

SECTION

3

MIGRATION, RISE  
AND DECLINE  
OF STATES AND  
KINGDOMS IN  
GHANA



# STATES AND KINGDOMS IN PRE-COLONIAL TIMES

## Emergence of Complex States

### Introduction

Welcome to section 3 of this manual. This learning material explores the origins of major ethnic groups such as the Guan, Mole-Dagbani, Akan, Ga-Adangbe and Ewe. The section also discusses the factors that aided the rise and decline of states in the Savannah, Forest and Coastal Zones. The material integrates historical skills such as source analysis, evaluating bias, reconciling conflicting narratives, considering multiple perspectives, and building a timeline.

### At the end of this section, you should be able to:

- Analyse the multiple perspectives on the migration accounts of any major ethnic group that settled in each of the vegetation zones in Ghana.
- Recount factors responsible for the rise and decline of major states and kingdoms in Ghana

### Key Ideas

- **Ethnic group** refers to a collection of people who share common traits, practices and values that are common to them and trace their ancestry to a common person. Members of an ethnic group identify with each other based on common traits such as culture, tradition, language, religion and other factors.
- **The Guan ethnic group** is the first ethnic group that arrived in Ghana and was met by other ethnic groups.
- **The Akan ethnic group** is the largest one in Ghana.
- **The Savannah Zone** covers about 54 percent of the landmass of Ghana. It covers regions such as Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Savannah and North-East.
- **The Coastal Zone** is found the Ga-Adangbe, Ewe and some Akan states.

## THE ORIGINS OF THE GUAN ETHNIC GROUP

Although there are different variations of the accounts on the migration of the Guan, there is a near agreement among historians that the Guan people are the earliest inhabitants of present-day Ghana. According to oral tradition which is backed by some written accounts, historical narratives and archaeological evidence, almost all the ethnic groups that live in Ghana today came to meet the Guan people. Long before the other ethnic groups entered and settled in Ghana, the Guan had established small independent states in Ghana. To some historians, the Guan ethnic group are the ‘indigenous natives’ of modern Ghana.

The Guan ethnic group can be found in regions such as Oti, Volta, Eastern, Central and Western. They are found in almost 12 out of the 16 regions of Ghana. In some regions, however, they have been assimilated into other ethnic groups. The Guan speak the Guan language although there are variations in their dialects. This language belongs in the Niger-Congo language group.

The Guans migrated from the Mossi region of present-day Burkina Faso. They were said to have left Burkina Faso because of the incessant battles they had with the Mande of the Mali Empire. As a result of the attacks, the Guans left Burkina Faso and later arrived at Gonjaland in present-day Ghana. They were said to have entered Ghana in three different groups.

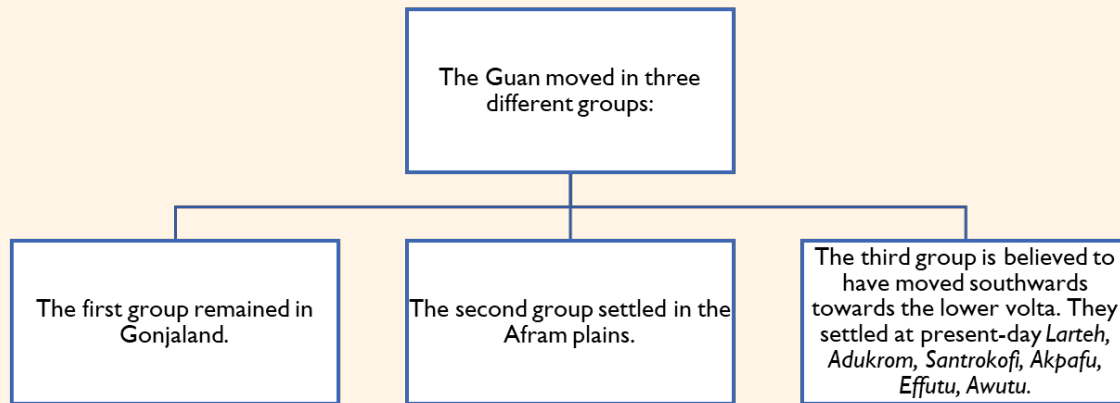
The first of the three Guan Groups lived in the Gonjaland where they were said to have developed a strong kingdom. Some of these Guan groups still live among the Gonja people. The second group of the Guans settled in modern day Afram Plains. There, they established a powerful state led by Ataara Ofinam. Years later, this kingdom was said to be attacked by the Adanse. In the interest of peace, the Guans crossed the Volta and settled in small states such as Anum, Boso, Santrokofi, Etsi, and Atwode.

The third and final Guan group travelled towards the Lower Volta area. This group include modern day Larteh, Adukrom, Awukugua, Abanse, Apirede and Dawu in present day Eastern region. Years later, some of the Guans who formed part of the third group decided to leave their kinfolks. These group include Efutu, Awutu and Senya. Others are Senya Bereku and Awutu Bereku. Another minor group of the third Guan group also moved out. They are the Nkonya, Yeji, Krachi and Nchumuru. Other known Guan groups are the Tafi, Avatime, Logba, Lolobi, Likpe, Nkonya, Santrokofi, Buem and Krachi. Years later, some of the Guan groups became assimilated into the cultures of some other ethnic groups in Ghana. The Guan political system was originally theocratic. Each Guan group was independent of the other unlike most of their neighbours. The Guans are now found in most regions in Ghana including, Oti, Eastern, Volta, Central, Western and Savanna.



### Activity 3.1

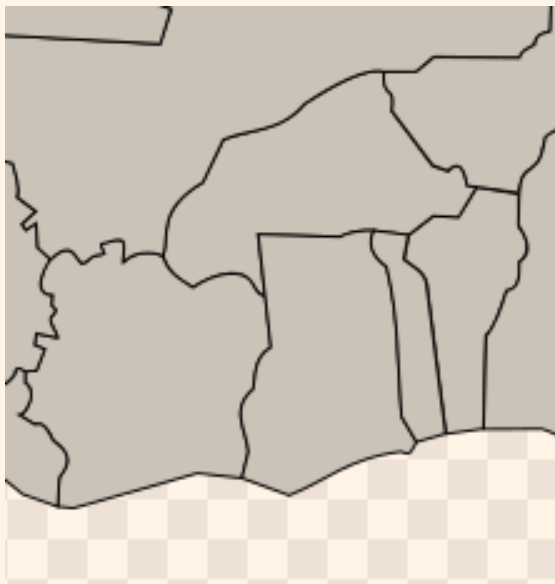
1. Explain the diagram below with reasons for the different groups of the Guan that moved.
2. Extension: Do they have anything in common? Explain your answer.



### Activity 3.2

Annotate the map below with the following:

1. The current settlements of the Guan groups.
2. The different migratory patterns of the Guan groups.



## How the Stories of Origin of the Guan shape the Way, they see themselves today

The stories of origin of the Guans shape the way they see themselves today.

1. First, the stories help to define their unique cultural identity. It helps them to take pride in the fact that their ancestors were the first inhabitants of the modern Ghana.
2. The stories also reinforced the peaceful disposition in the face of aggression and conflicts. Throughout the accounts, the Guan came across as people who were loving and loved to live side-by-side other ethnic groups.
3. Their stories help them to see themselves as one united ethnic group despite their spread in different countries today.
4. The stories provide them a sense of belonging to a unique ethnic identity and group.
5. The stories also help them to see themselves as people who were resilient and endured adversity such as climate change and conflicts.
6. The stories also enable them to see themselves as a more tolerant ethnic group that can adapt to different cultures.

## Contemporary Debates or Controversies Surrounding the Origin of the Guans

Like the Akan who have debates about their stories of origin, the Guan ethnic group also have some debates about the accounts of its origin. Whilst the popular view is that the Guan migrated from Burkina Faso to Ghana, there are other accounts to the contrary. There is a minority account that suggests that the Guans like the Akan, originated from the Middle East. Another account puts their point of origin at the Ghana Empire in Western Sudan.

### Activity 3.3

Discuss with the people around you – why might there be different explanations for the origins of the Guans. Prompts: Use the following as guides in answering the question – the use of non-written accounts such as oral tradition, the use of written accounts such as books and articles, the language of the Guans, settlement patterns etc.

How do historians find out about the origins of the Guan?

There are many ways to research the Guan's origins. These include:

### 1. Oral Traditions and Histories:

Oral traditions play a crucial role in preserving the history of the Guan people. Elders in Guan communities pass down stories, myths, and legends about their ancestors, migration patterns, and settlement processes. These oral accounts provide valuable insights into the cultural heritage of the Guan.

### 2. Ethnographic Studies:

Anthropologists and ethnographers have conducted fieldwork in Guan communities to document their cultural practices, social structures, and historical accounts. Studies like these are often published in academic journals and books, providing detailed analyses of Guan origins and traditions. An example of this is "The Peoples of the Gold Coast" by A. W. Cardinall which is an early ethnographic work that includes information about the Guan.

### 3. Linguistic Studies:

Linguists have studied the Guan languages, which belong to the larger Kwa language family. By analyzing linguistic similarities and differences, researchers can trace the migration patterns and historical connections between Guan groups and other ethnic groups in West Africa. Research papers on the classification and comparative study of Kwa languages often include sections on Guan languages.

### 4. Archaeological Evidence:

Archaeological excavations in regions inhabited by the Guan have unearthed artifacts such as pottery, tools, and ancient settlements. These findings help to establish timelines and migration routes, providing a material basis for understanding Guan history. Excavations in the Banda hills and the Volta Basin have provided artifacts linked to early Guan settlements.

### 5. Historical Records:

Colonial records, missionary writings, and early travel accounts often mention the Guan people and their interactions with other ethnic groups. These historical documents provide external perspectives on the Guan during different periods. European explorers' and missionaries' accounts from the 18th and 19th centuries often include references to Guan communities.

### 6. Genetic Studies:

Modern genetic research can trace the lineage and ancestry of populations. Although specific genetic studies on the Guan may be limited, broader genetic studies of West African populations can provide context for understanding Guan origins. Genetic

studies on the general population of West Africa can offer insights into the ancestral connections of the Guan.

## 7. Cultural and Art Historical Analysis:

The study of Guan art, architecture, and other cultural artifacts provides insights into their historical development and influences from neighboring cultures. Analysis of traditional Guan textiles, beadwork, and ceremonial objects in museum collections can reveal historical and cultural connections.

## 8. Interviews and Surveys:

Social scientists and researchers often conduct interviews and surveys within Guan communities to gather firsthand information about their history, traditions, and cultural practices. Field surveys and interviews conducted by local and international researchers, often documented in academic publications and theses, help us to find out about modern day Guan communities.

### Activity 3.4

1. Compare and contrast the different accounts/sources of the origin of the Guan using the table below.

| Type of source | What it can show us about the origin of the Guan | Strengths of using this kind of source | Limitations of using this type of source |
|----------------|--|--|--|
|                |  |  |  |
|                |  |  |  |
|                |  |  |  |
|                |  |  |  |

2. Discuss with your elbow partner: How the various Guan groups contributed to the peace, stability and development of Ghana?

**Prompt:** Use the following as guides in answering the question: tolerance of other ethnic groups, peaceful disposition of the Guans, inter-marriages with other ethnic groups, collaborations with other ethnic groups.

# ACCOUNTS OF THE ORIGIN OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE SAVANNAH ZONE OF GHANA

## Introduction to the Savannah Zone of Ghana

We hope you are very excited to read and learn about the origin of the ethnic groups in the Savanna zone of Ghana.

The Savannah zone of Ghana located in the northern part of the country. It is characterized by its vast grasslands, sparse tree cover, and a climate that features distinct wet and dry seasons. This region encompasses the Northern, North-East, Savannah, Upper East, and Upper West Regions. The landscape is predominantly flat with some rolling hills and occasional rocky outcrops.

The Savannah zone experiences a tropical climate with a marked dry season (from November to March) and a rainy season (from April to October). Temperatures can be quite high, particularly in the dry season.

The vegetation consists mainly of grasslands fused with drought-resistant trees such as baobabs, shea trees, and acacias. This ecosystem supports a variety of wildlife and is suitable for agriculture and pastoral activities.

The Savannah zone is home to diverse ethnic groups, each with its unique cultural practices, languages, and traditions. Among the ethnic groups in the Savannah Zone are the Mole-Dagbani (Dagomba, Mamprusi, Nanumba), Gonjas, Nabdam, Dagaaba, Sissalas, and Frafras. Several other groups also exist in this vast zone. Try and visit your school library or the internet for more examples of ethnic groups that inhabit the Savannah Zone of Ghana. Remember to document your findings and share them with your elbow partner in class.

These ethnic groups have rich cultural heritage including vibrant festivals, traditional music and dance, intricate crafts, and distinct languages. The cultural practices are deeply intertwined with the social and economic life of the people.

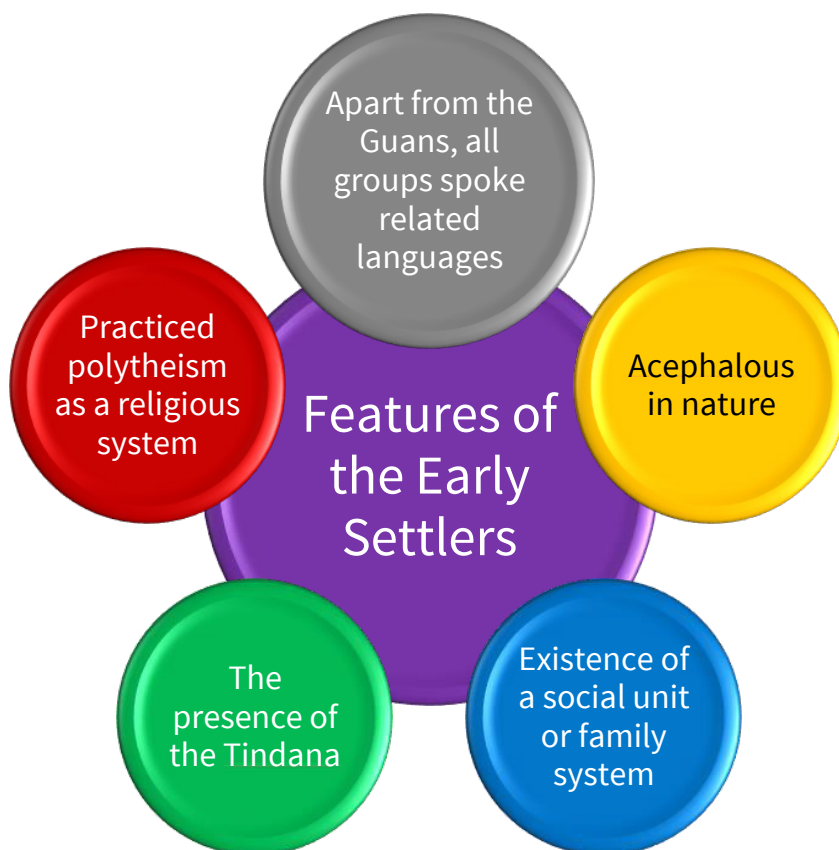
The primary economic activity in the Savannah zone is agriculture, with crops such as millet, sorghum, maize, rice, groundnuts, and yams being commonly cultivated. Livestock rearing is also an important economic activity, especially during the dry season when crop farming is less viable. The region is known for its traditional crafts, including weaving, pottery, and blacksmithing, which are significant sources of income for many communities. The Savannah zone has a rich history shaped by various migrations and interactions. Historically, it was part of significant empires and trade routes including the Ghana, Mali, and Songhai empires, which influenced the cultural and political landscapes of the region.

Understanding the Savannah zone's geography, climate, and cultural diversity is important for understanding the origins and development of its ethnic groups and their dynamic interactions over time.



## Early Settlers of the Savannah Zone

According to oral history, the early settlers or the indigenous inhabitants of the Savannah zone were the Vagala, Sisala, Tampulensi and the Guan, who lived along the White Volta. Others were the Konkomba, the Koma and the Chamba, who lived east of the White Volta.



**Fig. 3.1:** Features of Early Settlers

## The Tindana and his duties

It will interest you to know some of the duties and functions of the Tindana during this period.

Note that, these ethnic groups were acephalous meaning they did not have centralized authority or administration to make laws and enforce them. In the pre-colonial era of Ghana, the Tindana, also known as the Earth Priest or Land Priest, played a crucial role in the social, religious, and political life of various ethnic groups. Here are some of the key duties and functions of the Tindana:

### Custodian of the Land:

1. The Tindana was the spiritual and ceremonial custodian of the land.
2. The Tindana was a religious and spiritual leader: The Tindana conducted religious and spiritual rituals to appease the earth gods and ancestors.
3. The Tindana acted as a mediator and peacemaker: The Tindana acted as a mediator in conflicts, particularly those involving land disputes.
4. The Tindana was the protector of traditions of the society: The Tindana was a key figure in preserving and passing down oral traditions, customs, and laws of the society.
5. The Tindana was an advisor to chiefs and leaders: While the Tindana was not typically a political leader, he often advised chiefs and other political leaders on matters concerning land and spiritual affairs.
6. The Tindana Performed of sacrifices and rituals on behalf of the people: The Tindana performed sacrifices to the earth gods and ancestors to seek their favor, avert disasters, and maintain harmony between the spiritual and physical worlds.

