, or in other words householders (Fage, 1980, p. 52). The average number of people in each household on the Gold Coast in the first half of the seventeenth century has been variously calculated as seven (Fage, 1980, pp. 74–75) and five to ten (Kea, 1982, p. 37). On this basis, Elmina in 1621 must have had between 2,000 and 3,000 inhabitants (see Kea, 1982, p. 39, for a table illustrating the population developments in seventeenth-century Elmina).
18. Brásio, 1960, 8, p. 409.
19. Kea, 1982, pp. 38, 133.
20. Barbot, 1678–1679 (1978), pp. 22 (278), 24 (280–281).
21. Tilleman, 1994 (1697), p. 20 (56); Kea, 1982, p. 38.
22. Cf. Kea, 1982, pp. 82–85.
23. See Kea, 1982, pp. 21–37. For an interesting description of the great capital of "King Abaan" in 1557, see Towerson in Hakluyt (1589 (1971), pp. 108–110) and Fage (1980, pp. 61–63) for a convincing examination of these information.
24. Kea, 1982, p. 79.
25. See Van Dantzig, 1979, p. 226; Blake, 1941, p. 56 and documents 16, 18, 33.
26. Brásio, 1952, 1, pp. 190–191, "Carta de Diogo de Alvarenga a el Rei, 18-8-1503"; English translation in Blake (1942, pp. 94–95). In the letter, de Alvarenga asks the king of Portugal to put pressure on the commander of Elmina to complete the warehouse in Axim quickly, because in his opinion the trading post was very profitable. He also wanted the necessary building materials to be ordered as they were not available at the site.
27. "Carta de Gonçalo Toscano de Almeida, 14 abril 1548," quoted in Ballong-Wen-Mewuda, 1993, 2, p. 455.
28. Brásio, 1953, 2, pp. 372–373, "Carta Régia a Rui Gomes da Silva (19-8-1555)."
29. Dumett, 1987, p. 210; Welman, 1930.
30. Bosman, 1705 (1967), Letter I, p. 5; Letter XI, pp. 164–180.
31. For the two "halves" in western Nzema areas and Anyi cf. PARA. 7.2. For a discussion of the Abure system of "halves" and age classes, see Dugast, 1995.
32. FC N7, *1656–57, VII*, "Deduction of Johan Valckenburgh, 16th September 1656 [ARA VWIS, 1162; ARA WIC 116]."

33. Kea, 1982, pp. 82–83. Van Dantzig, 1979, p. 226. In a previous essay, Van Dantzig, basing his arguments on a study by J. K. J. De Jonge (1871), implicitly accepted the existence of a "jurisdiction" under Axim and its fort.
34. Van Dantzig, 1973, pp. 171–172.
35. Van Dantzig, 1973, pp. 172–173; 1979, p. 226; 1980a, pp. 93–95; ARAVEL 743 *Caerte des Lantschaps van de Gout Kust in Guinea, Mouri, Dec. 25, 1629.* W. W. Claridge (1915, 1, pp. 87–88, 90–91), who examines the events at "Fort Duma" in great detail without however providing his sources, argues that the gold-mining enterprise in Aboasi was brought to an end by an earthquake in 1636. Traditions in the area argue that the mine was abandoned after digging produced yellow amber and silver, which were considered inauspicious omens locally. In 1653 the ruins of the small Portuguese fort were seen by the Dutchman L. Dammaert on his expedition along the Ankobra, which led to the establishment of a Dutch outpost. Africans called the place *Brofonson* (lit. "at where Bolɔfolɛ is": B. indicates Whites and non-Africans in general). FC N6 *1653–1655, VI*, pp. 38–40, [ARA AANW 1898. XXII] "Louys Dammaert's Journal: 1653: 5 September."
36. Daaku, Van Dantzig, 1966a, p. 14.
37. Brun, 1624, p. 33, in Jones, 1983, pp. 65.
38. Daaku, Van Dantzig, 1966a, p. 14.
39. FC N7, *1656–57, VII*, pp. 74–76 [ARA OWIC 12] «Attestation, 25th November 1656».
40. See Van Dantzig, 1979, p. 235.
41. The map of 1629 lists three of them, located adjacent to the fort. The town's division into three political units was a lasting feature in its history, and even today the town and the surrounding territory is divided between the *mbia* of Bolɔfo Solo (Axim-Upper Town), Bolɔfo Aleze (Axim-Lower Town), and Nsanye.
42. FC N7, *1656–57, VII*, pp. 74–76, *ibid.*; FC N8, *1658–1659,* [ARA SG 3229; ARA WIC 1], "Remonstrance by Valckenburch, n.d., rep. 20 Sept. 1659." For a discussion, see Van Dantzig, 1979, p. 231.
43. Daaku, Van Dantzig, 1966a, p. 14.
44. FC N7, *1656–57, VII*, pp. 74–75, *ibid.*
45. Francisco Nao of Axim also took part in the Portuguese action, and he was cited as a witness to the events of September 1652, when he was acting as interpreter for the Dutch in Axim. FC N7, *1656–1657, VII,* pp. 67–69, [ARA OWIC 12] "Docket. C. Attestation of what passed with those of Jumore and Abripiquem, Ao 1652"; copy also as App. C to Dir. Gen. Valckenburgh's Deduction to the XIX. WIC, dd. Jan. 1, 1657. ARA VWIS 1162, pp. 322–338.
46. See Van Dantzig, 1979, p. 232.
47. *Ibid.* Luis Soares was in command of the fort of Axim at the very beginning of the seventeenth century.
48. De Marees, 1602 (1987), pp. 28b–29a (58–59), 40a (79), 103a (204). According to A. Van Dantzig (1980a, p. 28), the right to tax fishing in Elmina had previously been the prerogative of the ruler of Eguafo,

and was transferred by the local inhabitants to the Portuguese to mark the ending of their ancient dependency on Eguafo. See also Ballong-Wen-Mewuda, 1993, 1, p. 130.

49. For some information on the role and social position of this group (generally called mulattos by Europeans), see De Marees, 1602 (1987), p. 110a (216–217), 111a (220); Bosman, 1705 (1967), Letter IX, 141–143.
50. Van Dantzig, 1980a, pp. 27–28. Right up until they left, the Portuguese continued to pay annual rent to the local chiefs for the land on which the castle stood, and this custom was continued by their European successors.
51. Tilleman, 1994 (1697), p. 20 (55). The date of February 9, which Tilleman provided, corrected the date of January 9, which was suggested by O. Dapper (Jones, 1983, p. 106, n. 34).
52. Possibly the same Francisco Nao who took part in the Portuguese expedition against *Abuma* and worked as an interpreter for the WIC in the 1650s (cf. n. 45). In 1659 Francisco Nao was described as an "interpreter" (*taalsman*) for the Axim community (apparently a *kpɔmavolɛ*). FC N8, *1658–1659*, [ARA NBKG 81] "Extracts from the Diary of Director General Jan Valckenburgh, Elmina (2 Jan.–28 Feb. 1659), Feb. 6."
53. The German M. Hemmersam, who entered the employ of the WIC, took part in the conquest of Axim and provides us with a detailed description (Hemmersam, 1663, in Jones, 1983, pp. 105–107).
54. Van Dantzig, 1973, pp. 173–174; 1979, pp. 226–227; 1980a, pp. 34–35.
55. Hemmersam, 1663, in Jones, 1983, pp. 105–107.
56. The word corresponds to the old Portuguese *mamaluco* in the sense of mixed race, a usage that still exists in Brazilian Portuguese.
57. In the seventeenth century the measures of value in the entire Akan region were based on a system of weights in gold, which was a fusion of four different standards: the Arab-Islamic *mithqal*, the Arab-Islamic ounce (*uqiya*), the Portuguese ounce, and the Troy ounce introduced by the Dutch in the late sixteenth century (Kea, 1982, pp. 186–192). On the basis of a short summary by Van Dantzig (1980a, p. 35, n. 48), we can list the following equivalences (where one gold mark at the end of the seventeenth century was worth about 350 Dutch florins): 1 gold mark = 32 *pesos* = 8 Troy ounces (or ½ pound) = 2 *bendas*; 1 *benda* = 1 Troy ounce = 16 *ackies* (or *engels*). The *ackie* was the basic unit in the local currency made up of gold nuggets: 1 *ackie* = 12 *taku* = 24 *dambas*. This system remained highly uniform throughout the wider region practically until the end of the nineteenth century. For the Akan system of weights in gold, see Garrard, 1980.
58. FC N3 *The Gold Coast 1639–1645*, pp. 126–127, [ARA OWIC 12, *Contracten en Accorden met de naturellen, 1642–1657*] "Accord between the General Jacob Ruychaver and the Cabeceros of Axem, concluded Adij 17th February Ao 1642." English translation published in Daaku, 1966b, pp. 19–20. The name Agyevi is still linked to the *ebia* of Nsanye.
59. See Chouin, 1998, pp. 51–55, for relations between the WIC and Eguafo.
60. Van Dantzig, 1979, p. 228.
61. Ibid., p. 229. For the localization of the *Quaqua* Coast and its subdivisions, see Baesjou, 1989, p. 20.

62. FC N4, IV. *Gold Coast, 1646–1647*, pp. 185–188, [ARA OWIC 11] Dir. Gen. J. A. van der Wel to the XIX, WIC, Castle del Myna, Oct. 17, 1647.
63. FC N4, pp. 185–188, [ARA OWIC 11] van der Wel, Oct. 17, 1647.
64. FC N7 *1656–1657, VII*, pp. 74–76 [ARA OWIC 12], "Attestation by A. Hoogenhouck and A. van Steelant, Axem 25th November 1656." The document does not provide a date for these supposed events.
65. FC N3, *1639–1645*, p. 224 [ARA OWIC 11] "Ruychaver's Journal: 2 June 1645."
66. FC N4, [ARA OWIC 11] pp. 165–167, H. Caerloff to the XIX (WIC), Atchyn July 3, 1647.
67. Van Dantzig, 1979, p. 229.
68. FC N4, [ARA OWIC 11] H. Caerlof to van der Wel, Castle del Myna, Sept. 26, 1647.
69. FC N4, [ARA OWIC 11] van der Wel, Oct. 17, 1647.
70. FC N4, [ARA OWIC 11] H. Caarlof, Fiscal, to the XIX, Casteel del Myna, Sept. 26, 1647.
71. For the Akrosang brothers see Daaku, 1970a, pp. 107–111.
72. Van Dantzig, 1973, pp. 174–177; 1979; 1980a, pp. 37–46, 68–70; 1980b, 23–29.
73. FC N7, *1656–57, VII*, p. 73, [ARA OWIC 12] "Attestation, 25th Nov. 1656"; pp. 39–45, [ARA VWIS 1162, pp. 243–361], "J. Valckenburgh against J. P. Cruysenstern, St. George d'el Mina, 5 September 1656"; "Deduction of Johan Valckenburgh, 16th September 1656 [ARA VWIS 1162; WIC 116]." FC N8, *1658–1659* [ARA SG 3229; ARA WIC 1], "Remonstrance by Valckenburch, n.d., rep. 20 Sept. 1659." In the course of Nkasa's attack on Butri at the end of 1652, the Swedish trading post was also destroyed (January 1653) and the resident expelled. According to Van Dantzig (1980b, p. 25), the attack was provoked by the Dutch precisely for this reason and to create the opportunity to intervene and reestablish their influence over Butri.
74. FC N7, *1656–1657, VII*, pp. 67–69, [ARA OWIC 12] "Docket. C. Attestation of what passed with those of Jumore and Abripiquem, Ao 1652."
75. According to Kea (1982, p. 84), the development of production and commercialization of salt in Axim occurred in the seventeenth century.
76. FC N6 *1653–1655, VI*, pp. 38–40, [ARA AANW 1898, XXII] "Louys Dammaert's Journal, 1653, 5 September." The return journey, which exploited the river's current, took little more than a day and a night, including a break, whereas the journey upriver took four to five days.
77. Van Dantzig, 1973, pp. 177–178.
78. FC N8, *1658–1659*, pp. 85–125, "Report of the General Valckenburch, made in September 1659" [KITLV, n. 65 and ff.].
79. According to Henige (1975). Adom reached the peak of its power during the Komenda wars in the 1690s. It came briefly under Denkyira domination, but recovered its freedom after Asante defeated Denkyira. Adom was beaten in 1707 by the Dutch allied to Abokro and Egila. This defeat marked the beginning of its decay. Much of its territory was occupied by Wassa. See also Bosman, 1705 (1967), Letter II, pp. 22–25.

80. FC N6 *1653–1655, VI*, p. 83, [ARA AANW 1898 XXII] "Louys Dammaert's Journal: 1654: 11 May." For the events at Fort Ruychaver, see Van Dantzig, 1973, pp. 175–178; 1980a, pp. 93–99.
81. FC N7, *1656–57, VII*, pp. 74–75, [ARA OWIC 12] "Attestation, 25th November 1656."
82. Ibid., pp. 22–47, [ARA WIC 116] "Deduction of Johan Valckenburgh, 16th September 1656."
83. The flourishing markets of Great Assini and Awiane occupied also an important position for the control of the western coast. In February 1653, the commander of Axim, A. de Liefde, was advised by Elmina to send an African in his trust to reside in Awiane in order to send information about any ship appearing from windward. FC N6, *The Gold Coast 1653–1655*, [ARA AANW 1898 XXII] "Louys Dammaert's Journal, 1653, Feb. 21."
84. Following the evacuation of the "Swedish" trading post of Cape Appolonia, the WIC obtained the renewal of Adwɔmɔlɔ's allegiance in an act of "Conveyance and Transfer" (*Cessie en Opdragt*) of the town to the company in 1657. Ɛlɛmgbenle's act of "vassalage" was also renewed the following year. ARA OWIC 13, "Dedicatie van Jumore, 10/1/1657"; FC N7, *1656–1657, VIII,* pp. 60–62, "Act of Cession of the District Jumore, 16th January 1657"; ARA NBKG 222, "Renovatie der acte van vassalagie . . . van't Landschap Abripiquem, Maboue, 6/8/1658"; FC N8, *1658–1659*, p. 32, "Renovation of the Act of Vassalage . . . of the District Abripiquem, 6 Aug. 1658."
85. FC N8, *1658–1659* [ARA SG 3229; ARA WIC 1], "Remonstrance by Valckenburch, n.d., reported on 20 Sept. 1659."
86. Bosman, 1705, Letter IX, p. 130.
87. FC N11, *1662*, Directors of WIC to the States General, June 29, 1662 (St.Gen. Loket Kas, Zweden, 38).
88. FC N7, *1656–1657, VII*, pp. 67–69, [ARA OWIC 12] "Docket. C. Attestation . . . 1652."

CHAPTER 4

1. When Tibierge was in Assini in 1692, *Aqueny* was the highest chief of the Ewuture, and was succeeded by *Dammé*. In June–September 1701 the office was vacant and they were searching for a successor, whereas the following year it was held by *Coucocrou*, who had been the "favorite slave" of the previous incumbent. See Tibierge, 1692; Damon, 1698; and Loyer, 1714; in Roussier, 1935, pp. 66, 100, 179. Perrot (1988, p. 461; 2008, pp. 43–44) argues that the Ewuture lacked a central authority, and the heads of the four main lineages stood on equal footing.
2. Barbot, 1678–9 (1978), p. 20 (276); 1688, 2e partie, lettre 3me, fo. 3.
3. PF SOCG 247, ff. 211–214, "Lettera del R. P. Colombino di Nante . . . 7 Agosto 1637."
4. PF SOCG 247, ibid. The term "king" is used here to distinguish the supreme figure in the hierarchy from his subordinate chiefs. In the languages of the area this distinction is not expressed by a term other

than the one to indicate chiefs (such as *belemgbunli* in modern Nzema or *blemgbin* in Anyi).

5. According to Loyer (1714, in Roussier, 1935, pp. 165, 203), the ruling group was made up of the "king," 40 or 50 "Brembis ou Capchéres" (*blemgbin*), and the *babumets* (*mbusua mgbanyinli*), the family elders. For a discussion see Memel-Fotê, 1999.
6. *Maanle* (Wednesday) was considered in Nzema the day most suited to public assemblies, as suggested by its very name.
7. PF SOCG 247, ibid.
8. See McCaskie (1990, pp. 135–139) for an explanation of the office of *braffo*.
9. The expression *dorp*, village, was used for the smaller settlements. A Dutch chart published in 1683 (in Baesjou, 1988, map 9 and n. 24) marked the following place-names on the coast between the Ankobra and Cape Appolonia: *Asama* (Aziema or Essiama), *Mamo, Anjewaÿ,* and *Bogia* (Borazo). *Maboue* and *Jan Sontia* seem to correspond to *Mamo* and *Anjewaÿ,* located on the coastal dune. *Jan Soutia* might have been *Anjewaÿ* and might have corresponded to the old township of Anweanzinli (Ayinzile or Nyansi), also recorded as *Yamwe* on early twentieth-century maps (e.g., *Gold Coast Map*, 1:125.000, Sheet 72.V.II, The Gold Coast Survey, June 1908). Perhaps *Maboue/Mamo* corresponded to Ampain or Ambenu. I don't think we can accept Van Dantzig's suggestion (1979, p. 230) that *Jan Sontia* was Asanta (Asɛnda), which was located in Azane.
10. FC N6 *1653–1655, VI*, pp. 104–105, [ARA OWIC 12] "Attestation by L. van Cougelburch, R. Dyck, 17th July 1654."
11. FC N5, *1648–1652, V*, p. 164, [ARA VWIS 1162, pp. 223–225] "Act of Vassalage granted to the District Abripiquem, 26th Sept. 1652"; ARA NBKG 222, "Renovatie der acte van vassalagie Landschap Abripiquem, Maboue, 6/8/1658"; see also FC N8, *1658–1659*, p. 32; FC N7, *1656–1657, VII*, pp. 67–69, [ARA OWIC 12] "Attestation, 1652."
12. N. Uring (1727, p. 136) wrote that the six towns on the coast of Cape Appolonia were *large* (the observation referred to 1710). Des Marchais (in Labat, 1731, i, p. 222), who sailed off the region in 1725, claimed that Adwɔmɔlɔ was "extremely populated."
13. Also written *Maniperiou*, *Mamperiou*, *Mamprinejou*, *Maniperniqua*.
14. Also written *Pokoe Body*, *Packa Body*, *Poco Boury*, *Pocoboury*, *Pocke Boury*.
15. Other variants were *Echalmine* or *Schiolmana*, *Eliamine* or *Eliacume*, *Pardia*, and *Esempre*. ARA OWIC 13, "Dedicatie, 10/1/1657"; ARA NBKG 222, *idem*; FC N7, *1656–1657, VII*, p. 60, "Act of Cession, 16 (sic) Jan. 1657"; FC N7, *1656–57, VII*, pp. 39–45, [ARA VWIS 1162], "J. Valckenburgh against J. P. Cruysenstern, St. George d'el Mina, 5 September 1656"; FC N7, *1656–1657, VII*, pp. 67–69, [ARA OWIC 12] "Attestation, 1652."
16. Barbot, 1678–1679 [1978], p. 22 [278].
17. In the *profil de la côte* of Cape Appolonia attached to the book, the author recorded the precise positions of the ship lying at anchor one league offshore (4.4 km), opposite a settlement close to the highest hill (Ezia Boka), which was east-north-east of the ship. This settlement was the residence of

capitaine Pieter. Another village was identified on the coast to the west. The same description of the coastline can be found in the 1688 manuscript for Barbot's second voyage (c. 1688, lettre 3me).

