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The Nana Yaa Asantewaa War: Analysis of the Political Institutions of the Asante during The War Of The Golden Stool and the Existing Narratives

by

Angela Danso Gyane

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of Senior Independent Study

Supervised by
Ibra Sene- History
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Abstract

The War of the Golden Stool was the last in the Anglo-Asante Wars, where the Asante fought against the British colonial agenda. According to the Asante oral history, Nana Yaa Asantewaa was at the forefront of this war. She was the commander, but most of the literature to not reflect this oral history. Therefore, this study seeks to address two essential questions: how did gender dynamics in the Asante Kingdom's political system shape their Resistance against the British in 1900- 01? Moreover, how does the analysis of oral histories from the matrilineal culture of the Asante decenter Western narratives of the War of the Golden Stool and reinterpret the war's impact by centering the Nana Yaa Asantewaa's climb to power in 1900? These are questions that the literature leaves wanting as it fails to center Nana Yaa Asantewaa and the critical role she played in the War of the Golden Stool. While utilizing Asante oral histories such as Nwonkoro (Songs), dance, and storytelling, this study will address these questions to decolonize the war literature. This paper hypothesizes that the patriarchal system's complicated gender dynamics, the Queen-mother's critical position, and her post-menopausal age in the Asante Kingdom gave way for Nana Yaa Asantewaa to lead the Resistance against the British. Furthermore, that due to the anomalies which occurred leading up to and during the war of the Golden Stool- fragmentation of the confederation, the hole in the power structure, and the presence of a woman at the emergency meeting-Nana Yaa Asantewaa were able to use the already established governmental system that allows for her to have a certain amount of power in politics. Using the methodological framework based on Aidoo (2007), this paper seeks to fill in some of the literature's discrepancies by exploring gender, leadership, and colonial scholarship as it exists now.

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my mom,
Hagar Ntiwaa Sarkodie (Danso Gyane).

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This paper would not have been possible if it was not for the following people mentioned (and those not) and all those who gave me a motivational word.

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

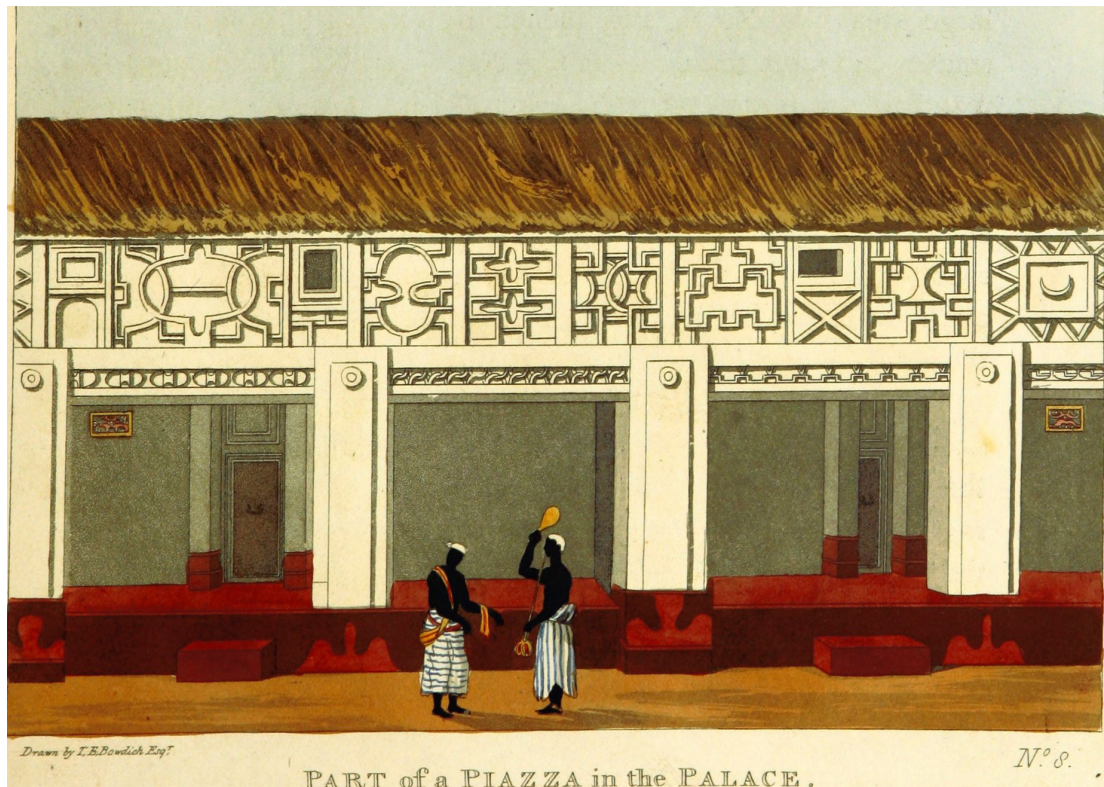


Figure 1 "Part of a Piazza in the palace" of Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti Empire, from *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee...* (1819) by Thomas E. Bowdich.

At its prime, the Asante Empire held a monopoly on modern-day Ghana and parts of modern-day Togo, Burkina Faso, and the Ivory Coast (Edgerton 1995). Due to the dominance of the Asante in the region, all European powers on the coast paid rent to the Asante-Hene, and at Elmina, the Dutch trading center, Asante envoys were greeted with a seven-gun salute (Ibid.). Unlike other predecessors in the region, the British rebuffed diplomatic attempts by the Asante to garner trade deals. Due to these tensions, the hundred-year war for the Gold Coast was catalyzed (Ibid.). The First Anglo-Asante War was from 1823 to 1831, where the British, led by Sir Charles MacCarthy, allied with the Fante, led an expedition against the Asante after rejecting the Asante's claim the Fante Coast and the

Asante's attempt to negotiate (Edgerton 1995, Tieku 2015). The first war ended in the British defeat as the British underestimated the military competency of the Asante (Ibid.). From 1863-1864, the Second Anglo Asante War took place, precipitated by the Asante crossing the river Pra while chasing a fugitive, with the war ending in a stalemate (Ibid.). In 1871 the British purchased the Dutch Gold Coast, which led to the Third Anglo-Asante War from 1873 to 1874. The British dominated technologically over the Asante, took over the capital, Kumasi, pillaged, and burned it down. (Ibid.). Following the war, ending in the signing of the Treaty of Fomena, signed in 1874, required the Asante to pay an indemnity of 50 thousand ounces of gold to the British (Ibid.). In 1891, the Asante then turned down the offer to be a British Protectorate, which led to the Fourth Anglo Asante War in 1894. The Asante did not resist, and the, with Asantehene, signed a treaty of protection and was sent into exile with other leaders (Ibid.).