### Migration of the Mole-Dagbani to the Savannah Zone of Ghana



**Fig 3.2:** Migration of Mole-Dagbanis

Historians rely on sources in oral traditions, linguistic evidence and archaeological data in an attempt to reconstruct the history of the Mole-Dagbani ethnic groups. The origin of the Mole-Dagbani people involves a series of migrations and transformations that took them from the Lake Chad region through Zamfara and the Mali Empire (Melle) to their final settlement in Pusiga under their leader Gbewa. The following is the migration route of the Mole-Dagbani:

#### Lake Chad Region

The ancestors of Mole-Dagbani are believed to have originated around the Lake Chad region. This area was a significant centre for early African civilizations and hosted influential empires such as the Kanem-Bornu Empire. Environmental pressures, conflicts, and the search for more fertile land likely initiated their westward migration.

## Migration to Zamfara

The migrating groups eventually moved westward to the region known as Zamfara, located in present-day northern Nigeria. Zamfara was known for its rich culture and was a significant centre of early Hausa states. During their time in Zamfara, the Mole-Dagbani ancestors came into contact with various cultures and political structures, further influencing their social and military organization.

## Journey to Melle (Mali Empire)

Under their leader Tohajie, also known as the Red Hunter, the Mole-Dagbani continued their migration westwards, reaching the territories of the Mali Empire (also known as Melle). The Mali Empire, at its height during the 13th and 14th centuries, was known for its wealth, extensive trade networks, and Islamic influence. The interaction with the Mali Empire further shaped the socio-political and military strategies of the Mole-Dagbani people. In Melle, the Mole-Dagbani people assisted the ‘King of Melle’ in his wars of conquest and conducted several raids in the region of Niger-Bend around Timbuctu. Tohajie was said to have been given a princess of Melle to marry and this princess gave forth to Kpobonumbo. Kpobonumbo also had Gbewa, who led the Mole-Dagbani people to Pusiga in modern Ghana.

## Leadership of Tohajie and Migration to Pusiga

Tohajie, a legendary figure in Mole-Dagbani history, led his people through these migrations. His leadership was marked by military prowess and strategic decisions. The title “Red Hunter” reflects his reputation as a skilled warrior and leader.

## Establishment in Pusiga under Naa Gbewaa

The Mole-Dagbani eventually migrated further south to the area around present-day Pusiga, near Bawku in northeastern Ghana. It was here that Naa Gbewaa (also known as Gbewa or Bawa), a central figure in Mole-Dagbani history and likely a descendant of Tohajie, established his capital. Pusiga became the heart of their early settlements in Ghana, marking the beginning of a more settled phase of their history.

After the death of Naa Gbewaa, his sons dispersed to establish their own kingdoms. This was as a result of series of disagreements over succession of their late eldest brother, Zirile.

The **Dagomba** Kingdom was founded by **Sitobu**, one of Naa Gbewaa’s sons. This kingdom centred around Yendi and became a major political and military power in the region.

Another son, **Tohugu**, established the **Mamprusi** Kingdom around Gambaga and Nalerigu. This kingdom also became influential in the region.

Other descendants founded smaller states such as **Nanumba** around Bimbilla. These states maintained close ties with the larger Dagomba and Mamprusi kingdoms. The influence of the Mole-Dagbani ethnic group extends all the way to the Mossi regions of

Burkina Faso. From the accounts, you can infer that the Mole- Dagbani states including the Mossi Kingdoms of Tenkodogo, Wagadugu, Yatenga and Fada N’Gurma are related by blood ties. The Mossi kingdoms were founded by maternal relatives of the Mole- Dagbani of Ghana. The Mossi kingdoms were founded by descendants of Yamtori, the oldest child and daughter of Naa Gbewa.

### Cultural and Political Development

**Integration and Expansion:** Over the centuries, the Mole-Dagbani kingdoms integrated with the indigenous populations, adopting various cultural elements and expanding their territories through conquest and alliances.

**Influence of Islam:** The spread of Islam, facilitated by trade and contact with Muslim traders, significantly influenced the Mole-Dagbani people, becoming a major religion and shaping their cultural and social systems including their chieftaincy, naming and festivals.

**Contemporary Era:** Modern Significance: Today, the Mole-Dagbani people are a significant ethnic group in Ghana. The historical kingdoms of Dagbon and Mamprugu continue to play vital roles in the cultural and traditional landscape of Ghana. Their chiefs and kings hold considerable influence and are key figures in regional and national matters.

This journey from the Lake Chad region through Zamfara and Melle to Pusiga highlights the dynamic and adaptive nature of the Mole-Dagbani people, their resilience, and their ability to integrate and thrive across different regions and cultural landscapes.

*See Extended Reading for further reading materials on Mole-Dagbani migration.*

### Activity 3.5: Drama/Role Play

In small groups, choose different figures to be from the accounts that you have just read of the Mole-Dagbani. Act out what their motivations would be for deciding to migrate and their reactions to some of the important events.

Consider the following figures for ideas:

- a. Tohajie
- b. Naa Gbewaa
- c. A farmer
- d. A child
- e. A village leader

**Activity 3.6**

Use the table below to complete the task in the table.

| Points of historical importance in the origin of the Mole-Dagbani | Significant historical event(s) that occurred there | Leader of the group |
|---|---|---------------------|
| Lake Chad   |   |                     |
| Zamfara   |   |                     |
| Mali Empire   |   |                     |
| Pusiga  |   |                     |
| Permanent settlements   |   |                     |

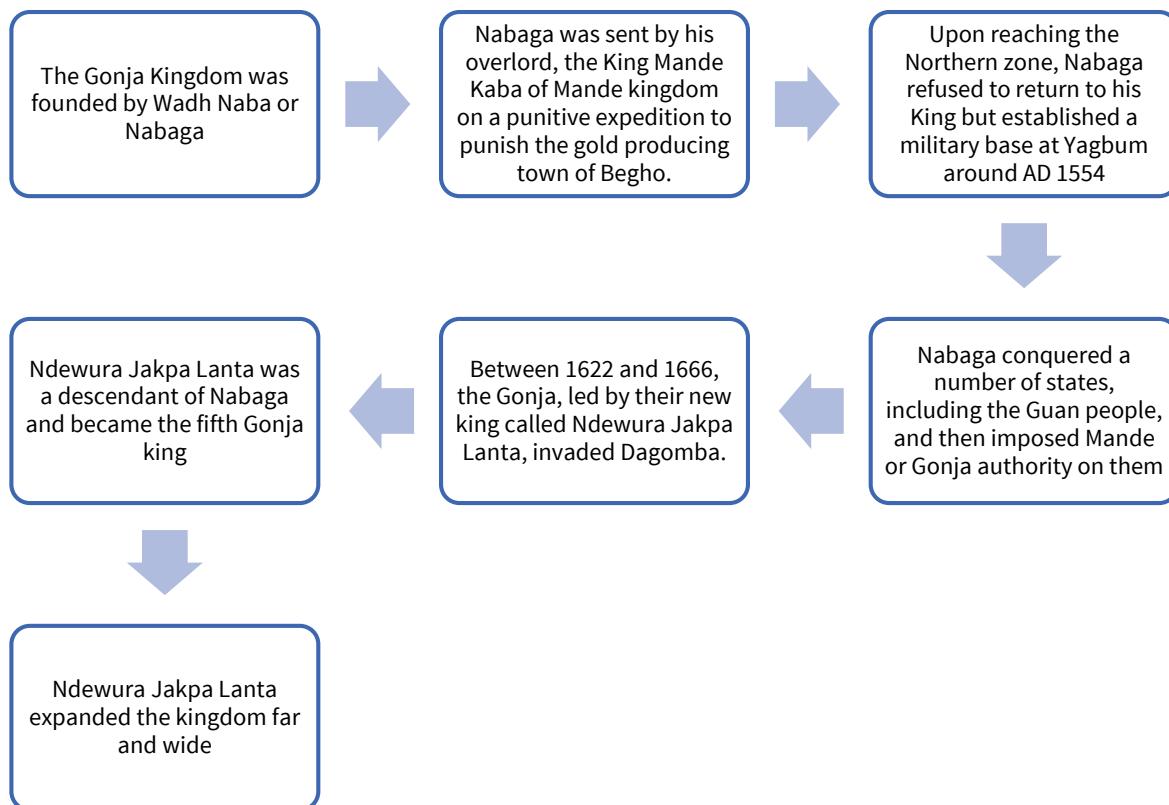
## Account of Origin of the Gonja

The Gonja arrived in Ghana in the 16th Century. Currently, their language is spoken by around 300,000 people, mostly from the Gonja ethnic group in northern Ghana. The Gonja kingdom emerged to the south-west of Mamprugu, Dagbon, and Nanum. Historical evidence in the form of oral traditions, linguistic evidence and archaeological data suggests that Gonja was founded by Mande warriors and traders from Mali, led by Wadh Naba or Nabaga, in the second half of the sixteenth century. Nabaga was originally sent on an errand by the Mande Chief to investigate the decline in gold supply to Mali. However, he defied the orders and established a military base at Yagbum around AD 1554.

With the assistance of Dyula Muslims from Begho, Nabaga launched an army of Ngbanya horsemen against the local inhabitants. He defeated the indigenous Guan-speaking people and imposed Gonja authority over them.

In 1595, the Gonja kingdom also defeated the Great Bono lineage, which was considered a threat to its existence. Between 1623 and 1666, a Gonja King named Ndewura Jakpa (or Lanta) led an invasion against Dagomba. He captured the salt-producing centre of Daboya from the Dagomba and founded several towns and villages, including the important market centre of Salaga.





### Social Organization

The people of Gonja can be categorized into three main social groups:

- **Ruling Aristocracy:** This group holds ultimate social influence. Among the Gonja, inheritance is paternal, and the family system is extended.
- **Muslim Community:** Many people adopted Islam, observing the five pillars of the faith.
- **Majority Commoners:** These individuals follow traditional beliefs and honoured their ancestors.

Polygyny is common and men can have multiple wives as long as they can financially support them. Just like their Mole-Dagbani counterparts, the cultural, social, political and religious life of the Gonja were influenced greatly by the adoption Islam as a religion and culture.

### Activity 3.7

- Use the map below to trace the migration routes of the following: Indicate clearly the route of migration
  - Mole Dagbani;
  - Gonja.



Map of Ghana showing the kingdom of Gonja at its height in the early 19th century.

- Extension activity:** Which factors accounted for the victory of the Mole-Dagbani over the indigenous people of the Savannah Zone?

### Activity 3.8

#### Comparing the Savannah Zone Peoples.

Although the Mole-Dagbani and Gonja ethnic groups occupy a similar geographic space, their histories are sometimes very different.

Using the information above, complete the following charts.

|                    | Gonja | Mole-Dagbani |
|--------------------|-------|--------------|
| Who migrated?      |       |              |
| What happened?     |       |              |
| When was this?     |       |              |
| Where was this?    |       |              |
| Why did it happen? |       |              |
| How did it happen? |       |              |
| Similarities?      |       |              |
| Differences?       |       |              |

### Extension activity

How have the Mole-Dagbani groups interrelated with the Gonja in the Savannah zone?

How have the Mole-Dagbani groups interrelated with the Gonja in the Savannah zone?

It is important to note that there may be different variations of accounts on the migration of the Mole-Dagbani and Gonja ethnic groups.

Most of these stories are primarily passed down through oral traditions but are also supported by historical narratives and some archaeological evidence. Oral traditions involve storytelling, songs, and proverbs handed down through generations.

The variations in the stories can arise due to:

- Different perspectives within sub-groups of the same ethnic group.
- Local adaptations and enhancements over time.
- Influence of neighbouring cultures and interactions.
- Purpose of the stories, such as legitimizing chieftaincy or territorial claims.

Think through how the interactions with other ethnic groups throughout history shaped the cultures and identities of the Savannah zone people. Their interactions through **trade, warfare, alliances, and marriages have:**

- Enriched cultural practices by incorporating elements from neighbouring groups.
- Influenced languages, resulting in multilingualism and loanwords.
- Shaped political structures and social organization.
- Led to shared festivals and religious practices.

Studying these stories provides you the insights into:

- Historical migration routes and reasons for movement.
- Patterns of settlement and how environmental factors influenced habitation.
- Cultural diffusion and the spread of ideas, technologies, and practices.
- Inter-ethnic relationships and the formation of new identities and communities.

### Activity 3.9

Discuss with your colleague on which source of history would be more useful for understanding the origin stories of the Gonja?

Consider the following sources: drum music and oral histories or a written account such as the *Kitab Ghunja*, written by Mohammed bin Mustafa?

*What are the strengths and limitations of each type of source?*

| Strengths of the source | Weaknesses of the strength |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
|                         |                            |

### Extended Activities

- Conduct interviews with elders to collect oral histories about their ethnic origins and cultural practices.
- Debate on the influence of external interactions on the culture and identity of Savannah zone people.
- In groups, each focusing on different cultural aspects such as religion, social organization, military strategies and trade, prepare a presentation on how these aspects were influenced by interactions with the Hausa states in Zamfara, the Mali Empire, and local populations in northern Ghana.

## Extended Reading

Click on the links below to get more information on Mole-Dagbon state

- <https://dagbonkingdom.com/history-of-mole-dagbon-state/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tvynwreh-Go>
- [https://cwas.uestc.edu.cn/\\_local/A/FD/26/653E50871872AD6F47F60B0A0AA\\_51F25885\\_1E19B6.pdf](https://cwas.uestc.edu.cn/_local/A/FD/26/653E50871872AD6F47F60B0A0AA_51F25885_1E19B6.pdf)

Click the links below to read more on Gonja tribe

- <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/A-Brief-History-of-Northern-Ghana-Focus-on-Gonja-249345>
- <https://www.africanhistoryextra.com/p/a-history-of-the-gonja-kingdom-1550>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiyXAUd5zfc>

## ACCOUNTS OF THE ORIGIN OF THE AKAN

The **Akan** ethnic group is the largest one in Ghana. This people comprise a number of divisions which include the Bono, Asante, Adanse, Twifo, Assin, Fante, Akuapem, Akyem, Akwamu, Kwawu, Sefwi, Aowin, Nzima and Ahanta.

### Who the Akan People Are

The Akan ethnic group is the largest ethnic group in Ghana. The Akan speak a language that is part of the Kwa group in the Niger-Congo family. The main variants of the Akan language are Twi and Fante, with Twi spoken in the forest regions and Fante along the coast. Besides Twi and Fante, there are four other related dialects spoken in the western part of Ghana: Nzima, Ahanta, Aowin, and Sefwi. These dialects are different from Twi and Fante but share similarities with each other. The Akan people comprise a number of divisions which include the Asante, Bono, Banda, Adanse, Assin, Fante, Denkyira, Akuapem, Akyem, Twifo, Sefwi, Aowin, Kwawu, Ahanta, Akwamu and Nzima. The Akan people are predominantly found in the forest and coastal regions of Ghana.

Key areas include the Ashanti Region, Central Region, Eastern Region, Western Region, Bono Regions and Ahafo Region.





Fig 3.3: The map of Ghana below shows the Akan states

## The Origins of the Akans

The origin of the Akans creates difficulty in the history of Ghana. The reason is that there is no single account that sufficiently explains exactly where the Akan people originated from.

Some version of their tradition claim that the ancestors of the Akan people came from North Africa or the Middle East. For example, some court historians in Akrokerri in Adanse and Asebu in the Fanteland assert that their ancestors came from Egypt or the Middle East. Others claim that the Akan migrated from ancient Ghana.

Another version of the traditions states that the Akan have always lived in the present country. The Adanse people claim that it was in their area that the seven clans of the Akan evolved. Brong (Bono) of Hani Nsawkaw asserts that their ancestors came from a sacred hole called *Bonkese*. The Wenchi people say they emerged from a hole at *Bonoso*, near that present Wenchi town. Brong of Tekyiman also claim they emerged from *Amuowi* hole, and this claim is carefully presented through their festival song (the *Apo* festival).

Now that you have read about the different accounts of the origins of the Akans, we can group the accounts into two different schools of thought. The two (2) different schools of thought of the origin of the Akan people are:

- the traditionalist account, led by J.B. Danquah and Eva Meyerowitz and
- the modernist theory, led by Historians Prof. Albert Adu Boahen and Harry Johnston.

## The Traditionalist Account on the Origin of the Akan by J.B. Danquah and Eva Meyerowitz

The traditionalist account of the origin of the Akan, as led by J.B. Danquah and Eva Meyerowitz, presents a migration narrative that traces the Akan people's origins back to ancient Ethiopia. This account emphasizes the internal traditions and oral histories of the Akan people.

According to the traditionalist narrative, the Akan people initially lived in Ethiopia. From Ethiopia, the Akan are believed to have migrated northward to Egypt. Egypt, with its rich history and cultural advancements was said to have influenced the Akan during their stay there.

After Egypt, the Akan moved westward to the Ancient Ghana Empire, situated in what is now modern-day Mali and Mauritania (Western Sudan). The Ancient Ghana Empire was a powerful and wealthy state due to its control of the trans-Saharan trade routes and abundant gold resources.

From the Ancient Ghana Empire, the Akan migrated to their present locations in modern Ghana. This movement was driven by various factors such as trade, search for fertile land, escape of conflicts, invasions and climatic changes.

### Activity 3.10

Summarise the Traditionalist Theory of the Origin of the Akan.

## The Modernist Theory on the Origin of the Akan by Historians Prof. Albert Adu Boahen and Harry Johnston

The modernist theory on the origin of the Akan, as proposed by historians Prof. Albert Adu Boahen and Harry Johnston, gives a migration narrative rooted in the Yorubaland of modern Nigeria. This theory traces the movement of the Akans to significant geographical landmarks and regions before they finally settled in their present locations in Ghana.