18. *Acaniminà* does not appear to have a clear modern equivalent. A place called Enkɛnyiawoman is recorded as the first settlement in the area of modern Atweabanso, to the west of Edobo. It was created by immigrants from Kpulisi (Princes Town), led by Obili Mani (Essuah, 1959, p. 16; 1962, pp. 150–152). However, I have no evidence that ancient Enkɛnyia woman was once located further to the east and can be identified with Barbot's *Acaniminà*.
19. Barbot, c. 1688, lettre 3me; TNA MP: I/631, ibid.
20. FC N7, *1656–57, VII*, pp. 22–47, "Deduction of Johan Valckenburgh, 16th September 1656 [ARA VWIS, 1162; ARA WIC 116]." See also Van Dantzig, 1980a, p. 42.
21. FC N7, *1656–57, VII*, p. 70, [ARA OWIC 12] "E. Man, Fiscal: Attestation by A. Hogenhouck, fiscaal of Axim, and A. van Steelant, Assistant, Axim, 25th Nov. 1656."
22. Ibid. The document records information provided by the two "captains" and the chiefs of Upper and Lower Axim.
23. The sworn evidence about Mɛnla was given by "Ausy Bene Captn., Sammene, and Ansa, Chiefs of the Upper part, and Ausy Pain Captn., Bindia, Macassan, and Atiemba, Chiefs of the Lower part of Axem." FC N7, *1656–1657, VII*, pp. 71–72, [ARA OWIC 12] "E. Man: Attestation by A. Hogenhouck and A. van Steelant, Axim, 25th Nov. 1656." Caerlof's "engagement" of Mɛnla might have occurred at the conclusion of the Axim revolt of 1647, but we cannot rule out the earlier dates of 1645 or 1646.
24. FC N7, *1656–57, VII*, [ARA VWIS, 1162; ARA WIC 116] "Deduction, 16th September 1656."
25. ARA VEL 743 *Caerte des Lantschaps van de Gout Kust in Guinea, Mouri, Dec. 25, 1629.* in his translation of the "Attestation by A. Hogenhouck and A. van Steelant, Axim, 25th Nov. 1656" (FC N7, *1656–1657, VII*, pp. 71–72), Furley suggests a possible identification of *Choree* with Egila in a comment in square brackets ending with a question mark. The only basis for this hypothesis appears to be the fact that Egila is inland but outside the "jurisdiction" of Axim.
26. However, Wilks (1993, p. 5) puts forward his conviction that *Cacres* can be identified with Akrokyere (or Akrokeri) in Adanse.
27. Kea (1982, p. 80, Map 2.7) identifies *Choree* as the town that appears on Teixeira's under the name of *Labore*, to the west of the Ankobra river and Egila. See Valsecchi (2002, p. 189) for possible lines of enquiry.
28. The *gyaase* of a chief or king was primarily made up of the subordinate members of his *abusua*, and was led by his sons.
29. FC N6 *1653–1655 (VI)*, pp. 104–106 [ARA OWIC 12] "Attestation by L. van Cougelburch, R. Dyck, 20th July 1654."
30. See, for example, PRAAD ADM 11/1/1700 F. Crowther, *Notes of Evidence taken at Enquiry into position of affairs in Ahanta, 1911*, p. 50, "Kwame Boakye, Linguist, Upper Town, Axim, 15-1-1912"; PRAAD ADM 11/1/1699,

Notes of Evidence . . . into the Constitution of Apolonia, 16th Jan.–11th April 1914, pp. 11–13, "Nkuma Nkatia, ohene of Allubo, 4 March 1914."

31. FC N6 *1653–1655, VI*, "Extract from letter by Fiscal J. Valckenburgh to Sub-Factor A. Hogenhouck at Axem, Castle d'el Mina, 4th September 1653 [ARA VWIS 1162, pp. 405–406. Being Annexure D.2. to D.G. Valckenburgh's Deduction to the XIX, WIC, dd. 1 Jan. 1657]."
32. FC N7, *1656–1657, VII,* pp. 46–47, "Reply of the Commandant Johan Philip van Cruisenstern contra Johan Valckenburgh, Director General, 6 Sept. 1656" [ARA VWIS 1162, pp. 21–277].
33. FC N6 *1653–1655, VI*, pp. 105–106, [ARA OWIC 12], "Attestation . . . 20th July 1654."
34. Someone called *Affo* maintained good relations with the Dutch during the Axim revolt of 1647 and then played an important role in mediating a peaceful solution. He might have been the same person. See FC N4, pp. 185–188, [ARA OWIC 11] van der Wel, Oct. 17, 1647.
35. FC N6 *1653–1655, VI*, pp. 104–106, [ARA OWIC 12], ibid.
36. Ibid. This account of the events was provided under oath by an eye witness, *Afouquana*, son of one of the wives of Ehyimane, a leading chief of Adwɔmɔlɔ.
37. FC N6 *1653–1655, VI*, pp. 104–106, [ARA OWIC 12], ibid.
38. FC N6 *1653–1655*, [ARA AANW, 1898 XXII] "Louys Dammaert's Journal, 19 July 1654." Dammaert specified that Mevilla went aboard the pinnace that had to take him ashore wearing a gold chain and a gold band around his hat, and he thus suggested a connection between the weight of these ornaments and the Swedish commander's inability to save himself when the canoe capsized.
39. According to Van Dantzig (1980a, p. 42), assassins sent by the Dutch drowned Mevilla while pretending to assist him once they were in the water. Van Dantzig even suggests that Koloko was guilty of double-crossing: he was supposedly bought by the Dutch to eliminate Mevilla, but then fell victim to local oppositionists who resented him. However he does not provide any evidence to support this theory.
40. FC N6 *1653–1655, VI*, pp. 104–106, [ARA OWIC 12] "Attestation by L. van Cougelburch, R. Dyck, 17th July 1654."
41. FC N7, *1656–1657, VII*, pp. 71–72, [ARA OWIC 12] "E. Man: Attestation by A. Hogenhouck and A. van Steelant, Axim, 25th Nov. 1656."
42. FC N7, *1656–1657, VII*, pp. 46–47, [ARA VWIS 1162, pp. 21/277] "Cruisenstern contra Valckenburgh, 6 Sept. 1656."
43. FC N7, *1656–1657, VII,* pp. 46–47, ibid.; FC N7, *1656–57, VII,* pp. 22–47, [ARA VWIS 1162; ARA WIC 116] "Deduction of Johan Valckenburgh, 16th September 1656."
44. Van Dantzig, 1980a, p. 42.
45. FC N6 *1653–1655*, [ARA AANW 1898] "Louys Dammaert's Journal, 6 June 1655."
46. FC N7, *1656–57, VII,* pp. 39–45, [ARA VWIS 1162, pp. 243/261], "J. Valckenburgh against J. P. Cruysenstern, St. George d'el Mina, 5 September 1656." See also FC N7, *1656–57, VII*, pp. 22–47, [ARA WIC 116] "Deduction, 16th September 1656."

47. FC N7, *1656–1657, VII,* pp. 46–47, [ARA VWIS 1162, pp. 21/277] "Cruisenstern contra Valckenburgh, 6 Sept. 1656."
48. FC N8, *1658–1659*, pp. 85–125, [KITLV, n. 65] "Report of the General Valckenburch, made in September 1659."
49. FC N7, *1656–1657, VII,* p. 18, "Extract from the letter from the Gen. Valckenburg dates 1st January 1657, from Del Mina to the Assembly of the XIX."
50. FC N7 *1656–1657, VII*, pp. 60–62, [ARA OWIC 13; ARA VWIS 1162] "Act of Cession and Transfer (Cessie en Opdragt) of the District Jumore, made by the Gen. Chart. W. I. C., 16th (sic) January 1657." The copy in ARA OWIC 13 is dated January 10.
51. KITLV, Leiden msc. H65, "Extract uyt messive van der Generael Valckenburg, 10 Maart 1658" (FC N8 *1658–1659*, "Extract from the letter from the Gen. Valckenburg . . . 4th (*sic*) March 1658"); H65 b. "Extract uyt messive van der Generael Jan Valckenburg: leeter dd. Elmina, 10 Juni [Juli?] 1658" (FC N8 *1658–1659*, "Extract from the letter from Jan Valckenburg . . . 10th July 1658"). Cf. also Van Dantzig, 1990, p. 212.
52. Makepeace, 1991, p. I.
53. Kea, 1982, p. 86.
54. KITLV, Leiden msc. H65b, "Extract . . . 10 Maart 1658"; "Extract . . . 10 Juni [Juli?] 1658."
55. FC N8, *1658–1659*, pp. 85–125, [KITLV, n. 65] "Report of the General Valckenburch, made in September 1659"; FC N7, *1656–57, VII,* pp. 39–45, [ARA VWIS 1162, pp. 243/261], "J. Valckenburgh . . . against . . . J. P. Cruysenstern, 5 September 1656." See also Van Dantzig (1990, p. 216, n. 46) for an identification of the places mentioned by Valckenburgh.
56. 1980a, pp. 40–41.
57. See also Makepeace, 1991, p. 51 (doc. 57, f. 48v, J. Conget to East India Company, Fort Cormantine, June 20, 1659).
58. FC N7, *1656–57, VII,* pp. 39–45, [ARA VWIS 1162, pp. 243–261], ibid.; pp. 52–55, [ARA VWIS, 1162, pp. 277–288] "Reply from the Fiscal Jenisch to the Swedish Commandant Kruysenstern, about the accusation of General Valckenburg, Johannesburgh, 28 Aug. 1656."
59. On these events, see the varied information contained in FC N8, *1658–1659*, [ARA NBKG 81] "Extracts from the Diary of . . . Jan Valckenburgh, Elmina (2 Jan.–28 Feb. 1659)." The story is reported in Bosman, 1705 (1967), Lett. I, p. 12; Claridge, 1915 (1964), I, pp. 130–131; Ward, 1948, p. 90 and examined in Daaku, 1970a, pp. 76–77; Van Dantzig, 1973, pp. 175–176; 1980a, pp. 96–99; Posnansky and Van Dantzig, 1976.
60. "Attestation by C. le Petit, 18 Dec. 1690" in Van Dantzig, 1978, pp. 63–66 (doc. 88). Published In Hazewinkel, 1932, pp. 249–261. See also Van Dantzig, 1980a, p. 63.
61. T. Ernsthuys became the commander of Axim Fort and would later become the *directeur-generael* of the WIC from 1682 to 1684. Manuel Correia was related to (the son of?) the Portuguese commander of Axim between 1624 and 1626, who led the expedition against *Abuma* in support of the people of Adwɔmɔlɔ.

62. The date 1667 was inserted by Van Dantzig in his edition of le Petit's text, which unfortunately does not mention the name of the *directeur-generael* who decided on the evacuation, though he writes that the lodge existed in the years of H. van Gageldonck, who held the position of *opper-fitoor* in the 1650s and 1660s, and Valckenburgh, whose second term of office as *directeur-generael* ran from 1662 to 1666.
63. Barbot, 1678–1699 (1978), pp. 21–22 (277–278); Ducasse, 1688, in Roussier, 1935, p. 8.
64. In 1664 the English occupied New Holland in North America, and then attacked the WIC settlements in Guinea, seizing Goreé, Takoradi, Shama, Cape Coast (a Swedish creation that the Dutch had just occupied), Mori, Anomabo, and Egya. In 1665 Admiral De Ruyter retook the forts with the exception of Cape Coast. Van Dantzig, 1980a, pp. 48–49.
65. Local stories link the expulsion of the Dutch to incompatibility between them and the resident supernatural forces. According to a tradition recorded in the nineteenth century, the men of the WIC were forced into evacuating their trading post on Ewakonu hill, due to repeated attacks by a swarm of wasps linked to the local *bozonle* who was disturbed by the presence of the foreigners (see PARA. 1.1, n. 5). See FC N86 *1870–1872,* pp. 42–48, [ARA NBKG 642], "Extracts from Report on Apol. District, 1869."
66. Van Dantzig, 1978, p. 8; 1980a, pp. 14–15.
67. "Attestation by C. le Petit, 18 Dec. 1690" in Van Dantzig, 1978, pp. 63–66, doc. 88.
68. Daaku, 1970a, p. 149.
69. Kea, 1982, pp 158–168.
70. Van Dantzig, 1990, p. 212.
71. FC N15, *1669–1673*, "1672A: Calendar of State Papers. Colonial Series. America and West Indies 1669–1674 (vol. 1), 936."
72. Barbot, 1688, 2e partie, lettre 3me, fo. 3.
73. Groeben, 1694, pp. 52–61, English translation in Jones, 1985, pp. 37–40.
74. According to Father Loyer, the migration of the Essuma (he calls them *Ochïn*) from Great Assini to the new settlement further to the west took place after 1670, as a result of a prolonged conflict with Adwɔmɔlɔ. Their leader, *Zena*, obtained hospitality from the high chief of the Ewuture, with whom he shared a common matriliny. The Essuma helped the Ewuture to evict the *Esieps.* Loyer wrote that after Great Assini's inhabitants left it, its land was completely empty (Loyer, 1714 in Roussier, 1935, pp. 187–188).
75. In the early 1680s, (new) Assini was the first market on the coast in which it was possible to purchase gold for ships coming from Europe (Groeben, 1694, p. 52, English translation in Jones, 1985, p. 37). In the past this had been a feature of Great Assini, whose replacement was to European eyes the outcome of a decline in the gold trade that affected all the western coast from the early 1690s, when the invasion of Aowin by Denkyira caused a prolonged suspension of trade routes whose effects were still being felt in the early eighteenth century (Bosman, 1705 (1967), Lett. I, p. 4. See also PARA. 5.3).

76. Denkyira is indicated as the destroyer of "Vieux Issini" (D'Anville, 1729, in Labat, 1731, II, p. 1). However D'Anville produced his map nearly half a century after the events, basing himself on information taken from travel anthologies.
77. For a tentative reconstruction of the conflicts involving Assini and neighboring polities in 1678–1682, see Valsecchi, 2002, pp. 177–181.
78. Law, 1997, doc. 536, p. 277, "Hugh Shears, from aboard the Cape Coast Briganteen in Succondee Roade, Feb. 24, 1682/3" (during this period, the custom of starting the year *a Conceptione*, i.e., on Mar. 25, was still in use in England, which meant a delay of about three months compared with the usage *a Circumcisione* (January), which was eventually adopted universally in Europe. On English aims, see TNA T70/10 and 11 "Abstracts of letters received by the Royal African Company of England."
79. Ibid., n. 37, preface to documents of section I, p. 2, and docs. 1 e 2. On the activities of Adom, see also Van Dantzig, 1980a, pp. 52–53.
80. "Attestation by C. le Petit, 18 Dec. 1690" (Van Dantzig, 1978, pp. 63–66, doc. 88).
81. Ducasse, 1688 in Roussier, 1935, p. 8.
82. See, for example, ARA NBKG 218, ff. 23–27, "J. Nieman, Gouverneur der fortressen van Brandenburgh op de Custe van Guinea aan J. Smits, Provisioneel Directeur Commandant WIC, Groot Fredrichsborgh den 9 Junij 1690"; partial English translation in Jones, 1985, doc. 74, pp. 172–174. In WIC reports, Cape Appolonia, Adwɔmɔlɔ, and Egila were listed as three distinct "countries" (*lantschappen*).
83. See D'Anville, 1729 in Labat, 1731, II, opposite p. 1. A note on the map specifies that Adwɔmɔlɔ spoke a different language. The map is clearly based on information from the early eighteenth century, including the writings of Bosman and Loyer.
84. "Attestation by C. le Petit, 18 Dec. 1690" (Van Dantzig, 1978, pp. 63–66, doc. 88).

CHAPTER 5

1. Wilks, 1985, p. 493. For the transition from gold to slaves as the main European interest, see Van Dantzig, 1980a, Chap. 3.
2. Van Dantzig, 1980, p. 205.
3. Kea, 1982, pp. 11, 336, n. 2. See also C.-H. Perrot (1984, pp. 42–64) on the ancestral "metropolises" of *Kõnvi Ande* and *Anyãnyã* (*Anwea Anwea*), which provides information on other studies into the question.
4. Kea, 1982, pp. 11, 285–287, 322–326. This historical phase has been the object of intense research in the question of the "origins" of the state and the theoretical aspects of the "mode of production." See, in particular, Terray, 1974, 1975; Dumett, 1979; and Yarak 1996.
5. Daaku, 1966a, p. 11; 1970a, pp. 147–148, 156–160; 1970b, pp. 3–10; Van Dantzig, 1980a, pp. 130–132. For an analysis of Denkyira's "empire," see McCaskie, 2007.