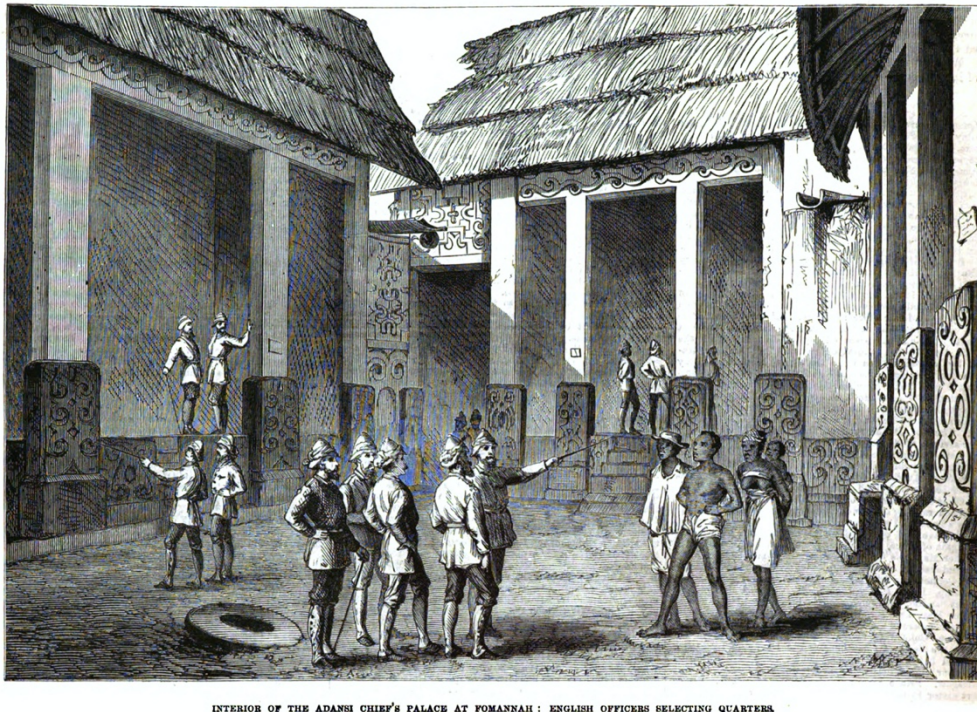


Figure 2 British troops ransacking a lower chief's home in Fomena in 1874. The Illustrated London News 64

The series of wars and conflicts between the British and Asante, categorized as the Anglo-Asante wars or the Hundred Years War, was critical in setting up the conditions for the War of the Golden Stool. It played a significant role in destabilizing the region and causing fractures in the Asante empire. It also led to the anomalies that allowed Nana Yaa Asantewaa to take the War's leadership position. Therefore, literature on these wars is essential. The literature does little to include women or the Queen-Mothers and the critical roles in Asante's foreign policies, and the wars and battles fought with the British. This sets a precedent for the War of the Golden Stool narrative to exclude Nana Yaa Asantewaa and her crucial role in the War. This study aims to include women in the narrative, and that will showcase how most of the literature fails miserably in telling the story.



Figure 3 Lord Gifford and Advanced Scouts storming a village. *The Illustrated London News* 64

The War of the Golden Stool, otherwise known as the Yaa Asantewaa War to the Asante, was fought from April 1900 to April 1901. Though a short-lived war, its consequences and significance are evident in the history of colonialism in modern-day Ghana. Nana Yaa Asantewaa, the Queen -Mother of Edweso, commandeered the Asante forces in this last Anglo-Asante War, but she is often dismissed from history books. The exclusion of Black women from history lends itself to the erasure of major historical influences- especially when it comes to the Asante because they are a matrilineal society. What makes this significant is that the erasure takes out the complex nature of Asante politics as it is not matriarchy but a matrilineal system that exists within patriarchy. Therefore, one needs to explore what patriarchy is in the first place, then evaluate how Asante fits within those lines, all while highlighting women's critical status in society. The literature does not afford one a close complex look at the history of the complex Asante gender relations within historical events. Therefore, it is systematic that Asante women are often left out of literature, except for Nana Yaa Asantewaa, who is nevertheless not often depicted inaccurately. Therefore, my study looks at what these gaps are lacking in the literature. It and uses oral histories often overlooked by scholars to supplement because they help center do a better job of telling history from the Asante point of view and pointing out the active roles of women even within a negative connotation. With women dismissed throughout Asante's history, through these Eurocentric literatures, the culture and identity of the Asante are also affected negatively.

This study's questions are: *How did the gender dynamics within the Asante political system of the Asante Kingdom shape the Asante Kingdom's Resistance against the British in 1900- 01? How does the analysis of oral histories from the matrilineal culture of the Asante*

decenter Western narratives of the War of the Golden Stool and reinterpret the War's impact by centering the Nana Yaa Asantewaa's climb to power in 1900? These questions aim to focus on certain blind spots missing from in the literature and therefore push the importance of primary sources like oral histories often dismissed in the War of the Golden Stool. There are two hypotheses:

H1: The patriarchal system's complicated gender dynamics, the critical position of the queen-mother, and her post-menopausal age in the Asante Kingdom gave way for Nana Yaa Asantewaa to lead the Resistance against the British.

H2: Due to these anomalies that occurred leading up to and during the War of the Golden Stool - the- fragmentation of the Asante Confederation, the hole in the power structure, and the presence of a woman at the emergency meeting- -Nana Yaa Asantewaa was able to use the already established governmental system that allowed for her to have a certain amount of power in politics. These aims center Nana Yaa Asantewaa in the War and highlight her contributions and significant impact on catalyzing and leading the War. These were built on the theoretical framework by Aidoo (2007), which sought to explain the Asante Queen-Mothers' phenomenon of assuming positions of power outside of their legal position.

This is a two-part study with a written component and a performance piece. The written component will be in the upcoming chapters, including the Literature Review, which will present existing literature on patriarchy, Asante politics, and differing narratives on the War of the Golden Stool. Then the Research Design will set up the study and the variables being evaluated. The Results and Analysis chapter showcases the oral history of the War from the Asante point of view and then compares and contrasts it to the literature- both the Ghanaian literature and the non- Ghanaian literature. The Alternative Independent Study script lays out

the performance component of this study, including traditional storytelling styles, Nwomkoro (songs), music, and dance.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

"Asante queen mothers were very often eclipsed and overwhelmed by the numerically superior male actors in the political arena. This is perhaps the reason why historians have largely neglected them. So far, the picture we have of these women co-rulers has been drawn mainly by anthropologists and sociologists such as R. S. Rattray, M. Fortes, M. Manoukian, and K. A. Busia. It is a static picture dealing with the position and status of the queen mothers". (Aidoo 1977)

Worldwide, women have participated in the wars, revolutions, and conflicts within their environment. Despite the very minimal scholarship on the role of women in combat, they still played pivotal roles in conflicts worldwide (Afshar 2004, Darden 2019). The role of women in the Asante is dynamic because women change and evolve based on age and status. The British attempts to colonize all of the Gold Coast were extensive, and it led to the Anglo-Asante wars that lasted about a hundred years. The importance of the Asante resistance is often ignored, and women's roles in some cases do not get addressed in a lot of the literature. The last of the Anglo-Asante wars, The War of the Golden Stool, was led by a woman, Nana Yaa Asantewaa of Adweso. Women in combat is a political phenomenon around the world and to have a woman lead a war is something that is out of the ordinary, as war is seen as a masculine space.

