

## EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON GA SOCIETY AND CULTURE

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### Introduction

The territory of the Ga stretch from Lanma in the West to Tema in the east and from the foot of the Akwapim hills in the north to the Atlantic Ocean in the south. They share a common boundary with the Akwapim and Akyem (Akan), in the north, the Awutu (Guan) and Fante (Akan) in the west and in the east with the Adangbe to whom they are more closely related than any other ethnic group. The Ga are divided into six major traditional states which together presently constitute the modern city of Accra, the capital of Ghana. From west to east these states which are sometimes described as towns are Ga Mashie, (Central Accra), Osu (Christiansborg), La (Labadi), Teshie, Nungua and Tema. Each of these states has several villages under it. As an ethnic group the Ga are of mixed origin. These diverse origins notwithstanding, they have a common identity as evidenced not only by the use of a common language, that is, the Ga language, but also common social institutions such as their naming system and the annual Homowo festival etc.

From the 16th century, the Ga coast began to experience an influx of immigrants from the various non-Ga-speaking peoples and kingdoms who are neighbours, particularly the Akan, the Awutu and other Guan and the Ewe. Europeans of varied nationalities were also attracted to the Ga littoral. These people have contributed in no small way in shaping present day Ga society, history and culture. The aim of this paper is to examine some of their influences as a contribution to the understanding of the complex nature of Ga society and culture.

### History

Oral traditions collected by the author indicate that most of the Ga trace their origins to the east of the Accra plains.<sup>1</sup> A section of Osu trace their origin to Osudoku in the Adanme area. Sections of Ga Mashie, La and Teshie trace their origins as far east as the southern part of modern Nigeria, though so far no confirmatory evidence has been established for this. According to oral traditions, the migrations of the various groups of Ga-speakers into the Accra plains took place at different times. Before the Ga speakers moved into the Accra plains, there were people living there in scattered farmsteads. These people were absorbed by the Ga-speaking people. The Kpeshi of Tema and other Guan groups are said to be among the earliest groups who lived in the Accra plains.<sup>1</sup> So far no definite date has been established for the first migration into the Accra plains. However, as early as 1557, Ga Mashie had already developed a well-organised trading system.<sup>2</sup>

Of the Ga group, Ga Mashie emerged as a powerful state. Its capital Ayawaso, or Great Accra,<sup>3</sup> where the king resided, was situated eleven miles inland, whilst the coastal settlement of little Accra was a mere fishing village.

Ga Mashie's emergence as a powerful state was closely linked with trade with the Europeans, who started trading with the Ga from the middle of the sixteenth century. In 1557 the English trader, Towerson, obtained 50 lbs. of gold from Accra and Winneba between 13

May and 2 June.<sup>5</sup> A few years later, the Portuguese built a lodge which was later attacked and razed to the ground by the Ga.<sup>6</sup>

Other groups of Europeans with whom the Ga traded were the Dutch, English, Swedes, Danes, French and a host of interlopers of all nationalities. By the closing decades of the seventeenth century, there were three forts: Crevecoeur (the present Ussher Fort), James Fort and Christiansborg belonging to the Dutch, English and Danes<sup>7</sup> respectively. In addition to lump sums and presents to the king of Accra, when the agreements were signed for the building of the forts, each European company paid a rent of 2 oz of gold a month for each fort. They also paid customs duties on goods landed in Accra.

The European presence added new dimensions to the economic life of the Ga. Trade, especially in gold and slaves, boomed. From the beginning of the European contact they gave inland states freedom to trade with the Europeans on the Coast. This policy of free trade was changed to a protectionist system in the seventeenth century. The inland traders had to sell their goods in exchange for European manufactured goods at a market called Abonse (ABC) a few miles north of Great Accra or Ayawaso. There was strict control and supervision in this market.<sup>8</sup>