6. The initiative was the creation of B. Raule, a ship-owner from Zeeland. The Brandenburg (later Prussian) company was present in the area until the transfer of its bases to Holland in 1720. See Jones, 1985 (particularly the introduction, pp. 1–11); Van Dantzig, 1980a, pp. 53–56.
7. Van Dantzig, 1980a, p. 55.
8. Jones, 1985, p. 4 and docs. 44, 55, 59, 77, with details on the enterprise.
9. FC N18 *1687–1690*, pp. 13–15, [ARA WIC 122] "Agreement between the Hon. Dir.-Gen. N. Sweerts in the name and on behalf of the WIC and the Caboseer Boúsoú as gemachtigde of the Anckober nation, Fort St. Anthony at Axim, 11 Oct. 1687"; Van Dantzig, 1980a, p. 63.
10. The two were educated in France and then returned home at different times: *Banga* around 1695 and *Aniaba* in 1701. The second, who became Louis XIV's godson, achieved a certain notoriety in France. For information on their lives, see Roussier, 1935 (Introduction); Nardin and Spirik, 1970; Wiltgen, 1956, pp. 78–88. A fictional reconstruction in Diabate, 1975.
11. Ducasse, 1688, in Roussier, 1935, pp. 29–30.
12. The spellings d'Amon and Damou also occurred regularly; his Christian name is not known.
13. Tibierge put emphasis on the fact that his name was the same as that of *Akassini*'s "family," which was in fact *Aniaba* (1692, in Roussier, 1935, p. 67); according to Loyer (1714, in Roussier, 1935, p. 187) the name of the matriclan to which both *Zena* and the Ewuture chief belonged was *Aumoüans*. This name could be read as a plural of Boïne, the name of one of the six modern Ewuture lineages, to which a kind of political preeminence is still attributed today (see Perrot, 1988, p. 461).
14. While his relationship with Damon deteriorated, *Aniaba* tried to secure for himself a top role in the local power system by exploiting his excellent connections. This was certainly not just the question of the manipulated and soon frustrated ambitions of an individual whose rare and privileged experiences stretched across two distant worlds. The Ewuture chiefs explicitly asked *Akassini* for *Aniaba* so that he could be established as the successor to their royal stool. But his candidature failed after the Ewuture and the French improved their relations. See Tibierge, 1692; Damon, 1698; and Loyer, 1714, in Roussier, 1935, pp. 66, 100, 179. See also Valsecchi, 2002, pp. 205–211, for a tentative analysis of *Aniaba*'s role in French–African relations in Assini. For an illuminating contemporary account of *Aniaba*'s return to his home –country, see Godot, 1704.
15. For the events surrounding the French attempt to establish a presence on the Gold Coast, see Roussier, 1935, pp. V–XXXIX); Van Dantzig, 1980a, pp. 56–66.
16. FC N19, *1691–1700*, pp. 9–12 [ARA WIC 122; copy in WIC 116, fol. 776], "Agreement and Accord between the Director General Jan van Sevenhuysen . . . and the Caboceers, Chiefs (*Hoofdlieden*), and principal men (*Opperste*) inhabiting the river Cobre, and particularly of the countries . . . of Ancober, . . . Abbocrou, . . . Igwira . . . 22 August 1697, in the village Axem." The agreement was signed by Bɛnga (*Pinga*), "1st

Headman (*Hoofdman*) and Administrator (*Gezaghebber*)," *Com Auzi*, "2nd Headman," *Assjanny* and Mokɛ (*Mokey*), "Caboseros" for Azane; *Ashemy* (or *Assanny*), Akpole (*Appery*), and *Bohe*, chiefs (*Hoofdlieden*) for Abokro; *Kiny* and *Eddunffa*, "caboceer" and *Codja*, headman for Egila.

17. Loyer, 1714, in Roussier, 1935, p. 227.
18. Van Dantzig, 1980a, p. 63; 1980b, pp. 47–48. The Ankobra trading post would later be called Elise Carthago and it survived until 1711. See also Anquandah, 1999.
19. Bosman, 1705 (1967), Letter I, p. 5.
20. Daaku, 1970a, pp. 78–95; Van Dantzig, 1980a, pp. 102–114.
21. Van Dantzig, 1980a, pp. 124–171.
22. Tibierge, 1692, in Roussier, 1935, p. 67.
23. C.-H. Perrot (1982, p. 43) also considered the theory sustained in some traditions that Anɔ Asema was actually a vassal or even an emissary of Denkyira, who freed himself of these ties and created a new power in the Aowin areas.
24. According to Tibierge (1692, in Roussier, 1935, pp. 62–63), an area called *Egban* was the source for gold arriving in Assini (cf. n. 28).
25. Bosman, 1705 (1967), Letter I, p. 4. According to J. R. Willis, the editor of the new English edition of Bosman, the letters that make up the work were written in 1701 and 1702. These events, which were mentioned in the first letter, therefore occurred in 1691 or 1692. For the Denkyira conquest of Aowin, see Letter VI, p. 79.
26. Van Dantzig, 1980a, pp. 168–171.
27. Ibid., p. 62.
28. Tibierge, 1692, in Roussier, 1935, pp. 62–66. *Egban* appears to correspond to the area Damon (1698, in Roussier, 1935, p. 77) refers to as *Abouga*. Loyer (1714, in Roussier, 1935, pp. 181, 189) includes these regions in the country of the *Compas*, a vast collection of communities lacking a central political power, which was located to the north of the Aby Lagoon and bordering with Assini.
29. Damon, 1698, in Roussier, 1935, pp. 75, 77.
30. *Amonle elilɛ* literally means "eating the *amonle*," a word that is generally translated as "fetish."
31. Damon, 1702, in Roussier, 1935, pp. 96–100.
32. The events surrounding this negotiation were described by Loyer, 1714, in Roussier, 1935, pp. 226–227.
33. Van Dantzig, 1980a, pp. 65; 1978, p. 92.
34. Loyer, 1714, in Roussier, 1935, p. 227.
35. De La Palma was also criticized and reprimanded for the tragic defeat of the Dutch at Assini (Van Dantzig, 1980a, pp. 65–66; 1978, pp. 89–93).
36. Loyer, 1714, in Roussier, 1935, p. 227.
37. FC N37, *1701–1702*, [ARA WIC 99] p. 255, "General Expenditure incurred on the Gold Coast of Guinea: 1 Oct.-30 Nov. 1702; 1 Dec. 1702–31 Jan. 1703" Encl. 2 to "Addendum, 1702–1705, May 30 1707: Dir. Gen. Pieter Nuijts, Hend[k] van Wezel, et al. to Ass. of X, WIC, Amsterdam."
38. Van Dantzig, 1980a, p. 168. At the same time, there was renewed interest in the WIC in finding a way to direct access to the gold mines: in April

1706, the *fitoor* of Axim, J. Landman, received orders to obtain discretely soil samples from Egila, Abokro, and Azane for analysis of the possible gold content. This initiative did not produce any significant results (Van Dantzig, 1980a, p. 100).

39. FC N37, *1701–1706, Tribal Satates (I)*, p. 191 [ARA AANW 1902, XXVI, 115] "Ankobra [Ancober]: June 19, 1706; June 23."
40. FC N39 (A), *1706,* "Day Register of the Upper Factor President P. Nuijts" [ARA AANW 1902 XXVI, 115], pp. 25–27, July 13, 1706: letter from Axim (Landman), July 11; pp. 50–51, Sept. 2, 1706: letter from Axim (Landman), Aug. 31; pp. 57–58, Sept. 6, 1706: letter from Axim (Landman), Axim, Sept. 1; pp. 68–69, Sept. 11, 1706: letter from Axim (Landman), Axim, Sept. 8; pp. 70–71, Nuijts to Landman (Axim), Sept. 13, 1706; FC N37, *1701–1706, Tribal Satates (I)*, pp. 192–193 [ARA AANW 1902, XXVI, 115] "Aowin»" 1706: July 13; July 20; July 31; Sept. 2; Sept. 6; Sept. 11; Sept. 13; Sept. 21.
41. FC N39 (A), *1706,* [ARA AANW 1902, XXVI, 115], p. 78, Sept. 21, 1706: letter from Axim (Landman), Sept. 20; TNA T70/5, Dalby Thomas, Cape Coast Castle, Oct. 5, 1706. Landman noted that the total trade between Axim and Ankobra had risen to 20 gold marks in December 1706 but could continue to increase up to 60 marks, if supplies of tradable goods were sufficient. See FC N37, *1701–1706, Tribal States (I)*, [ARA AANW 1902, XXVI, 115] pp. 191–192, Dec. 14, 1706: letter from Axim (Landman), Dec. 11; [ARA WIC 124] "Minutes of Council, Elmina, Dec. 21 1706." See also Van Dantzig, 1980a, p. 168.
42. The cause of the slowdown in the commercial activities of Aowin was the ruinous losses inflicted by marauders who destroyed a large Aowin caravan on its way to *Canca*, a market in the interior, with European goods that had been purchased on the coast. FC N38, *1707–1715*, *Tribal States (II)*, p. 32, [ARA AANW 1902, XXVI, 115] Mar. 5, 1707: letter from Axim (Landman), Mar. 2.
43. FC N39 (B), *1706–1707*, p. 135, [ARA AANW 1902, XXVI, 115] Feb. 7, 1707: letter from Axim (Landman), Mar. 5 (a summary in FC N38, *1707–1715,* p. 32).
44. Van Dantzig, 1980a, pp. 169–171.
45. FC N38, *1707–1715*, *Tribal States, II,* p. 6, [ARA WIC 122] "Agreement (original) Dir. Gen. P. Nuyts, and Abokroe, Igwira and Sur Jumoré, 13th July 1707."
46. FC N38, *1707–1715*, *Tribal States, II,* p. 68, [ARA WIC 100] Apr. 23, 1708: Dir.-Gen. Nuijts to Assembly of X, WIC.
47. For the history of relations between the two companies and particularly between Dalby Thomas and Nuyts, see Van Dantzig, 1980a, pp. 171–181.
48. TNA T70/5, *Abstracts of Letters Received by the Royal African Company of England from the Coast of Africa. N. 1, from March the 20th 1705 to August the 15th 1715*, Sir Dalby Thomas to Royal African Company, Cabo Corso Castle Sept. 12, 1709.
49. Loyer, 1714, in Roussier, 1935, pp. 227–228.
50. Atkins, 1735, p. 188. Des Marchais, who visited the region in 1725, provided much information on *Afamouchou*, but his observations were

clearly an enlargement on Loyer's writing and not based on any first-hand information. See Des Marchais, in Labat, 1731, I, p. 221.

51. C.-H. Perrot (1982, pp. 231–234) has speculated on a link between the "queen" of Adwɔmɔlɔ and the woman who led the ancestral migration of the *Ashüa* of Ndenye from Nuba, located to the northeast of Lake Amanzule in a key position on the route to Aowin.
52. Des Marchais, 1725, in Labat, 1731, I, p. 222.
53. Loyer, 1714, in Roussier, 1935, pp. 227–228; Atkins, 1735, p. 188.
54. Uring, 1727, p. 136.
55. The Abolezo site is in a dominant and easily defendable site in relation to both the coast and the interior. It is a short distance from the modern built-up area and is scattered with rock formations. It is believed to be home to *mmotia*, supernatural gnome-like creatures.
56. Nyɛmanu, located between modern Twenɛne and Kɛnrɛne, was still inhabited in the early twentieth century.
57. This impression is increased by comparison with other more or less contemporary variants of the same name used by Europeans, such as *Agumené* and *Àgumané* (Barbot), *Junmore* (Bosman), *Guommray* (Loyer), and *Ghiomer* (d'Anville).
58. Uring, 1727, pp. 138–140.
59. Uring, 1727, pp. 140–141.
60. This category included the *capitaine Pieter*, mentioned by Barbot (1678–1679 [1978], p. 21 [277]), who indeed was leading a war against unspecified "neighbours," and the *caboceer Croa* who in 1715 took command of the people of Cape Appolonia in the face of an attack from Asante and Wassa forces (cf. PARA. 6.2).
61. Even if he doesn't give any estimated figures for the population, Uring defines the six towns of Cape Appolonia as "large" (1727, p. 136); the comparative terms were probably based on the other settlements encountered along the coasts of the region.
62. Uring, 1727, p. 140.
63. Atkins, 1735, p. 74. In 1724 Cape Appolonia supplied *Jan Conny* with maize, while he and his men were under siege on the Ankobra and out of supplies. See FC N42, 1724–1726, pp. 60–61, [ARA NBKG 6] letter from Capt. Steenhart, in Axim woods, Sept. 12, 1724.
64. Uring, 1727, pp. 136–137, 140.
65. Uring (1727, p. 139) described the accommodation provided by his guest in Abolezo: "Their houses are low thatch'd hutts, consisting of one or two rooms, in which they raise places with clay, about two foot higher than the floor, and lay mats and carpets thereon, where they sleep, and have a stool for a pillow."
66. Atkins, 1735, pp. 73–74. J. Atkins anchored off Cape Appolonia on June 6, 1721 for a few hours. Atkins did not record whether he went ashore, and the contact with the inhabitants was through the crews of the boats that came alongside the vessel to trade.
67. Uring, 1727, p. 137.
68. Atkins, 1735, p. 159.

CHAPTER 6

1. For the great seventeenth-century merchants and intermediaries of the coastal areas, see Kea, 1982, chap. 6.
2. Ibid., p. 391, n. 32.
3. Cf. Fynn, 1971, pp. 25–26.
4. See Daaku, 1970a, chaps 6 and 7.
5. The name Kɔne Kpole (*kpole*: big) is the one handed down in the stories of the *mbusua* of the matriclan Mafolɛ who claim this famous figure to be one of their ancestors. Besides, in a letter to the *directeur-generael* of the WIC, Butler, sent in 1721, *Jan Conny* himself took on the name of *Coone* or *Cone*. See FC N41, *1718–1723*, pp. 143–144, [ARA NBKG 6] Oct. 24, 1721: letter from *Jan Conny*, Great Fredericksburg, Oct. 22. Documents from the period produce endless variations of the name, including *Connie, Counie, Conny,* and *Kony. Jan* (John, Jean, etc.) could be either the Christian name or a derivation from Nyane, Nyanyi, or Nyame.
6. At the end of 1710, *Conny* led the move by the people of Kpɔkɛzo to depose the Brandenburg director-general De Lange, and he forced his replacement by Stockoff. *Conny* ignored the protests of the English and the Dutch, and their joint efforts to mediate in De Lange's reinstatement, in an attempt to avoid a dangerous precedent. More important, they wanted to prevent the three ports, which were so important for trade with Asante and Aowin, from becoming permanently engaged in interloper trade. This trend was already underway: Prussia, whose resources were tied up in fighting the War of Spanish Succession, was not in a position to maintain regular trade with its African bases and made increasing use of interlopers in order to supply them with commercial goods. Cf. Daaku, 1970a, pp. 128–129.
7. For a history of the events relating to *Jan Conny*, see Daaku, 1970, pp. 128–143 and Van Dantzig, 1980a, pp. 181–188. See also Welman, 1930, pp. 33–49.
8. My interview with *ninsinli* ɛzonle Kanra, Ekpu, Nov. 25, 1995 (an important elder of the Mafolɛ). The Boa Kpanyinli Mafolɛ *abusua*, one of the "7 aakos" of Benyinli, also claim descent from Kɔne Kpole. See my interview with A. Kwasi Kassie, Nawule, Dec. 31, 1995.
9. According to tradition, this is demonstrated by the matriclan's *sɛkɛlɛneɛ* (emblem): *ezukoa kɔkɔlɛ*, that is, gold as money. See Grottanelli, 1962, pp. 502–503.
10. FC N43, *1727–1730*, [ARA NBKG 94] pp. 75–76, Jan. 5, 1728: letter from Komenda (Wobma), Jan. 4; Jan. 5:Norré to Komenda e ss.
11. Van Dantzig, 1978, p. 159, "183: ARA WIC 124, Minutes Elmina Council, 21st March 1711."
12. See Daaku, 1970a, pp. 131–132, Van Dantzig, 1980a, p. 183.
13. Van Dantzig, 1978, pp. 159–160, "184: ARA WIC 124, 18th April 1711."
14. FC N38, *1707–1715*, p. 229, [ARA WIC 102] Mar. 4, 1714: H. Haring and Councillors to Assembly of X, WIC, Amsterdam.
15. These appear to be two individuals of highly dependent status closely connected to the person of *Conny*. This condition, which had important

ritualistic implications, is implied by their names, particularly *Cra*, which means *εkεla* or spiritual "double" of his master (see PARA. 1.5; see also McCaskie, 1995, pp. 292–293).