This literature review explores previous theories on patriarchy and showcases the already existing literature on the Asante before and during the Golden Stool War. The Asante Kingdom/Empire is widely researched, and because of that, there is a lot of literature available that explores its history and people. Unfortunately, a lot of the literature is written by non- Ghanaians and has failed to document what the Asante see as their history and heritage. The Asante Kingdom preserved its history and culture through oral traditions from storytelling to the Talking Drum to the Nnwomkro-songs sung by women. Though many

scholars have some knowledge of Asante's rich history, they do not know all, and many more misinterpret Asante culture due to language barriers and their own biases.

The literature review is going to first explore patriarchy theoretically and as it existed in the Asante, then the political structure of the Asante during that time period, the previous four Anglo-Asante wars, the already existing narrative on the War, the Ghanaian scholarship on the war and then finally its significance.

Patriarchy

As the Asante Kingdom is a matrilineal society, it is often assumed to be a matriarchy. With the extensive power of the Queen-Mother and various women who have been heralded throughout Asante's history for their bravery, the patriarchal system that exists within the Asante is often overlooked. Though the Asante do not have a typical patriarchal society where men have sole societal power, they still uphold it in their way. The following literature was chosen to define the fundamentals of patriarchy. It highlights the different forms and spaces patriarchy occupies, which will then be applied to the Asante society, namely during the War of the Golden Stool and its effects on the war's outcome.

Patriarchy means the father's rule, and is a heavily discourses concept with different interpretations as it is applied to a different society. For example, Eisenstein defines patriarchy as a sexual hierarchy revealed through women's roles as mothers, consumers in the family, and domestic workers (Eisenstein 1977), which shows that the societal norms of gender roles help support a patriarchal system's make up its foundations. Walby defines it as a social structure system in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women. The main focus is the systematic structure of gender inequality and childbearing, evident as maintaining the patriarchal systems within a society (Walby 1996). Lerner argues that

patriarchy is created by men and women with the patriarchal family as the foundation of its organization (Chowdhury 2009). Millett sees the family as an institution that encourages its members to conform to gender norms and roles, which leave women in inferior positions (Ibid.). Beechey theorized patriarchy to unravel the intricacies of the experiences of women's oppression (Beechey 1979). This was theorized based on several theorists such as Juliet Mitchell, who uses patriarchy to touch on kindred systems where men exchange women and the power of the father, and Heidi Hartman, who uses patriarchy to refer to male dominance over women. (Ibid.).

These theories still maintain that the basis of patriarchy is male dominance both inside and outside of the home. While many of the theorists above focused on the home as the most significant support of patriarchy, some theorists like Woehrle concentrate on the military due to patriarchal power. (Woehrle 2010) Woehrle sees patriarchy and war as social phenomena that are not mutually exclusive but as interlocking structures that support each other (Ibid.). The patriarchy's power is the centralized male control of foreign policy, the state, and national decision-making. The structures of patriarchy, such as racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism, are convoluted parts of militarism with the state's power to establish norms (Ibid.). The military sphere has become a 'masculine' haven because of myths surrounding masculinity and war; therefore, patriarchy, to protect, control, and expand its power, needs militarism (Ibid.).

Political Structure of the Asante Kingdom

The legitimate authority in the Asante is through Sika Dwa Kofi, the Golden Stool, which keeps the Asante Union together. "It is said that on one Friday, at a great gathering of the various independent chiefs, Okomfo Anokye- a powerful chief priest in the Asante- caused a stool to descend from the clouds and rest on the lap of Osei Tutu," (Asirifi-Danquah. 2007, Boahen 2003). The chiefs who were gathered then



Figure 4 Sika Dwa Kofi (The Golden Stool of Asante) Fair Use Image

consecrated the stool through rituals, and it was named 'Sika Dua Kofi' or the Golden Stool, and Okomfo Anokye presented to stool to the king as the soul of the Asante nation, and guaranteed that legitimacy of authority was confirmed through the possession of the golden stool (Ibid.). Knowing that the Golden Stool represented the Asante's soul, it is the Asantehene's authoritative symbol to rule over the union of states that make up the Asante, and the British equated the conquering of the Asante with the ownership of the Golden Stool (Akyeampong and Obeng 1995). The Governor of the Gold Coast, Hodgson, wrote in his letter to the colonial office on 29th January 1909 saying: "Finally, I refer to the Golden Stool, about which so much has been said in the newspapers. Very few people seem to realize the Political value of a tribal stool... To deprive a tribe of its stool is far more severe punishment than to deprive it of its king or head chief... the whole history of Ashanti is attached to it, and only the possessor of it is acknowledged as Head or Master of the Ashantis" (Ibid.). This is significant because it shows the British perception was to take the government's symbol of authority- to signify the British rule as a legitimate one.

Acheampong and Obeng state, "The axis of Asante social organization was the matrilineage (*abusua*), headed by a male elder (*abusuapanin*) and a female elder (*obaapanin*). The roles of the chief (*ohene*) and the queen mother (*ohemaa*) at the state level were modeled after that of the *Abusuapanin* and the *Obaapanin*" (Acheampong and Obeng 1995). The Asante Union had a federation with a representative government, where descent groups provide political elites- Senior chiefs, and the royal bloodline delivers the kingship (McCaskie 2015). The *Asantehemaa* (Queen Mother) and the *Asantehene* (King) were at the pinnacle of the empire residing in Kumasi, the capital (Achebe 2019). Under them were the Paramount Chiefs - the *Omanhene*- and the Paramount queen-mother, the *Ohemaa*, followed by the rulers of each town, the *Oba Panin* (female), and the *Odikro* (male). The Towns were divided into eight clans governed by subchiefs *Abusua-panin* (male) (Ibid.). Most political positions were reserved for men except for the *Ohemaa*- queen mother's place, usually held by the king's mother or sister, and often seen as ruler along with the king (Acheampong and Obeng 1995, Aidoo 1977). The Queen-mother must possess the qualities of wisdom, knowledge, emotion, and compassion (Acheampong and Obeng 1995). The Queen-mother was the principal advisor and guide to the king, including having the right to rebuke and criticize him in public. Failure to do so will lead to the deposition or destoolment, removed from her position by the national assembly of chiefs (Aidoo 1977). The queen-mother is also required to be present in court whenever important matters are decided (Ibid.). She also had her court where she reviewed judicial cases with her cluster of male and female counselors, with an independent jurisdiction that covered matters affecting women; some males litigants would apply to have their cases transferred to her court from the king's court because her fines were generally lower (Ibid.). She was seen as the genealogist of the royal

family. She could determine who was the rightful king to sit on the stool as well as nominate a candidate which the chiefs had to approve, similar to that of the president of the United States nominating a supreme court justice and the senate approving of it (Ibid.). She had intricate roles in the rites and rituals to enthrone a king and was the first to be called to a dying king and had responsibilities in his funeral rites (Ibid.). The queen-mother was also entitled to the right of her wealth and property, like all women within the Asante, and with the accumulation of money comes power (Ibid.).