This theory uses archaeological, linguistic, and genetic evidence to explain the origin of the Akan. The modernist account suggests that the Akan people initially lived in Yorubaland, located in what is now Nigeria.

According to this account, from Yorubaland, the Akan migrated by crossing the Mono and Volta rivers. These water bodies likely influenced their migration routes and settlements. The migration continued into the Afram Plains, a region that provided suitable conditions for settlement and agricultural activities.



The Akan then traveled northwards but eventually turned southwards to settle in the Pra-Offin basin, an area known for its fertile lands and strategic location.

From the Pra-Offin basin, various Akan groups migrated and settled in their current locations across Ghana, each establishing distinct communities and cultural practices.

### Activity 3.11

Summarise the Modernist Theory of the Origin of the Akan.

### Activity 3.12

|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
|  | <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Modernist Account</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to this account, the Akan first lived in the Yorubaland in modern Nigeria.</li> <li>• From there, they crossed the Mono and Volta rivers and entered the Afram Plains.</li> <li>• The Akan later travelled northwards but turned again southwards to settle in the Pra-Offin basin.</li> <li>• From this region, each Akan group migrated to settle in its present site.</li> </ul> |  | <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Traditionalist Account</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to this account, the Akan first lived in Ethiopia.</li> <li>• From there, they later moved to Egypt and then came to settle in the Ancient Ghana Empire of Western Sudan.</li> <li>• It was from Ancient Ghana that they migrated into their present-day locations in Ghana.</li> </ul> |
|---|--|---|---|

Using the information above, explain the key differences between the Traditionalist and Modernist accounts.

## Where the Two Accounts of Origin Came from

The Traditionalist account is derived from oral traditions and internal cultural narratives of the Akan people. This account is also rich in myth and folklore, providing a cultural and spiritual context. This account was documented by historians such as J.B. Danquah and Eva Meyerowitz who relied on the oral histories passed down through generations.

The modern theory on the other hand is based on scientific and historical research. It uses linguistic studies, and genetic data to trace the origins and migration patterns of the Akans. Modernist theories provide timelines and archaeological evidence. Archaeologists for example, argue that the Akan most probably originated in the area to the immediate north of the forest and crossed the Mono and Volta rivers, from where they moved to the confluence of Pra and Offin rivers. It was in this latter area that the Akan developed their common distinguishing institutions before they spread

to other parts of the country. The modern theory was developed by historians such as Prof. Albert Adu Boahen and Harry Johnston who utilized interdisciplinary methods in drawing their conclusions.

### Comparative Analysis

Now let us compare the two accounts of the origin of the Akan in terms of their source of evidence, narrative style and migration theories.

1. *Sources of Evidence:* Traditionalist accounts rely heavily on oral traditions, myths, and cultural narratives, while modernist accounts use archaeological, linguistic, and anthropological data.
2. *Narrative Style:* Traditionalists often provide a more cohesive and culturally rich story, focusing on the internal perspectives of the Akan people. Modernists, on the other hand, aim for a more scientifically verifiable account that fits within the broader context of West African history.
3. *Migration Theories:* Both accounts agree on the theme of migration but differ in their proposed origins and migration routes. Traditionalists suggest a more linear narrative from ancient Ghana, whereas modernists propose a more complex series of movements influenced by various historical factors.

The Traditional account emphasizes migration due to trade, search for fertile land, escape of conflicts, invasions, and climatic changes and highlights key locations such as Ethiopia, Egypt, and the Ancient Ghana Empire.

The modern theory on the other hand traces migration through archaeological, linguistic, and genetic findings and identifies Yorubaland, Mono and Volta rivers, Afram Plains, and Pra-Offin basin as key migration points.

### Strengths of the Traditional Account of the Origin of the Akan

The Traditional account, which relies on oral traditions and myths to explain the origin of the Akan has several strengths. Some of which include:

1. **Rich in Cultural Context and Heritage:** The traditionalist account is deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of the Akan people. It draws from oral histories, myths, and legends that have been passed down through generations, providing a rich explanation of cultural context. For example, stories about the Akan's migration from Ethiopia through Egypt and the Ancient Ghana Empire are intertwined with cultural practices, rituals, and festivals that reinforce the community's heritage and collective memory.
2. **Preserves Oral History and Traditions:** This account preserves the oral traditions that are important to the Akan identity. Oral histories are an integral part of the cultural transmission process, ensuring that the stories, values, and beliefs of the past are not lost. For example, elders recounting migration stories during

community gatherings help maintain a continuous link to the past, reinforcing cultural norms and values.

3. **Deepens Cultural Identity and Continuity:** The traditionalist narrative strengthens the cultural identity of the Akan people by giving a sense of historical continuity and belonging. It builds a collective identity that is rooted in shared experiences and heritage. For example, the belief in an ancestral homeland and a shared journey enhances group solidarity and a sense of pride in their unique history and cultural contributions.

## Limitations of the Traditional Account of the Origin of the Akan

The Traditional account poses several limitations to the study of the origin of the Akan. Some of which include:

1. **Lacks Empirical Evidence:** The traditionalist account is primarily based on oral traditions, which are not always supported by archaeological or written records. This lack of empirical evidence can make it difficult to verify the accuracy of these narratives. For example, the migration from Ethiopia to Egypt and then to the Ancient Ghana Empire lacks concrete archaeological findings that can support these claims.
2. **Oral Traditions May Change Over Time:** Oral traditions are subject to changes as they are transmitted from generation to generation. Variations in storytelling and the passage of time can lead to inconsistencies and exaggerations, potentially distorting the original narratives. For example, different versions of the same migration story might exist, with varying details and emphasis, making it difficult to determine the original account.
3. **It gives Subjective Interpretations:** Oral histories are often influenced by the personal biases and perspectives of the storytellers. These subjective interpretations can affect the reliability of the accounts, as they might reflect individual or communal agendas. For example, a storyteller might emphasize certain aspects of the migration to highlight the bravery and resilience of their ancestors, while downplaying or omitting less favorable details.

## Strengths of the Modernists Accounts on the Origin of the Akan

The Modernists accounts which rely on a more empirical and academic approach, presents several strengths in explaining the origin of the Akan. Among some of these include:

1. **It is Supported by Empirical Evidence from Multiple Disciplines:** The modernist theory is backed by evidence from archaeology, linguistics, and genetics. This interdisciplinary approach provides a more detailed and scientifically validated understanding of the Akan's origins and migration patterns. For example,



archaeological findings in Yorubaland and the Afram Plains, linguistic studies tracing language patterns, and genetic research all contribute to a deep evidence-based narrative.

2. **Provides Scientific Validation and Historical Accuracy:** By relying on empirical data, the modernist theory offers a scientifically validated account that is more likely to be historically accurate. This approach helps to construct a reliable timeline and map of the Akan migration. For example, historians can trace the movement of populations over time, providing concrete evidence of migration routes and interconnections between different groups.
3. **It Can Be Cross-Referenced with Other Data for Reliability:** The ability to cross-reference findings from different scientific disciplines enhances the reliability and validity of the modernist account. Consistent evidence across various fields strengthens the overall narrative. For example, supporting archaeological evidence with linguistic data on language similarities and genetic studies on population movements helps to build a coherent and credible historical account.

## Limitations of the Modernists Accounts on the Origin of the Akan

The Modernists theory, however, comes with several limitations in explaining the origin of the Akans. This includes:

- a. **It May Overlook Cultural and Emotional Significance of Oral Traditions:** The modernist theory, with its focus on empirical evidence, might not fully capture the cultural and emotional importance of oral traditions. These traditions play a crucial role in shaping community identity and historical consciousness. For example, while the scientific narrative might provide a factual account of migration, it might not impart as deeply with the community as the traditional stories that are rich in cultural symbolism and meaning.
- b. **Potential Biases in the Interpretation of Evidence:** The interpretation of archaeological, linguistic, and genetic data can be influenced by the biases of researchers. These biases can affect the conclusions drawn and the overall narrative constructed. For example, researchers might prioritize certain types of evidence over others or interpret data in ways that agree with their preconceived notions.
- c. **Accounts Might Not Fully Capture the Spiritual and Cultural Aspects of the Narratives:** The modernist approach which focuses on empirical data, might miss the spiritual and cultural dimensions that are important to the traditionalist account. These aspects are essential for understanding the full significance of the migration stories. For example, the spiritual journey and cultural practices associated with the migration from Ethiopia to Ghana are important elements that provide depth and context to the Akan identity, which might be overlooked in a purely scientific account.

### Activity 3.13

Complete the table below to compare the strengths and weaknesses of the two differing accounts. Work with a partner to help you develop your ideas.

| Type of Account | Strengths | Limitations/ Weaknesses |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Traditionalist  |           |                         |
| Modernist       |           |                         |

## How the Stories of Origin Influence the way the Akan People See themselves and their Place in Ghana Today

The Traditionalist account of the origin stories of the Akan influence the way they see themselves and their place in Ghana today through the following:

**Cultural Identity:** The Traditionalist origin accounts reinforce a strong cultural pride and heritage among the Akan people. This emphasizes their long-standing presence and historical significance in the region.

**Unity and Community:** The account fosters a sense of unity and community, as the narrative is deeply rooted in shared cultural and historical experiences.

**Cultural Practices:** The account influences contemporary cultural practices, rituals, and traditions that are passed down through generations.

The Modernist theory on the other hand also influences the Akan people in the following ways:

- **Historical Roots:** The account connects the Akan to a broader West African history, highlighting their dynamic migration and settlement patterns.
- **Appreciation for Diversity:** The Modernists account encourages appreciation for diverse historical roots and migration experiences within the Akan communities.
- **Modern Identity:** It helps in understanding the modern identity of the Akan people through a scientific and historical lens, providing a comprehensive view of their past.

## Contemporary Debates

The Traditionalists and Modernists accounts of the origin of the Akans presents a number of controversies or debates. Some of the ongoing debates are given below:

- *Validity and Accuracy:* There are ongoing discussions about the relative validity and accuracy of the traditionalist and modernist accounts. Scholars and cultural leaders may debate the authenticity and reliability of oral traditions versus scientific evidence.
- *Cultural vs. Scientific Perspectives:* Tension between preserving the cultural narratives and embracing scientific findings do exist. Some argue for the importance of maintaining cultural heritage, while others emphasize the need for empirical evidence.
- *Political and Social Implications:* The narratives influence regional identities, politics, and social cohesion in Ghana. Different groups may advocate for their preferred origin story, impacting national and regional discourse.
- *Educational Approaches:* There are debates over how these narratives should be taught in schools and represented in educational materials. Balancing cultural heritage with scientific evidence can be challenging in curriculum development.

## Understanding the History of the Akan People through Timelines

Now let's focus on building a timeline of the Akan people to further promote understanding of the Akan origin. Constructing a timeline of their history can help us understand their past. It is important to acknowledge that much of this history is based on oral traditions and archaeological findings, which may leave some gaps and uncertainties.

The Akan history timeline is given below:

1. **Pre-11th Century:** Origins and Early Settlements
  - a. The Akan people are believed to have migrated from the Sahel region due to changing climatic conditions.
  - b. Early settlements were established in the forested regions of modern Ghana and Ivory Coast.
2. **11th to 15th Century:** Formation of Early States
  - a. Small, decentralized states began to form among the Akan people.
  - b. Notable early states include the Bono and Denkyira kingdoms.
3. **16th Century:** Rise of Powerful Kingdoms
  - a. The Ashanti Empire started to rise to prominence in the late 16th century.
  - b. The Akan people engaged in trade, including gold, kola nuts, and slaves.
4. **17th Century:** Expansion and Conflict:
  - a. The Ashanti Empire expanded through military conquests, becoming a dominant force in West Africa.
  - b. Conflicts with neighboring states, such as the Fante Confederacy, marked this period.

5. **18th Century: Peak of the Ashanti Empire**
  - a. The Ashanti Empire reached its peak under the rule of Osei Tutu and later leaders.
  - b. The introduction of new crops and European goods through trade had significant impacts on Akan society.
6. **19th Century: Colonial Encounters**
  - a. Increased contact with European powers, particularly the British, led to conflicts such as the Anglo-Ashanti Wars.
  - b. By the late 19th century, the British had established colonial rule over the Gold Coast, impacting Akan political structures.
7. **20th Century: Independence and Modern Ghana**
  - a. Ghana gained independence from British colonial rule in 1957, with Kwame Nkrumah becoming the first president.
  - b. The Akan people together with members of other ethnic groups played a significant role in the independence movement of Ghana. Together with Ghanaians from other parts of the country, they continue to contribute to nation-building in many aspects of the country.

### Activity 3.14

Prepare for and participate in a class debate on the motion: “The Traditionalist Accounts of the origins of the Akans is more convincing than the Modernist Accounts of their origins. Use evidence from the text to support your arguments.

Use the planning grid below to help your group organise your points.

| Which motion is my group supporting? | Debate structure |                           |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
|                                      | Speaker’s Names  | Evidence to support point |
| Speaker 1:                           | Point to make    |                           |
| Speaker 2:                           |                  |                           |
| Speaker 3                            |                  |                           |

After the debate, complete the summary box below:

|  |
|--|
| After the debate, which do you think is the most convincing account and why? |
|  |

### Activity 3.15

Create a detailed timeline of the migration and settlement patterns of the Akan people, incorporating key events from both Traditionalist and Modernist perspectives. You could do this as a whole class to decorate your learning area or you could do it individually by using a template.

### Extended Activity

1. Conduct interviews with local Akan community members to gather oral histories about their origins and cultural practices. Compare these with the accounts in the text.

Use the following as your interview guide:

- Who are the Akans?
- Where do they come from?
- What influenced their migration to their current settlements?
- Who were their leaders? What are their migration routes?
- When did they arrive in their permanent settlements?
- Which group or groups did they encounter in their permanent settlements?
- How did they relate with the people they met?
- What factors influenced their settlement patterns?
- How did they organize themselves?
- Who were their leaders?
- What was their inheritance system?
- What were their cultural practices?
- What is the influence of their cultural practices on their rise and development?

|                      |
|----------------------|
| Notes from interview |
|                      |

2. Use digital tools to create an interactive map tracing the migration routes of the Akan people as described in both the Traditionalist and Modernist theories.
3. Develop a presentation on the cultural practices and festivals of the Akan people, highlighting how these traditions are linked to their migration stories. Share your work with a classmate.



4.
  - a. Create a digital story (video) that narrates the migration and settlement of the Akan people from either the Traditionalist or Modernist viewpoint. Share your story in the social media and tag your teachers and friends in your school and outside your school.
  - b. What conclusions can you draw from the cultural practices and festivals of the Akan people?
5. How does the Akan culture and institutions influence the culture of Ghana?

| Positive Influences   | Negative Influences |
|---|---------------------|
|   |                     |
| What lessons do you draw from the Akan cultural and institutional influence on Ghana's culture? |                     |

6. How do the various Akan groups ensure unity, peace and stability among themselves?

Consider these points as your guide:

- Alliances
- Tolerance of other people and cultures
- Intermarriages
- Trade relations
- Strengthening of their Clan systems
- The use of Oaths and symbols
- Able leadership

7. How does the accounts of the origins of the Akan influence their chieftaincy practices?

## THE COASTAL ZONE OF GHANA

The Coastal Zone of Ghana include ethnic groups such as the Ewe, Ga-Adangbe and some Akan groups such as the Fante, Ahanta and Nzima. The Coastal Zone of Ghana comprises the Volta, Greater Accra, Central and Western Regions. Among the states that emerged in this zone were the Nzima, Ahanta, Eguafo, Fetu, Asebu, Fante, Agona, Ga, Dangbe and Ewe. All of these states had emerged in their present locations long before the period of 1471 when the first European nationals, the Portuguese, arrived in Shama in Ghana. Our focus in this section is, however, on the Ga-Adangbe and Ewe ethnic groups.

## Accounts of Origin of the Ga-Adangbe

The Ga-Adangbe ethnic group is mainly found in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Some of them can also be found in parts of the Eastern and the Volta Regions.

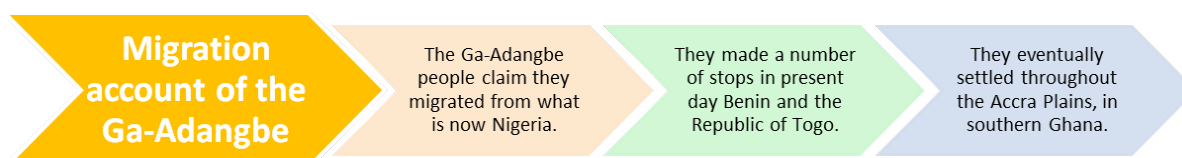
Accounts of oral history, ethnography, linguistics and written narratives have it that the Ga-Adangbe people of Ghana claimed that they migrated from Southern Nigeria to settle in their permanent settlements in Ghana. They were said to have made several stops in present day Republics of Benin and Togo. They later crossed the Volta and settled in the Accra Plains. The Ga-Adangbe were originally one group of people. They were, however, divided into two distinct groups. These two groups were the Ga and the Adangbe. The Ga division refers to the people who live in the coastal plains that stretch from Accra to Tema. The Ga group first settled in the coastal region of Ayawaso which became their principal town. This group is made up of the Ga Mashi, Osu, La, Abola, Teshie, Nungua, Tema, Otublohum, Gbese and Asere.