The change in economic policy from free trade to the protectionist policy brought the Ga into conflict with their neighbours. One of these neighbours were the Akwamu, vassals of the Ga. The Akwamu strengthened their position on the northern boundary of Accra by incorporating other states. In 1677 war finally broke out between the Ga and Akwamu and the Ga were defeated in 1680.<sup>9</sup> Some of the Ga with their king fled from Accra and founded another state with its capital Glidzi across the Volta in the modern republic of Togo. Among other towns founded by the Ga was Aneho. From 1680 onwards, it became the practice of the Ga to seek refuge with their kinsmen in this new state whenever they faced difficulties in Accra. Some of the Ga who left for Glidzi also returned to seek help from the Ga in Accra in the eighteenth century but ended up staying in Accra permanently.<sup>10</sup>

The Akwamu ruled the Ga till 1730 when they in turn were defeated by a combined force of the Ga, Adangbe and Akwapim with the help of the Akyem.<sup>11</sup> By this defeat, Akyem claimed suzerainty over the Ga till 1742 when Asante defeated the Akyem.<sup>12</sup> Asante also took over from the Akyem till 1826 when she was defeated by a coalition of the coastal states and British forces.

Development among the European nations trading on the Coast also had considerable influence on Ga history. After the defeat of Asante in 1826, the British began to consolidate their power on the Gold Coast in general. In 1850 they bought the Danish forts and possessions and in 1872 the Dutch possessions on the Gold Coast. This left the British in sole charge of the Ga littoral. In 1874 the Gold Coast was declared a British Colony and in 1877 the capital of the Colony was moved from Cape Coast to Accra thereby ushering the Ga into a new phase of development. The abolition of the slave trade by the Europeans in the nineteenth century also opened new opportunities in Accra. One of the results of the abolition was the settlement of Brazilian freed slaves in Accra. These are the Tarbon of Ga Mashie.<sup>13</sup>

The above historical outline of the Ga shows that the Accra plains have witnessed intensive commercial activities and political upheavals. These attracted migrants to the Ga littoral. They came for various reasons. For example, the Otublohum of Ga Mashie, originally settled in Accra as representatives of the Akwamu government.<sup>14</sup> A section of the Alatas of Ga Mashie came as slaves and servants of the English company to help in the building and maintenance of James Fort. The Abese-Fante of La came from Moure on a

fishing expedition to La and stayed permanently. The Anehos of Osu and La came to seek the alliance of the Ga in a civil war in their town, Aneho. They decided to stay when they realised that the Ga were reluctant to help them.<sup>15</sup>

### Composition of the Towns

The influx of immigrants belonging to different ethnic groups affected the composition of the Ga towns. In Ga traditional society the basic unit was, and still is, the *we*. A *we* is an ancestral house to which all those who trace descent through the male line of a common ancestor belong. Every *we* has its own set of personal names. It was in the *we* that a child was welcomed into the world through the custom of *Kpojiemo* (outdooring), marriage transactions are made in the *we* and it was in the *we* that a member was laid in state and the last rites performed for him when he dies. Every office among the Ga was, and still is, vested in the *we*, and it is members of the *we* who decided who should hold office, subject to the approval of the elders of the town.

As the people of the *we* increased, one member usually built an annex called *Plama* close to the original *we*. The *Plama* usually developed into another *we*. Eventually a cluster of related *wei* (plural of *we*) developed in one area and became known as an *akutso* (quarter) *akutsei* (plural). *Akutso* is derived from *we* (House) *ku* (group); *weku* - family; *tso* (tree) i.e. "family group (House group) tree." *Akutso* is seen as a tree with branches of *wei*. Each Ga state is therefore divided into *akutsei* (sing. *akutso*) consisting of *wei*. The number of *akutsei* differs from state to state. For example, Ga Mashie has seven *Akutsei*, Osu four; La seven; Teshie five; Nungua two, and Tema four.<sup>16</sup>

Immigrants were incorporated into the organisation of the *Wei* and *Akutsei*. Immigrants either formed separate *akutsei*, as in the cases of Otublohum and Alata of Ga Mashie and Aneho of Osu, or a section of an already existing *akutso*, as in the case of the Abese-Fante section of the Abese *akutso* of La. Individual immigrants who could not build their own *we* stayed with hosts and their children became members of the *we* of their hosts.