However, the Queen-mother had limitations as she was selected by the king and members of the royal family with the approval of the ruling assembly of chiefs (Aidoo 1977). Her hereditary position immediately raised her above women commoners who had no direct control over her conduct in office; therefore, she did not represent women's interests within the government (Ibid.). It is structural that as a person in power, she is not beholden to represent the women of a given state but can personally choose to look out for their interest if need be (Ibid.). Although the social system was characterized by a very high degree of equality between male and female members of a lineage in inheritance and marriage, cultural attitudes restricted women's modus operandi in public life (Ibid.). This included the universal loathing of aggressiveness in the public behavior of women but not of men (Ibid.). The aggressive female was sharply put down as obaa-barima (a 'he-woman') (Ibid.).

This literature collection was chosen because it helps set up the political structure that exists within the Asante. However, in much Western literature, the Queen-Mother's role is not highlighted during historical events, therefore, portraying their position as more performative than formative. This is significant because it sets up a hierarchy of power within the Asante and the power the Queen- Mother wields within the Asante and its

significance. This illustrates how a Paramount Queen Mother wielding the military power in Asante as Nana Yaa Asantewaa did is an anomaly. The unique circumstances that allowed this to happen are shown in the following sections.

Existing Narratives on the War of the Golden Stool

Western narratives of the War focus on Asante as a whole and not many individuals, except for the Asante-Hene Prempeh II and Governor Hodson. Wasserman is a prime example of this because he dismisses the Golden Stool's significance just because it was not a throne (Wasserman 1961). He also fails to mention Nana Yaa Asantewaa's role in the War, not even as the War catalyst.

McCaskie and Rattray do recount the War, including Nana Yaa Asantewaa, but they fail to centralize her and her role (McCaskie 2007 and Rattray 1929). Most of the western narratives also conclude with the British winning the War and presumably colonizing the Asante, apart from Wilks in 'Asante at the End of the Nineteenth Century: Setting the Record Straight.' He decolonizes the narratives by analyzing Osafroadu Amankwatia, a legal adviser to the Northern Ghana House of Chiefs, that the narratives around colonization need more discourse. He explores the British-Asante relations in the late nineteenth century and breaks down the inaccuracies of the existing narratives, including the War of 1900.

The current western narrative still hails the War as a win for the British, but it fails to consider the War's goals, especially since by 1900, the British had already succeeded in the fragmentation of the Asante but still proceeded to ask for the Golden Stool.

Ghanaian Scholarship on the War.

In 1896 Prempeh, against his advisors' thoughts, opted for peace, which led to his exile (Akyeampong and Obeng 1995). The British did not conquer the Asante as the King

had submitted for Treaty, which the British denied, and they illegally annexed Asante as a colonial territory (Ibid.). It dissolved the Asante Union by signing treaties with each of the states and forced the Asante to do compulsory labor and pay outrageous taxes (Ibid.).

Sir Frederick Hodgson, the Governor of the Gold Coast, came to Kumasi on the 25th of March, and demanded the Golden Stool on the 28th of March. (Akyeampong and Obeng 1995) He gave a speech to the Asante's leaders after the British exiled the Asante here demanding for the Golden stool to sit upon (Ibid.). The queen-mother of Edweso, Yaa Asantewaa, propelled the Asante into action after hearing the chiefs discussing the issue at hand. Nana Yaa Asantewaa said,

"How can a proud and brave people like the Asante sit back and look while the white men took away their King and chiefs, and humiliated them with a demand for the Golden Stool. The Golden Stool only means money to the white men; they have searched and dug everywhere for it. I shall not pay one predwan to the Governor. If you, the chiefs of Asante, are going to behave like cowards and not fight, you should exchange your loincloths for my undergarments (Montu mo danta mma me na monnye me tam)" (Aidoo 1977, pg. 12)

Because Yaa Asantewaa's speech shamed the Asante men, they picked up arms and went to War (Ibid.). The revolt lasted from April 1900 through April 1901, because the Asante were weakened by the fact that only a few states and Edweso fought in the War, and the death of Yaa Asantewaa's head general weakened Yaa Asantewa's forces (Asirifi-Danquah. 2007).¹

The War started in Bare when the British led a search party to look for the Golden Stool (Asirifi-Danquah. 2007). The Bare contingents and neighboring towns attacked the search party and set up a surprise attack as the party was retreating (Ibid.). That was squashed, however, when the search party rounded up agitators (Ibid.). Nana Yaa then set up

¹ Actual battles ended in December 1900, then Nana Yaa Asantewaa went into hiding. They did eventually capture her in April 1901 (Asirifi-Danquah. 2007).

Edweso as the military base and attacked the Fort in Asante with about 20,000 men, and ordered the destruction of all governmental installments and telegraph poles to cut off communication to the coast (Ibid.). This advance on the Fort locked the Governor and other British people within the building for some weeks (Ibid.). The Asante adapted the strategy of Stockages; between the 4th of April to the 24th alone, they built 21 stockages to block British movement in and out of the capital (Ibid.).

During Negotiations in April, the Asante leaders demanded the return of their King, the indemnity retracted, and the Governor to let go of the Golden stool as they had no idea of its whereabouts (Ibid.). The Governor agreed but reneged when relieving troops arrived and attacked neighboring towns (Ibid.). On the 23rd of April was the first full battle where the Asante succeeded in pushing the British back (Ibid.). On the 24th of April, the Asante attacked and Burned down the Fante and Hausa settlements near the Fort and the Basel Mission, forcing thousands of refugees into the Fort for protection (Ibid.). Nana Yaa paraded the city and directed operations herself while taunting British soldiers, refusing to stand down until all her demands were met (Ibid.). Her demands included the exiled King's release, the stopping of Asante citizens having to do forced labor, and for the British and foreign troops to be returned to their prospective countries (Ibid.). The Governor was able to escape the Fort, and on the 13th of July, the relief troops arrived in Asante (Ibid.). The 3rd of December was the last of the military engagement, but Nana Yaa didn't surrender until the 3rd of March 1901, but the British were still unable to find the Golden Stool (Ibid.).

The Ghanaian narratives do better to use the oral history of the Asante as a legitimate source, therefore, leading them to centralize Nana Yaa Asantewaa in the war. Unfortunately, many of them fall short in showcasing the role she played in the war. The existing literature

theorizes that the oral histories sensationalize and exaggerate her impact, therefore minimizing her role in the war as just a figurehead.

Significance

The existing literature fails to center the influence and impact of women in Asante-who were crucial to the Asante political system. Some of the Ghanaian literature do a good job of telling the history and including all the necessary actors and the roles they played in the war, but they still fall short in some point- they all declare victory for the British. The Asante oral history says otherwise; therefore, I needed to use this literature to display all the existing narratives on the war so that it could be compared to the oral histories that I collected. Using the oral histories as a primary source, I will be able to center Nana Yaa Asantewaa. One might claim it was a political move for her to be hailed as a commander and not just a figurehead. I would argue that if her narrative is politicalized by the Asante, then it should be something we engage with and not dismiss, by inquiring as to why they would do that. I also believe that with these works being written sources, they do not fully encompass the depth that Asante's oral sources provide. To decolonize our thought of only viewing specific forms of works as academic, I will showcase the oral histories in a musical theater piece. This will include traditional music, songs, and stories that will help supplement this paper.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Introduction

In this Independent Study, I will be utilizing an Idiographic Case study² to answer my research questions:

How did gender dynamics within the Asante political system shape the Asante Kingdom's resistance against the British, from 1900 to 1901?