16. Daaku, 1970a, pp. 132–135; Van Dantzig, 1980, pp. 184–185.
17. FC N40, 1715–1717, [ARA NBKG 82] pp. 26–27, Oct. 17, 1715: letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 10.
18. J. K. Fynn (1971, pp. 43–45) identifies this *Socco* with Bighu, the ancient Wangara market situated in modern-day Brong-Ahafo. The Akan did indeed call Bighu by the name Nsɔkɔ, generally applied to Malinke speakers (Wilks, 1993, p. 18; 1982a; for Bighu see also Bighu Wilks, 1961; Posnansky, 1987). However Fynn's suggestion appears highly unlikely. It would much more realistic to keep to Aowin traditions and the available sources, which provide evidence of Aowin expansion to the southwest and the conquest of the Essuma capital Nsɔkɔ (*Socco*). See also Daaku, 1973a, p. 2; Diabate, 1984, vol. 1; Mouezy, 1953, pp. 44–51; Terray, 1995, p. 401.
19. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 26–27, [ARA NBKG 82] Oct. 17, 1715: letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 10. It is not clear whether Great Nkasa indicates in this case the region of the Tano downstream from Aowin and in the direction of (new) Assini, or upstream to the northeast and toward Sehwi, or indeed the areas to the northwest of Aowin in the Bia river basin, where Aowin migration would in fact create Ndenye (Perrot, 1982).
20. The *casus belli* for Asante was provided by the defection of a contingent of about 3,000 fighting men engaged in the campaign in Abron (against the country called *Affindie Coco* or Ahwene Koko, the forerunner of modern-day Wenchi; see Ozanne, 1966). Once the war came to an end, these men refused to return to Asante and hand over their considerable booty from the war. They requested and obtained hospitality in Aowin. FC N40, *1715–1717*, p. 25, [ARA NBKG 82] Aug. 18, 1715: letter from Sekondi (Blenke), Aug. 19; 1715, Oct. 11: letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 8; Fynn, 1971, p. 43; Daaku, 1970a, p. 134.
21. Motwekrom (*Motie Comze*), a town situated on the route that runs southward from central Aowin toward the Tano, was described as "a district situated inland in a three crossway between Cape Apolonia, Ancober, and Ouwien, without whom none can pass between there and Ouwien," FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 26–27, [ARA NBKG 82] Oct. 17, 1715: letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 10.
22. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 23–25, [ARA NBKG 82] Feb. 10, 1715: Van Naerssen to Butler, Axim, Feb. 6; Sept. 2, 1715: letter from Axim (Butler), August 30; Haring to Butler, Elmina, Sept. 1715.
23. The WIC employee Van Naerssen wrote as early as February 1715 that Gyetua was willing to betray *Conny* for some kind of recompense, should the latter advance on Axim. He claimed that he was bound by a pact with *Conny*, who had promised him 200 *bendas* of gold, purely for reasons of financial need. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 34–35, [ARA NBKG 82] Feb. 10, 1715: Van Naerssen to Butler, Axim, Feb. 6.
24. Haring went so far as to order the capture of some 10 people from Cape Appolonia, which at that time was at war with Azane, so that they could

be used as hostages and force *Conny* to pay his debt to the WIC. FC N40, *Journal 1715–1717*, pp. 44–48, [ARA NBKG 82] June 27, 1715: letter from Axim (Butler), June 25; Haring to Heyman, on the ship Chama, at Axim, Aug. 8, 1715; July 4: letter from Axim (Butler), July 2; Sept. 2:letter from Axim (Butler), Aug. 30.

25. FC N40, *Journal 1715–1717*, pp. 32–44, [ARA NBKG 82] Jan. 18, 1715: Butler reports letter from Van Naerssen, Axim; Jan. 28: Butler reports letter from Van Naerssen, Axim; Jan. 31: Butler reports letter from Van Naerssen, Axim; Feb. 10: Van Naerssen, Axim, Feb. 6; Feb. 13: letter from Van Naerssen, Axim, Feb. 11; Feb. 14: letter from Axim, Feb. 11 (discussed in Council, Elmina); March 14: Van Naaersen, Axim, March 12; April 20: Van Naerssen, Axim, to Butler, April 17; June 5: letter from Axim (Butler), June 1; June 27: letter from Axim (Butler), June 25; July 31: letter from Axim (Butler), July 28.
26. The dispute concerned the mutual claims for payment of debts from the other. On the one hand, Gyetua was owed money for the support he had guaranteed in the past, and on the other, *Conny* had sent the sum of 40 *bendas* of gold to the chiefs of Cape Appolonia, of which 25 they could keep as payment for conducting forays against Axim and 15 they were to send to Gyetua, whom *Conny* had asked to attack Azane. While Cape Appolonia put up resistance to Bɛnga's attacks, Gyetua never did more than promise to act: as we have seen, he liked to keep his options open when it came to military alliances. In July, *Conny* dealt a sudden blow against his unreliable ally and arrested the head of the Wassa contingent, *Bo Coffy* (Abukofi?), with other important subordinates. He then demanded that Gyetua pay 40 *bendas* in exchange for their release. This was an extremely provocative act and could easily have turned into war, but as Asante forced him to mobilize all his forces against Aowin, Gyetua paid 22 *bendas* to *Conny* for the release of the hostages and postponed the resolution of their dispute. FC N40, *Journal 1715–1717*, pp. 46–51, [ARA NBKG 82] Letter from Blenke, Sekondi, July 7, 1715; Sept. 12: letter from Sekondi (Blenke); October 11: letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 8.
27. For a summary of the questions relating to the Asante conquest of Aowin, see Terray, 1995, pp. 400–406. On the formation of the Anyi states, see Perrot (1982) (Ndenye) and Diabate (1984) (Sanwi).
28. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 25–31, [ARA NBKG 82] Oct. 2, 1715: letter from Axim (Butler), Sept. 30; Oct. 11: letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 8; cf. anche Fynn, 1971, pp. 42–45.
29. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 26–27, [ARA NBKG 82] Oct. 17, 1715: letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 10.
30. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 27–31, [ARA NBKG 82] Letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 13, 1715; Oct. 20, 1715: letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 17; Oct. 25: letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 20; Letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 29; Nov. 3: letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 28. In this last letter, Butler recorded rumors that Twifo was about to take advantage of the absence of Gyetua's men to invade and occupy Wassa: something that would have made the Dutch extremely happy, given that Wassa

had caused considerable problems through its alliance with *Conny* and because of its preference for the Brandenburg trading posts. However, the hope never became a reality.

31. FC N40, *1715–1717*, p. 30, [ARA NBKG 82] Oct. 25, 1715: letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 20; see also Van Dantzig, 1980a, p. 184.
32. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 27–30, [ARA NBKG 82] Letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 13, 1715.
33. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 49–51, [ARA NBKG 82] Oct. 11, 1715: letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 8; Nov. 14: letter from Axim (Butler), Nov. 11.
34. FC N40, *1715–17*, pp. 50–55, [ARA NBKG 82] Dec. 11, 1715: Haring to Axim (Butler); Dec. 16: letter from Axim (Butler), Dec. 13.
35. The character may well have been Amɛnlɛma Anɔ, the founder of Sanwi. See PARA. 7.2, n. 32.
36. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 102–103, [ARA NBKG 82] Nov. 30, 1715: letter from Axim (Butler), Nov. 27; Dec. 4: letter from Axim (Butler), Dec. 2; Dec. 9: letter from Axim (Butler), Dec. 7; January 5, 1716: letter from Sekondi (Blenke), Jan. 4; Jan. 23: letter from Axim (Butler), Jan. 19; Jan. 27: letter from Axim (Butler), Jan. 24.
37. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 26–31, [ARA NBKG 82] Oct. 17, 1715: letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 10; Nov. 3: letter from Axim (Butler), Oct. 29; pp. 50–52, Dec. 11, 1715: Haring to Axim (Butler): "These Cape Apolonians are situated next to the Aowins and have provided them with guns and powder and possibly afforded them their help."
38. Butler informed Elmina about the attack on Cape Appolonia in an undated letter, which was read at a directors' meeting on Dec. 11. Then, once he had information on Bɛnga, he sent more specific news on Dec. 10. This event must therefore have occurred in the early part of the month, possibly the 7th or the 8th. See FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 50–53, [ARA NBKG 82] Dec. 11, 1715: letter from Axim (Butler), s.d; Dec. 11: Haring to Axim (Butler); Dec. 13: letter from Axim (Butler), Dec. 10.
39. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 59–60, [ARA NBKG 82] Jan. 23, 1716: letter from Axim (Butler), Jan. 19. News of *Croa*'s drowning was brought by the crew of a pirogue sent to Cape Appolonia by *Conny*, who is supposed to have seen the *caboceer* sink beneath the waves (Dec. 13, 1715: letter from Butler, Axim, Dec. 10). However, a *caboceer Crawa* was once again in a prominent position in Cape Appolonia in 1724, and it cannot be excluded that he was the same person mentioned in 1715, who would therefore have escaped the drowning. See FC N42, *1724–1726*, pp. 82–83, [ARA NBKG 91] Oct. 26, 1724: letter from Boutry (Norré), Oct. 25: enclosure: Van Mierop, Axim, to Norré, Oct. 24.
40. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 50–55, [ARA NBKG 82] Dec. 11, 1715: Haring to Axim (Butler); Dec. 16: letter from Axim (Butler), Dec. 13.
41. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 60–61, [ARA NBKG 82] Feb. 2, 1716: letter from Axim (Butler), Jan. 30. This accusation was used by the Asante commanders to justify the manner in which their men had plundered their Wassa allies on several occasions.
42. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 50–55, [ARA NBKG 82] Dec. 11, 1715: Haring to Axim (Butler); Dec. 13: letter from Axim (Butler), Dec. 10; Dec. 16: letter

from Axim (Butler), Dec. 13; Dec. 18: letter from Axim (Butler), Dec. 16; Dec. 21: letter from Axim (Butler), Dec. 18.

43. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 57–60, [ARA NBKG 82] Jan. 5, 1716: letter from Axim (Butler), Jan 3.; Jan. 9: letter from Axim (Butler), Jan. 7; Jan. 10: Haring to Axim (Butler); Jan.10: letter from Axim (Butler), Jan. 7; Jan. 11: letter from Axim (Butler), Jan. 9.
44. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 60–62, [ARA NBKG 82] Feb. 2, 1716: letter from Axim (Butler) Jan. 30; Feb. 8: letter from Axim (Butler), Feb. 5, See also Daaku, 1970a, pp. 135–136.
45. See Daaku, 1970, pp. 134–136, 179. For *Conny*'s pricing policy in 1721, see Atkins, 1735, p. 450.
46. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 62–63, [ARA NBKG 83] Aug. 24, 1716: letter from Axim (Van Naerssen), Jan. 18; Aug. 25: dir.-gen. Robbertsz to Axim (Van Naerssen).
47. The WIC management in Amsterdam even decided in 1716 to advise the abandonment of five forts (Mori, Kormantin, Komenda, Sekondi, and Butri), whose management was not considered economically sustainable. But the council in Elmina fiercely rejected such a measure. See Van Dantzig, 1980a, p. 186.
48. English translation in Van Dantzig, 1978, pp. 183–184, doc. 215, from ARA WIC 124, "Resol. D.-G., Council, Elmina, 12th Feb. 1716."
49. FC N40, *1715–1717*, "Ancober, 1717" [ARA NBKG 84] Mar. 2, 1717: letter from Axim (Blenke), Feb. 28; "Apolonia, 1717", [ARA NBKG 84] Sept. 18, 1717: letter from Axim (Blenke), Sept. 12, Aowin merchants were also discouraged from pressing on as far as Axim by the activities of *Domma*, who was a native of Aowin and was made a refugee as a result of the Asante invasion. He had lost his women at Motwekrom. *Domma* was attempting to collect money that he claimed he was owed by his fellow countrymen (indeed members of his own family) and for this purpose he *panyarred* (took hostage) some Aowins for whom he himself was acting as a guide on the way to Axim, when they got as far as the mouth of the Amanzule. He kept them hostage against payment of the sums he was demanding (Sept. 30, 1717: letter from Blenke, Axim, Sept. 28).
50. Terray, 1995, p. 405; FC N40, *1715–1717*, p. 103, [ARA NBKG 83] May 27, 1716: letter from Axim (Van Naerssen), May. 24. Van Dantzig (1977, p. 63) argues that *Dinkje* was the leader in the conquest of modern-day Ndenye, to the northwest of Aowin.
51. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 103–104 [ARA NBKG 82] Mar. 13, 1716: letter from Axim (Butler), Mar. 10, On Apr 2, two envoys from a large group of Aowin merchants, posted just over the border with Cape Appolonia, arrived in Axim with a gift of 10 ounces of gold for Butler. He feared that the party of Aowin merchants could choose to satisfy their commercial aims at the Cape and avoid pressing on for Axim (Apr. 7, 1716: letter from Axim, Butler, Apr. 4).
52. The Aowins preferred to pay with slaves and ivory, and rarely used gold. When they did, it was in the form of "fetish gold" (gold cast for jewelry or ornaments) and not gold dust. This gold had been hidden during the invasion. They were almost exclusively interested in purchasing firearms

and gunpowder. Moreover they went to the coast in small groups and frequented many different markets between Assini and Kpɔkɛzo, with the clear intention of not attracting too much attention by buying very large consignments of munitions. The Dutch believed this rearmament was to be directed against Wassa, but later it became clear that the intention was to wage war against Asafo. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 103–104 [ARA NBKG 83] May 27, 1716: letter from Axim (Van Naerssen), May 24; Aug. 3: letter from Axim (Van Naerssen), July 29; Aug. 24: letter from Axim (Van Naerssen), Aug. 19; Aug. 31: letter from Axim (Van Naerssen), Aug. 27; p. 248, Nov. 14, 1717: letter from Axim (Blenke), Nov. 10.

53. FC N40, *1715–1717*, pp. 10–44, [ARA NBKG 84] Jan. 2, 1717: letter from Axim (Blenke), Dec. 31, 1716; Jan. 6: Robbertsz to Axim (Blenke) and ff. *Conny* managed to split the opposing alliance by insisting that Azane and Abokro first pay the Dutch the 30 *bendas* and the remaining 11 to him: the other African parties rejected this method of payment, much to the WIC's displeasure.
54. This matter arose from the assassination in 1714 of *Conny*'s loyal ally, *Obim* of Butri. Van Dantzig, 1980a, pp. 185–186; Daaku, 1970a, pp. 132–133.
55. See Fynn, 1971, pp. 45–50; Priestley, Wilks, 1960; Wilks, 1993, pp. 253–255.
56. FC N40, *1715–1717*, p. 10, [ARA NBKG 84] Nov. 24, 1717: letter from Axim (Blenke), Nov. 22; Dec. 20: letter from Axim (Blenke), Dec. 16.
57. Fynn, 1971, pp. 60–62; Wilks, 1993, pp. 254–255. The report of the sack of Kumase appears in ARA NBKG 85, Munnickhoven to Butler, Axim, Mar. 21, 1718. The question of whether *Ebiri Moro* came from Aowin or Sehwi has been the subject of much historical argument. For an examination of the various points of view, see Perrot, 1982, pp. 57–64; see also Boni, 2001, pp. 146–158 for the relationship between these events and the formation of Sehwi Wiawso.
58. Fynn, 1971, pp. 60–62.
59. Daaku, 1970a, pp. 137–141; Van Dantzig, 1980a, pp. 186–188.
60. FC N41, *1718–1723*, [ARA NBKG 84], p. 61, 1718, Feb. 10: Robbertsz to Axim (Blenke); March 4: Robbertsz to Directors, WIC.
61. FC N41, *1718–1723*, pp. 119–120, [ARA NBKG 73] "Agreement made by A. Costner by order of Director Gen. W. Butler with the Abocroe and Igwira Chiefs (Hoofdlieden), Axim, 15th Nov. 1720"; pp. 173–174, [ARA NBKG 31] Apr. 20, 1720: letter from Assembly of X to Butler, Amsterdam, Mar. 20, 1720; May 8: letter from Axim (Muller), May 6 and ff. On this ambitious and ill-fated plan, see Van Dantzig, 1973, pp. 181–183; 1980a, pp. 101–102.
62. FC N41, *1718–1723*, pp. 63–65, [ARA NBKG 85] Apr. 21, 1718: letter from Axim (Munnikhoven), Apr. 18; Oct. 12: letter from Axim (van Naerssen), Oct. 9; Nov. 11: letter from Axim (van Naerssen), Nov. 9.
63. FC N41, *1718–1723*, pp. 149–153, [ARA NBKG 88] Aug. 20, 1721: Butler to Axim (Muller); Sep. 13: letter from Axim (Muller), Sept. 10; [ARA WIC 105] Nov. 20: letter from Axim (Muller), Nov. 18; Dec. 11: letter from Axim (Muller), n.d.

64. Atkins, 1735, p. 188.
65. Dutch sources refer to serious problems that divided Cape Appolonia and Azane, *Conny*'s stronghold. See FC N41, *1718–1723*, pp. 149–153, [ARA NBKG 88] Aug. 20,1721: Butler to Axim (Muller). Azane was now engaged in intense trading activity driven by *Conny*. His canoes loaded with goods were arriving daily at the mouth of the Ankobra (causing considerable resentment among the Dutch). See FC N41, *1718–1723*, p. 146 [ARA WIC 105] Dec. 4, 1721: letter from P. van Schaage at Ancober, n.d. In August 1722, the chiefs of Azane even decided to go to war against Cape Appolonia, and Butler has suspicions that *Conny* was behind this move.
66. FC N41, *1718–1723*, pp. 246–247, [ARA WIC 105] May 8, 1722: Butler to Ass. of X. In his letter, the *directeur-generael* Butler came to the conclusion that the number of bases was excessive in the current trading situation and with current running costs. Moreover the price of slaves had been falling since the late 1720s. See FC N41, *1718–1723*, p. 123, [ARA NBKG 88] Jan. 15, 1721: letter from Axim (Muller), Jan. 13.
67. FC N42, *1724–1726*, pp. 1–73, [ARA NBKG 91] Feb. 20, 1724: letter from Axim (v. Goch), n.d.; Mar. 13: letter from Axim (v. Goch); [ARA WIC 106] July 20, 1724: Valckenier to the Assembly of X; [ARA NBKG 91] Sept. 14, 1724: letter from Capt. Steenhart in Axim roads, Sept. 12.
68. FC N42, *1724–1726*, pp. 146–147, [ARA NBKG 92] Mar. 13, 1725: letter from Capt. A. Steenhart, Feb. 20.
69. The *fitoor* of Axim, Norré, referred to five different chiefs of the towns of Cape Appolonia, but he did not name them. See FC N42, *1724–1726*, pp. 92–93, [ARA NBKG 91] Nov. 20, 1724: letter from Norré, Axim Nov. 18.
70. FC N42, *1724–1726*, pp. 82–84, [ARA NBKG 91] Oct. 26, 1724: letter from Boutry (Norré) Oct. 25; enclosure: Van Mierop (Axim) to Norré, Oct. 24; Oct. 26: Valckenier to Butry (Norré); FC N41 *1718–1723*, [ARA NBKG 62] Oct. 18, 1721: Butler to Axim (Muller).
71. At the beginning of October, Azia Kpanyinli, with 150 men, had broken the siege and crossed the forest behind Axim to reach the Ankobra river. Other groups followed the same route in the following weeks. FC N42, *1724–1726*, pp. 72–90, [ARA NBKG 91] Oct. 7, 1724: letter from Boutry (van Goch, Norré); Nov. 16: letter from Norré in the ship "Wantwyck," Nov. 14. FC N41 *1718–1723*, [ARA NBKG 62] Oct. 18, 1721: Butler to Axim (Muller).
72. FC N42, *1724–1726*, pp. 92–93, [ARA NBKG 91] Nov. 20, 1724: letter from Norré, Axim Nov. 18.
73. Cf. FC N42, *1724–1726*, pp. 146–147, [ARA NBKG 92] Mar. 3, 1725: letter from Capt. A. Steenhart, Feb. 20; pp. 150–151, [ARA WIC 106] Mar. 31, 1725: letter from Capt. Steenhart, Mar. 27. H. Diabate (1984, vol. 1, pp. 513–521) wrote extensively about the Sanwi conquest of the Isle of Mɔnɔbaha, but she dated it in the 1750s. The correct date is 1725. However Sanwi subjugation of the Ewuture living in the lagoon area, particularly those further to the east, was probably a rather long process.