### Conflict and Compromise

The immigrants with their different customs sometimes created problems for the Ga and the problem of inter-marriage between Ga women and Akan men was a source of conflict. The Ga are patrilineal whilst the Akan are matrilineal. This was confirmed by European traders in their records. Dapper wrote in the seventeenth century:

*In the inheritance of the crown the brother succeeds, for want of brothers, the eldest of the family, without any consideration of the children, so also private estate goes to the brothers or for want of brothers, to the sisters children, only at Accra the children inherit as well the father's as the mother's goods.*<sup>17</sup>

Bosman also observed in the eighteenth century that:

*The children they have by their wives are indeed legitimate, but all along the coast never inherit their parents' effects except at Accra only.*<sup>18</sup>

According to Barbot:

*The right of inheritance all over the Gold Coast, except at Accra is very strangely settled for the children born legitimate never inherit their parents effect. Accra is the only place where the children are the sole lawful heirs to the father's or mother's effects.*<sup>19</sup>

*Naar nogen kabuseer eller en anden fri Neger doer paa Akra, daa arver den aeldste Son faderens Arve - slaver og alt hvad hand efterlader sig med Saadan vilkaar, at*

*hand farsoger sine Soskende, indtil de nogenledes kand hjelpe sig self. Men i Aquambu følger de en langt anden maade i deres Arve-Ret, at den een Broder arver den anden.*<sup>20</sup>

And Rask observed:

*When a Caboceer or a free Negro dies in Accra, the eldest son inherits his father's slaves and all that he left with the responsibility of taking care of his brothers and sisters till they can fend for themselves, but the Akwamus have completely a different rule of succession whereby one brother succeeds the other.*

The existence of matrilineal and patrilineal succession among the Akan and Ga, respectively, meant that children of Ga women and Akan men technically did not belong to the family of either parent. Fortunately for such children, the Ga had a system of adoption whereby children of disputed or unacceptable paternity were adopted into the *we* of their mothers. Such children were given a name of the *we* and could succeed to offices held by the *we*. This system of adoption was extended to children of Ga women and men of alien origin. As the immigrants increased, cases of matrilineal succession became more frequent. This gave rise to conflicts over the law of succession among the Ga. Sarbah, for example, wrote as follows:

*It will be doubtlessly noted that the so-called customary law of succession by children, said to be the rule at Accra and among the Ga tribe is of doubtful authenticity.*<sup>21</sup>

Quartey-Papafio, on the other hand, asserted that:

*among the Ga tribe proper, sons succeed in preference to nephews, or in other words, that succession among the Ga tribes proper is through the male line.*<sup>22</sup>

The law courts added to the general confusion. Some courts gave judgements in favour of matrilineal succession though there were always witnesses to the contrary. They, however, conceded to the application of patrilineal succession in the Ga towns, such as La and Nungua, because, as Ollennu stated, *in cases which came before the judges, there was a mass of evidence uncontradicted that they were patrilineal and the judges were compelled to accept the custom, in some cases with great reluctance.*<sup>23</sup> Some Judgements of the courts gave rise to Ollennu's contention that the custom of succession in Accra Central (Ga Mashie) is the same as that of the Akan tribes, and different from that obtaining in all other Ga-Adangme towns and states.<sup>24</sup>

Those who made pronouncements in favour of matrilineal succession did not realise that it was the exception rather than the rule. In cases of matrilineal succession among the Ga, either the families concerned were of Akan origin and had, unlike other immigrants, maintained their own system, or the family, even though Ga, had compromised in the past by allowing sons of female members of the *we* to succeed in special circumstances. Field made a profound, though exaggerated, statement on succession among the Ga when she stated that:

*there are no rigid laws. There are only certain very usual practices which the elders are at liberty to modify in any way they deem fit. They do not administer law, they administer what seems to them justice and wisdom.*<sup>25</sup>

In the general arguments and confusion the writers forgot the key word - compromise. The Ga are indeed patrilineal but have shown a willingness to compromise and make concessions.