How does the analysis of oral histories from the matrilineal culture of the Asante decenter Western narratives of the War of the Golden Stool and reinterpret the impact of the war by centering the Nana Yaa Asantewaa's climb to power?

I hypothesize that the patriarchal system's complicated gender dynamics, the critical position of the queen-mother, and her post-menopausal age in the Asante Kingdom gave way for Nana Yaa Asantewaa to lead the Resistance against the British. Due to the anomalies which occurred leading up to and during the war of the Golden Stool- fragmentation of the confederation, the hole in the power structure, and the presence of a woman at the emergency meeting-Nana Yaa Asantewaa was able to use the already established governmental system that allows for her to have a certain amount of power in politics.

My research focuses on a specific phenomenon during the pre-colonial period in Asante history that showcases the complex ontological underpinnings of patriarchy and the Matrilineal System in the Asante. Therefore, a quantitative approach will be ineffective in

² An Idiographic Case Study seeks to evaluate the case study on its own without generalizing it to others.

testing my hypothesis thoroughly. I have a qualitative approach for my research as I will be using categories in which there is no particular order set to it, and it has non-numerical data. This will allow me to fully explore the literature on the subject and the oral histories -songs and dance- that will help shape my analysis.

Measures and Analytical Techniques

My antecedent variable is patriarchy and gender within the Asante Political system. I will operationalize the antecedent variable by looking at Farah Chowdhury's *Theorising Patriarchy: The Bangladesh Context* and Woehrle's *Patriarchy and War*. Women's role in the house is transferred into the political arena, limiting women's power when it is not explicitly stated. Woehrle's theory on patriarchy and war states that the underlying contemporary theory argues that gender distinctions and the inequalities of power are essential to maintaining the war system and vice versa. Patriarchy needs militarism to control, protect, and expand its power. The military was a great source of nationalism among the states within the Asante empire, but during the Golden Stool War, many states did not fight for the Asante cause (Acheampong and Boahen 2003). That is one of the primary reasons that the loss of the war was blamed upon men because many men refused to join the war effort. After all, a woman was the head (Acheampong and Boahen 2003).

My independent variable is Nana Yaa Asantewaa's power. I will operationalize the independent variable by looking at the traditional roles of women and the queen mother and those to Nana Yaa Asantewaa's role in the War of the Golden Stool. Being the Queen Mother of Edweso, she handled many internal state issues that dealt with women and some men in Edweso and served as the senior advisor to Edwesohene (paramount chief of Edweso). I will then look at all the powers she acquired, including the power of Edwesohene, who was exiled

at the time, and her role in the war, which allowed her powers equivalent to those of the Asante-hene.

The conditional variables are the anomalies before and during the War of the Golden Stool, which are operationalized by looking at Aidoo's (2007) theory on Asante, the queen mother's rise to power. The series of anomalies include the fragmentation of the Asante Kingdom, a hole in the Asante power structure with the exile of the King, the exile of Nana Yaa Asantewaa's grandson Edweso (Chief) Kwasi Afrane II, who was the chief of Edweso, and the demands made by the Gold Coast governor including the relinquishing of the Golden Stool, the national symbol of the Asante. This framework states that Queen Mothers in Asante were most effective in politics and government when they were free from ritual constraints when they commanded independent resources and no available or effective male leadership. The Asante Kingdom fragmentation caused by Great Britain signing treaties with individual states was the first anomaly. The second was the exile of the Asantehene and Asantehemaa, which left those two positions of power empty with no one to fill them. The Queen-Mother chooses the next Asantehene; therefore, with her gone, these positions remained vacant. The third anomaly was the exile of Nana Yaa Asantewaa's grandson Edweso (Chief) Kwasi Afrane II, which led to Nana Yaa Asantewaa becoming the sole ruler of Edweso; therefore, she commandeered all its resources and people as well as was responsible in representing Edweso in Kingdom wide meetings.

My dependent variable was the success of the Asante Resistance in 1900. I will operationalize the dependent variable by the goals of the war-the occupation of the Golden Stool and the returning of the Asantehene (King). The last Anglo-Asante war was named the War of the Golden Stool because the British saw the importance of the stool to the people of

the Asante and knew of its history of being the representation of the Asante nation; therefore to achieve colonialism fully, they saw the occupation of the seat as a powerful pawn (Acheampong and Boahen 2003). During Negotiations in April 1900, the Asante leaders demanded the return of their King, the indemnity retracted, and the Governor to let go of the Golden stool as they had no idea of its whereabouts (Asirifi-Danquah. 2007). Therefore, the war's success will be measured as whether the goals of the war by each side were realized or not. For the Asante Kingdom, success is measured by retaining the Golden Stool and the Asante-Hene Prempeh I's return and no success is the Asante Kingdom losing the Golden Stool and the Asantehene permanently.

Cases/Sampling

I am doing a case study on the Asante nation in Ghana and their resistance against the British, namely the last war, the War of the Golden Stool, or the Yaa Antewaa War and Asante unity during the resistance. This case was chosen not only because it was a case in which the War was catalyzed and led by a woman but also because it took place in a society with both patriarchy and a matrilineal system. There have been wars led by women such as Joan of Arc during the Hundred Years' War, Nehanda Charwe Nyakasikana (Mbuya Nehanda) during the colonization of Zimbabwe, The Mino (Dahomey Amazons) in numerous wars, Wang Cong'er and Wang Nangxian during the White Lotus rebellion in China, to name a few. There are other cases in Asante history where women could take more power than allotted to them by the law. Asantehemaa Afua Kobi, for example, led negotiations against the British in 1872 and exclaimed, "I am only a woman, but would fight the governor with my left hand" (Aidoo 1977). Yaa Akyaa also took power by taking the Golden Stool to keep her opponents at bay and became the virtual ruler of Asante until 1896,

when her son was grown enough to take over. However, Nana Yaa Asantewaa's case stood out because the ones listed above were acknowledged for their roles in their various wars, while various reporting of the War of the Golden Stool and the literature on the War often leave out the contributions of Nana Yaa Asantewaa. This was fascinating because Asante's oral history (NwomKro) focused on Nana Yaa as the center and leader of the War.

Data Sources:

I will be utilizing archival work by looking at works written during and after the conflict and will compare those with oral histories I will collect through the Asante songs, dance, stories. As the Asante family is traced through the family's women, I visited the traditional home of Nana Yaa Asantewaa in Edweso, where I met with Obaapanin Nana Y Asantewaa, a descendant of Nana Yaa Asantewaa. She told the story of Nana Yaa Asantewaa, also focusing on the internal issues that were going on in Edweso at the time. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, I was unable to visit the palace of Edweso to glean more information. The Centre for National Culture in Kumasi also highlighted some of Asante's history and customs. I had the opportunity to visit Mankya Palace and learned about Asante's history, customs, and traditions in Twi, the native language of the Asante. I set up an appointment with Mr. Osei Bonsu Sarfo Kantanka, the head historian and curator for the Mankya Palace. He provided a lot of the in-depth oral histories found in this study. I will also use many secondary resources that have been written on the war and Nana Yaa Asantewaa.