The Dangbe group is found in parts of the coast and Shai Hills areas. They include Shai, Ningo, Kpone, Osudoku, Gbugbla (Prampram), Krobo and Ada. The chart below shows the sub-groups that constituted the Ga and the Adangbe divisions.

It was after crossing the Volta that some parts of the Adangbe division settled on the coast west of the mouth of the Volta. This group is made up of the Ada, Ningo and Kpone. The second group of the Adangbe later left their kinfolds to settle at the Shai and Krobo Hills. This group later took to farming and some art works as they dominated the area. At the Accra Plains, the Ga-Adangbe were said to have met the Guan who were also led by priests and priestesses just like the Ga-Adangbe. There was absence of centralised authority of chiefs. Among the Ga-Adangbe, traditional priests headed by the Wulomo were originally responsible for state organization. They were also responsible for the spiritual welfare of the people. The Ga-Adangbe ethnic groups as a coastal one has had close affinity to other coastal states such as the Ewe. There are some linguistic similarities in some Ewe and Adangbe words.

| Ga                                | Adangbe                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Osu      | <input type="checkbox"/> Ada                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> La       | <input type="checkbox"/> Krobo                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abola    | <input type="checkbox"/> Osudoku              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teshie   | <input type="checkbox"/> Shai                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nungua   | <input type="checkbox"/> Gbugla<br>(Prampram) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tema     | <input type="checkbox"/> Kpone                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Otubohun | <input type="checkbox"/> Ningo                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Obese    |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asere    |   |

**Fig 3.4:** Summary chart showing the sub-groups that constituted the Ga and the Adangbe



**Fig 3.5:** Summary diagram of the migration of the Ga-Adangbe

Oral historical narratives also claimed that the Ga-Adangbe and the Ewe people shared common roots.

## The Origins of the Ewe People

In Ghana, the Ewe ethnic group fondly called the Ewe are located in the south-eastern part of the River Volta areas. The Ewe are also found in the Republic of Togo and parts of the Republic of Benin. The Ewe people are believed to have migrated from the east. According to oral tradition, which is supported by ethnography and written accounts, the Ewe left Ile Ife in modern Day Nigeria and settled at the Oyo Empire now the Republic of Benin. The Ewe later migrated to Ketu which is also known among the Ewe as ‘Amedzofe’ (but not the one in the Volta Region today) in modern day Republic of Benin. At Ketu, they were said to have lived with other people such as the Yoruba and the Ga-Adangbe.

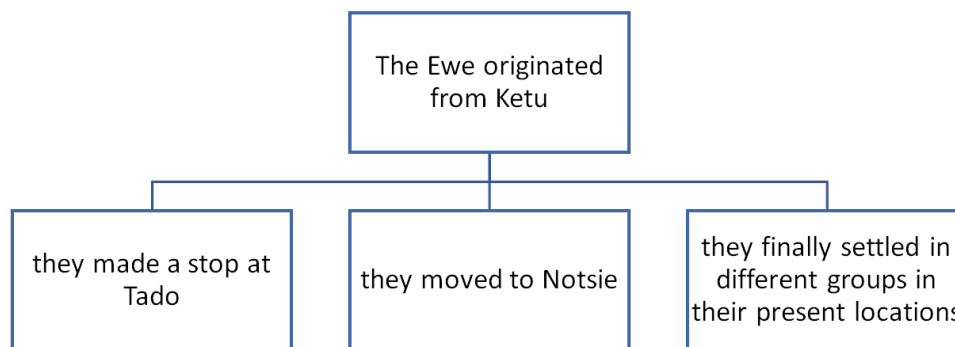
As the Yoruba empire began to expand, Ketu was affected by waves of expansion. This created some source of instability and confusion. To avoid the effects of these confusions and instability, the Ewe who were concerned about peace moved out. From Ketu where the Ewe had lived for a long time, the Ewe stopped briefly at Tado which is located on the Eastern side of River Mono.

After spending some years at Tado, the Ewe crossed the river. They passed through the forests on its banks and finally settled in the town of Nuatja or Notsie which is a settlement between the rivers Haho and Mono. Here, they joined some of their fellow Ketu migrants who had earlier settled in the walled town of Notsie. At Notsie, they were ruled by King Agorkorli I. The king was said to be unkind to the Ewe settlers, having given them a lot of difficult tasks to perform. After tolerating the King for so long, but without any form of change of heart on his part, the Ewe conceived of a plan to escape from the walled town.

One day, they broke through the town wall and escaped. When they left Notsie, they split into three main divisions. The first division travelled south and south-west to settle in the southern lowland region east of the River Volta. This group includes the Adaklu, Asogli, Akovie, Takla, Sokode and Abutia. The Adaklu were led by Togbui Hosu. The second division of the Ewe who constitute the Anlo, Ave, Fenyi and Wheta settled in the coastal plain or near it. This group was largely led by Amega Wenya and Togbui Sri. The third division travelled west and north-west to settle in the upland and valley region east of the Volta. They include, the Peki, Akpini, Ve, Have, Awudome, Alavanyo, Woadze and Matse. Historians are unable to indicate the exact period that the Ewe arrived in their present home. It is, however, believed by some Historians and

backed by oral tradition that the Ewe might have arrived in their new settlement in present day Volta Region around the 14th century AD. The Ewe people speak Ewegbe which belongs in the Kwa group of Sudanic languages. They form a homogenous linguistic and cultural group. In their new settlement in Ghana, the Ewe split into several subtribes, chiefdoms and paramountcies which are politically independent of the other. Among the various Ewe groups are the Adaklu, Anlo, Ave, Abutia, Asogli, Akpini, Tongu, Gbi, Some, Taviefe and Have.

The Ewe encountered some initial obstacles in their new settlements. This was because they were greeted with empty spaces which they had to occupy. In the upland and valley region, they encountered some Guan settlements. They later lived peacefully with these settlements and established relationships with them through intermarriages and cultural exchanges. The Ewe ethnic group collaborates with other ethnic groups in nation building. Click on this link to watch a documentary on the Hogbetsotso celebration of the Anlo-Ewe to learn more about the migration of the Ewe from Notsie to Ghana.



**Fig. 3.6:** Summary diagram of the origins of the Ewe

### Activity 3.16

Using the table below, demonstrate how the Ewe people influenced Ghanaian culture and institutions. Use the following as prompts: language, festivals, music and dance, food, art and craft and inheritance system.

| S/N | Aspect of Ewe Culture | Influence on Ghana's culture and institutions |
|-----|-----------------------|---|
| 1   | Language              |   |
| 2   | Festivals             |   |
| 3   | Music and dance       |   |
| 4   | Food                  |   |
| 5   | Art and craft         |   |
| 6   | System of inheritance |   |

## How the Stories of Origin of the Ga-Adangbe and the Ewe Compare and Contrast

The stories of origin of the Ga-Adangbe and the Ewe have in them some similarities and notable differences.

Let's start with the similarities or the comparisons.

1. The first established similarity is that both ethnic groups migrated to their permanent settlements in Ghana
2. Their stories show that leadership, followership and obedience were important in their migration to their permanent settlements.
3. Another similarity in their stories is the dependence on the spiritual direction of the gods, ancestors and the Supreme Being to lead them. The Ga-Adangbe had the Wulomo as their spiritual leader in their migration to Ghana. The Ewe on the other hand had spiritual leaders whom they consulted on the way to their permanent settlements in Ghana.
4. Finally, the Ga-Adangbe and the Ewe were particular about preserving their culture, heritage and tradition even as they migrated. They brought with them their names, dances, language and songs.

### Differences of the Contrasts in their Accounts

- a. One difference in their account is about their point of origin. Whereas the Ga-Adangbe are believed to have a Southern Nigerian root in Ille-Ife, the Ewe are said to have migrated from Ketu in modern Republic of Benin. But even with this difference, some schools of thought have it that the two groups had common origin in Yorubaland.
- b. Another difference or contrast lies in the people who led them. The Anlo-Ewe were led by Amega Wenya and Togbui Sri; the Adaklu-Ewe were led by Togbui Hosu whilst the Ga-Adangbe were led by leaders such as Nii Ayi Kushi.
- c. There were differences in their migration routes too. The Ga-Adangbe were said to cross the Volta to arrive at the Accra Plains where they settled for a while. The Ewe on the other hand were said to cross Tado to River Mono to arrive at their present settlements.
- d. In terms of settlements, the Ga-Adangbe were said to first settle at the Accra Plains where they encountered the Guan. They later moved to their present settlements. The Ewe on the other hand settle at the very places they are found today.
- e. In terms of leadership, the Ga were led by priests or Wulomo whilst the Ewe were led by chiefs and clan heads.
- f. Finally, while the Ga-Adangbe speak Ga, Adangbe and Krobo languages, the Ewe speak Ewe, but with several dialects including Adaklu, Anlo, Akpini, Asogli, Tongu, Aflao and several others.

**Activity 3.17**

Discuss with your elbow partner the similarities and differences between the origin stories of the Ga-Adangbe and the Ewe.

| Similarities in origin stories                                    | Differences in origin stories |
|---|-------------------------------|
|   |                               |
| What are the links and connections between the different stories? |                               |

## The Central Themes, Key Figures and Events Depicted in Each Narrative

The stories of origin of the Ga-Adangbe and the Ewe depict some central themes, key figures and events that are worth studying.

1. In terms of central themes, their shared stories revealed the point of migration from an ancestral home to their current settlement in Ghana.
2. The stories also revealed the points of resilience and adaptability in the face of challenges which included conflicts, population explosion and climate change.
3. Their stories also show the theme of leadership, followership and guidance. In both cases, the two groups were led by leaders who guided them to their current settlements.
4. The stories also revealed the theme of preservation of culture which include their religion, marriage, dances, and governance system.

### Key Figures

The Anlo-Ewe were led by leaders such as Togbui Wenya and Togbui Sri. The Ga-Adangbe had leaders such as King Ayi Kushi.

### Events Depicted in their Stories

- a. The key events depicted in the stories of migration of the Ga-Adangbe and the Ewe include encounters with other people and groups. The Ga-Adangbe first met the Guan in the Accra Plains. The inland Ewe people such as the Akpini, Dzolo and Have also met Guan groups such as the Avatime, Logba, Tafi and Nyagbo.
- b. Their stories also revealed an important event of settlement and establishment of states. Both ethnic groups settled in new areas. They later worked hard to establish states with influence.
- c. Their stories also depict the important event of migration as an aged-old practice.
- d. The stories show connections to nature, ancestors and the Supreme Being as the source of guidance, direction and hope in their journeys.



## How the Stories of Origin shape the way the Ga-Adangbe and the Ewe People see themselves today within Ghana

The stories of origin of the Ga-Adangbe and the Ewe appeared to have some similarities.

1. These stories confer on both the Ga-Adangbe and the Ewe people of Ghana self-perception and identity.
2. The stories reinforced their shared heritage.
3. The stories shape their cultural practices, beliefs and traditions. This includes their way of naming their children. Both the Ga-Adangbe and the Ewe have names such as Tettey/Tetteh. The Adangbe and the Ewe have names such as Atsu/Etse (male twins) and Mawu for God.
4. Their shared stories also reinforced their connection to a common homeland. This imposes on them strong emotional connections.
5. The stories also strengthen their social bonds.

### Activity 3.18

1. Locate the following on the map of Ghana below:
  - a. Anlo
  - b. Ada
  - c. Accra
  - d. Cape Coast
  - e. Nzima
  - f. Ahanta
2. Now add in the migratory routes of the Ga-Adangbe or the Ewe



### Activity 3.19

1. Compare and contrast the origin accounts of the Ga-Adangbe and the Ewe by completing the chart below:

| Ethnic Group | Central Themes | Key figures in their migration story | Key events depicted in their story | System of government | Economic activities |
|--------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Ga-Adangbe   |                |                                      |                                    |                      |                     |
| Ewe          |                |                                      |                                    |                      |                     |

### Extended activity

1. Make use of personal interviews, library materials and internet sources to write about the migration story of the:
  - a. Ewe;
  - b. Ga-Adangbe.

*Use the following clues:*

- Which sources of history are available for narrating the history of origin of the two ethnic groups?
  - Where were their respective origins?
  - Why did they leave their original homes?
  - Who were their leaders?
  - Where did they stop on the way to their present settlements?
  - How did they organize themselves?
  - Where are they located in Ghana today?
  - Which groups did they meet upon their arrival in Ghana?
  - How were they influenced by those groups?
  - What are their various divisions or states?
  - What are the institutions of the Ewe and the Ga-Adangbe?
  - What have been their contributions to the nation?
2. Research the role of a female leader among the Ga-Adangbe. If you have access to a computer, consider using software applications to create a presentation or poster. You may ask your teacher to invite a Ga-Adangbe resource person to the class to educate you and your classmates on the role of female leaders among the Ga-Adangbe.

How have the Akans and the Ewe ethnic groups collaborated in terms of the following areas: marriage, military alliance, trade, chieftaincy and festivals?

| Area of Collaboration  | Level or form of collaboration |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Marriage   |                                |
| Military Alliance  |                                |
| Trade  |                                |
| Chieftaincy  |                                |
| Festivals  |                                |
| What conclusions can you draw from the level of collaboration that have existed among the two ethnic groups? |                                |

3. a. Make use of the following primary and secondary sources to form your opinion on the origins of the major ethnic groups found in the Forest zone.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Source 1<br>Oral Traditions                | Source 3<br>Peer-reviewed articles             |
| Source 3<br>Archaeological artefacts/sites | Source 4<br>Festivals and ethnographic sources |

- b. What were your major findings based on the sources above?
4. How will you evaluate the origin of the ethnic groups found in the Forest zone based on the sources you made use of earlier?

## Extended Reading

Click on the link below to watch a video on the Ewe tribe

<https://www.youtube.co./watch?v=Y5hjQbqNhzU>.

## CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOME KEY LEADERS OF THE MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS DURING THEIR MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT

In this lesson, we shall be looking at the contributions of some key leaders of the major ethnic groups during their migration and settlement. All the major ethnic groups in Ghana have some illustrious and legendary individuals who contributed greatly to the success of their migration to their present settlement.

The ethnic groups were led and guided by different leaders during their migration to present-day locations. For the Anlo- Ewe, leaders such as Torgbui Sri and Amega Wenya led their migration from Notsie to their current settlements. The Mole-Dagbani were guided by leaders such as Naa Gbewa who established the Dagbon kingdom. The Gonja were influenced positively by Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa or the 'spear-holder.' Osei Tutu 1 was a key figure in the formation of the Asante Kingdom, even though he did not lead the Akan in their migration to Ghana.

Some major roles these leaders played included serving as warlords, priests, spiritual guides, among others. The list below shows some of the key leaders of the ethnic groups during their migration:

### Leaders of the Major Ethnic Groups during their Migration Process

The ethnic groups were led and guided by different leaders in the course of their migration to present-day locations. They acted as warlords, priests, spiritual guides among others to their ethnic groups. The list below shows some of the key leaders of the ethnic groups during their migration.



**Fig 3.6:** Key leaders of the ethnic groups during their migration

## Qualities and Skills that made the Leaders of the various Ethnic Groups Effective

It is important to recognise that leadership was key in the migration of the various ethnic groups that we now have in Ghana. Without the role of these leaders, the movement of the people into present Ghana would not have been possible.

**Pause and Discuss:** What in your view were some of the qualities and skills that would need to be possessed by these leaders? Share your opinions with your elbow partner.

The leaders of these ethnic groups possessed such qualities as patience, endurance, tolerance, team-work, collaboration, courage, vision, moral courage, discipline and leadership. Osei Tutu I of the Asante for instance was noted for his collaboration with

Okomfo Anokye. He was charismatic, visionary, unifying and strategic leader who successfully put the pre-Asante States together as one strong, united and powerful Kingdom. He was also celebrated for his courage and boldness.

These leaders also possessed skills in communication, strategy, planning, group formation, problem-solving, and adaptability. Naa Gbewa who led the Mole-Dagbani relied on strategy, wisdom, planning and group formation to keep in check the indigenous groups that they met upon their arrival in the current northern zone of Ghana. These leaders demonstrated strategic insight, charisma, and the ability to unify their people. Torgbui Sri of the Anlo-Ewe demonstrated resilience and strategic planning in leading the Anlo-Ewe people through their migration.

## Challenges Faced by the Leaders who Led their Groups during the Migration Process

Leaders such as Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa, Amega Wenya, Osei Tutu I who led their people were faced with so many challenges. Put yourself in their shoes and imagine some of the challenges they dealt with. They were faced with the challenge of convincing their followers to buy into their vision. They were also faced with the challenge of constant wars and attacks on their groups. They and their followers were also faced with challenges of dealing with the harsh climatic conditions.

Others such as Amega Wenya of the Anlo were faced with the problems of old age, weariness and low strength. Other leaders were also exposed to threats of death. According to oral tradition, both Obunumankoma and Odapagyan died on the way to the present home of the Fante. Both Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa and Naa Gbewa had to fight wars in order to settle peacefully in their present settlements. They fought hard to consolidate their power in their strongholds. Torgbui Sri faced the challenge of leading his people through dangerous territories and ensuring their safety.

## How the Leaders Make Decisions that Affected the Course of the Migration

The leaders of the various ethnic groups made some decisions that affected the course of the migration of their groups. These decisions were key contributors to what have become of these ethnic groups today.

1. The decision by Wadh Naba or Nabaga not to carry out the assignment of the Mande Kaba against the Begho people was what eventually led to the formation of the Gonja Kingdom.
2. Amega Wenya's decision that he was weak and could no longer move ahead was what led to the founding of Anloga as the traditional capital of the Anlo.
3. The decision of Ataara Ofinam of the Guan ethnic group to pursue peace instead of war was what eventually led to many Guan settlements in Eastern, Central and Oti regions today.