Through such concession in the law of succession, sons of female members of the *we* could succeed even when such a high office as chieftaincy (*mantse*) was involved. For example, in Nungua one Ajin, the son of a sister of *mantse* Kwei, succeeded to his uncle's

stool as a reward for going on a special mission for his uncle. A similar incident happened in La. In these instances, the *we* of the nephew was added to the old *wei* which supplied the *mantse*.<sup>26</sup> By this process, sons of immigrants could easily be incorporated into the ruling organ of the town.

### Separation of Religious from Secular Power

The events of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries affected the nature of political authority among the Ga. The Ga towns were divided into lineage groups under the leadership of *wulomei* (sing. *wulomo* "priest") who were in charge of the lineage god (*jemawong*). There was a principal god for the whole town and the *wulomo* of this god was the head of the administration. For example, La was under the leadership of the Lakpa *wulomo* and Nungua was under Gbobu *wulomo*. As the responsibility of the *wulomo* increased, it became necessary to separate his religious from his secular functions. This is what happened in La. La oral traditions indicate that the Lakpa grove used to be in the centre of the town in the Courtyard of the *mantse* who was also the Lakpa *wulomo*. In the time of *wulomo* Odoi Kpoti in the eighteenth century, the Lakpa god began to kill people because the *wulomo* was becoming increasingly involved in secular matters and therefore certain things to which the god objected were happening in the grove. Besides, the people felt the grove's position in the centre of the town was not safe for human beings. The grove was therefore removed to the outskirts of the town and one Odoi from the *mantse*'s household was put in charge of the god. Thus the functions of the Lakpa *wulomo* and *mantse* were separated.<sup>27</sup>

Separation between the religious and secular functions of the heads of the administration occurred in the various Ga towns at different times and in different ways. In some of the towns, the original holder of the office kept his priestly role and designated somebody else to act for him in other matters. This person became known as the *mantse* (chief) and was later treated as such by the British colonial government, when it took over the administration of the Gold Coast in 1874. In this instance, the *wulomo*, who was originally the head of his town, lost his position to the man he had chosen to act for him.<sup>28</sup> The original combination of religious and secular power in one person, the *wulomo* among the Ga is summed up in the kple song.

*Atseo mi woyoo kronn  
medi sofo  
medi hene.*

*I am called a pure priestess  
I rule as priest  
I rule as King.*

With the separation of the religious from the secular authority, the Ga began to adopt certain characteristics of Akan chieftaincy. The stool, which is the symbol of the *mantse*'s office, is said to have been copied from the Akan. State drums and horns were also copied from the Akan. This explains why, as Nketia stated, the speech mode of drumming associated with the Ga courts is invariably Akan (Twi Fante). There does not appear to be an established tradition of drum language based on Ga.<sup>29</sup> The horn language of the Ga chief is also, with a few exceptions, mostly Akan. For example, the horn of the Akanmaje *mantse* sounds:

*Onipa nni aye*  
*Onipa nni aye*  
*Onipa to nsu mu a ma onko*  
*Aboa to nsu mu a yino kodi*

*Man is ungrateful*  
*Man is ungrateful*  
*If a man falls into a river, let him drown*  
*If an animal falls into a river take it out to eat.*

Other aspects of the Akan administration were also adopted by the Ga. The *wei* from which the *mantse* is chosen is known as the *jaase* and the head is called *Jasetse*. This was based on the Akan, *Gyaase* whose function is to protect the King or Omanhene and perform menial tasks for him. A war captain among the Ga is known as *asafoiatse* derived from the Akan *asafo* (war company), and the *asafo* songs are mainly in Akan. The Akan military organisation was copied haphazardly by the Ga. This was probably a result of superimposing the Akan pattern on what the Ga already had. Crowther's commentary in his report of a Commission of Enquiry held into the constitution of the Ga in 1907 sums up the situation:

*These (Ga) stools are arranged for military purposes in groups or wings and from the fact that Twi words are used to describe such divisions, there is strong presumptive evidence that this formation has been imitated if somewhat imperfectly from that common to the Akan race. Evidence of its application was conflicting and somewhat meagre, but this may be attributable to the fact that it does not affect the judicial system. The stools of Asere, Gbese and Otublohum form round the stool of the Ga mantse, the centre. Those of Alata, Sempe and Akumaji the left wing, those of Osu, La, Teshie, Nungua and Tema, the right wing.<sup>30</sup>*

### **Incorporation into the political structure**

The Ga adopted a policy of incorporating immigrants into the governmental machinery. They made it a deliberate policy to give posts to immigrants. For example, the Anehos of La were given the post of *mankrado* and the Abese-Fante that of *Woleiatse* (chief fisherman).<sup>31</sup> Immigrants could also attain certain positions through achievement. The Alatas provide a good example. As servants of the English company, they acquired wealth and certain skills which made them influential member of the society. In the mid-eighteenth century, on Cudjoe was referred to variously as English company slave and English company linguist. In his capacity as linguist of the English, his influence became tremendous, especially in the section of Accra under the English, i.e. James Town. Later on he was referred to as Caboceer Cudjoe. This is backed by oral tradition. Traditional accounts indicate that the first Alata *mantse* was called Wetse Kojo, who had a *mantse's* stool carved for him by one Otublafo of Otublohum and adopted the Akan custom of *odwira*.<sup>32</sup> Kojo eventually superseded the *mantse* of Sempe, the original rulers of James Town and owners of the land on which James Fort was built. He became the *mantse* of James town and claimed ownership of James town land acquired by the government. In a case D.P. Hammond Vrs. *Mantse* Ababio and others, the Alata *Mantse*, Kojo Ababio IV, declared: *My predecessors in title have been recognised as Mantse and in going to war he always went in front of them.*<sup>33</sup> Kojo Ababio became so power-drunk that he refused to accept that Sempe had a right to elect a *mantse* for her own *akutso*. He claimed that the Sempe had never

had a mantse. The head of Sempe was the *mankralo* of the Alata or James Town *mantse*. This so infuriated the representative of the Sempe that at a Commission of Enquiry in 1907 he asked Ababio, *I am a Ga, did you come from Lagos and make me mankralo here? Can you who say you are a stranger make me mankralo?*<sup>34</sup> Kojo Ababio withdrew his claims, but after that the Sempes refused to accept the Alata *mantse* as the *mantse* for the whole of James Town, although the government continued to recognise him as such.

The policy of incorporation adopted by the Ga was aimed at giving the immigrants a sense of belonging to the state. With the defeat of the Ga by Akwamu in 1680, the power of the Ga rulers was shattered. Immigrants who displayed certain qualities and had the ability to help in protecting and defending the Ga were elevated. Since the immigrants, like everybody else in the state, had the responsibility of arming themselves, it was necessary, especially if they were wealthy and had a lot of followers, that they should be part of the power structure. By giving them a position in the government, they identified themselves with the stability of the government and the survival of the state. This was sound policy, especially in a period of incessant warfare.

### Religious Organisation

The process of incorporation and adaptation was extended to Ga traditional religion. The immigrants were allowed to bring and worship their own gods. This has led to the existence of more than one cult among the Ga. Field has classified Ga gods into four categories. There are *Kple* and *Kpa* gods which are Ga and Obutu (Awutu) *Me* gods which are of Adangme origin; Otu gods which are Fante and Effutu and Akong gods which are Akuapem.<sup>35</sup> When the mediums of these gods are possessed, they speak the language of the original home of their god. Thus *Kple* mediums speak Ga, *Me* mediums speak Fante and Akong mediums speak Akuapem Twi.

In spite of the existence of these cults, there is cohesion in Ga religious worship. This is especially noticeable during the annual Homowo festival. Homowo, which marks the beginning of the Ga New Year, is celebrated by all the Ga-speaking people, but it is done on different days between July and September and in different ways. The common features are that the celebration is preceded by a period of silence, when the dead are not mourned and drums are not beaten. All the Ga living in the villages come to their hometown to participate in the celebration, during which a specially cooked meal of steamed corn meal (*kpokpoi*) and palmtree soup is eaten. The ancestors are remembered by the pouring of libation and the sprinkling of *kpokpoi* on the ground for them. The celebrations are highlighted by the performance of certain rituals for the principal gods of the town.