Oral History Presentation

My research will be supplemented by a musical theatre production that will include oral histories of the Asante as well as my analysis of my research question. The Oral histories will include Asante traditional dance (Asa), Nwomkro (songs), and the talking drum. The

Nwomkro (songs) will be presented in Twi, with English translation available, and the original songs I write as part of my analysis will be in both Twi and English with Translations where needed. This will be showcased for the Wooster campus community virtually (per acceptable Covid guidelines). The audience will get to experience the Asante forms of oral sources and how they are performed. My performance is significant because many of the sources on the topic are written in text format, which is not traditional to the Asante people. Performing it in the musical format it is meant to be in preserves the data source as it was produced, rather than re-producing only it with a foreign medium, giving it good scholarship to help historicize everything.

Though the Asante had sacred symbols such as the Adinkra Symbols, history was recorded through oral histories. There are various forms that the oral histories take, such as the Kwakwranntia trumpet ensemble of the Asante, which was highlighted by Kaminski in his article, Sound Barrage, the Apirede Drum ensemble, Adowa, Nwomkro, and Adzewa. I am focusing on Nwomkro because it is led and sung by women, which is the perspective missing in the narrative of the War of the Golden Stool.

Example of the Nwomkro:

Ɔkɔyi kɔɔ eii
Yaa Asantewaa
Ɔbaa besia Ogyina apremo ano eeii
Waye bi egyae
Ɔkɔyi kɔɔ eii
Yaa Asantewaa
Waye bi egyae
Wabo mmode
Waye bi egyae
Yema Woa yikoo

Translation: Yaa Asantewaa

The woman who fights before cannons
You have accomplished great things
You have done well

Nyomkro written by me: - In the Style of Maame Dorcas- Call to arms

Nana Yaa Asantewaa ekoo yi

Eko yi abao

Nana Yaa Asantewaa ekoo yi

Eko yi abao

Refrain:

Monsoreo monfa moakotade hye

Nana Yaa eii ekoyi abao

Monfa moakotade kye

Monfa mo tuo

Monfa mo sikein

Monfa moako niema nyinaa

Mmbae, mbarimae

Asanteman oo

Obroni ne bae

Obegye sika dua kofi

Eko yi abao

Kumasi foɔ, Akyemfoɔ, Ahantafoɔ,

Monsore, Monma mumunso

Efise.. Eko yi abao

Translation:

Nana Yaa Asantewaa's war is here

Get ready with your war clothing the War is here.

All Asante towns and people prepare for war.

Expectations:

The strengths of my design are the deep dive into my case study as well as the oral histories. Because I am focusing on one case study, I am able to explore different aspects of the War. I am able to access and translate these oral histories because I am Asante- this gives me an added advantage because looking at already translated work is not as accurate as the primary resource.

My weaknesses are the lack of western sources, and although there are few western sources, this also provides an opening for this study. Though the pandemic has severely

limited the books I have access to, there is also a general lack of western sources on the War that look at oral history. The books that are often written by Ghanaians acknowledge oral histories more, such as Boahen and Acheampong's 'Yaa Asantewaa and the Asante- British war of 1900-01' and Asirifi-Danquah's 'A Struggle Between Two Queens.' The other secondary sources including the newspaper articles view the war in a more western-centric lens.

I expect my research to lead to the uncovering of how significant Yaa Asantewaa's role was in the victory of the war. If my hypothesis is wrong however, it might be because she did not make as much impact and thus victory had no correlation to her or her actions.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

Results- Case study

In the Asante Matrilineal system, women are at the core of the home and the empire. The kingdom was divided into states with approximately 70 paramount chiefs ruling over them. The towns are based on the women and are split into eight families where women are the basis – or the people in the country, all others are considered soldiers of the community. There are nine big families, like the Oyoko, which exists in each of the Asante townships (families do not intermarry within themselves no matter the township one originates from). Women hold the family and appoint a male as the Abusua Panin, the head of the family, but the power within the family still lies with the women in the family. Each family has its primary housing or houses that are termed as the Abusua fie (family house), which are distributed to the women of the family. In each house there are three divisions, like the sojourners- people from the same family but from a different township. The women are the genealogists of the nation, so only they can determine who could be considered family.

The women of the kingdom have to approve of any new laws, enforce the law, and are integral in repealing any law. The Queen Mother holds her own court, where she rules over women's issues as well as the men who opt to have her instead of the king. Whatever the king does, he needs to consult the women- the Queen-Mother for approval, even in declaring war. Women do not go to war because they take care of the home as the men go to war. Women contributed to war efforts in other ways however, including praying for the safety of the men and the success of the war (momome). A section of the army, called the

Akobeia, stays behind with the women to protect them. Men are soldiers for the women; therefore, if they retreat, some of the women can rush in as commanders.

Asantehemaa Yaa Akyaa became Queen-Mother of Asante in 1884 when she destooled her mother, Asantehemaa Afua Kobi. She then nominated her son Prempeh I to be Asantehene at the age of thirteen. A significant number of the council of Paramount Chiefs disagreed with her choice, preferring her older son. She used her considerable personal wealth to influence the political process, including bribing politicians, supporters, and shrine priests whose predictions were used in Asante as essential supplements to political calculations. She also acquired ample supplies of expensive Snider rifles and other ammunition for her succession war forces. Yaa Akyaa took possession of the Golden Stool in the middle of the wars so that none of her opponents, the chiefs trying to enstool a new Asantehene, could be enstooled even if they won. The succession wars lasted four years, and her tactics branded her an 'obaa-barima' (she-male). Yaa Akyaa became the tacit ruler of Asante since Prempe I was only 16 when he became the Asante hene. She advised reconciliation with all her adversaries in Kumase, Mampon, Kokofu, and Nsuta.

The Anglo-Asante war of 1874 was the first time the Asante were defeated on their own soil. The Asante-hene had planned to meet the British halfway and fight them, but the Queen Mother halted their progress. Due to fact that the Asante had some British prisoners of war and after negotiation and the payoff, however, the Asante refused to release the prisoners. She disagreed with this position and saw it as unethical to engage in such behaviors. She opted to release the prisoners instead of go to war By the time the Queen - Mother realized that the war effort by the British was not centralized on the prisoners but an attempt to conquer the Asante, she relented and agreed to go to war, but it was too late and

the British were already upon them. Nana Yaa Akyaa was exiled to the Seychelles with Asantehene Prempeh I and other officials because she was outspokenly against the British and opposed their diplomatic surveillance missions in the Asante.