74. Valckenier records the purchase in a single day of 100 slaves and 3,000 pounds of ivory from Asante merchants who arrived immediately after the end of hostilities. See FC N42, *1724–1726*, pp. 154–156, [ARA WIC 106] July 10, 1725: despatch from Valckenier to Assembly of X.
75. Fynn, 1971, pp. 62–64.
76. Gyetua's death was announced in August 1718. Ntsiful was in the line of succession. See FC N41, *1718–1723*, [ARA NBKG 6] Sept. 8, 1718: letter from Van de Poele (Sekondi), Sept. 5
77. Fynn, 1971, pp. 62–64.
78. FC N42, *1724–1726*, pp. 180–186, [ARA WIC 106] Jan. 16, 1726: despatch from Valckenier to Assembly of X; Jan. 23: letter from Axim (van Munnickhoven), Jan. 20; Feb. 3: letter from Axim (van Munnickhoven), Jan. 28; Feb. 17: letter from Axim (van Munnickhoven), Feb. 15; Feb. 23: letter from van Munnickoven, Feb. 20; Mar. 1: letter from van Munnickhoven, Feb. 26; Mar 7: letter from van Munnickhoven, Mar. 4; Mar. 14: letter from van Munnickhoven, Mar. 11.
79. Daaku, 1970a, p. 141.
80. Van Munnickhoven advised the *directeur-generael* Valckenier to accept the request from the Azane chiefs to return to their homes, partly because the trading post on the Ankobra would have been badly affected if they continued to reside on the western bank of the river and a stretch of coast regularly visited by English ships. FC N42, *1724–1726*, pp. 187–188, [ARA NBKG 93] van Munnikhoven (Axim) to Valckenier, Mar. 26, 1726; Valckenier to van Munnickhoven, Apr. 5, 1726; van Munnickhoven to Valckenier, Apr. 16, 1726.
81. FC N43, *1727–1730*, p. 1, [ARA NBKG 94] Sept. 1, 1727: letter from Axim (Ockers) Aug. 29.
82. FC N43, *1727–1730*, pp. 1–2, [ARA NBKG 94] Dec. 6, 1727: letter from Axim (Woortman) Dec. 3.
83. FC N49 *(A-F)*, *1757–1762, (E)*, pp. 70–79, [ARA WIC 963] Letter from Axim (Huydecoper), Feb. 2, 1762.
84. FC N43, *1727–1730*, pp. 151–154, [ARA NBKG 91] 1730, Sept. 7, 1730: letter from Axim (Ockers), Sept. 7.
85. Fynn, 1971, pp. 64–67.
86. FC N43, *1727–1730*, pp. 177–191, [ARA WIC 109] Sept. 2, 1730: letter from Sekondi (Angier) and ff., especially Sept. 14: letter from Chama (van Goch); Oct. 12: letter from Sekondi (Angier); Oct. 16: letter from Sekondi (Angier); Nov. 6: letter from Sekondi (Angier), Nov. 6; Nov. 12: letter from J. Bleeker (Takoradi), Nov. 12; Nov. 18: letter from Sekondi (Angier), Nov. 18; Nov. 23: letter from Axim (Ockers), Nov. 21.
87. FC N43, *1727–1730*, p. 105, [ARA NBKG 95] Feb. 21, 1729: letter from Axim (Ockers) Feb. 19, Ackah, 1965, app. 2 "Information given by Mr. Tayi Avo of Ayinasi."
88. FC N42, *1724–1726*, pp. 82–83, [ARA NBKG 91] Oct. 26, 1724: letter from Boutry (Norré), Oct. 25: enclosure in Van Mierop (Axim) to Norré, Oct. 24.
89. FC N43, *1727–1730*, pp. 105–109, [ARA NBKG 95] Apr. 7, 1729: letter from Axim (Ockers), Apr. 5; Jun. 17: letter from Axim (Ockers), 15 (?)

June; July 16: letter from Axim (Ockers), July 12; Aug. 6: letter from Axim (Ockers), 8 (?) August; Oct. 9: letter from Axim (Ockers), Oct. 8; Dec. 23: letter from Axim (Ockers), Dec. 20; Dec. 28: letter from Axim (Ockers), Dec. 25.

90. FC N43, *1727–1730*, p. 105, [ARA NBKG 95] Feb. 21, 1729: letter from Axim (Ockers), Feb. 19; pp. 150–154, [ARA NBKG 97] Aug. 21, 1730: Pranger to Axim (Ockers); Sept. 7, 1730: letter from Axim (Ockers).
91. FC N44 *1731–1739*, pp. 1–2, [ARA NBKG 97] Jan. 3, 1731: letter from Axim (Ockers), Dec. 28, 1730; [ARA NBKG 6] "Minutes of Council, 16 February 1731."
92. FC N44, *1731–1739*, pp. 3–4, [ARA NBKG 97] Jan. 27, 1731: Dir.-Gen. Pranger to de la Planque, Axim, Jan. 24, 1731 e ss.
93. Ackah, 1965, app. 5, p. 8, "Alahagji Nuhu and the Chief of Ampain and Stool-head."
94. Ibid., app. 2, 5.
95. Ibid., app. 2, "Information given by Mr. Tayi Avo, alias Nyamekeh Avo, of Aiyinasi."
96. FC N44 *1731–1739*, p. 1, [ARA NBKG 97] Jan. 3, 1731: letter from Axim (Ockers) Dec. 28, 1730.
97. FC N46, *1747–1750*, pp. 53–54, [ARA NBKG 110] Mar. 24, 1749: letter from Axim (Jb. Credo Bacot), Mar. 21; p. 77, [ARA NBKG 111] Aug. 20, 1750: letter from Axim (Jb C. Bacot), Aug. 17.
98. Nineteenth-century sources refer to Anɔ Bile Aka as the founder of Benyinli (its eastern section at least) where he continued to reside (see FC N86 *1870–1872*, pp. 42–48, "Extracts from Report on Apol. District, 1869" [ARA NBKG 642, Jan. 31, 1870, "Annual report Appolonia, by J. G. Schnerr"]). However the fact that he was installed in Benyinli and clearly in control of the town in 1730 does not necessarily mean that his father was dead.
99. 1705, Letter II, pp. 11–12.
100. Kea, 1982, p. 32.
101. FC N45, *The Gold Coast, 1740–1746*, pp. 153–155, [ARA NBKG 106] Sept. 9, 1742: letter from Axim (de Guitere), n.d.

CHAPTER 7

1. FC N86 *1870–1872*, pp. 42–48, "Extracts from Report on Apol. District, 1869" [ARA NBKG 642, Jan. 31, 1870, "Annual report Appolonia, by J. G. Schnerr"]; Ackah, 1965, app. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 15, 18.
2. FC N106 (C), *Dutch Letters from the Gold Coast, 1760–64*, [ARA WIC 115] Sept. 14, 1763: letter from J. P. T. Huydecoper at Axim to Assembly of X, WIC, Amsterdam; FC N51, *Journals 1765 (2)*, pp. 10–19, [ARA WIC 966] Dec. 13, 1765: letter from Axim (Fennekol), n.d.
3. Anɔ Bɔnlɔmane is mentioned as one of the first *arelemgbunli* (Ackah, 1965, app. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 15, 18), but it is not very clear whether he was actually one of Anɔ Bile's sons (the name *bɔnlɔmane* indicates the first male child for both parents) or a brother (*adiema*) of him, as some traditions assert (see PRAAD ADM 11/1/81, "Descendants of Anno Bilay to

Secretary for Native Affairs, Attuaboe, 13th December, 1924"). Anɔ Bɔnlɔmane was active in the first half of the century (cf. Valsecchi, 1994, p. 93; see also PRAAD WRG 3/1/35, *Ackah Ayimah vrs. Yamikeh Quacoe*, "District Commissioner O'Brien: evidence by Yamikey Quacoe, Oct. 4th 1895").

4. FC N106 (C), *1760–64*, pp. 10–11, [ARA WIC 115] Sept.14, 1763: letter from J. P. T. Huydecoper at Axim to Assembly of X, WIC, Amsterdam.
5. FC N51, *Journals 1765 (2)*, pp. 10–19, [ARA WIC 966] Dec. 13, 1765: letter from Axim (Fennekol), n.d. Fennekol's intention was to substantiate historically the Dutch claims on the Cape Appolonia area and challenge British intrusion.
6. My interview: *ɔhyeneba* and *abusua kpanyinli* of the Navile *abusua*, Awiaso, Mar. 13, 1991.
7. PRAAD WRG 24/1/559, "Petition of the Nvaviley Family to Governor A. Burns, Awiaso, 12th Jan. 1945."
8. Besides, the onomastics of Anɔ Bile Aka is particularly indicative of male offspring, given the usage of putting the father's name in front of the personal name of the first-born son (which is usually the same as the paternal grandfather). See Grottanelli, 1977, p. 60.
9. FC N51, *Journals 1765 (2)*, [ARA WIC 966], Dec. 13, 1765, ibid. Anɔ Bile Aka and Boa Kpanyinli but not Amihyia are associated in local traditions with Benyinli. This town was the main royal residence in the reign of Nyanzu Aka (*c.*1816/1818–1832).
10. Palumbo, 1995, pp. 188–200.
11. According to some traditions, the royal *ebia* was shifted from Ahumazo to Anyelebo, immediately inland from Ɛkɛbaku (Ackah, 1965, app. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 22). This Anyelebo is not to be confused with another A., situated between Ngelekazo and Elonyi, just a short walk from the coast, regarded by the inhabitants of Ngelekazo as their ancestral settlement (*suadabazo*), which was later moved to the ocean shore for the production of salt (my interview: Mensah Nyanzu and Mɔke Mieza, Ngelekazo, Feb. 8, 1991).
12. This attribution of a founding role was recorded as early as 1870. See FC N86 *1870–1872 Journal*, pp. 42–48, "Extracts from Report on Apol. District, 1869" [ARA NBKG 642, Jan. 31, 1870].
13. PRAAD WRG 3/1/35, *Ackah Ayimah vrs. Yamikeh Quacoe*, "District Commissioner O'Brien: evidence by Yamikey Quacoe, Oct. 4th 1895." It is not clear whether Anokyi was founded before or after the destruction of Baku in 1730.
14. Barbot, 1688, 2e partie, lettre 3me, fo. 3; 1746, 3, p. 148; Uring, 1710, pp. 136–141.
15. FC N51, *Journals* 1765 (2), [ARA WIC 966] 1765, Dec. 13: letter from Axim (Fennekol), n.d. See also Diabate, 1984, 2, p. 180; Valsecchi, 1994.
16. PRAAD ADM 11/1/1699, *Notes of Evidence taken before an Inquiry . . . into the Constitution of Apolonia, 1914*, pp. 25–27, "Kwasi Hawba, Head Linguist, Beyin 13 march 1914"; pp. 44–53, "Yamike Kwaku, Sekondi, 19 march 1914"; PRAAD WRG 3/1/35, *Ackah Ayimah vrs. Yamikeh Quacoe*, "District Commissioner C. A. O'Brien: evidence by Yamikey Quacoe, Oct. 4th 1895"; "Oct 5th"; Mouezy, 1953, p. 46.

17. PRAAD ADM 11/1/1699, ivi, pp. 74–75, "Samuel David Kofie, Attuaboe, 3 April 1914."
18. PRAAD ADM 11/1/1468, "Bessua Ackah Intah and Buadie Kwodwo to District Commissioner, Half Assinie, 27th Feb. 1909."
19. FC N45, *The Gold Coast:, 1740–1746*, p. 1, [ARA NBKG 105] "1740: Cape Apolonia and Aowin," Nov. 12, 1740: letter from Axim (F. Lihme), n.d.; Nov. 25, 1740: letter from Axim (Lihme), Nov. 21.
20. PRAAD ADM 11/1/1699, pp. 44–53, "Yamike Kwaku, Sekondi, 19 march 1914"; PRAAD WRG 3/1/35, ibid.; PRAAD ADM 11/1/1468, ibid.
21. In 1765, the Commander of Axim, Fennekol, considered it necessary to clarify to himself and his superiors that the district of *Sur Jumoré* (i.e., Adwɔmɔlɔ-Apatem) was a distinct territory from the country of *Jumoré* (Adwɔmɔlɔ), which is situated close to Cape Appolonia. FC N51, *Journals* 1765 (2), [ARA WIC 966], Dec. 13, 1765: letter from Axim (Fennekol), n.d.; FC N38, *1707–1715, Tribal States*, p. 6, [ARA WIC 122] July 13, 1707, "Agreement (original) Dir. Gen. P. Nuyts and Abokroe, Igwira and Sur Jumoré."
22. My interview: Awiaso, Mar. 13, 1991.
23. Ackah, 1965, app. 2.
24. See also Grottanelli, 1977, p. 78. The *tɛne* provides for the possibility of adopting an extremely familiar behavior in relation to the member of the other group, whatever his or her age and social position, and even going as far as open verbal provocation or insult, without any consequences. Each of the "relations" can only respond in the same vein.
25. Ackah, 1965, app. 1, 2, 3, 5.
26. Ackah, 1965, app. 3 *Elders of Eikwe*; PRAAD WRG 3/1/35, *Ackah Ayimah vrs. Yamikeh Quacoe*, "District Commissioner C. A. O'Brien: evidence by Yamikey Quacoe, Oct. 4th 1895"; "Aka Ayima in the hearing of 7 July, 1896, Supreme Court held at Elmina, Chief Justice W. Brandford Griffith"; PRAAD ADM 11/1/1699 *Notes of Evidence taken before an Inquiry . . . into the Constitution of Apolonia, 1914*, pp. 25–27, Kwasi Hawba, Head Linguist, Beyin, Mar. 13, 1914.
27. FC N54, *Journal 1767–1769 (5)*, [ARA WIC 970] Mar. 3, 1768: letter from Axim (Fennekol), Feb. 27.
28. The theme of a close connection between ruling groups in the various polities that emerged, or reemerged, following the demise of Denkyira (Aowin, Nzema, Pepesaa, Wassa, Egila, and the Anyi groups, in particular) recurs in accounts of the "origins" and "migrations" in the area, and to some extent is linked to the motif of a shared provenance from the mythical land of *Anwea Anwea*. See, for example, the accounts gathered from the Ɔyɔko royal *abusua* of Aowin in Daaku, 1973a: "Enchi"; also Perrot, 1982, pp. 40–52; Diabate, 1984.
29. The Nzema and Ahanta Nvavile are said to be equivalent to the twi Anona and Agona matriclans (which are closely related), with whom they share the clan symbol of a parrot (*ako*). PRAAD ADM 11/1/1700 F. Crowther, *Notes of Evidence taken at Enquiry into position of affairs in Ahanta, 1911*, p. 50, "Adoo Wiwa, Linguist at Agona (Ahanta), Secondee, 12-1-1912."
30. PRAAD ADM 11/1/81, "Descendants of Anno Bilay to Secretary of Native Affairs, Attuaboe, 19th January 1925." The association with

Denkyira and the Agona is a common thread to stories on the origins of many Nvavile *mbusua*. Examples are the two Nvavile *mbia* of Ezinlibo and Mpataba in Western Nzema (my interviews: *nana* Kɔlɔra Bile IV, *ɔhene* of Ezinlibo, Oct. 25, 1995; *abusua kpanyinli* Ahome Aka, *maanle mgbanyinli* Mieza Ediafuo and Bile Ngama, Mpataba, Nov. 27, 1995).