All the gods and the worshippers, including those of alien origin, participate in the worship of the principal gods of the town. In La, for example, all the priests and priestesses go to the courtyard of *Lakpa* on the Wednesday of the *Homowo* known as *Kpa Sho* (Kpa Wednesday) to dance and worship *Lakpa*. On these occasions one can hardly observe any difference in the enthusiasm of the possessed medium. The only difference is the language they speak when they are possessed by their gods. On occasions when the Akong, Otu or *Me* mediums perform rituals for their own god, they are also aided in their celebrations by all the mediums of the town and sometimes by mediums from the other Ga towns. Evidence that the Ga always leave room for reverence and incorporation of other gods is seen in the text of the libation of the *wulomei*. After offering drink and asking for blessing from their own gods they add:

## Ga

*Milee nmaa kulibiti Ayibo*  
*Ni male nye yibo*  
*Keje Lanma keyashi Ada Shwilao*  
*Keje wuoyi keyashi namli*  
*Bibiti ke ewuji fee abanu eko*  
*Nii nyeke joomo juro ajoo wo.*

## English

*I do not know the number of grains of millet.*  
*Therefore I do not know your number.*  
*From Lanma to Ada Volta.*  
*From the north to the south.*  
*Come to drink both great and small.*  
*And shower us with good blessings.*

Foreign influence on Ga traditional religion can also be seen even in the text of the religious anthem of the Ga. Akan words have been incorporated into it:

Ga	English
<i>Awo Awoo</i>	Hail! Hail!
<i>Aagba ee</i>	It is being prophesied
<i>Bleku tsoo</i>	Abundant rain
<i>Esu esu</i>	Water, water
<i>Enam enam</i>	Fish, fish
<i>Manye o manye a</i>	Peace
<i>Adebani kpotoo</i>	Abundant food.

The Akan words are Esu (water), Enam (fish) Adebani (food)

Foreign influence is noticeable even in Kple, which is a Ga cult. According to Field, the *kple* songs are in the forgotten Obutu dialect and are often mere gibberish to both singers and hearers.<sup>36</sup> Field's statement is an exaggeration. The author's collection of *kple* songs shows that *kple* is sung in Ga mixed with Obutu and Akan. Occasionally, one comes across a *kple* song completely sung in corrupted Akan. For example

<i>Obi nni Nyampong ase</i>	No one knows God's origin
<i>Obi nni tente Woakong</i>	No one knows the origin of Kple our ancient sacred dance
<i>Obi nni dada me wo aye</i>	No one knows the ancient origin of what we do.
<i>Obi nni Nyampong ase da</i>	No one knows God's origin ever

The explanation for this variety in *kple* text is provided by Nketia and Field. By comparing *kple* music with Adanme Klama music, Nketia found that they have sufficient similarity in style to suggest that *kple* is not as foreign to Ga tradition as the evidence of the multilingual basis of its texts suggests at first sight. He sees the possibility of *kple* being a Ga cult, which at some period absorbed Guan elements both in respect of gods and the use of language and later Akan as a stylistic element.<sup>37</sup> Field also states that *kple* gods could possibly be sub-divided again, for they doubtless represent intermingled cults, but there is

little to be gained by attempting this almost impossible task.<sup>37</sup>

## Language

Foreign influence on Ga linguistic culture is not limited to formal text associated with ritual but can be observed in the ordinary informal language spoken by the Ga. M.E. Kropp-Dakubu who has done extensive research on the Ga language states that "the Ga have had a long and intimate association with the Akan language, that has left an indelible mark on their language and linguistic culture."<sup>38</sup> Examples of Akan derived words are:

<i>Nyam</i>	Praise, glory, enhancement
<i>Nyankuntun</i>	Rainbow
<i>Mkpai/mpae</i>	Libation
<i>Oboade</i>	Creation of the world, origin, tradition.
<i>Ohia</i>	Poverty, need.
<i>Onukpa/onipa</i>	An adult person - a title for a man, mister.