Figure 5 January 1896: British Formally Annexing the Asante Kingdom- depicting the Governor's Discussion with Prempeh I

At the time that the British came to capture the Asantehene Prempeh, he surrendered peacefully in hopes that it would help the Asante avoid war with the British. After the exile of the King, the British expected the Asante to fall apart but that was not the case. Therefore, the governor came back demanding the Golden Stool. Before then the British had bought off several of the Paramount chiefs- fragmenting the Asante, which led to those chiefs staying neutral in the conflict by refusing to join either side. In March of 1900, Governor Hodgson assembled all Asante chiefs and leaders in Kumasi and demanded to be given the Golden Stool, Sika Dwa Kofi, to sit on. Everyone remained quiet after the speech except for Nana Yaa Asantewaa who was the Obaa-panin of Edweso/ Edweso- hema. She spoke out saying:

"3bere a woreba ba no, wohunuu Nana Prempeh anaa?"- "When you were coming did you see Asantehene Prempeh?" to which the governor replied, saying he had not seen him. Nana Yaa Asantewaa went on to say that "nea ɔte adwa no soɔ no nkutoo, na onim baabi a ɔde sieie. eno nti, gye se ɔba bekyeree wo.- "only the one who sits on the stool can show you where he placed it so he would have to come show you." The governor then informed her that the Asantehene had been transported to the Seychelles and would not be returning.

Later that evening, all the paramount chiefs met to discuss what happened and Nana Yaa Asantewaa was present because her grandson had been exiled with the Asantehene. It was there she made her speech saying:

"How can a proud and brave people like the Ashanti sit back and look while white men take away their king and chiefs, and humiliate them with demand for the Golden Stool? The Golden Stool only means money to the white man; they have searched and dug everywhere for it. I shall pay nothing to the Governor. If you, the chiefs of Ashanti, are going to behave like cowards and not fight, you should exchange your loincloths for my undergarments. Is it true that the bravery of the Ashanti is no more? I cannot believe it. It cannot be! If the men of Ashanti will not go forward, then we, the women, will. We will fight the white men until the last one of us falls in the battlefields." (Asirifi-Danquah. 2007)

This mobilized some of the chiefs to step forward and fight against the British, while many opted out of the war.

The British then sent people to search for Sika Dwa Kofi, where Afranewaa of Ofiso, Nana Yaa Asantewaa's sister, engaged in a battle with the British and fired the first shot in the last Anglo Asante War at Barekesh. Yaa Asantewaa had to mobilize the remaining Asante forces as there were divisions. She distributed the Asante military into strategic points in Asante and trapped the governor of the Gold Coast within their fort. They cut down telegraph wires to block communication between those stuck in the fort and their reinforcements. Two notes were written by the hostages to be sent out, one in English and a second in French. The English one was blocked because a translator was on hand, but the

French note got into the hands of their reinforcements, and they were able to be set free.

Moving around Camps, Nana Yaa Asantewaa gave orders and set up strategies. She changed generals through the war and directly engaged the British in at least one battle. Moreover, she finally surrendered when her only daughter was captured, as losing her daughter would mean the end of her lineage.

Analysis

My findings related to my initial hypothesis, which was that the Asante Kingdom's patriarchal system's complicated gender dynamics, the Queen-mother's critical position, and her post-menopausal age in the Asante Kingdom gave way for Nana Yaa Asantewaa to lead the Resistance against the British. The second hypothesis is that due to the anomalies that occurred leading up to and during the war of the Golden Stool- fragmentation of the confederation, hole in power structure, and the presence of a woman at the emergency meeting-Nana Yaa Asantewaa was able to use the already established governmental system that allows for her to have a certain amount of power in politics. There are significant disparities between the literature written by non-Ghanaians and Ghanaian scholars because the Ghanaian scholars do focus a lot more on Nana Yaa Asantewaa and the active role she played in starting the war. However, on another level, most of the literature does not center around Nana Yaa Asantewaa and the crucial role she played in the War of the Golden Stool. While oral histories of the Asante highlight the role women played in Asante history and, more specifically, its military endeavors, the literature often focuses on men's roles. This is primarily due to the military's understanding as a masculine space even though women have been in combat or led wars for centuries, from Joan of Arc to the Dahomey Amazons. This is shown through Woehrle's theorization of patriarchy and war, where the military upholds the

patriarchic system. This is because the military is run by those with power within the state, which in a patriarchic society is men.

Osei Tutu, founder of the Asante Empire, after the war of liberation in 1701 from Denkyira, integrated the Asante military into the government and its politics (Aidoo 1977). Therefore, the seven military divisions- Konti, Akwamu, Adonten, Nifa, Benkum, Kyidom, and Gyaase – became the core of political and administrative power (Ibid.). Women were excluded from the military because of the fear of menstrual contamination and their inability to participate in ritual because of menstruation (Ibid.). While this is the case, there are countless incidents in Asante's history where women have caused conflict or led wars. For example, the 1818-1819 Palace Coup was led by the Queen-Mother, Adoma Akosua, who planned it to coincide with the Asante War against the Gyaman (Akyeampong and Obeng 1995, Aidoo 1977). The Asante went to war against the kingdom of Gyaman because Kwadwo Adinkra created his golden stool to rival that of the Asantehene's and that was seen as an abomination (Akyeampong and Obeng 1995). While the Asante Hene led the Asante troops, the Queen-Mother and the chief of Bono- who had an ambition to be enthroned, as well as seventeen of the king's wives, connived to take over the kingdom (Ibid.). There was a sacred pot given to the king's sister to protect because it was a form of spiritual welfare, but the fire-pot was broken to pieces during the attempted coup (Ibid.). The king was informed and returned earlier than predicted, and upon his return, he was contaminated by many of his wives who hugged him during their menstruation (Ibid.). His wives were decapitated, his sister was strangled to prevent the spillage of royal blood, and the chiefs, as well as all of his supporters- approximately Seven hundred people, were put to death (Ibid.). The Queen-Mother was destooled and replaced with Yaa Dufi and was exiled to the Nkwantanan ward of

Kumase. Her descendants were forever banned from the offices of Asantehene and Asantehemaa (Ibid.).

There was also the Queen-Mother of Dwaben, Ama Serwaa, who fought against Kumase in the 1930s with her sons. She returned from exile ten years later to rebuild her state and the Queen-Mother of Kokofu, Ataa Birago, who fought in the civil wars of the 1870s and 1880s and lost her life in 1884 (Akyeampong and Obeng 1995, Aidoo 1977). Along with Nana Yaa Asantewaa, all these Queen-Mothers had reached menopause before having such substantial power. The Asante military system, according to Aidoo, was operated to exclude women from political office. However, remarkably the Queen-mothers were still able to be effective despite having little to no systematic experience.

'Victors write history' is a commonly used phrase and accepted concept on what has shaped history till this modern era, but the War of the Golden Stool complicates this matter. While written in the literature, which was written mainly by non-Asantes, the war was a success for Britain, but they fail to consider several things. They fail to consider that by 1897, Great Britain had declared Asante a British Protectorate; therefore, they were already colonizing that region. Through Governor Hodgson's speech and letters, it becomes very apparent why the war is called the War of the Golden Stool, making that the ultimate goal of the war. As the British had other relics and sacred Asante items in their custody, they could have easily ignored the Sika Dwa Kofi (the Golden Stool), but they saw its significance. Therefore, for the war to be declared a success based on the leaders' exile is incorrect, as that was not the goal of the war. Because the Asante led by Nana Yaa Asantewaa fought to keep their sacred stool and their King's return, who was eventually reinstated years later, they declare themselves the winner of the war in their oral histories. This adds to why it is

essential to acknowledge the Asante history told by them through their preferred medium. This also adds to the importance of the alternative part of this Independent Study. It looks at the subject matter and the significance of the medium on oral histories. This storytelling style will also decolonize our ideas of academic works and how they should be shown.