31. PRAAD ADM 11/1/81, "Descendants of Anno Bilay to Secretary for Native Affairs, Attuaboe, 13th December, 1924"; my interview: Awiaso, Mar. 13, 1991.
32. Daaku, 1973a, p. 2, "Enchi." For nineteenth-century sources on the matrilineal link between Anɔ Asema and Amɛnlɛma Anɔ, see TNA CO 879/19, pp. 282–283, "Evidence taken before the English Boundary Commissioners . . . Enchy, 30 January 1884." Diabate (1984, 2, pp. 714–721) emphasizes the functionality of royal genealogies in Aowin and Sanwi to strategies of political legitimization. The royal house of Sanwi was constituted through the association between an ɔyɔkɔ element linked to the royal *abusua* of Aowin (the Amɛnlɛma Anɔ line) and an Aduana element (the Amandufu line). According to traditions, both lines originated in Wassa. See PRAAD ADM 11/1/1703, *Wassaw Enquiry, 1913. Notes of Evidence by F. Crowther*, pp. 15–19, "Kwajo Adu of Akyease (Wassa Amenfi), Akropong, 8 Sept. 1913"; pp. 20–30, "omanhene Kwanina Bassayin of Wassa Amenfi, Kwajo Adu, and Kwasi Danso, Akropong, Sept. 9, 1913."
33. Ackah, 1965, pp. 2, 21.
34. Brother-germans of the same sex were perceived as almost the same person.
35. A Dutch record of 1764 claims that Amihyia was the son of a woman from Egila (this record is produced to deny matrilineal legitimacy to the power he exercised in Appolonia), while another document specifies Amihyia's close link to Egila's royal *ebia*. FC N52, *1765–1766 (3)*, pp. 88–112, [ARA WIC 967] July 21, 1766: Director General and Council (Huydecoper, etc.) to Cape Coast (Hippisley); copy in TNA t70/1532; FC N49 (A-F), *1757–1762 (D)*, [ARA WIC 963], pp. 63–72, Oct. 15, 1762: letter from Axim (Huydecoper), Oct. 12.
36. Cf. FC N53, *1766–67 (4)* [ARA WIC 968], pp. 106–107, Letter from Axim (Fennekol), Apr. 8, 1767. Membership of the same *abusua* is a necessary condition for the subsequent transfer of inheritance between *mezeama* (Amon d'Aby, 1960: 131). Amihyia, the last surviving brother, was the maternal uncle (*awuvuanyi*) of Koasi, who succeeded him and, on his accession, proclaimed himself heir to both Amihyia and Boa Kpanyinli (T 70/1000, April–June, 1780; Valsecchi, 1994, p. 97).
37. Paulme, 1970; Horowitz, 1977, pp. 254–257 "notables of Mafere, 30 March 1973"; Diabate, 1984, IV, p. 343, "Mannuan Ayelebi, Dinkea, 20 julliet 1974."
38. For Saawua's role in Asante history and its position as the seat of the *Saamanhene* (before 1900) and the *Gyaasehene* of Asante (up to 1947), see Wilks, 1975, pp. 470, 538, 564, 569, 573, 574, 578, 713 (on *Saamanhene* Akyampon Panin in particular); Lewin, 1978, pp. 76–78, 145, 244–245; Wilks, 1993, pp. 174, 176; McCaskie, 1995, pp.159, 284, 401, 414. A few eminent Esawa *mbusua* claim to originate in the town of Saawua or

in other areas variously located in Takyiman, Nkoranza, Dwaben, and the district of Amansie, close to Kumase. The abandonment of their original lands is supposed to have followed the rise of Denkyira and Asante. The Esawa of Bamianko (Egila) are supposed to have migrated out of the Dwaben area (PRAAD ADM 11/1/1700, F. Crowther, *Ahanta Enquiry, 1911–12 – Notes of Evidence*, pp. 65–66, 68; "Kobbina Ntiri II, Ohene of Bamianko, Axim 16th Jan. 1912"); and the Esawa of Aowin from Saawua (Daaku, 1973a, "Motwekrom," "Sawuanu").

39. Holtsbaum, 1925, pp. 82–83; Daaku, 1971, p. 35; Daaku, 1973a, "Motwekrom"; PRAAD ADM 11/1/1700, F. Crowther, *Ahanta Enquiry, 1911–12 – Notes of Evidence*, pp. 65–66, 68, "Kobbina Ntiri II, Ohene of Bamianko, Axim 16th Jan. 1912"; PRAAD ADM 11/1/1699 *Notes of Evidence taken before an Inquiry . . . into the Constitution of Apolonia, 1914*, p. 84 "Ntiri II, Omanhene of Bamianko, Fura Junction, 11 April 1914."
40. PRAAD ADM 11/1/1699, op. cit.; and my interviews with *nana* Kema Betu III, *ɔhene* of Kekame, Oct. 1, 1995; *awulae* Adjevi Kwame II, *ɔmanhene* of Nsanye, Nov. 26, 1995.
41. PRAAD ADM 11/1/1699 *Notes of Evidence,* "Yamike Kwaku's claim," Nyameke Kaku, Sekondi, Mar. 19, 1914, pp. 44–45. My interview: *nana* Whajan Kpanyinli IV and *maanle mgbanyinli*, Adusuazo, Nov. 23, 1995; *ɛgya* Bulu Kwodwo, Benyinli, Jan. 5, 1996.
42. PRAAD ADM 11/1/1470 (case No 27/1911) *Bamianko Native Affairs*, S. C. R. Beaven "Statements taken at an enquiry held at Suku Suku on the 6th day of September, 1920."
43. PRAAD ADM 11/1/1699 *Notes of Evidence,* "Yamike Kwaku's claim," Nyameke Kaku, Sekondi, Mar. 19, 1914, pp. 44–45. The alliance procedure *amonle elilɛ* provides for a ritual involving the spilling of blood by two or more of the contracting individuals, or, in the case of alliances between groups, the killing of a member of each group. See Ackah, 1965, pp.13–15; Grottanelli, 1977, pp. 69–70.
44. PRAAD ADM Jan. 11, 1470, ivi, "Kweku Attah, former ohin of Bansu, 6 Sept. 1920."
45. FC N49 (A-F), *1757–1762 (D)*, [ARA WIC 963], pp. 63–72, Oct. 15, 1762: letter from Axim (Huydecoper), Oct. 12; FC N53, *Journal 1767* [ARA WIC 968] Apr. 12, 1767: Axim (Fennekol), Apr. 8; FC N54, *Journal 1767*, pp. 4–18, [ARA WIC 968], Huydecoper and Council to Cape Coast Castle (Petrie), Feb. 4, 1767; FC N106 (C), *Dutch Letters from the Gold Coast, 1760–1764, 1767*, pp. 3–4, [ARA WIC 115] Dec. 5, 1761: Dir. Gen. Erasmi, Elmina, to Paes. Chamber, Amsterdam, WIC.
46. Aka of Dixcove is described as "very nearly related" to Anɔ Aka of Egila, Anɔ Bile Aka, and Amihyia Kpanyinli. FC N46, *1747–1750*, pp. 126–127, [ARA NBKG 111] June 6, 1750: Jb. C. Bacot (Axim) to D. C. Van Voorst, June 3, 1750; Aug. 13, 1750: letter from Jb. C. Bacot, Boutry, to D. C. Van Voorst; Aug. 20, 1750; Letter from Axim (Jb. C. Bacot), Aug. 17; n47, *The Gold Coast, 1751–1753*, pp. 2–3 [ARA NBKG 112] Oct. 7, 1751: letter from Axim (Jb. C. Bacot), Oct. 5. According to Bacot, Amihyia Kpanyinli himself defined Aka as his «near relative» and that «there was an alliance of

oath-swearing between them». (FC N46, *1747–1750*, [ARA NBKG 111] Aug. 20, 1750: letter from Bacot, Aug. 17).

47. In 1864, the French naval officer O. Desnouy (1866, p. 509) claimed that the same "family" had been ruling Bonua, Sanwi, and Appolonia for a century. Sanwi was therefore supposed to have undergone a change of dynasty. On the composite nature (Ɔyɔkɔ/Aduana) of the royal *abusua* of Sanwi, cf. n. 32.
48. See for instance FC N46, *1747–1750*, pp. 61–62, [ARA NBKG 110] June 21, 1749: letter from Axim (Jb. C. Bacot), June 18; N49 (A-F), *1757–1762 (D),* pp.57–58, [ARA WIC 963], Oct. 7, 1762: Erasmi to Axim (Huydecoper). For the sworn alliance between Amihyia and the royal *ebia* of Ahanta, concluded in 1755 and renewed in 1778, see FC N48, *1754–1757 (1st Part)*, p. 63, [ARA NBKG 117] Apr. 16, 1756: circular letter from Pres. Ulsen to Commandants from Saccondee to Axim; TNA T70/1134, *Dixcove Fort Day Books*, G. Ogilvie, Apr.–June 1778.
49. FC N54, *Journal 1767–1769 (5)*, [ARA WIC 970] Mar. 3, 1768: letter from Axim (Fennekol), Feb. 27.
50. FC N50, *1763–1764*, pp. 51–52, [ARA WIC 964] May 12, 1763: Axim (Huydecoper and Klock), May 9. In 1766, Asare Abrampa was killed by forces loyal to Enemil, the Wassa "king,",while he was preparing to move with his followers to join Amihyia. See FC N52, *1765–1766 (3), 1766 Elmina Journal (Huydecoper)*, [ARA WIC 967], p. 54, Aug. 15: Axim (Fennekol). For Asare Abrampa see also Fynn, 1971, p. 94.
51. There is plenty of evidence of intense mediation of conflicts between components of the network carried out by eminent members such as Anɔ Aka (Egila), Amihyia Kpanyinli, his successor Koasi and Tano Kodwo (Dixcove), who often frequently traveled throughout the region. For the mediation of *palavers* between Dixcove and Appolonia, see the many references in the *Dixcove Fort Day Books* (1751–1819) in TNA T70/1130–1138. See also TNA T70/999–1005, *Fort Appolonia Day Books* (1765–1818); particularly T70/1002, W. Feilde, Feb.–Apr. 1787; J. Bannerman, Jan.–June, 1790; T70/1003, H. Hilton, Apr.–Dec. 1797 for *palavers* in which Koasi and Tano Kodwo intervened. In 1804, for example, Tano Kodwo stayed in Benyinli to arbitrate in peace negotiations between Appolonia and Sanwi (TNA T70/1004, *Fort Appolonia Day Books*, C. Deey, Jan.–Dec. 1804).
52. For Enkyi, Aowin, and Sehwi Anwhiaso, respectively, see Daaku (1973a, p. 4; 1974, 1, p. 44). For Sanwi, see Mouezy, 1953, p. 151, n. 1; Horowitz, 1977, pp. 255, 362, 368; Diabate, 1984, vol. 4, p. 222; vol. 5, p. 543. For Banso, Egila, see PRAAD ADM 11/1/1700, F. Crowther, *Ahanta Enquiry, 1911–12 – Notes of Evidence*, p. 89, Kwaku Aka, Ohene of Banso, Axim, Jan. 16, 1912. The *ndane* formula is explained with references to different events, according to the region and epoch in which it was recorded.
53. My interview: J. S. Aka, Benyinli, Dec. 5, 1996. For Aowin accounts of the fact that in ancient times «the Appolonians and the Brissam [Aowin] men were all one company», see TNA CO 879/19, "Evidence taken before the English Boundary Commissioners alone at Palaver with Native Kings and Chiefs; Enchy, 30 January 1884," p. 285; CO 879/19, Encl. 1 in 148,

"Extracts from the Diary of Lieut. T. F. Pullen, from 10th Nov. 1883 to 26th Feb. 1884," p. 330, Feb. 7, 1884.

54. Kea, 1982, pp. 92–93, 364–365.
55. Van Dantzig, 1990.
56. TNA CO 700/Gold Coast (1D), *Map of Cape Appolonia*, 1766.
57. Wilks, 1975, pp. 9–12; Yarak, 1990, pp. 118–120.
58. Ackah, 1965, app. 2.
59. FC N51, *Journals 1765* (2), [ARA WIC 966], Dec. 13, 1765: letter from Axim (Fennekol), n.d.
60. FC N49 (A-F), *1757–1762*, pp. 63–72, [ARA WIC 963] Oct. 15, 1762: letter from Axim (Huydecoper), Oct. 12.
61. FC N49 (A-F), *1757–1762 (E)*, pp. 70–79, [ARA WIC 963] Letter from Axim (Huydecoper, Feb. 2, 1762.
62. Van Dantzig, 1980a, p. 253.
63. TNA T70/1532, G. Petrie to WIC, n.d. [1776]; TNA T70/31, Mutter to Committee, May 27, 1764. A comparison is provided by the practices of royal succession in (new) Assini. On the king's death, the first of the appointed heirs, the one who became king, took control of his predecessor's slaves and dependants, while the second heir (eligible in the event of the death or deposition of the first) took possession of gold, adding it to his own properties, which often made him wealthier than the king himself (Loyer, 1714 in Roussier, 1935, pp. 169–170).
64. The agreement is concluded at Axim by two representatives of Amihyia, his son Bile (*Brier*), and a member of his *abusua* (a "cousin"), Mɛnla (*Minjah*). FC N106 (C), *Dutch Letters from the Gold Coast, 1760–1764, 1767*, pp. 10–19, [ARA WIC 115], Sept. 14, 1763, J. P. T. Huydecoper, Axim, to Assembly of X, WIC, Amsterdam; N47, *1751–1753*, "1753. Apolonia," p. 203, [ARA NBKG 114] Feb. 16: Van Voorst to Axim (Walmbeek), enclosing copy of the Convention [original in ARA WIC 296]. See also BM, Add. Mss. 14035, "Letter to the Earl of Melburne, inclosing a Representation to His Majesty on Count Weldensen's Memorial, July 29th, 1767"; TNA T70/1531, "Remarks of the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa in answer to the Dutch West India Company's Memorial claiming exclusive right to the District of Cape Appolonia (enclosure in Poirier to African Office, May 1st 1767), n.d."
65. FC N49 (A-F), *1757–1762 (C)*, "Correspondence with Outforts, 1761: Axim (Huydecoper)," pp. 45–54, [ARA WIC 962] Oct. 26, 1761: letter from Axim (Huydecoper), Oct. 23; N106 (C), *1760–1764*, *1767,* pp. 10–19, [ARA WIC 115], Sept. 14, 1763, J P. T. Huydecoper at Axim to Assembly of X, WIC, Amsterdam.
66. Hippisley, 1764, pp. 40–41.
67. For these dynamics see Baesjou, 1998, pp. 27–29.
68. FC N54, *Journal 1767, contd.,* [ARA WIC 968], Huydecoper and Council to Cape Coast Castle (Petrie), Feb. 4, 1767; n106 (C), *1760–1764*, pp. 10–19, [ARA WIC 115], ibid.
69. FC N47, *1751–1753,* p. 1, "Apolonia," [ARA NBKG 112] Sept. 27, 1751: letter from Axim (Jb. C. Bacot), n.d.; p. 2, Oct. 7: letter from Axim

(Jb. C. Bacot), Oct. 5; Nov. 11, 1751: letter from Axim (Bacot), Nov. 8; p. 157, [ARA NBKG 113] Mar. 15, 1752: Van Voorst to Axim (Bacot); TNA T70/1532, J. Hippisley to Director General, Cape Coast Castle, May 14, 1766; J. Huydecoper et al. to J. Hippisley, July 21, 1766; G. Petrie to J. Huydecoper et al., n.d. Cf. also TNA T70/1531, "Remarks," n.d.

70. FC N47, *1751–1753,* pp. 2–3, [ARA NBKG 112] Oct. 7, 1751: letter from Axim (Jb. C. Bacot), Oct. 5.
71. TNA T70/1532, G. Petrie to WIC, n.d. (1762?); CO 388/54, "Remarks," Deponent D. Hamilton, Bristol, Feb. 21, 1767: «[He was at Cape Appolonia in the year 1753] and then was informed that the Cabboceer detained in irons a Dutchman who had undertaken to bleed the late Cabboceer and had pricked a tendon of his of which the said Cabboceer afterwards died». The event occurred between the final months of 1752 and the beginning of 1753. H. Walmbeek, who was in command of the Axim Fort at the time of An Bile Aka's death (FC N106 (C), 1*760–1764*, pp. 10–19, [ARA WIC 115], ibid.), took office in December 1752 (FC N47, *1751–1753*, p. 158 [ARA NBKG 113], Dec. 11, 1752: letter from Axim, Hendrik Walmbeek, Dec. 8). Anɔ Bile Aka's death appears to have already occurred when Amihyia signed a convention with the WIC on Feb. 13, 1753 (FC N47, *1751–1753*, "1753, Apolonia," p. 203, [ARA NBKG 114] Feb. 16, 1753: Van Voorst to Axim (Walmbeek).
72. Jan Pieter Theodoor Huydecoper (1728–1767), who came from an important patrician family, arrived on the Gold Coast in 1757. He carried out the functions of chairman of the board of the WIC in Elmina from 1758 to 1760; he was commander of Axim from 1760 to 1764 and *directeur-generael* from 1764 until his death. His vast private business interests, together with the high offices he held, allowed him to accumulate massive wealth, calculated on his death to be 118 slaves (82 male and 36 female), property worth 70,642 *gulden*, and goods worth 368,369 *gulden* (Baesjou, 1998, pp. 31, 45, n. 57).
73. The following summary of the conflicts between Amihyia, Mea Takyi, the WIC, and a few other protagonists of this particular phase in the history of our region owes a great deal to the carefully researched history published by R. Baesjou in 1998.
74. FC N49 (A-F), *1757–1762 (C)*, "Correspondence with Outforts, 1761: Axim (Huydecoper)," pp. 45–54, [ARA WIC 962] Oct. 26, 1761: letter from Axim (Huydecoper), Oct. 23.
75. Beasjou, 1998, pp. 31–32.
76. FC N106 (C), *1760–1764*, pp. 10–19, [ARA WIC 115] Sept. 14, 1763: J. P. T. Huydecoper, Axim, to Assembly of X, WIC, Amsterdam. Accounts based on local oral traditions of the conflict between Mea and Amihyia can be found in Essuah (1962, pp. 36–41) and Ackah (1965, app. 5). For the origins of the conflict, see also FC N46, *1747–1750*, pp. 77–78, [ARA NKBG 111] Van Voorst to Axim (Bacot), Feb. 9, 1750; N47, *1751–1753*, pp. 3–4, [ARA NKBG 112] Oct. 21, 1751: letter from Axim (Bacot), Oct. 18; N48, *1754–1757 (1st part)*, pp. 64–65, [ARA NKBG 117] Letter from Walmbeek, Axim, received Apr. 30, 1756.