4. The decision of Naa Gbewa to engage the indigenous ethnic groups of the Northern zone in a fierce fight culminated in the formation and establishment of the Mole-Dagbani Kingdom which includes the Mossi Kingdom of Burkina Faso.
5. These leaders often made their decisions through a mix blend of strategic planning, consultations with advisors, and response to immediate challenges. Osei Tutu I was noted for his decisions on strategic military alliances and collaborations. Torgbui Sri made decisions to navigate through difficult rains and secure new settlements. Naa Gbewaa focused on establishing administrative structures and alliances to stabilize and expand the Dagbon kingdom.

## How the Leadership of these Figures Contribute to the Success of the Migration

1. The leadership of the personalities who led the various ethnic groups was important contributor to the success of the migration of their ethnic groups.
2. First of all, as leaders, they provided vision and direction to the group. This vision was what drove the group in their difficult moments.
3. The leaders also provided a sense of motivation and inspiration to their followers.
4. They provided moral and spiritual leadership to their groups.
5. The leaders also gave their followers hope in their struggling and challenging moments.
6. The leaders provided strategic planning and maneuvering skills that their groups relied on to become victorious in their wars. Osei Tutu 1 was renowned for his strategic leadership roles in the formation of the Ashanti Kingdom.
7. Some leaders provided leadership that led their groups to embark on wars of conquest and expansion. Naa Gbewa and Ndewura Jakpa are celebrated war heroes of their people.

## The Lasting Cultural and Social Development Impacts of these Leaders on their Ethnic Groups

These leaders have left indelible and enduring cultural and development impacts on their respective ethnic groups. The establishment of the Ashanti Kingdom by Osei Tutu I has left behind an enviable led to a rich cultural heritage on his Kingdom and the rest of the Ghanaian society today. For instance, Torgbui Sri I's leadership is celebrated in Ewe culture, with festivals and traditions that honour their history. Naa Gbewaa's contributions laid the foundation for the Dagbon kingdom's political and social structures, which continue to influence the Dagomba people.

## Analyses of Potential Conflicting Narratives about the Actions and Contributions of these Leaders

The narratives and contributions of these leaders do not go without conflicting accounts or perspectives. In other words, these leaders are hailed in one breadth and condemned in another breadth. Osei Tutu I of the Asante for instance is celebrated for his historic role in the formation of the Asante Kingdom. He receives praise for his strategic alliances and military tactics that helped to establish the Ashanti Kingdom as one united and powerful one in Ghana. At the same time, he is sometimes criticised for the prolonged wars and conflicts in his time. These conflicts sometimes created divisions between warring ethnic groups.

In some cases, some people tend to hold on to these unhealthy rivalries even up to today. Naa Gbewa is credited for his ability to wage wars that helped to solidify the base of the Mole-Dagbani people in the Savannah Zone of Ghana. However, he is accused for not establishing a strong succession plan that could forestall future conflicts of succession.

## How these Leaders are Remembered and Celebrated in their Ethnic Groups today

- a. The contributions of these leaders are remembered and celebrated in their ethnic groups in many ways today.
- b. Among the Fante for instance, the contributions of Obunumankoma, Odapagyan and Oson are remembered in the form of statue which are erected at Mankessim junction.
- c. The Anlo-Ewe remember the contributions and pieces of advice of Togbi Sri in what they call Togbi Sri's 'Words of advice to the Anlos'. This is a kind of poem recited by school children and Anlo citizens.
- d. In some areas, some monuments including schools and halls are named after some of these leaders. An example of this is the Gbewa Palace of the Dagomba people.
- e. Among the Ga-Adangbe, King Ayikushi is hailed for his efforts at uniting the Ga and the Adangbe as one group.
- f. Others such as Otumfo Asare of the Akwamu are remembered through the names of some towns such as Asamankese which was originally called Asaremanke.

## Contemporary Debates about the Legacies of these Leaders

Despite the significant leadership provided by these leaders, some people today raise some issues with some of their decisions. For example, a school of thought holds the view that some succession disputes that some ethnic kingdoms experience today is due to the inability of these leaders to provide in clear terms who their successors should be. It is also said that the inability of Ataara Ofinam and his many Guan ethnic groups

to form one big united kingdom is what has accounted for the lack of a strong and united Guan kingdom today.

## How the Understanding the Role of the Leaders Enhance Understanding of the Migrations and Identities of the Ethnic Groups

It is important for us who live today to understand the role of the leaders who led the various ethnic groups especially in their migration history. Our understanding of the roles of these leaders will provide us with deeper insights into the motivations, challenges, and strategies of their migrations. It will highlight the resilience and adaptability of their people and helps us to appreciate the historical context of ethnic identities in Ghana. This understanding fosters a greater appreciation of the cultural, social, and political contributions of these ethnic groups to Ghana's broader society.

### Activity 3.20

- Split yourselves into groups and prepare a presentation on one of the leaders who contributed to the migration of an ethnic group to Ghana. Make sure you consider the following:
  - Who the leader was
  - What ethnic group they led and what challenges they, therefore, faced
  - What the leader did for their group
  - When this was happening
  - How they are remembered today and whether you agree with this based on your historical knowledge
  - How we have learned about them i.e. what sources of information have been used to find out about them
- As you listen to other group's presentations, make notes on the following template:

| Name of Leader | Historical Narrative | Assessment of their Legacy |
|----------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
|                |                      |                            |
|                |                      |                            |
|                |                      |                            |
|                |                      |                            |

## The Role Some Women in the Migration of Major Ethnic Groups to Ghana

In Ghana's history, women have played indispensable roles in the migration and settlement of major ethnic groups. They have contributed as leaders, advisors, cultural custodians, and advocates. These roles have been crucial in shaping the social and cultural landscapes of their communities. Our understanding of the roles of these important women will provide us with a richer and more balanced perspective on the history and development of Ghana's ethnic groups. It will make history more inclusive. Let us, therefore, take a look at some of these women whose roles contributed to the settlement and consolidation of their states.

### 1. Aberewa Yeebetuo

In about the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century came the mass exodus of Oyoko clan members from Amansie and Adanse. The Oyoko clan under the tutelage of Koba Amanfi needed a fertile land where he and his people could move to from Amansie to go and settle. By this thought, the chief hunter of Chief Koba Amanfi called Abirafo Nyame was tasked to search for a suitable place for the settlement of the Oyoko clan members. Abirafo Nyame discovered a rich area around the Subin Marshes which was endowed with abundant game. Tradition also recalls a number of isolated settlers, some of whom were the village of Anowu (the site of the present-day Kumasi Children's hospital), Yeebetuokrom (near the area of the present day Kumasi post office at Adum) and Kwadwokrom near the area of the present day lepper settlement. This required area was the bonafide property of Aberewa Yeebetuo. So, it was Aberewa Yeebetuo who sold her land to chief Krobea Amanfi for "30 Piredwan" (the equivalence of about GHC500 today) to facilitate the migration of the Oyoko clan members to their present settlement, Kwaman (Kumasi). It was the personal sacrifice, empathy, love, generosity and selflessness of Aberewa Yeebetuo that eventually laid the foundation of what later became one of the biggest and famous Kingdoms (Asante) ever known in Ghana.

### Role and Contributions

- *Leadership and Resistance:* Yaa Asantewaa played a crucial role in organizing and leading the Ashanti people against British colonial forces. Her leadership during the War of the Golden Stool symbolized the defence of Ashanti autonomy and cultural heritage.
- *Cultural Preservation:* She ensured the preservation of Ashanti traditions and cultural practices during periods of war. Her influence extended to maintaining the social structure and unity of the Ashanti people during migrations caused by external pressures.
- *Inspirational Figure:* Yaa Asantewaa's bravery and strategic planning inspired future generations, including women to take active roles in the political and social spheres of their communities.

## 2. Dode Akabi of the Ga-Dangme

Another prominent woman who contributed to the migration and settlement history of her people was Dode Akabi. Dode Akabi was a prominent queen of the Ga-Dangme people. Her role was prominent in their migration and settlement in the Greater Accra region.

### Role and Contributions

- *Political Leadership:* As a queen, Dode Akabi commanded significant influence in political decisions, including those related to migration and settlement. Her leadership helped establish stable communities in the Accra plains.
- *Conflict Resolution:* She was instrumental in negotiating with neighbouring groups. She ensured peaceful coexistence and helped to secure territories for her people.
- *Cultural Guardian:* Dode Akabi helped preserve and promote Ga-Dangme cultural practices, ensuring that their traditions and social structures remained intact during migrations.

## 3. Queen Mothers in some Akan Ethnic Groups

Queen mothers among some Akan ethnic groups have historically played crucial roles during migrations and settlement period

### Role and Contributions

- *Advisory Roles:* Queen mothers often served as advisors to kings and chiefs, influencing decisions related to migration, warfare, and settlement. Their wisdom and experience were invaluable in guiding their communities.
- *Social Organization:* They were responsible for maintaining social order, mediating conflicts and ensuring the welfare of women and children during migrations. Their roles were essential in preserving social cohesion and stability.
- *Cultural Custodians:* Queen mothers acted as custodians of cultural practices and traditions, ensuring that their people retained their identity and heritage despite the challenges of migration.

### Activity 3.21

1. Discuss the role that women have played in the various migration accounts. How important have women been? Did they have similar or different roles to male leaders? Why do you think this is? Use the questions as prompts
2. Once you have had the discussion in your small circles, nominate a speaker from each group to sit in a bigger circle to feedback with the rest of the class listening – have the different groups come up with different ideas?

### Extended Activity

1. Use Microsoft Excel to create a database of all the leaders who helped in the migration of ethnic groups to their present-day locations. Provide the following information in your database:
  - a. Name of the leader
  - b. Name of the ethnic group
  - c. Place of Origin
  - d. Challenges encountered on their way
  - e. Period they migrated
  - f. An estimate of how old the leader would have been if they were alive today.
  - g. The traditional title they would have earned if they were living today.

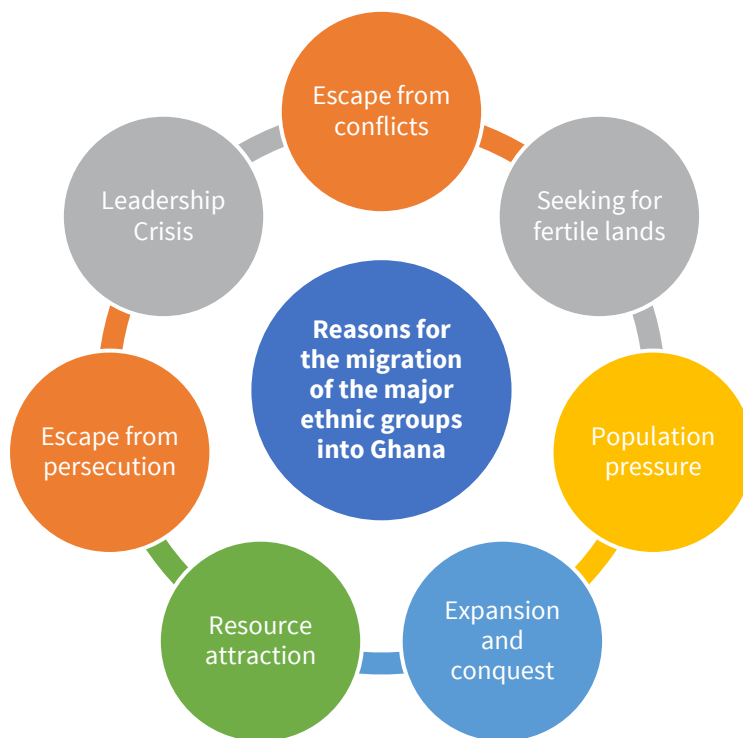
**Note: Share your presentation on social media and tag your parents, teachers and school mates.**

## REASONS FOR THE MIGRATION OF MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS INTO GHANA

As you explore the migrations of major ethnic groups into present-day Ghana, you will find that they were driven by a variety of factors or reasons. Many ethnic groups, such as the Akan, Ewe, and Dagomba, moved due to a combination of environmental pressures, warfare, and the search for better resources. These migrations often aimed at finding fertile land, escaping conflict, or seeking opportunities for trade and cultural exchange.

Study the diagram below to understand some of the reasons for their migration into Ghana.





**Fig 3.7:** Some reasons for migration

**Pause and Discuss:** Think about what you have learned so far as well as anything you know about modern day migrations of people. With the person next to you, discuss the following:

What do you think was the most important of the reasons for migration listed above? Why do you think that?

## The Key Geographical Features that Influenced Settlement Patterns

Some key geographical features played a crucial role in determining where ethnic groups settled in Ghana. These features include fertile river valleys, such as those along the Volta River. This provided abundant water for agriculture, which attracted many groups.

The coastal areas were ideal for trade and fishing, drawing groups such as the Ga, Anlo-Ewe and Fante. The forested regions offered rich resources and protection from external threats, appealing to groups such as the Ashanti, Akyem, Kwahu, Akwamu. Some Guan groups who fled conflicts prefer mountainous areas. The Savannah zone with arable land was suitable for agriculture, domestication of animals, craft works and hunting of games.

## Natural Resources in Present Day Ghana that Attracted Migrants to Ghana

Present-day Ghana's abundant natural resources were a major source of attraction for migrants. The region's rich gold and mineral deposits, particularly in the forest regions of Ashanti, Bono and Eastern drew many groups seeking wealth and economic opportunities to these areas. Additionally, fertile agricultural land and water resources made Ghana an appealing destination for those looking to establish stable communities and livelihoods. Other groups such as the Guans (Avatime, Nyagbo and Logba) were also motivated by some relief features such as mountains.

## Roles Environmental Factors Played in Pushing People out of their Original Settlements

Environmental factors, such as drought, soil degradation, and natural disasters, often forced ethnic groups to leave their original territories. For example, the decline in soil fertility in the Sahel region pushed groups such as the Mole-Dagbani southward into present-day Ghana. Changes in climate and the search for more arable land drove many migrations, as people sought to ensure their survival and well-being.

## How Warfare or Political Instability Caused People to Move to Present-day Ghana

Warfare and political instability were significant factors in the migration of ethnic groups to Ghana. Conflicts among neighbouring states, invasions by external forces, and internal power struggles often caused populations to seek safer territories. For instance, the internal disagreements between the Mole-Dagbani led to the establishment of new states in the Savannah zone.

It was the conflict between the Ewe and their ruler Agorkoli which pushed the Ewe out of Notsie to settle in their present settlements. Many Guan ethnic groups are scattered in Ghana because of their search for peace.

The traditionalist account of the migration of the Akan also stressed escape of conflicts in Western Sudan as one of the factors responsible for the migration of the Akan to Ghana.

## How the Existing Trade Routes or Established Communities Create a Pull towards Ghana

Existing trade routes and established communities significantly influenced migration patterns. The Trans-Saharan trade routes, which connected West Africa to North Africa and beyond, made regions in Ghana, such as the Ashanti and Northern territories, central hubs for commerce. The presence of established trading centres, like those in

Kumasi and Tamale, attracted migrants looking to engage in trade and benefit from the economic activities of these thriving communities.

The emergence of commercial centres such as Begho, Salaga and Bono Manso attracted several people from West Africa into these areas. The presence of European merchants on the coast of Ghana also attracted people such as messengers, labourers, artisans, canoe boys among others to these coastal towns.

### Activity 3.22

1. Use the table below to make notes on one of the reasons for migration.
2. Interview the other learners around you who have made notes on different reasons to make sure that the table is filled.

| Reason for Migration                                   | Explanation and Detail |
|--|------------------------|
| Geographical   |                        |
|  |                        |
|  |                        |
|  |                        |
| How do each of these factors relate to each other?     |                        |
| Which do you think was the most important reason? Why? |                        |

## How the Arrival of New Groups Impacted Existing Populations in Ghana

The arrival of new groups often led to a dynamic interplay between the migrants and existing populations. In some cases, this resulted in conflicts over land and resources. In the Savannah Zone of Ghana, the arrival of the proto-Mole Dagbani people led to civil wars between the invaders and the indigenous ethnic groups.

The arrival of the Gonja in the Savannah Zone created cultural assimilation between the Gonja and the existing Guan ethnic group. The arrival of new groups also led to cultural exchanges and the blending of traditions. For example, the integration of Akan migrants with the existing Guan populations in southern Ghana enriched the cultural landscape and led to the development of new social and political structures.

The arrival of Ewe groups in the present Volta region did not create any conflicts between the existing Guan settlements and the Ewe. Instead, it led to cultural exchanges and assimilations

## Migration as a Source of Conflict or Cultural Exchange

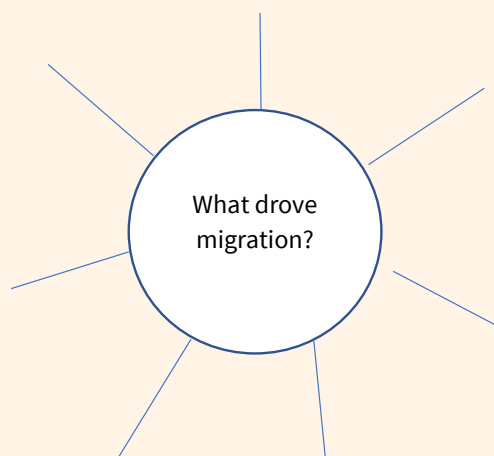
Migrations into Ghana led to both conflict and cultural exchange. While initial contact sometimes resulted in clashes over territory and resources, over time, many groups engaged in trade, intermarriage, and cultural exchange. This blending of cultures contributed to the rich diversity of Ghanaian society. For instance, the Ashanti's interactions with the Brong and other Akan sub-groups facilitated the exchange of customs, languages, and technologies. The arrival of the Ewe in southeastern part of Ghana led to cultural exchanges between the Ewe and the Guan settlements. The arrival of the Fanti in their present settlements created some initial conflicts with the existing Etsi communities that they came to meet.