Other languages, such as Ewe and Hausa, have also contributed a few words, such as *Aboo garden* in Ewe and *Abotsi friend* in Hausa.

Foreign influence is readily recognisable in the use of personal names among the Ga. Although the Ga have their own unique sets of names, certain names borne by them can be traced to Akan, Ewe,<sup>39</sup> Yoruba or European origin.

The Europeans with whom the Ga came into contact also left traces of their interaction in the Ga language. While the influence of the English can easily be identified because of its long, uninterrupted and widespread use both as a commercial and colonial language, the other languages need to be studied before any identification of the borrowed words in Ga can be made. Examples of such words are:

<i>Sakisi saks</i> (Danish) <i>scissors</i>
<i>Klakun kalkun</i> (Danish) <i>Kalkoen</i> (Dutch) <i>Turkey</i>
<i>Duku Doek</i> (Dutch) <i>Scarf</i>
<i>Flonoo Forno</i> (Portuguese) <i>Oven</i>
<i>Atrakpoi Trappe</i> (Danish) <i>Stairs</i>

## Entertainment

Traditional entertainment has not escaped foreign influence. Nketia described Ga recreational music as a common ground of Akan and Ga forms.<sup>40</sup> Some song types such as *asoayere* and *adowa* are entirely in Akan, whilst others like *tuumatu*, *kaadiohefeosee*, *siolele*, *adaawe* and *kpanlogo* which are Ga, often include words or lines in Akan and occasionally other languages, such as Ewe and English. Whilst these are widespread among the Ga other musical and dance forms such as *gome* are a special to some *wei* or groups and the words are unintelligible to the audience.

## Conclusion

The external factor is indeed a crucial element in the development of Ga society and culture. There is no doubt that this worked hand in hand with other factors which have not been discussed in this paper. The commercial attraction of the Ga littoral at least from the sixteenth century brought in its wake waves of migrations. These migrants were pulled in by several motives which were economic, political and social. Political subjection, redefinition of relationships and economic development characterised the history of the Ga from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. Migrants naturally brought with them their culture. The reaction of the Ga went beyond mere tolerance. The Ga freely borrowed or were compelled

by circumstances to adopt aspects of the culture of the immigrants. The Ga became so accustomed to the presence of immigrants that they expressed the desire for more to join them. This is summed up in their libation prayer:

*Ablekuma aba kuma wo*

“May strangers come to settle among us”

When amplified the prayer means:

*May strangers come to join us; may they come with their wealth, their might, their families, their experience, their ideas and above all, their gods.*

*And may we be enriched spiritually, physically and materially by their presence.*

The Ga took what they needed from other people's culture and made it their own. Considering the external pressures and influences on the Ga-speaking people, it is remarkable that they have managed to maintain their identity as a group. It would appear that within their society are in-built shock absorbers which made this possible

### Footnotes

- 1) The Oral Traditions were collected from the individual Ga States 1969 - 81. These are referred to as Field Notes.
- 2) Field Notes - E.A. Ammah, 1969.
- 3) Astley: *A New Collection of Voyages and Travels* Vol.II, London, 1745, p.173.
- 4) P. Ozanne, *The Early Historic Archaeology of Accra*, in *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* Vol. VI 1962. *Ghana Notes and Queries* Vol.9. Map of the Gold Coast done at Moure on 25 December 1629.
- 5) Richard Hakluyt: *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffique and Discoveries of the English Nation* Vol. XI (Edinburgh 1889, pp. 118 - 118.
- 6) J.W. Blake: *European beginnings in West Africa 1454 - 1578*, London, 1937, pp. 101 - 2, 177. Astley, op. cit., p. 174.
- 7) Furley Collections N3 1639 - 45, Agreement made in the name and on behalf of the Hon. Company by order of General Jacob Ruychayer with the king of Great Accra, 30 August 1642.  
*Ibid.* N7 1656 - 1657, English Principal Lancelot Staveley to Director-General Valckerburgh, 30 November 1657.  
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