77. Baesjou, 1998, p. 46, n. 61.
78. FC N53, *1766–1767 (4)*, pp. 102–105, [ARA WIC 968] Apr. 2, 1767: letter from Axim (Fennekol), Mar. 29.
79. FC N46, *1747–1750*, pp. 77–78, [ARA NBKG 111] Aug. 20, 1750: letter from Axim (Jb. C. Bacot), Aug. 17.
80. FC N48, *1754–1757 (1st part)*, pp. 64–65, [ARA NKBG 117], ibid. In 1763 the Dutch captain J. Prehuysen claimed that the enmity between Amihyia and Amandufo was due to an underlying rivalry between their "families." See FC N106 (C), *1760–1764*, p. 9, [ARA WIC 115] Apr. 22, 1763: J. Prehuysen at Axim to Dir.-Gen. Erasmi.
81. For the dispute between Amandufo and Amihyia concerning the return of refugees, see Diabate (1984, vol. 1, pp. 521–529), which provides a complex historical account largely based on Ewuture and Anyi oral traditions. See also Perrot, 2008, Chap. 3.
82. FC N52, *1765–1766 (3)*, pp. 63–64, [ARA WIC 967], Apr. 7, 1766: letter from Axim (Fennekol), Apr. 3.
83. For a detailed reconstruction of the conflicts over the following two years, with explanation of the involvement of the Dutch, Sanwi, and other powers, including Wassa, Aowin, and Ahanta, see FC N106 (C), *1760–1764*, pp. 10–19, [ARA WIC 115] Sept. 14, 1763: J. P. T. Huydecoper, Axim, to Assembly of X, WIC, Amsterdam.
84. Essuah, 1962, pp. 36–41; Ackah, 1965, app. 13.
85. Valsecchi, 1999b. Amihyia's failure to observe the interdiction, which was much commented upon in contemporary sources, raises some important questions concerning belief, transgression, and the use of spiritual powers in local context. For a detailed examination of this subject, which is outside the scope of this book, see McCaskie, 1996, pp. 102–143.
86. FC N49 (A-F), *1757–1762 (C)*, "Correspondence with Outforts, 1761: Axim (Huydecoper)," pp. 45–61, [ARA WIC 962], Oct. 26, 1761: letter from Axim (Huyd.), Oct. 23; Oct. 29: Erasmi to Huydecoper; Nov. 24: letter from Axim (Huyd.), Nov.17; N106 (C), *1760–1764*, pp. 10–19, [ARA WIC 115], ibid.; Baesjou, 1998, pp. 31–36.
87. Following the attack on the Egilas, Amihyia in mid-1762 sent a very substantial force under the command of his appointed heir, Koasi, against the settlements dependent on Amandufo to the west of the Tano. However, the locals, who had been forewarned by deserters from Appolonia, evacuated the area and organized an ambush that inflicted enormous losses on the invaders (according to tradition, Amihyia would only see the return of no more than 30 men, including Koasi). See FC N49 (A-F), *1757–1762*, [ARA WIC 963], p. 45, July 9, 1762: letter from Axim (Huydecoper), July 5.
88. The original text of the agreement (*Conventie*), signed on Apr. 29, 1762 is in ARA WIC 298; a partial translation into English can be found in FC N49 (A-F), *1757–1762 (E)*, pp. 60–64, "Convention concluded by order of D. P. Erasmi, Dir. Gen . . . with the Caboceer Amontuffer, King of Assine, Accollahoe, Fomffoe, Asombre, and the surrounding Districts in the District Auwin . . . in the Auwinse Leeger [camp] Apintenaur, aan de [over the] River Asinë, this 29th April 1762."

89. FC N49 (A-F), *1757/63–1764*, pp. 33–34, [ARA WIC 964] May 10, 1762: letter from Axim (Huydecoper, Walmbeek).
90. TNA T70 31, C. Bell to Committee, Cape Coast Castle, Dec. 24, 1762; Baesjou, 1998, pp. 33–35.
91. FC N49 (A-F), *1757–1762 (E)*, pp. 67–69, [ARA WIC 963] Jan. 17, 1762: letter from Axim (Huydecoper), n.d. (Jan. 16).
92. Baesjou, 1988, pp. 33–36; FC N106 (C), *1760–1764*, pp. 10–19, [ARA WIC 115], ibid.; FC N450, *1763–1764*, pp. 15–65, [ARA WIC 964] Feb. 1, 1763: letter from Axim (Klok), Jan. 29; Feb. 2: letter from Huydecoper "in the negro camp at the hill Ancober," Jan. 30; Huydecoper to Klok, Mar. 24; e *passim*.
93. Huydecoper believed the various rumors current at the time concerning Boa Kpanyinli's more conciliatory position, that he was against a clash with the WIC and that, having evacuated Benyinli and sought refuge in Ahumazo with his people, he had contacted Ntiakon for the purpose of obtaining free passage so that he could abandon Appolonia and his brother and settle in the interior, beyond Wassa. But the hopes of Axim's commander were clearly unfounded. See FC N50, *1763–1764*, pp. 55–58, [ARA WIC 964] May 13, 1763: letter from Axim (Huydecoper), May 10.
94. FC N50, *1763–1764*, p. 60, [ARA WIC 964] Aug. 4, 1763: letter from Axim (Huydecoper), Aug. 1.
95. FC N106 (C), *1760–1764, 1767*, [ARA WIC 492] pp. 24–25, "Report by J. Prehuysen, May 15, 1764."
96. FC N50, *Journals 1763–1764*, pp. 62–63, [ARA WIC 965] Nov. 2, 1763: letter from Axim (Huydecoper), Oct. 28. Amandufo's army (6,000 were apparently under his direct command, and the others belonged to his most important supporters), whose main *nsafohyenle* were *Akokie* and *Cudjo Popoe*, included a considerable number of Ewuture, equipped with 19 large canoes, and each one could carry up to 100. These numbers appear high and give the demography of the period. However we have no way to check the accuracy of Prehuysen's estimates.
97. Baesjou, 1998, pp. 36, 48, n. 100.
98. TNA CO 388/54, "Copy of a Cession of Cape Appolonia to the British Nation, Appolonia 25th Dec. 1765, 5th of George III's Reign."
99. Hippisley, 1764, pp. 52–56.
100. Relations between Fante and Wassa, ancient allies, were deteriorating during the 1750s, mainly because of increasing commercial rivalry. In 1758 Fante and Asante established an alliance against Wassa. See Fynn, 1971, pp. 93–94, 99–101.
101. FC N51, *Journals 1765 (2)*, pp. 53–54, [ARA WIC 965] June 17, 1765: letter from Axim (Fennekol), June 14.
102. Fynn, 1971, p. 105.
103. This fact is supposed to have given rise to the nickname *Akrofoo*, which the Fante used for the Nzema (Ackah, 1965, app. 13).
104. FC N53, *1766–1767 (4)*, pp. 88–92, [ARA WIC 968] Feb. 28, 1767: letter from Axim (Fennekol), Feb. 24.

105. FC N53, *1766–1767 (4)*, pp. 68–73, [ARA NBKG 12] "Minutes of Council, Jan. 13, 1767."
106. FC N53, *Journal 1766–1767 (4)*, pp. 69–73, [ARA NBKG 12] "Minutes of Council" Jan. 13, 1767; p. 78, "Minutes of Council", July 11.
107. Baesjou, 1998, p. 38. For the 1767 negotiations, see the preceding note and also various other documents in FC N53, *1766–1767 (4)*: in particolare pp. 88–91, [ARA WIC 968] Feb. 28, 1767: letter from Axim (Fennekol), Feb. 24; Mar. 1: Huydecoper to Axim (Fennekol); Mar. 18: letter from Axim (F.), Mar. 14; Mar. 30: letter from Axim (F.), Mar. 26; Apr. 2: letter from Axim (Fennekol), Mar. 29 e ss.
108. FC N54, *Journal 1767–1769 (5)*, pp. 127–129, [ARA WIC 970] Apr. 12, 1768: letter from Axim (Fennekol), Apr. 8; FC N.55, *Journal 1769–1771 (6)*, "1770: Correspondence with Outforts, Jan.–June," [ARA WIC 971] pp. 22–25, June 1, 1770: letter from Axim (Fennekol), May 28; "1771: Correspondence with Outforts, Axim (Fennekol)," pp. 122–127, Jan. 2: letter from Axim (Fennekol).
109. TNA T70/999, E. Williams, Jan.–Feb.1770.
110. The victims of this period also included an important courtier, a *kpɔ mavolɛ*, who was charged with the delicate diplomatic mission of obtaining payment of a debt from Ntiakon. Amihyia had him decapitated, because he fled from Wassa without achieving any of the tasks he had been set. See FC N55, *Journal 1769–1771 (6)*, [ARA WIC 971] "Correspondence with Outforts Jan–June 1770"; pp. 20–25, May 10, 1770: letter from Axim (Fennekol), May 6; June 1: letter from Axim (Fennekol), May 28; pp. 48–49, July 30: letter from Axim (F.), June 26. For the procedures relating to trial by ordeal using the juice of *ɛnlonle* bark, see Ackah, 1965, pp. 55–60; Grottanelli, 1971.
111. TNA T70/999, T. Trinder, Sept.–Oct. 1768.
112. See Coombs, 1963.
113. In 1873 the Esawa of Sehwi Anhwiaso refused to provide forces to assist Asante in the invasion of the Gold Coast (Holtsbaum, 1925, p. 82). In the 1880s and 1890s, decisive support for the policies of good neighborliness between the Asante and the British came from the Esawa who constituted the basic network for the flourishing business activities on the Gold Coast conducted by a set of interests based in the Asante town of Saawua (Amansie district). Saawua was the main center in Asante for the production of rubber for export, mainly gathered in the western forest areas. For the leading role of Saawua and the *Saawuahene* in the pro-British party during the turbulences and civil war that Asante went through in 1880s, see Lewin, 1978, pp. 77–78; Wilks, 1975, p. 713; 1993, pp. 174, 176.
114. The mission was led by a high-ranking official, who visited the fort on Sep. 4. During the following months, a new commercial link with Kumase was set up; Benyinli and Adoabo witnessed the regular arrival of important Asante emissaries leading up to the final funeral ceremonies in the latter part of 1780. For a period the renewed relations guaranteed particularly advantageous trade for the British and the local markets. TNA T70/1000, G. Ogilvie, July–Sept. 1779; Oct.–Dec. 1779, Jan.–Mar.

1780; T70/32, Gov. G. Roberts and Council to Committee, Cape Coast Castle, May 29, 1780; Oct. 8, 1780; Oct. 31, 1780; Dec. 24 1780; T70/1542 (Part 2), R. Miles to Capt. G. Chidam, lodged at Appolonia Fort, s.d. 1780.

115. Fynn, 1971, pp. 126.
116. TNA T70/1001, M. Watts, Jan.–Mar. 1785; T. Buchanan, Apr.–June 1785; July–Sept. 1785; Oct.–Dec. 1785; Jan.–Mar. 1786; Apr.–June 1786.
117. TNA T70/1004, H. Nairne, July–Dec. 1808; T70/1005, J Fountaine, Jan.–June 1810; July–Dec. 1810; Jan.–Apr. 1816.
118. Valsecchi, 1986, pp. 510–551.
119. Ackah, 1965, app. 2, 18.
120. See, for example, the tradition collected by Schneer as far back as 1869 in FC N86 *1870–1872 Journal*, pp. 42–48, [ARA NBKG 642], "Extracts from Report on Apol. District, 1869."
121. The classical succession procedure for the Nzema provided for the nomination of three beneficiaries of the inheritance (*agya*), each chosen from a different line (*nyama*) within the *abusua*, giving priority to the line most distant from that of the deceased in the selection of the first heir (*agyadivolɛ*), and then electing the closer lines through the second (*de adiake azo*) and third heir (*tpe nwole nnya*). The three all inherit from the others irrespective of the order in which they die (Verdeaux, 1979; Palumbo, 1992). This system allows, at least in principle, alternate access to control of offices and assets by the various subgroups within the *abusua*.
122. Ackah, 1965, app. 2.; Sanderson, 1925, pp. 97–98.
123. FC N49 (A-f), *1757–1762*, pp. 63–72, [ARA WIC 963] Oct. 15, 1762: letter from Axim (Huydecoper), Oct. 12.
124. The anecdote mentioned by R. W. Sanderson in 1925 expressed precisely these sentiments, and was a legendary version of the change in the hegemonic matriclan that characterized the succession from Anɔ Bile to Anɔ Bile Aka. In these circumstances, wrote Sanderson vaguely alluding to local "traditions," a dramatic conflict was triggered between the "elders" and the "young men," in which the former were defeated and committed suicide en masse. The victors therefore seceded from the matriclan of their adversaries and constituted a new one, the Ndweafoɔ (Sanderson, 1925, pp. 97–98).
125. TNA T70/1000, *Fort Appolonia: Day Book*, July–Sept. 1778; T70/ 1000, Jan.–Mar. 1779. Amihyia's death was officially announced to the commander of Fort Appolonia on Mar. 31, 1779, as was the accession of Koasi Belempone.
126. FC N46, *1747–1750*, pp. 53–54, [ARA NBKG 110] Mar. 24, 1749: letter from Axim (Jb. C. Bacot), Mar. 21; pp. 163–164, [ARA NBKG 111] Aug. 20, 1750: letter from Axim (Jb. C. Bacot), Aug. 17, pp. 77; N51, *Journals* 1765 *(2)*, pp. 67–70, [ARA WIC 966] Dec. 13, 1765: letter from Axim (Fennekol), n.d. Anɔ Bile Aka is described as Senior Ruler (*Oudste Regent*). The precedence of Boa over Amihyia is constantly emphasized (see, e.g., TNA T70/31, Mutter to Committee, May 27, 1764).

127. Koasi was referred to in 1762 as a uterine relation ("cousin") and appointed heir to Amihyia. See FC N49 (A-F) *1757–1762*, p. 45, [ARA WIC 963] July 9, 1762: letter from Axim (Huydecoper), July 5. After his accession to the stool, Dutch sources referred to him as Koasi Amihyia (*Quassie Amenigia*). See FC N63 *Journal 1790–1794 (IV)*, [ARA NBKG 174] "Original Corr. with Outforts," p. 81, June 21, 1792: letter from Axim (van der Gryp); p. 211, [ARA NBKG 177] Sept. 3, 1793: Director General to Axim (van der Gryp).
128. According to the commander of Fort Appolonia, Lomax, «he claimed the Stool as successor of both Baugh [Boa] and Ammoncem [Amihyia]» TNA T70/1000, *Fort Appolonia: Day Book*, Apr.–June 1780.
129. After Koasi Belempone's death, Adoabo would for a long time be referred to in the Day Books of Fort Appolonia as *Quashie's Town*. Cf. TNA T70/1000, Apr.–June 1780; T70/1002, July–Dec. 1789; Jan.–June, July–Dec. 1790; T70/1003, Apr.–May 1793; Jan.–Mar. 1796; Apr.–Dec. 1797.
130. The holders of this office were entered in the British fort's payroll with the same sums as the *belemgbunli*, given that they were regarded as Boa' successors (the monthly payment of £4 in 1766 had increased to £8 in 1769. See Baesjou, 1998, p. 38 and TNA T70/999). On Bile Kpole's death in 1791, he was succeeded by Ingeza, who in 1810 became involved in a serious conflict with *belemgbunli*ɛzoa Kyi and took refuge in Assini. However in 1817 or 1818, he reached an agreement with Nyanzu Aka, returned to Benyinli and resumed his office. See TNA T70/1001, Jan.–Mar. 1781; T70/1002, Jan.–June 1791; T70/1005, July–Dec. 1810; T70/1006, July–Dec. 1818.
131. Adu (*John Adoe* for the British) was defined as a "son" of Boa and Amihyia. He was in fact a particularly influential *safohyenle* of Benyinli, who commanded the eastern section of the town, where the *gyaase* resided. During the final years of their life, Boa and Amihyia delegated much of the government business to him. In November 1779, Adu was appointed *sinzavolɛ* (regent) for Boa's succession, while awaiting the decisions of Koasi and the *abusua* on this matter. See TNA T70/152, "Council held at Cape Coast Castle, 24th August 1780"; T70/1000, July–Sept. 1778; Oct.–Dec. 1779; T70/1534, *Materials for Reporting upon the Public Account from primo Jan. 1770 to ultimo Dec. 1776: List of the Principal Kings, Cabboceers and others in the pay of the Committee, as they stood ultimo Dec. 1776.* Adu died in early 1781, shortly after Koasi had relieved him of his responsibilities for the western section of Benyinli and the *ebia* of Boa Kpanyinli and transferred them to Bile Kpole. TNA T70 1001, Jan.–Mar. 1781.
132. Koasi Belempone's death was announced in July 1800. TNA T70/1003, May–Dec. 1800.
133. TNA T70 1001, ibid.; TNA T70/1547, Lomax to Feilde and Council, Appolonia, May 6, 1781; Feilde to Lomax, May 17, 1781.
134. Amon d'Aby, 1960, p. 131.
135. Ackah, 1965, app. 2, "Information given by Mr. Tayi Avo, alias Nyamekeh Avo, of Ayinasi."

136. Wilks, 1982b, pp. 242–243.
137. A vicious conflict broke out on Koasi's death, which was made public in June 1800. Between 1801 and 1803, one of Koasi's "sons," ɛzoa Kpanyinli, carried out the duties of regent, assisted by the brother ɛzoa Kyi, one of the pretenders. ɛzoa Kyi then held power from 1803 until 1816 or 1817. He was followed by Nyanzu Aka (1816/17–*ca.* 1832), uterine nephew, and appointed heir of his predecessor, and then Kaku Aka (*ca.* 1832–1848), the *belemgbunli* deposed by the British and imprisoned in Cape Coast Castle, where he died in 1851. His relations with Nyanzu Aka and the previous *arelemgbunli* are difficult to ascertain. See Valsecchi, 1990.