## How Migrants Adapt their Way of Life to the New Environment

Migrants adapted their way of life to the new environment in several ways. They adopted agricultural practices suitable for the local climate, such as cultivating yams, cocoa, and other crops. Socially, they integrated with existing communities, adopting and blending cultural practices. Politically, they established governance systems that incorporated local traditions, as seen in the Ashanti Empire's administrative structure, which combined centralized authority with local autonomy. Socially, they engaged in intermarriages with the existing communities. Examples include the Ewe and the Guan, the Gonja and the Guan. The Guan and the Ga who were initially theocratic as they were led by priests later adopted centralized system of administration in their new settlements. They were influenced by their Akan neighbours.

### Activity 3.23

1. Use the diagram below to summarise why each group decided to migrate:



2. Complete the chart below. If you have access to the internet, use this to add more detail.

| Ethnic Group | Reason for migration | Impact of migration |
|--------------|----------------------|---------------------|
|              |                      |                     |
|              |                      |                     |
|              |                      |                     |
|              |                      |                     |
|              |                      |                     |
|              |                      |                     |

### Activity 3.24

1. Put yourself into groups (or your teacher can facilitate this) and take on the roles of one of the different ethnic groups that we have been learning about. Assign yourselves the various roles that would have been in these groups i.e. leader, warrior, priests, clan heads etc.
2. Role play the story of the migration of this group for the class. Make sure that you include the reasons for migration and the challenges that they faced.

## How the Study of the Migration Stories Help Us Understand the Diversity of Ghanaian Culture Today

As we study these migration stories, it helps us to appreciate the diverse origins and cultural influences that shape Ghanaian society today. Our understanding of the historical migrations and interactions of various ethnic groups provides insights into the complex tapestry of languages, traditions, and social practices that characterize modern Ghana. The understanding highlights the resilience, adaptability, and interconnectedness of its people. This fosters a deeper appreciation of the nation's rich cultural heritage.

### Pause and Discuss:

1. Discuss with a partner. Why is it important to study these migration stories? How can it help Ghanaians in the future?
2. Consider the following as prompts:

- a. For understanding our history and origin
- b. To ensure national unity
- c. To promote the culture of tolerance
- d. To demonstrate our collective ownership of the country
- e. To have knowledge and understanding of the development of certain key institutions in the country
- f. To understand the forms of alliances e.g. Asante-Akwamu-Anlo Alliance

## THE RISE AND DECLINE OF STATES IN THE SAVANNAH ZONE OF GHANA

Dear learner, you are welcome to this lesson. We hope you enjoyed our discussions about the origin of ethnic groups so far. This lesson will be fun and full of interesting activities. Always ensure that you take down notes as you read this material. Let us start by looking at the rise and decline of states in the Savannah Zone of Ghana.

Quick discussion: Do you recall our explanation of the Savannah Zone in the key words section?

### When and Where the First States Emerged in the Savannah Zone of Ghana

The first states in the Savannah Zone of Ghana emerged around the 13th century in the northern savannah part of present-day Ghana. These include the Mole-Dagbani (Mamprusi, Nanumba and Dagomba states) in Ghana and the Mossi states of Burkina Faso as well as the Gonja who emerged to the southwest of Mamprugu, Dagbon and Nanumba.

### Pre-existing Social Structures or Cultural Practices that Laid the Groundwork for State Formation

The pre-existing social structures and cultural practices played a significant role in laying the groundwork for state formation in the Savannah Zone of Ghana. These early societies were organized into clans or extended family groups. Unlike the indigenous groups of the Savannah Zone, the early states and kingdoms in this zone also had chieftaincies that facilitated governance and conflict resolution among them. Among the Mole-Dagbani and the Gonja states, the existence of kinship ties and clan systems provided a framework for social cohesion and hierarchy. This structure and social affinities were important in their transition into more centralized state structures.



## How Environmental Factors such as Resource Availability or Climate Change Influenced the Development of Complex Societies

Environmental factors significantly influenced the development of complex societies in the Savannah Zone. For instance;

- a. The availability of fertile land for agriculture and water sources for irrigation were critical in supporting larger populations and encouraging sedentary lifestyles.
- b. Additionally, natural resources such as gold and salt fostered trade, which stimulated economic and social complexity.
- c. Climate change, with periods of drought or abundant rainfall, also impacted agricultural productivity and could either bolster the growth of states through surplus production or lead to decline through resource scarcity.

## The Role of Trade in the Rise of States in the Savannah Zone of Ghana

Trade also played a pivotal role in the rise of states in the Savannah Zone. The region was strategically located along trans-Saharan trade routes. This strategic location on trade routes facilitated the exchange of gold, salt, kola nuts, and other commodities. Traders from Hausaland and the Mande-Dyula travelled to the area to trade in various articles of trade. This trade not only brought wealth to the states, but also introduced new ideas, technologies, and cultural practices including Islam.

The decades of wealth from this long-distance trade helped the ruling classes in the Savannah Zone to consolidate power. They invested in military strength, and built administrative infrastructure. These enabled them to lay strong foundation for state formation and stability. Trade also led to the introduction of Islam in the Savannah Zone.

Islam was introduced into this zone by Hausa and Mande-Dyula traders. The introduction of Islam promoted education and craft industries in the area. Islam also enabled the rulers of these Kingdoms to formalize their centralized authority systems by employing the services of scribes, messengers and interpreters. Eventually, Islam affected the religion, culture and language of these Kingdoms and brought them closer to the rest of Islamic West Africa.

## How Advancements in Agriculture or Food Production Contributes to Supporting Larger Populations and Social Hierarchies

The advancements in agriculture were instrumental in promoting larger population growth in the Savannah Zone of Ghana. The advancement of agriculture in this zone took the form of the adoption of new farming tools such as iron tools. They also adopted irrigation systems suitable for the climate of this zone. Moreover, they embarked on the domestication of animals such as cattle, goats. They also cultivated crops such as yams and cereals such as millet and sorghum and groundnuts. All these agriculture practices were key in promoting population growth in this area.

The adoption of irrigation techniques and more advanced farming tools led to over production beyond consumption at the subsistence level. This created surplus. This surplus encouraged barter trade system and later exchanged economy with traders from the forest belt, Hausa states and Mande-Dyula. The surplus also allowed for the specialization of labour.

This specialization enabled some individuals to focus on agriculture while others had time for governance, trade, and artistic works. This eventually created social hierarchies. The ability to store and redistribute food surpluses also helped leaders to gain and maintain power. With the surplus, the rulers supported their armies and managed resources during periods of scarcity.

## How Leadership Structures Evolved from Earlier Societies to Centralised State Authorities

Leadership structures evolved from clan-based systems to more centralized state authorities through a combination of military conquests, strategic marriages, and alliances. Initially, leadership was often based on kinship ties and chieftaincy, where local leaders managed smaller groups. Over time, powerful leaders who were able to control trade routes and resources accumulated more power and influence. These leaders established dynasties and centralized administrations, with bureaucratic systems to manage resources, collect taxes, and enforce laws. They transitioned from a combination of decentralized and acephalous governance systems to centralized governance systems with powerful kings and rulers such as the Ya Na, Nayiri and Yagbumwura.

## Factors Responsible for the Rise of States in the Savannah Zone

The Savannah Zone of Ghana witnessed some powerful states. These included the Dagbon, Mamprugu (Mamprusi), Nanumba and Gonja as centralized states. Look for some history texts to find out some of the factors that led to the rise of these states. You may also visit the internet to look for more. The chart below shows some of the factors that led to the rise of states in the Savannah Zone. Take a critical look at the chart.

| Northern Zone      | Factors Responsible for the Rise of the States |
|--------------------|--|
| Mole-Dagbani/Gonja | Able Leadership                                |
|                    | The role of Islam                              |
|                    | The role of trade                              |
|                    | Agriculture                                    |
|                    | Possession of superior weapons                 |
|                    | Centralised system of governance               |
|                    | Patrilineal system of inheritance              |

### States in the Savannah Zone boasted of some able leaders.

These able leaders contributed so much to the formation and growth of these states. Leaders such as Na Gbewa engaged in several wars of conquest against the indigenous ethnic groups in the Savannah Zone in order to assume control over the area. His efforts and those of his successors such as Sitobu, Mantabu led to the rise of the Mole-Dagbani States. The bravery and war prowess of Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa who is considered the real founder of the Gonja State was also responsible for the rise of the Gonja State in the Savannah Zone.

### The possession and use of superior weapons for offensive and defensive purposes also aided the rise of states in the Savannah Zone.

States in the Savannah Zone met some indigenous ethnic groups upon arrival in the areas. These included the Vagala, Guan, Chamba, Tampulensi and Konkomba

The new arrivals waged successful wars against these indigenous tribes. The new arrivals were successful in the wars because of their possession of more superior weapons against the inferior ones use by the indigenous people.

The new arrivals boasted of iron swords, spears and cudgels as weapons whereas the indigenous people used bows and arrows which were far inferior. The use of these superior weapons by Na Gbewa and his people and later by Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa and the Gonja made them to conquer more territories and consolidated their power over the areas.

### The practice of centralized system of administration also led to the rise of these states.

The indigenous ethnic groups of the Savannah Zone practised the acephalous systems with the Tindana as their religio-political leader. The Mole-Dagbani and the Gonja who came to meet these ethnic groups, however, established strong centralised states.

Unlike the indigenous ethnic groups, the newly established states practiced monarchical system of governance. They had divine leaders who led and guided them. They were unified under single powerful authority. It was, therefore, easier to organise themselves for offensive, defensive and development purposes. The Dagbon people had the Ya Na, the Mamprusi had the Nayiri while the Gonja had the Yagbumwura.

### **Trade was another important factor that led to the rise of these states.**

Not only was agriculture and crafts the basis of the economy of these states, but the people also played active roles in the Trans-Saharan Trade Caravan Trade. The Savannah States traded with several states and Kingdoms in West Africa. They also traded with some forest states in southern Ghana. Their trade with the Hausa and Mande (Mali) traders contributed to the rise of the states in the zone.

The Mande and the Wangaran traders also helped to establish areas such as Bole, Wa and Begho as commercial centres in the Savannah Zone. These centers later attracted huge populations of people from West Africa. Some of them took permanent settlements in the area. The trade brought great wealth and influence to the people and the rulers through taxation, exchange economy and middleman-roles. These eventually aided the rise of these states.

### **The introduction of Islam also led to the rise of the states in the Savannah Zone**

An important factor that contributed greatly to the rise of states in the Savannah Zone was the introduction of Islam. Islam was introduced into the Savannah zone between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries AD by the Hausa, Mande and Soninke traders.

The introduction of Islam in this area deepened Islamic culture, religion, language and culture of the area. Islam affected the way of life of the people and the rulers in the area. Islamic schools were later established in towns such as Salaga (noted for her slave market), Banda, Wa, and Yendi. These centres of learning later produced Islamic scholars, Sheiks and Imans who contributed to writing of historical accounts and the spiritual life of the people.

Among their scholarly writings were the *Kitab Ghunja* (History of Ghana) written by Al Hajj Muhammad Mustafa of Gonja. Others also wrote biographies and poems. Islam also influenced the centralized rule system of these states in the area. It introduced a more effective system of administration. Islam also attracted traders to the area. These factors popularized the area to the rest of the Muslim West Africa.

### **Some of the Achievements and Contributions of These Early States in the Savannah Zone**

The early states in the Savannah Zone made significant contributions in various fields.

1. They established sophisticated systems of governance and law, which influenced subsequent political structures in the region.

2. These states were also centres of trade and cultural exchange. This facilitated the spread of Islam and literacy through Arabic scripts.
3. The Savannah Zone became a centre of Islamic education and scholarship in Ghana. This contributed a lot of Islamic chronicles on the history of the northern part of Ghana. Islam also promoted peace and unity in the area.
4. The Savannah Zone also contributed to advancements in agriculture, metallurgy, and architecture.
5. The wealth generated from trade enabled the construction of impressive buildings and infrastructure some of which still stand today. An example of this is the Larabanga Mosque which now serves as a tourist centre of significance in the northern part of Ghana.

### Activities 3.25

1. Identify at least two factors that contributed to the rise of states in the Savannah zone of Ghana.
2. Explain at least three factors that contributed to the rise of states in the Savannah Zone of Ghana.
3. Which factor do you think was the most significant for the rise of states in the Savannah zone? Explain your answer.

## Factors that Led to the Decline of States in the Savannah Zone

### Factors that led to the decline or transformation of these early states over time

Several factors could have led to the decline or transformation of these early states. Internal factors such as succession disputes, corruption, and mismanagement of resources often weakened central authority. Environmental changes, like prolonged droughts or resource depletion, could disrupt agriculture and trade. External pressures, including invasions by neighbouring states or groups, also played a role. Additionally, the shift in trade routes or the rise of more powerful neighbouring states could undermine the economic foundations of these early states, leading to their decline or transformation.

The Savannah Zone of Ghana had some powerful states such as Dagbon, Mamprugu (Mamprusi), Nanumba and Gonja. Some of these states were so powerful that they extended their influence all the way to Burkina Faso and modern Republic of Togo.

However, a number of factors contributed to the decline of these states. Let us, therefore, discuss some of these factors.

### **In the first place, the states in this zone suffered from the problem of succession disputes**

Initially, proper structures for succession were not established in these states. This created disputes whenever existing rulers died. The death of Zirile as the successor of Na Gbewa sparked disagreements over who to succeed him. This, however, led to the formation of new states such as Mamprugu and Nanumba and later the Mossi Kingdoms of Burkina Faso. These disagreements had continued for a while. In a way, these disagreements tended to weaken the unity and strength of these states over time.

### **Decline in agriculture productivity also affected the growth of these states.**

Due to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, a number of abled-bodied youths who were capable of engaging in agriculture, were taken away. This state of affairs affected the growth of agriculture in these states. As agriculture is the basis of the economy of these states, the decline in agriculture also led to the decline in the economic power and strength of these states. With this state of affairs, some people in these areas began to move to the southern parts of Ghana in search of better conditions.

### **Another factor that contributed to the decline of these states is climate change.**

The Savannah region has a lot of great potential for growth. For centuries, this zone remained the food basket for Ghana and some parts of West Africa. Its yam, millet, sorghum, groundnut, shea butter had been useful to many parts of Ghana. This contributed to the wealth and power of the rulers of the states in this zone. However, the perennial adverse climatic conditions in this area sometimes affected farming and animal rearing in the zone. With the decline in agriculture due to climatic factors, the wealth and power of the rulers were affected also. Some people also moved out of this zone in search of more climate-friendly areas. This culminated into a decline in the power of the states in the zone.

### **The decline in craft and artistic works in the area also fueled the decline of the states**

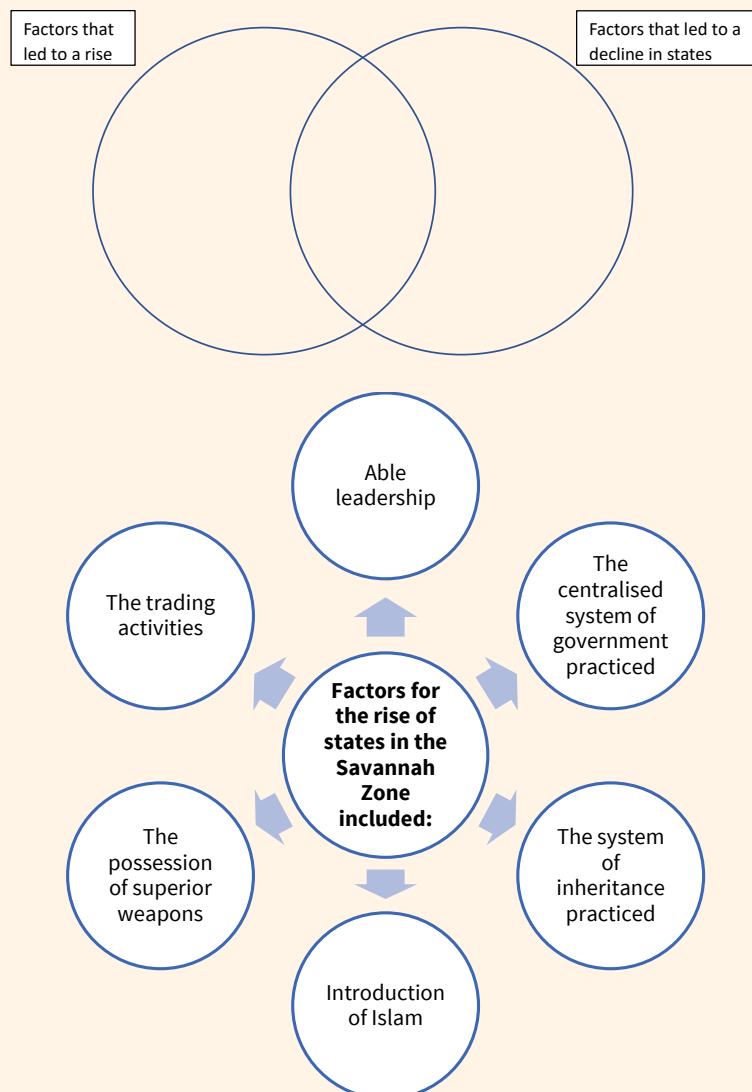
Besides agriculture, the Savannah Zone is also known for quality textiles, hides and skins and leather products. With these products, the people in the area engaged in long distance trade with the Hausa, Mande-Dyula and the Akan states in the forest zone of modern Ghana. This brought some profit and wealth to the people and their rulers. However, with the increase in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and harsh climatic conditions, the potential for this industry reduced. The reduction in the profitability of this industry also impacted adversely on the rise of the states in the Savannah Zone.