CHAPTER 8

1. TNA CO 388/54, "Copy of a Cession of Cape Appolonia to the British Nation, Appolonia 25th Dec. 1765, 5th of George III's Reign." The agreement was signed by Boa, Amihyia, and other 44 "Principal People," whose names are unfortunately not shown on the only known copy.
2. As late as 1848, Cruickshank was still indicating Awiane as the western boundary of Nzema (Cruickshank, 1849, "Atuambo May 9th 1848").
3. FC N86 *1870–1872 Journal*, pp. 42–48, "Extracts from Report on Apol. District, 1869" [ARA NBKG 642, Jan. 31, 1870, Annual Report Appolonia, by J. G. Schnerr].
4. Essuah, 1962, pp. 100–104; my interviews: *ɔhene*, *abusua kpanyinli*, *maanle mgbanyinli*, New Kabenlasuazo, Oct. 25, 1995; *nana* Ngotobia Catoe I, Bawia, Nov. 1, 1995 (in this variant, permission to settle was obtained from Anɔ Bɔnlɔmane). See PARA. 1.4.
5. FC N86 *1870–1872 Journal*, [ARA NBKG 642] ibid.
6. In the first half of the nineteenth century, there were precise accounts of this particular task of the communities established in the "bush behind Appolonia" in providing support to the sovereign's campaigns. FC N27, *1834–1849*, "English Correspondence," p. 45, [ARA NBKG 672] Tonneboyër to Lans, Jan. 20, 1835.
7. Ackah, 1965, app. 2, 15.
8. In 1763, there was a record of the fact that the settlements on the small islands of the lagoon were still inhabited. During the fighting in March of that year, the Dutch forces occupied two island villages, which had just been abandoned by their inhabitants and were still full of stocks of food. FC N50, *Journals 1763–1764*, *Journal 1763*, [ARA WIC 964] pp. 40–44, Huydecoper to Klock, Mar. 30, 1763.
9. This relationship continued even after the dissolution of the "Kingdom of Appolonia" and the inclusion of the Etile subregion into Eastern Nzema. The occupant of the *ebia* of Amgbenu (Ampain) held the office of custodian of royal burial places (*bamuhene*).
10. FC N106 (C), *Dutch Letters from the Gold Coast, 1760–1764,* pp. 10–19, [ARA WIC 115] Sept. 14, 1763: J. P. T. Huydecoper at Axim to Assembly of X, WIC, Amsterdam. For the traditional stories on Aziema and its

foundation, see Ackah, 1965, app. 9, 10. In 1792, the Dutch mentioned a certain *Entaya* as chief (*opperste*) of *Essîamma*. FC N63, *Journal 1790–1794, IV*, [ARA NBKG 175] p. 120, June 30, 1792: letter from Axim (van der Gryp).

11. Asɛnda, Kekame, and Aziema were burnt by Mea's men in 1762. FC N49 (A-F) *1757–1762, Journal XXIX*, *1762*, pp. 69–80, [ARA WIC 963] Jan. 18, 1762: letter from Axim (Huydecoper), Jan. 16; Feb. 2, 1762: letter from Axim (Huydecoper), Jan. 30.
12. FC N51, *Journals 1765 (2)*, pp. 58–62, [ARA WIC 966] Aug. 22, 1765: letter from Axim (Fennekol), n.d.; Sept. 30: letter from Axim (Fennekol), n.d.
13. Cf. TNA T.70 1534, "Materials for Reporting upon the Public Accounts from primo January 70 to ultimo December 1776."
14. Bekoa Anɔ's group set itself up as the dominant component in Asɛnda together with another group of Ndweafoɔ, all descendents of Mɛnla Kotwi. The eastern section of the town, Kotokulo, is still the seat of the main *ebia*, whereas the name of Asɛnda, strictly speaking, refers to the western section, seat of the group of Mɛnla Kotwi, which today holds the office of *tufuhene*. My interviews: *tufuhene* Mɛnla Kotwi IV, Asɛnda, Oct. 22, 1995; *nana* Amihyia Kpanyinli II, *ɔhene* of Asɛnda, Oct. 31, 1995.
15. Bekoa Anɔ, who was in command in Asɛnda, died in 1778. He was succeeded by Ankobra Mieza, who died in 1792; *Aborsina*, who died in 1794; Adonle (*Adoune*, *Aduane*, *Downe*), who died at the end of 1795, following a trial by ordeal using poison that he was forced to undergo by Koasi Belempone, who suspected him of plotting with other big men to kill him. The *ebia* then passed in 1796 to his heir, *Quabrabra*, perhaps the first Aakpɔ Ababio referred to in the dynastic lists of Asɛnda (TNA T70 1000, Jan.–Mar. 1779; July–Sept. 1779; T70 1002 Apr. 1–Dec. 31, 1792; T70 1003, Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 1795; Jan. 1–Mar. 31, 1796).
16. FC N58, *Journal 1775–1777 (9)*, pp. 127–129, [ARA WIC 982] July 4, 1775: letter from Axim (Fennekol), July 3.
17. Ackah, 1965, app. 7, "Ohene of Nkroful."
18. FC N106 (C), *1760–1764, 1767,* [ARA WIC 492] pp. 24–25, "Report by J. Prehuysen, May 15, 1764." See also PARAS. 2.4 and 7.4.
19. Only in colonial times would the definition of the boundaries lead to a precise territorial partition. Throughout the whole of the twentieth century however, many communities continued to recognize jurisdictional referenced points in "traditional" centers of power on the other side of the international border.
20. The modern term for these figures is *safohyenle*, which corresponds to the Twi and Fante *safohene*. See Ackah, 1965, pp. 44–47. The hierarchy among the various subordinate chiefs throughout the twentieth century appears to have been in many ways the product of the colonial institutionalization of chieftaincy.
21. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the main "districts" of Appolonia were Benyinli (which included Cape Appolonia and Adwɔmɔlɔ), Adoabo (ɛlɛmgbenle and ɛtile), Asɛnda (Azane), Nwulofolɔ, and Awiane.

According to the Dutchman Schnerr, only the dominant *mbia* office-holders of the first four districts had a title of sovereignty and could call themselves "kings" (*belemgbunli*), whereas all the other chiefs in the area were only *krom Makelaars* (village leaders) or *Peniens* (elders). FC N80, *1849–1854, Journal (2)*, "Outforts, 1854," ins. betw. pp. 162–163, [ARA NBKG 548] letter n. 23: D. A. van Hien (Axim) to Secretary Apr. 24, 1854; FC N85, *1868–1869*, p. 153, [ARA NBKG 640] Aug. 31, n. 118: letter from Bein (Schnerr).

22. FC N106 (C), *Dutch Letters from the Gold Coast, 1760–1764, 1767*, pp. 3–4, [ARA WIC 115] Dec. 5, 1761: Dir. Gen. Erasmi, Elmina, to Paes. Chamber, Amsterdam, WIC (according to this source, Amihyia had 2,000 men); pp. 10–19, [ARA WIC 115] Sept. 14, 1763: J. P. T. Huydecoper at Axim to Assembly of X, WIC, Amsterdam (1,500 men). In Oct. 1762, Huydecoper osserved that Amihyia had trouble in putting together a force of "2,000 muskets," by which he clearly meant a permanent armed force. In this period, firearms had completely replaced spears and bows along the coast as the most effective military technology. FC N49 (A-F), *1757–1762 (D)*, [ARA WIC 963], pp. 63–72, Oct. 15, 1762: letter from Axim (Huydecoper), Oct. 12; Kea, 1982, pp. 160–164.
23. A brief explanation of these criteria can be found in Kea (1982, p. 139, p. 380, n. 64), who opted for the higher ratio (1:4) between armed men and the population at large. The ratio of 1:8 has been proposed as the preferred option for nineteenth-century Asante by M. Johnson, 1978, p. 25 (and if it were applied to our example, the result would be 24,000 or 32,000 inhabitants).
24. Kea, 1982, p. 139. Kea estimates the population of the same area during the seventeenth century as between 300,000 and 500,000 (Kea, 1982, p. 142).
25. Bekoa Anɔ, the main subordinate supporter of Amihyia in the war against the Dutch was able to mobilize 200 men in 1765, and these men lived with their families at the mouth of the Amanzule. FC N51, *Journals 1765 (2)*, [ARA WIC 966] pp. 61–62, Sept. 30, 1765: letter from Axim (Fennekol), n.d.
26. TNA T70 1590, "Questions proposed by H.M.'s Commissioners T. Ludlam and W. Dawes Esquires to J. Fountaine, Governor of Appolonia and his answers thereto, J. Fountaine, Appolonia, 1st Sept. 1810." According to Fountaine, the overall military force on which the *belemgbunli* of Appolonia could rely was between 5,000 and 8,000 men.
27. It could also be argued that the abolition of the slave trade by England in 1807 was still too close to affect the local context to any significant degree.
28. In 1849, a census carried out by the British recorded a population of 9,160 persons. However, it only covered the coastal towns (where the population was concentrated in a few minor dependent settlements) and no area of the interior, with the exception of Nwulofolɔ. A few years later during collection of the poll tax, the administration of Cape Coast Castle appears to have become aware of the considerable size of the population living in the forest areas. TNA CO96/15, Apr. 20, 1849 (28) "Population

of the Divisions of Appolonia and Dixcove, enumerating the number of slaves and pawns, enclosure in n. 28, Despatch of 20 April."

29. TNA CO 700/Gold Coast (1D), *Map of Cape Appolonia*, Dublin 1766; the map is anonymous and is dated 1766. The caption makes it clear that when the document was produced the fort had not yet been built. Among the other documents relating to the fort at Benyinli with which it is held, there are plans for a "block house" that the British originally intended to build (somewhat different from the building that was finally erected), signed by Captain C. Tarrant and dated Dublin, 1765.
30. For first-hand information about the route between Kumase and Benyinli during the second half of the nineteenth century, see ARA NBKG 642, Jan. 27, 1870, cited in Baesjou, 1979, p. 35, n. 182 and TNA CO 879/19, encl. 1 in n. 148, "Extracts from the Diary of Lieut. T. F. Pullen, from 10th Nov. 1883 to 26th Feb. 1884," p. 324, Jan. 21, 1884. The route crossed Aowin and River Tano at Alakwabo (TNA CO 879/19) all overland to reach Amokwasuazo (*Amakouw*) and "Ehhomah, where the Nouba [Nuba] farms are" (TNA CO 879/19), and then proceeded by river (Bɔsɔkɛ Stream) to Lake Amanzule (Lake *Patasso*) and the village of Nzulezo (*Ezurazu*), which was built on stilts, and finally to Benyinli.
31. FC N106 (C), *Dutch Letters from the Gold Coast, 1760–64*, [ARA WIC 492], "Resolutions of Council, May 15, 1764: copy of report, J. Prehuysen."
32. Except during the driest period of the dry season, canoes could normally get within half a kilometre of the fort.
33. FC N86 *1870–1872 Journal*, pp. 42–48, [ARA NBKG 642], "Extracts from Report on Apol. District, 1869."
34. The Nzema version of the Fante-Twi word *gyaase* is *agyase*.
35. A description of the composition of the court personnel of the *arelemgbunli* can be found in Ackah, 1965, pp. 40–43 and Fig. 8. The list is clearly based on the Akan tradition of chieftaincy during the colonial period, and the names of the various positions are in part variants of the Twi or Fante names made famous in an extensive literature. In some cases however, the names are specifically Nzema. The court personnel included the spokesmen (*ahyeame*) of the *belemgbunli*, the bearers of the chair (*abiasoavolɛma*), the umbrella-bearers (*ekyimasuavolɛma*), the executioners (*tilepɛvoma* or *adumfuɔ*), the drummers (*kenlebɔvoma*), the horn-players (*mɛnebɔvoma*), the bearers of the walking stick (*kp ɔmavolɛma*), the bodyguards (*sinzavolɛma*), the crier (*elawulebovɔlɛ*), and the servants (*agyasefoɔ* or *agyasievoma*). The same structure of the court was repeated in smaller proportions by the subordinate chiefs and some big men.
36. My interviews: *ɔhyeneba* Tanoɛ Nyako, ɛkɛbaku, Oct. 7, 1993; *nana* Tanoɛ Bile and *ɔhyeneba* Tanoɛ Nyako, ɛkɛbaku, Oct. 26, 1995.
37. The *ayera* of Benyinli was located under a canopy close to the ocean shore and, at least from the 1780s, next to the southern wall of the British fort. The "Fetish in front of the Fort" was frequently mentioned in the Day Books of Appolonia as the place of regular or exceptional ritual, as in the case of epidemics (smallpox at the end of 1796) or drought. See TNA T70/1003, *J. Mould* Apr.–Dec. 1796; H. Hilton, Jan.–March 1799;

T70/1004, T. M. Bynon, Oct.–Dec. 1801; D. Deey Oct.–Dec. 1802. Details of this cult, which was abandoned after the religious reformer William Harris passed through the area in 1913, can be found in PRAAD ADM 11/1/1699, *Notes of Evidence*, "Kwasi Hawba, Head Linguist, Beyin 12 march 1914."

38. FC N46, *1747–1750*, p. 43, [ARA NBKG 110] June 28, 1749: letter from Axim (J. B. C. Bacot), June 25. A settlement located in the area of Ahumazo Miegyinla is shown on the map of the Cape Appolonia region of 1766. See TNA CO 700/Gold Coast 1D, *Map of Cape Appolonia*, 1766.
39. Meredith, 1812, pp. 53–54.
40. For a collection of observations by various nineteenth-century writers on the power of the *belemgbunli* of Appolonia, see Ackah, 1965, pp. 25–26.
41. FC N106 (C), *1760–1764*, pp. 10–19, [ARA WIC 115] Sept. 14, 1763, J. P. T. Huydecoper, Axim, to Assembly of X, WIC, Amsterdam.
42. At the time of the battle on the Amanzule during the Dutch invasion of 1763, Amihyia carefully avoided attacking first and sought instead to provoke the enemy into attacking. The clash occurred on *yalɛ* (Friday), sacred to the Amanzule *bozonle*, the principal spiritual force in the area. Whoever caused combat in the area around the river in these circumstances would suffer negative consequences. FC N50, *1763–1764*, pp. 18–25, [ARA WIC 964] Feb. 2, 1763: letter from Huydecoper "in the negro camp on the hill Ancober," Jan. 30.
43. The available documentary sources present Appolonia as an important market for gold and, at certain times, for ivory. Slaves, often from the Wassa or Aowin market, were only traded in small numbers. See reports on "State and Condition of Appolonia Fort" in TNA T70/1555, C. Godfrey, 1st Jan. 1787"; T70/1558, W. Ettrick, 28th Feb. 1788"; T70/1561, E. Hickman, 1st June 1790"; T70/1561, J. Dowson and Whiteside, 9th July 1795"; T70/1578, T. M. Bynon, 12th Dec. 1801"; T70/1580, C. Deey, 2nd Feb. 1803"; T70/1583, J. Ellis and H. A. Adamson, 1st March 1806."
44. A list of the transactions involving slaves at the fort in July–December 1770 (two commanders take over the command, E. Williams and R. Miles) refer to the purchase on different occasions of six individuals, in addition to one received as pawn. A man and a woman were sold by Boa Kpanyinli, two men by Amihyia, the names of the sellers of a teenager and a man were not specified. Amihyia handed over a woman as a pledge in exchange for four rolls of tobacco. The prices paid for the slaves in goods amounted to 8.15 ounce per person in the case of the men, 5 for the teenage boy, and 5.15 for the woman. The list of purchases clearly shows that the same individuals were sold immediately or shortly afterwards to British ships in the region (Captains Ritchie, Dow, McCarthy, and Calvert). In relation to the persons purchased, it appears that only one extra person, a boy, was sold. TNA T70/1249, "Trade at Appolonia Fort, July–Dec. 1770." The day books of Fort Appolonia are mainly held in TNA T70, but unfortunately only few fragments of the registers of the commercial transactions carried out in the fort have yet been traced. A few other scraps of information can be inferred from the other available documentation.

45. TNA T70/1561, ibid.
46. The purchase of large consignments of *milhio* and rice was one of the main commercial aims of the former governor of Cape Coast Castle, Stockwell, which had resided in Appolonia in the early 1850s. FC N47, *1751–1753,* pp. 157–158, [ARA NBKG 113] June 3, 1752: letter from Axim (Jb. C. Bacot), June 1; TNA T70 1590, "Questions, J. Fountaine, Appolonia, 1st Sept. 1810."
47. Sanderson (1925, p. 99) contains early twentieth-century traditions according to which Amihyia Kpanyinli had 300 personal slaves.
48. Hippisley, 1764, p. 41.
49. FC N49 (A-F), *1757–1762*, "Correspondence with Outforts, 1761: Axim (Huydecoper)," [ARA WIC 962], Oct. 26, 1761: letter from Axim (Huydecoper), Oct. 23.
50. One typical means concerned the children of slaves, who automatically became part of the *gyaase*. The status of slavery was purely individual and not inheritable, so the children would become part of the master's group.
51. Yarak, 1996, pp. 234–235; Wilks, 1982b, p. 243.
52. FC N52, *1765–1766 (3)*, pp. 63–64, [ARA WIC 967], Apr. 7, 1766: letter from Axim (Fennekol), Apr. 3.
53. TNA T70/1534, "Materials for Reporting upon the Public Account from primo Jan. 1770 to ultimo Dec. 1776: List of the Principal Kings, Cabboceers and others in the pay of the Committee, as they stood ultimo Dec. 1776."
54. Important theoretical suggestions for understanding the Asante state (and empire), with references to the Weberian category of patrimonialism, can be found in Yarak, 1983; 1990; 1996. See also McCaskie, 1996, pp. 18–19, 248–252, and 346, n. 73. Many of these considerations can be considered valid for the Akan states in general. In order to explain relations between power, the system of relations of servitude embodied in the *gyaase* and the society in general, Yarak (1996) builds on the categories of "feudal mode of production" and "tributary mode of production" as revisited by C. Wickham (1984, 1985).
55. Meredith, 1812, pp. 26–27; *West African Sketches*, 1824, p. 68; Cruickshank, 1849; 1853, 1, pp. 233–234; TNA T70 1590, "Questions, J. Fountaine, Appolonia, 1st Sept. 1810."
56. TNA T70 1555, Governor and Council to Committee, Cape Coast Castle, Mar. 16, 1787.
57. TNA T70 1596, "Statement showing the number of persons in the employ and in the pay of the African Company on the Gold Coast in the year 1813."
58. Viti, 1998, pp. 329–332.
59. For recent in-depth discussion of these topics in the perspectives of spatial analysis, see Howard and Shain (2005), in particular Howard (2005).
60. Daaku, 1970a, pp. 140–142.

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