## The problem of diversification in crop production also led to the decline of their states over time

Many states in the Savannah zone tended to over rely on single crops such as cotton, shea butter or groundnuts. This means that little diversification is done in their farming practices. The adverse climatic conditions tended to affect these crops leading to huge losses to the people. This situation of poor climatic conditions sometimes created famine in the area. The situation encouraged migration of people to other parts of West Africa. The low productivity from the farms also affected the economic power of the ruling houses. Hence, their influence is reduced over time.

### Activity 3.26

1. Explain three factors that contributed to the decline of states in the Savannah Zone of Ghana.
2. Create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the factors that led to the rise and decline of states in the Savannah zone of Ghana.





### **States in the Savannah Zone boasted of some able leaders.**

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5. The wealth generated from trade enabled the construction of impressive buildings and infrastructure some of which still stand today. An example of this is the Larabanga Mosque which now serves as a tourist centre of significance in the northern part of Ghana.

**Activity 3.28**

1. Make use of primary and secondary sources of history to account for at least three factors each that were responsible for the rise and decline of states in the Savannah zone.

| Source type and content | What factor does it explain | What are the strengths of this source? | What are the limitations of this source? |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
|                         |                             |  |  |
|                         |                             |  |  |
|                         |                             |  |  |

**Extension Activity**

1. Discuss the role of women in the rise of any major kingdom in the Savannah zone of Ghana.
2. Create a chart that shows the major kingdoms in the Savannah zone of Ghana, where they settled after they migrated, and the administrative region where they are dominant today.
3. How can studying the rise of states in the Savannah zone of Ghana inform our understanding of power, leadership, and social organisation throughout history?

## THE RISE AND DECLINE OF STATES IN THE FOREST ZONE

### Historical States and Kingdoms in the Forest Zone of Ghana

The forest zone of Ghana covers a large expanse of land characterised by huge forest covers dotted by several water sources, different animal and plant species and green vegetation. Many states and kingdom emerged in the forest zone of Ghana, but our focus will be on the most historical ones. The notable historical states and kingdoms that existed in the forest zone of Ghana included the Bono States, the Denkyira Kingdom, Ashanti Empire, the Akyem Kingdom, and the Akwamu Kingdom. These states were known for their rich cultural heritage, complex centralised political system and economic prosperity.

## The General Time Period Associated with the Rise of States in the Forest Zone

The rise of these states and kingdoms generally occurred between the late 15th and the 18th centuries. The Denkyira Kingdom emerged around the late 15th century, while the Ashanti Empire rose to prominence in the late 17th century. The Akyem and Akwamu kingdoms also saw significant development during this period, contributing to the region's dynamic political landscape.

## How the Environmental Features of the Forest Zone Differed from the Savannah Zone and Influenced State Formation

The environmental features of the Forest zone differed significantly from those of the Savannah zone, influencing state formation in several ways. The Forest zone was characterized by dense tropical rainforests, which provided abundant natural resources such as timber, minerals, mountains and fertile land for agriculture. Unlike the open grasslands of the Savannah, the forests offered protection from external invasions. They also provided a wealth of resources for building and sustaining powerful states.

The availability of resources such as minerals attracted traders and boosted the local economy. This encouraged the formation of complex societies and centralized states in the forest zone. The land in the Forest zone was generally more fertile than the lands in the Savannah zone. Thus, unlike the Savannah Zone, the forest Zone, until much later, was not exposed so much to adverse climatic conditions. This encouraged state formation and settlement.

## The Dominant Economic Activities That Supported the Rise of Forest States

The dominant economic activities that supported the rise of forest states in Ghana included gold mining, agriculture, and trade. Gold mining was particularly significant, as the Forest zone was rich in gold deposits. The gold trade attracted both local and foreign traders to the forest region.

The zone supplied much of the gold requirements of Western European countries including the United Kingdom during the period of Colonialism. The region became a major hub for gold trade in both the Trans-Saharan Caravan Trade and the Legitimate trade with the Europeans.

Agriculture which was a key part of the economy of the forest states also played a significant role in their economic activities. With vast fertile and virgin lands dotted by various water sources, the Forest states cultivated yams, oil palms, plantain and kola nuts.

Additionally, the strategic location of these states facilitated trade with both inland and coastal regions, promoting economic growth and stability. As the Forest states were

mostly located on trade routes, they engaged in internal and external trades. Some of their towns also served as trade entrepot in both the Trans-Saharan Trade and the Legitimate trade.

They traded with the Mande-Dyula and Hausa traders from West Africa in commodities such as gold and kola nuts which were in high demands at the time. They also acted as middlemen in both trades. Trade provided them with a lot of wealth and influence.

## How the Forest States Established and Maintained Systems of Leadership and Governance

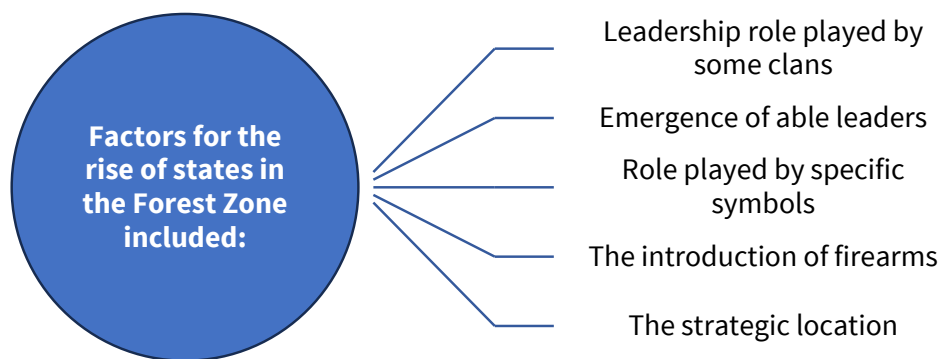
Until the second half of the seventeenth century, the Akan lived in small states or chiefdoms such as Bono Manso, Tekyiman, Wenchi, Adanse, Wassa, Aowin, Sefwi, Kwahu and Twifo. The impenetrable thick forest and the presence of tsetseflies initially delayed bigger state formations. These initial chiefdoms were organised on kinship lines. They were associations of loosely united family groups with a descent from a common ancestor.

These Forest states unlike the indigenous Guan groups that they came to meet later established and maintained structured systems of leadership and governance. They did this through the establishment of centralised monarchies and elaborate administrative structures. Their leadership and administrative structures were often hierarchical.

In the Ashanti Empire, for example, even though the Asantehene (king) was considered as *primus inter pares* (first among equals or Amanhene), yet he held supreme authority. He was supported by a council of chiefs and advisors. This hierarchical structure allowed for efficient governance and the implementation of laws and policies. It also ensured a sense of loyalty, order and stability. It guaranteed effective mobilization especially in times of emergencies. To what extent do you think the modern administrative state of Ghana mimics these structures?

Among the Forest states, the use of rituals, symbols and gestures were common part of their leadership and administrative structures. The use of traditional symbols and rituals reinforced the legitimacy and continuity of leadership. The Beaded Stool of the Denkyira and the Golden Stool of the Ashanti played useful roles in their state formation, continuity and stability. Among the Ashanti for instance, it is believed that the soul of each Ashanti resides in the Golden Stool. Also important to these states are their Great Oaths.

Finally, the Forest states have the tendency of building strategic military alliances with one another. They sometimes did so with states outside the Forest zone. A much talked about example of this strategic alliance was the Ashanti-Akwamu-Anlo Tripartite Alliance. These alliances enabled them to counterbalance the power and influence of rival powers. It also afforded them to consolidate their power and.



**Fig. 3.8:** Factors contributing to the rise of forest zones states

## Factors for the Rise of States in the Forest Zone

A number of factors contributed to the rise of states in the Forest Zone in Ghana. Some of these factors are illustrated in the chart above.

Let us discuss some of these factors as illustrated above.

### First is the leadership role played by some clans in the forest zones

The place of clans and kinship system is important among the Forest states. Some of these clans were at the forefront in state formations and consolidations. They provided the rallying point for organising the people into states. The Aduana Clan played a key role in the formation of the Bono state. The Oyoko Clan is responsible for organizing other pre-Ashanti groups into what became metropolitan Ashanti which later developed into a more powerful kingdom with high reputation.

### The rise of the Forest states was also due to the emergence of some able leaders

Leadership was key in the formation of the Forest States. The charisma, wit and skill of Agyin Kokobo and Otumfo Asare helped to establish the powerful Akwamu state. Denkyira's rise and influence was also due to its able leaders such as Boadu Akafo Brempon. The rise of Ashanti as a more powerful and all conquering state was due to the leadership skills and qualities of Osei Tutu I. Even though he did not establish the Ashanti state, it was his military prowess, strategic alliances and effective leadership that led to the rise of the Ashanti Kingdom.

### The role played by specific symbols cannot be discounted in the rise of the Forest states

The Forest states in particular and the Akan in general value important symbols and Oaths. These symbols and Oaths contributed no less to the rise of these forest states in Ghana. In one breadth, these symbols served as rallying point of unity among the members of the state.

In another breadth, the symbols became sacred objects of reverence for the members. The Agona Denkyira were noted for their sacred Beaded Stool which was a source of their strength and unity. They valued it and held it in great esteem. It was a source of strength for them in times of wars.

The Bono state was also noted for these symbols. The Ashanti Kingdom still has and revere their Golden Stool. This is considered the soul of the Ashanti Kingdom. In the past, they were prepared to defend it at all cost even if it meant being killed for it. The defense of this Stool provided them with great source of motivation, pride and resilience in fighting several wars of conquest. It also provided them with the passion in fighting what became the Anglo-Ashanti Wars.

### **The rise of the forest states was also due to the introduction of firearms by the Europeans**

These firearms were introduced by the British, the Dutch, the Danes, the Swedes, the Bradenburgers (Germans) and interlopers from European nations. Initially, these Europeans were reluctant in selling the firearms to the Africans because of the fear that the Africans might use them against the Europeans. But there was a change in policy later and African states started to acquire these firearms for warfare.

The emergence of Akyem, Akwamu, Ashanti and Denkyira as large political states in the seventeenth was due in part to the acquisition in large quantities of these firearms. The acquisition of these arms was made possible by the abundance of gold resources enjoyed by these states. They exchanged the gold for these arms or bought them from the Europeans. They sometimes used their coastal allies to acquire these firearms.

The acquisition of these firearms by leaders such as Osei Tutu of the Ashanti enabled them to embark on numerous wars of conquest which eventually led to the expansion and consolidation of these states. The firearms, however, created tensions and caused numerous inter-ethnic wars. Find out some examples of these wars and share your findings with your mates.

### **Finally, the strategic location of these states also contributed to their rise**

The forest states were in areas that boasted of abundance of forest resources such as timber, minerals and arable lands for agriculture. Their lands were fertile for farming all year round. They cultivated crops not just for subsistence but for surplus value also. The abundance of food in the states meant that there was time for leisure and expansionary ambitions. Some of their towns such as Kumasi were strategically located as trade routes and entrepot. These attracted huge traffic of goods and human populations to these areas. All these favourable conditions laid the foundation for a successful take off of states in the zone.



## The Decline of the Different Kingdoms in the Forest Zone

The decline of the different kingdoms in the Forest zone was influenced by a combination of internal and external factors.

1. Internal conflicts, such as succession disputes and rebellions, weakened the central authority and disrupted social cohesion.
2. The vulnerability to constant raids and attacks eventually weakened some of them.
3. Economic challenges, including the depletion of resources and changes in trade routes, also played a significant role.
4. Externally, European colonization and the subsequent imposition of colonial rule had a profound impact on these states. The British waged several wars against the Ashanti Empire, leading to its eventual defeat and incorporation into the British Gold Coast colony in the early 20th century.
5. The disruption of traditional systems of governance and economic exploitation by colonial powers further accelerated the decline of these kingdoms.

## Factors for the Rise and Decline of some Forest Zone States

The table below shows some factors for the rise, expansion and decline of some states that emerged in the forest zone of Ghana

**Table 3.1:** Summary of rise and decline of states in the Forest zone in Ghana

| Kingdom         | Rise  | Expansion   | Decline  |
|-----------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Bono</b>     | Control of key trade routes <i>[Consider trade as a lifeblood of the kingdom]</i>   | Military prowess, strategic alliances <i>[Evaluate specific wars or alliances]</i>                  | Internal power struggles between ruling houses <i>[Analyse how these struggles weakened the kingdom]</i>       |
| <b>Denkyira</b> | Effective leadership figures (identify specific rulers) <i>[Analyse how these leaders fostered stability and expansion]</i> | Wars of Conquest <i>[Consider the impact on trade and wealth generation]</i>                        | Evaluate the impact of the rise of rival Asante kingdom on Denkyira's decline compared to internal weaknesses. |
| <b>Asante</b>   | Strong centralised political structure <i>[Analyse the structure and its advantages]</i>                                    | Skilled military organisation and tactics <i>[Consider specific battles or military strategies]</i> | Overextension due to constant warfare  |
| <b>Akyem</b>    | Strategic location on major trade routes <i>[Analyse the benefits of this location]</i>                                     | Skilled diplomacy and negotiation <i>[Consider examples of how diplomacy helped Akyem]</i>          | Vulnerability to raids by more powerful neighbours   |

### Activity 3.28

1. Use the chart to explain how economic, social and political factors contributed to the rise of major states and kingdoms in the Forest Zone in Ghana. Judge how important each factor was. Make sure you always add details and explanations to your work.

| Factor    | How it led to the rise of states | Level of importance |
|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Political |                                  |                     |
| Social    |                                  |                     |
| Economic  |                                  |                     |

2. Place yourself into groups (or have your teacher assign groups to you) and role play the rise of one of the Forest Zone States. Think of some key events/ scenes from the history of this group and imagine how different characters would react.

Prepare for a debate in groups on the following topic: 'Able leadership was the sole factor for the rise of states in the Forest Zone.' Use the chart below to prepare your group for the debate.

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>Title:</b>    |  |
| Our argument:    |  |
| Speaker 1 Points |  |
| Speaker 2 Points |  |
| Speaker 3 Points |  |
| Conclusion       |  |

After the debate, make notes using the following table:

| Side 1: leadership was the sole factor | Side 2: leadership was not the sole factor |
|--|--|
| Evidence:                              | Evidence:                                  |
| My conclusions:                        |  |

**Research activity:**

Use the information above and the internet if you have access to it to research the reasons behind the decline of the Forest Zone states.

Think about the following:

- Were there any historical periods of decline for these states?
- What factors are attributed to those declines?
- Do the states have factors in common in relation to their decline?

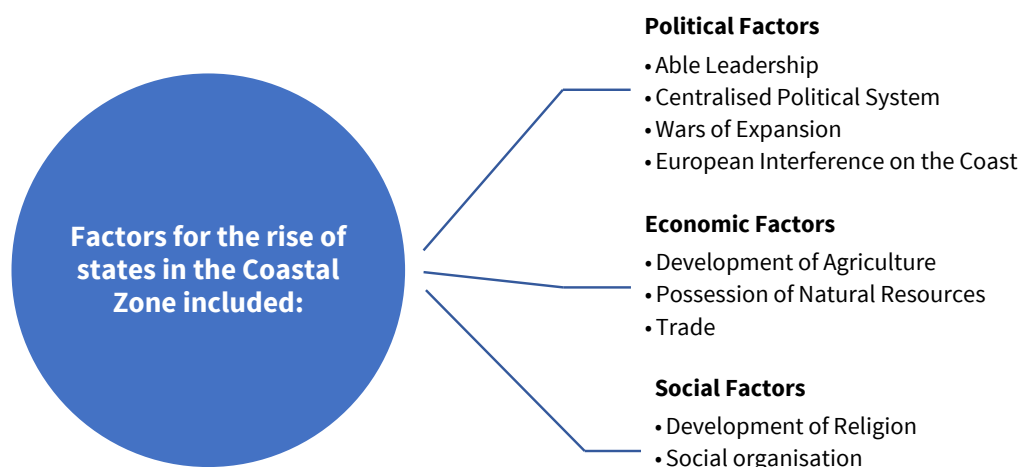
## THE RISE AND DECLINE OF STATES IN THE COASTAL ZONE OF GHANA

In our earlier discussion, we indicated what the Coastal zone of Ghana is all about. Start by mentioning at least two states that are located in the Coastal zone. What are the similarities between these states? After writing down your answers, show them to your classmate for review.

As we have seen with the Savannah zone and the Forest zone, the Coastal zone also went through the moment of glory or rise and the period of decline. What factors contributed to the rise of these Coastal states? How did they decline?

### Factors for the Rise of the Coastal States

The factors that accounted for the rise of the coastal states can be put into political factors, economic factors and social factors. The chart below shows the various factors that aided the rise of the Coastal states. Let us, therefore, discuss them one after the other.



**Fig. 3.29:** Rise of the states in the Coastal Zone

### **One political factor that led to the rise of the coastal states is able leadership.**

Like the forest states and the Savannah states, the coastal states also boasted of some able leaders. These leaders were strategic in planning. They possessed effective mobilization and organizational skills. They used these skills and competences to lay the foundations of their states. They also consolidated the states. The Ga for instance had Nii Ayi Kushi who sacrificed a great deal for the people. The Anlo also had their able leader in Torgbui Sri I. It is the leadership of these personalities that laid a solid foundation for these coastal states.

### **Another political factor that accounted for the rise of the coastal state was their practice of centralized systems.**

Apart from the Ga-Adangbe, the rest of the Coastal states practised centralized system of administration. The Ga-Adangbe were originally theocratic. They, however, adopted the centralized system from their neighbours. The practice of the centralised system of administration ensured a sense of stability, and loyalty in the coastal states. It ensured proper mobilization and defence of the states. The practice of this centralized system was thus responsible for the rise of these coastal states.

### **Trade is one economic factor that also accounted for the rise of the coastal states**

All the coastal states were active participants in the European coastal trade in slaves and legitimate goods such as gold, oil palm, rubber, cotton. The coastal states generally acted as middlemen or intermediaries between the inland traders and the European merchants on the coast. The trade brought much wealth to the people in the coastal towns. Some individuals established their own ruling dynasties. Existing ruling houses also consolidated their rules through the profits, rent notes and taxes collected.

### **How the Geographical Location and Resources of Ghana's Coast Contribute to the Rise of Powerful States**

Both geographical location and resources contributed meaningfully to the rise of powerful states in the zone. The Coastal zone of Ghana boasts of the Gulf of Guinea and other water resources. With the availability of these resources, Coastal states such as the Anlo-Ewe, the Ga-Adangbe and some Fante states practiced fishing as a source of occupation and livelihood. The geographical location of these states by the Gulf of Guinea also made them active players in the coastal trade especially in both the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the Legitimate Trade that followed it later. Some coastal states such as the Anlo-Ewe, Ga-Adangbe and the Fante played the role of middlemen in these trades. This brought them enormous wealth and power. Keta for example became an important harbour city that attracted populations from the rest of Ghana and West Africa as labourers, artisans, messengers and merchants. Another resource that boosted the rise of the coastal states was coconut. Both Keta and Nzema areas

were noted for their coconut production. Other resources of the coastal zone were salt and salted dried fish. These resources were responsible for their rise.

## How Trade Played a Role in the Development of the Coastal Zone

Trade was an important contributor to the development of the coastal zone of Ghana. The areas were noted for their internal and external trade. Internally, the coastal states traded with the inland and Forests states through the exchange of commodities such as dried and salted fish as well as salt for cloth, kola nut, and gold from the Forest zone.

Externally, the Coastal states were active players in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the Legitimate Trade as middlemen and slave merchants. Some of their people became what was known as ‘Merchant Princes’. These were ‘trade boys’ or ‘company slaves’ who became worthy through trade and assumed positions of influence in the coast.

Among them were John Kabes or Cabes who served both the English and the Dutch companies. He is believed to be the ancestor of the rulers of Komenda State. Another person was Obirempon Kodwo or Cudjo Caboceer who served the English Company from 1729 until his death in 1776. He is closely associated with the Ogua or Cape Coast Stool. Amonu Juma was another ‘merchant prince.’ He headed the Asafo company in Anomabu in 1764 and later founded the dynasty which rules Anomabu today. In the Anlo area, individuals such as Tamakloe, De Souza and. The Vanderpuye were also renowned slave merchants in the Ga-Adangbe State.

Wealth from trade accorded the rulers and some enterprising families of the Coastal states with great power and influence.

## How the Control of Trade and Resources Led to the Rise of Powerful States in the Coastal Zone

Trade was prominent in the rise of powerful states in the Coastal zone. With trade, the Coastal states became more relevant. They acted as middlemen in the European-African trade. Some of their rulers leased lands to the European merchants and charged rent notes on them. The King of Elmina for instance collected rent notes from the Portuguese over the land on which they built Castelo de Sao Jorge da Mina or the St. George of the Mine Castle in 1482.

Some coastal citizens who were enterprising also benefited from the trade with the Europeans. Trade also attracted huge populations to these areas thereby making the areas important centres of focus in trade, occupation, education and social life. The tax, rent notes and profits from the trade made the rulers of the various Coastal States wealthy and powerful. Individuals such as Amonu Juma, a ‘Merchant Prince’ founded a dynasty in Anomabu.

Control of resources such as salt also made the rulers wealthy and powerful. Salt was in high demand at the time. It was highly sought after in the Forest Zone of Ghana.

**Activity 3.29**

1. Imagine that you and a partner are a European trader and a coastal state representative. Act out how this interaction over trade would happen. You can do this in larger groups and assign various roles if you wish.
  - a. Think about the following:
    - i. What would each party want out of the interaction?
    - ii. Would it be a hostile or pleasant interaction?
    - iii. How would each party respond and react to each other?

**Activity 3.30**

Use the chart to explain how economic, social and political factors contributed to the rise of major states and kingdoms in Ghana. Judge how important each factor was. Make sure you always add details and explanations to your work.

| Factor    | How it led to the rise of states | Level of importance |
|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Political |                                  |                     |
| Social    |                                  |                     |
| Economic  |                                  |                     |

## Decline of the Coastal Kingdoms

Despite the rise and influence of kingdoms in the coastal zone, they eventually declined in their power. What factors were responsible for their decline? With your experiences in the Savannah and Forest zones, would you mind identifying some possible factors that led to the decline of the coastal states?

**One factor that led to the decline of the coastal states was the ‘divide and rule’ tactics adopted by the Europeans.**

The Europeans especially the British pitched the coastal state against each other as rivals. This tactic weakened the authority of some coastal chiefs. In this tactic, some areas were closer to some Europeans where other areas were considered enemies of other Europeans.

### **The sale of firearms to the Africans also led to the decline of the coastal states**

When the Europeans lifted the ban on the sale of firearms to the Africans, it escalated inter-ethnic conflicts in many parts of Ghana. With the lifting of the ban, states such as the Denkyira, Akwamu, Akyem and Asante which were in the Forest zone acquired these firearms. With the firearms, they successfully waged wars against some states including coastal the Ga and the Fante. This eventually weakened the authority of the rulers in these coastal states.

### **The creation of ‘Spheres of Influence’ by the Europeans also led to the decline of the Coastal states.**

The presence of the Europeans on the coast of Ghana made the Europeans to carve out some parts of the coast as their areas of influence. The Dutch for instance regarded the stretch of land from the Christianborg Castle in Osu to Keta and an indeterminate number of miles inland as their ‘territory.’ They held on to these areas until 1850 when they sold them to the British. The west of Osu belonged to the Dutch and the British. Elmina for instance was for the Dutch whilst Cape Coast was for the British. Both Sekondi and Komenda were divided into Dutch and British divisions. These strategies went a long way to weaken the authority of the coastal rulers.

### **Another factor that led to the decline of the coastal states was the emergence of new social classes.**

The introduction of the Atlantic Slave Trade and the Legitimate Trade led to the emergence of new social classes in the coastal areas. They became the middle class or the ‘merchant princes.’ They were wealthy and highly respected in their settlements. Amonu Juma who founded the Anomabu ruling dynasty belonged in this class. John Cabes also fell in hhis class. The emergence of this new class system challenged the authority of the old traditional class or ruling class. This eventually weakened the influence of the ruling houses, and contributed to the decline of their states.

### **The introduction of Christianity and Western education in the coastal states also contributed to the decline of the coastal states.**

Both Christianity and Western education challenged the authority of the chiefs. The missionary regarded the African chieftaincy system as heathenistic and backward. They condemned it and challenged its legitimacy. With time, some coastal residents who became Christians or products of Western education began to undermine the authority of their traditional rulers. Over time, the chiefs lost their influence.

**Pause and Discuss:** Explain what you think was the main reason for the decline of the coastal states. Feedback to the rest of the class. Have you come up with similar or different ideas?



**Activity 3.31**

Create a timeline depicting the rise and decline of different coastal states in Ghana.

## How the Coastal States Leave a Lasting Impact on Ghana

The coastal states have in many ways left lasting impacts on Ghana. First, in the areas of education, the coastal states continue to be reference points. The coastal states pride themselves as being the pioneers of Western education in Ghana. The oldest and renowned secondary schools are mostly found in the coastal areas of Ghana till date.

In the struggle for independence and nationalism in general, the Coastal areas were prominent. Citizens such as John Mensah Sarbah, Joseph Casely Hayford, Nii Kwabena Bonney II, Osu Alata Mantse (the ‘Boycotthene’), Dr Kwame Nkrumah and Komla Agbeli Gbedema as coastal citizens were key in the independence struggle in Ghana. The freedom and nationhood we enjoy today are fruits of their struggles.

The forts and castles built in the Coastal areas remain important tourist attractions in Ghana. Every year, these tourist sites such as the Cape Coast Castle, Elmina Castle and the Christianborg Castle attracts huge number of foreign and local tourists. This fetches some amount of foreign exchange for the country. It also helps to create instant jobs for taxi and Uber drivers, hotel workers and dealers in arts and crafts.

**Pause and Discuss:** How did the coastal states contribute to the development of Ghana? How do they still contribute to the ongoing development of Ghana today?

Use your social media handle to share your presentation in the social media. Tag your friends, history teacher and other teachers in your school.

**Activity 3.32**

1. Discuss the basic factors that accounted for the rise of coastal states in Ghana.

**Hints:** *Trade, able leadership, resources, alliances, the role of Western education and Christianity, strategic location*

2. How can the geographical location and resources of an area contribute to the development of the area?

3. With the aid of the vocabularies you have learnt in this section, try your hand on this word puzzle.

### Word Search Puzzle

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H | I | S | T | O | R | Y | X | A | K | A | N | T |
| E | A | R | C | H | A | E | O | L | O | G | Y | G |
| M | F | O | R | E | S | T | E | L | T | T | E | S |
| O | I | R | U | T | E | S | R | E | D | A | E | L |
| L | Z | O | N | E | H | O | T | L | E | M | U | T |
| E | O | E | R | U | O | S | N | O | D | N | U | O |
| D | O | G | U | A | N | G | R | I | A | D | B | F |
| A | T | A | N | E | R | R | E | E | S | I | D | N |
| G | T | A | E | E | I | A | V | A | N | N | A | S |
| B | A | M | I | G | R | A | T | I | O | N | A | O |
| A | N | A | C | I | L | T | S | A | O | C | T | A |
| N | L | L | E | H | O | W | E | R | S | Y | R | U |
| I | G | E | W | E | A | O | M | R | S | E | H | T |
| N | A | M | O | L | E | D | A | G | B | A | N | I |
| A | S | T | O | H | A | J | I | E | N | A | R | U |

| Word List    |          |             |            |
|--------------|----------|-------------|------------|
| Migration    | Savannah | Akan        | Tohajie    |
| Mole Dagbani | Zone     | Sources     | Settlement |
| Guan         | Forest   | Archaeology | Ewe        |
| Founders     | Coastal  | History     | Route      |
| Leaders      |          |             |            |

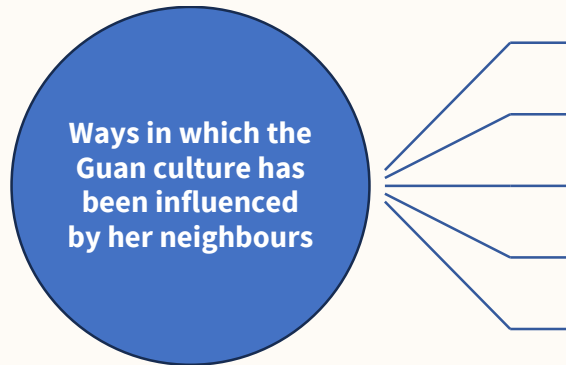
### Instructions for Word Puzzle

- Locate and circle each word from the list in the word search puzzle.  
**Note:** The words can be hidden horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, and forwards or backwards.
- Choose three words from the list and write a short paragraph explaining their significance in the context of Ghanaian history.
- Share findings with the class or in groups, discussing how each term relates to the broader themes of migration, settlement, and cultural heritage in Ghana.

**Enjoy solving the puzzle!**

# Review Questions

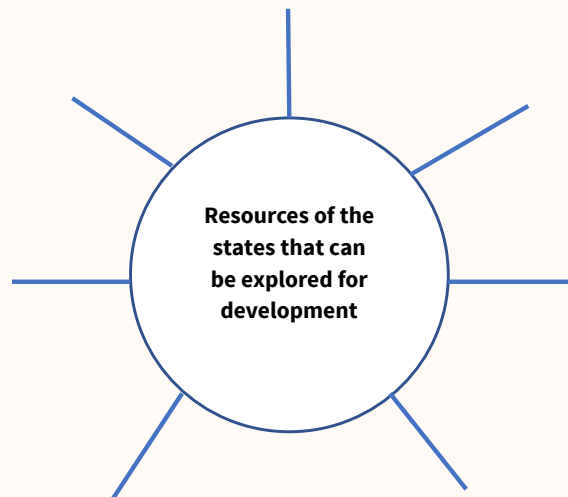
1. How have the Guan culture been influenced by her neighbours?



2. How have the Akans contributed to the cultural growth and development of Ghana?
3. How have the various ethnic groups and states in Ghana ensured peaceful co-existence?

Notes on strategies the various ethnic groups in Ghana use to ensure peaceful co-existence.

4. Accounts for some of the resources of the various states that the country can explore for national development



5. How can the various ethnic groups promote national unity and peace in the country?

# Answers to Review Questions

1. The Guan culture has been influenced in some ways by their neighbours.
  - One area of influence is chieftaincy. The Guans were originally theocratic. They were led by priests. However, the Guans later adopted the centralized system of administration from their Akan neighbours.
  - Another area of influence is language. Although various Guan groups have retained their languages or dialects, the Guans have also been influenced by the languages of their neighbour. This includes the Akan, Ewe and the Gonja.
  - The Guans were also influenced by the cultures of their neighbours. They have learnt the mode of dressing, Asafo company and songs, traditional dances of some of their neighbours.
  - It is important to indicate that the Guans have also influenced the cultures of some of their neighbours. This includes the Gonja. The Guans are generally peaceful people, and this tends to affect the areas they settle at.

2. How the Akan contributed to the cultural growth and development of the country.

The Akan have contributed enormously to the cultural growth and development of the country.

- One such area of contribution is the chieftaincy system. Their practice of centralised system of administration has been embraced by most parts of Ghana including once theocratic and acephalous societies.
  - Another area of their contribution is their symbols. The Akan symbols such as the Adinkra symbols are now national symbols.
  - They also contributed in the area of music and songs. Akan songs can be heard at national events, funerals, naming ceremonies and churches.
  - The Akan Kente cloth just like the Ewe one is a national symbol of Ghana. It identifies Ghanaians everywhere in the world.
3. The various ethnic groups and states in Ghana have ensured peaceful co-existence through some of the following practices:
    - Inter-marriages.
    - Military and economic alliances.
    - National struggles for independence.
    - Organization of social programmes such as festivals, funerals, etc.
    - Religion-Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion.
  4. Resources of the various states that the country can explore for national development
    - Tourist attractions.

- Festivals.
  - Songs and dances.
  - Palaces.
  - Kente/Fugu cloths.
  - Foods.
  - Art works.
  - National symbols.
- 5.** The various ethnic groups can promote national unity and peace in the country by doing some of the following:
- Ensuring tolerance of each other's culture.
  - Avoiding ethnocentrism and favouritism.
  - Ensuring national inclusion in all institutions of the state.
  - Promoting inter-marriages.
  - Deepening the boarding school system.
  - Encouraging the inclusion and participation of women and People Living with Disabilities (PWDs) in all decision-making areas.
  - Documenting succession lines of all ruling houses or clans.

## Extended Reading

- Kuffour, P.A. (2021). Concise notes on African and Ghanaian history, K4 Series Investment Ventures
- Click on the links below for further readings on the origin and migration of the Gonjas:
- [https://www.persee.fr/doc/sfhom\\_1768-7144\\_1981\\_mel\\_5\\_1\\_923#:~:text=The%20traditional%20view%20is%20that,doubt%20on%20the%20traditional%20history.](https://www.persee.fr/doc/sfhom_1768-7144_1981_mel_5_1_923#:~:text=The%20traditional%20view%20is%20that,doubt%20on%20the%20traditional%20history.)
- <https://molenationalpark.org/the-gonjas.php>
- <https://www.britannica.com/place/kingdom-of-Gonja>
- <https://www.africanhistoryextra.com/p/a-history-of-the-gonja-kingdom-1550>

Click on the following links for further readings on the origin and migration of the Akans:

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akan\\_people#:~:text=13%20External%20links-,Oral%20tradition%20and%20Origin,into%20Awkar%2C%20or%20Koumbi%20Saleh.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akan_people#:~:text=13%20External%20links-,Oral%20tradition%20and%20Origin,into%20Awkar%2C%20or%20Koumbi%20Saleh.)
- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Akan>
- <https://www.modernghana.com/news/993390/the-origins-of-the-akan-speaking-people-of-ghana.html>
- <https://resources.saylor.org/wwwresources/archived/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Akan-People.pdf>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nR743qDlOjM>

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