What was a strength within my findings was that oral histories did more to encompass all important actors in the war and highlight their specific roles and actions. As there is much secondary literature on the subject, the oral histories provide the primary sources needed to tell the whole story of Asante. Therefore, utilizing them in the way I did, shows their legitimacy as a primary source that should not be easily dismissed or belittled. The oral histories were able to do what Western literature was unable to do- and that was to center women and present them as actors in their stories. By actively leaving Nana Yaa Asantewaa out of the narrative or minimizing her contributions, these works of literature fail at decolonizing their narrative and the global issue of the erasure of women as essential contributors. The weaknesses were the lack of resources and time to complete this study. Due to the Corona Virus, I had a hard time acquiring some resources, and many were unattainable.

Chapter 5: Alternative I.S- Script (Tentative)



Figure 6 Nana Yaa Asantewaa in full Asante War Attire

Entrance: (Wearing Ohemaa regalia)

Adowa with Nwomkoro Music Playing: ~ 1-3 minute play time

Ɔkɔyi kɔɔ eii

Yaa Asantewaa

Obaa besia Ogyina apremo ano eei

Waye bi egyae

Okoyi koo eii

Yaa Asantewaa

Waye bi egyae

Wabo mmode

Waye bi egyae

Yema Woa yikoo

Translation: Yaa Asantewaa

The woman who fights before cannons

You have accomplished great things

You have done well

Monologue:

Me din de Nana Yaa Asantewaa

My name is Nana Yaa Asantewaa

I am the Queen Mother of Edweso

Dialogue: (Nana Yaa Asantewaa and Governor Hodgson)

She spoke out saying: "3bere a woreba ba no, wohunuu Nana Prempeh anaa?"-

“When you were coming did you see Asantehene Prempeh?”.

To which the governor replied saying he had not seen him.

Nana Yaa Asantewaa went on to say that:

“nea ɔte adwa no soɔ no nkutoo, na onim baabi a ɔde sieɛ. eno nti, gye sɛ ɔba
bɛkyeree wo.-

“only the one who sits on the stool can show you where he placed it so he would have
to come show you.”

The governor -Asantehene has been transported to the Seychelles and would not be returning.

Kete Song and Dance performed: ~ 1-2 minute play time

Monologue: The story of the Golden stool

Speech: (During the gathering of elders)

“How can a proud and brave people like the Ashanti sit back and look
while white men take away their king and chiefs, and humiliate them with
demand for the Golden Stool? The Golden Stool only means money to the white
man; they have searched and dug everywhere for it. I shall pay nothing to the
Governor. If you, the chiefs of Ashanti, are going to behave like cowards and not
fight, you should exchange your loincloths for my undergarments. Is it true that the
bravery of the Ashanti is no more? I cannot believe it. It cannot be! If the men of
Ashanti will not go forward, then we, the women, will. We will fight the white men
until the last one of us falls in the battlefields”.

Call for Battle: Change into war attire

Nyomkro written by me: - In the Style of Maame Dorcas- Call to arms

Nana Yaa Asantewaa ekoo yi

Eko yi abao

Nana Yaa Asantewaa ekoo yi

Eko yi abao

Refrain:

Monsɔreo monfa moakotade hye

Nana Yaa eii ekoyi abao

Monfa moakotade kye

Monfa mo tuo

Monfa mo sikein

Monfa moako niema nyinaa

Mmbae, mbarimae

Asanteman oo

Obroni ne bae

Ɔbegye sika dua kofi

Eko yi abao

Kumasi foɔ, Akyemfoɔ, Ahantafoɔ,

Monsɔre, Monma mumunso

Efiɛ.. Eko yi abao

Translation:

Nana Yaa Asantewaa's war is here

Get ready with your war clothing the War is here.

All Asante towns and people prepare for war.

Nana Yaa Asantewaa Speech:

Brave men of Ashanti, we are now faced with a serious confrontation by the Governor's extremely provocative request for the Golden Stool, which is the religious symbol of unity of the Ashanti nation. Not quite long ago the white man came and unilaterally occupied our God-given land and by force of arms has declared Ashanti Kingdom a British protectorate. We should also not forget that during the reign of King Karikari, the aggressors waged a senseless war on us, destroyed the seat of the Ashanti monarch and burnt our palace after looting all the treasures bequeathed to us by our fore father. Taking our brave men for a ride, the governor arbitrarily arrested and deported our King together with some prominent Chiefs of Ashanti without you men raising a finger. Today, he has come again to demand the Golden Stool. Gallant youth and men of our fatherland, shall we sit down to be dehumanized all the time by these rogues? We should rise and defend our heritage; it is better to perish than to look on sheepishly while the white man whose sole business in our country is to steal, kill and destroy, threatens to rob us of our Golden Stool. Arise men! And defend the Golden Stool from being captured by foreigners. It is more honorable to perish in defense of the

Golden Stool than to remain in perpetual slavery. I am prepared and ready to lead you to war against the white man.

Fontomfrom- ~ 1-2 minute play time

While explaining her role in battle

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study addressed two questions: *how did gender dynamics in the Asante Kingdom's political system shape their Resistance against the British in 1900- 01? How does the analysis of oral histories from the matrilineal culture of the Asante decenter Western narratives of the War of the Golden Stool and reinterpret the impact of the war by centering the Nana Yaa Asantewaa's climb to power in 1900?* The limited amount of literature on the subject and the Eurocentric lean of the historical phenomenon left Nana Yaa Asantewaa a prominent figure in the war. When she is mentioned- her contributions are greatly under-credited. This study, however, sought to utilize Asante's oral histories to center Nana Yaa Asantewaa and evaluate the circumstances by which she rose to power and the significance of her actions. This section seeks to conclude the study by exploring its findings and seeing any connection to its questions and hypotheses. It will also highlight some of its strengths and weaknesses as well as suggestions for further studies.

The study found that most of the literature on the War of the Golden Stool did little to explore the complicated gender dynamics within the Asante and failed to consider female contributions during the war-, whether formally or informally. Women are instrumental in Asante war informally through things such as Mmomome, spiritual work and prayer for the safety and victory of the army. New contributions also made by this study includes Nana Yaa Asantewaa's acts as commander of the Asante Army including strategizing, selecting and removing generals, as well as being at the forefront of recruitment, and her presence at the war camps, were missing in most of the literature. They also dismissed the significance of oral histories and often preferring to cite or use other sources. As the oral histories, in some

cases, differed significantly from the literature- in terms of declaring the war a victory, they needed to address what victory might mean in the first place. From the findings, there was a clear answer to the questions. Gender dynamics in the political system of the Asante Kingdom did shape their Resistance against the British in 1900- 01, as Nana Yaa Asantewaa was able to spearhead the war, even though the Asante was a heavily militarized patriarchal society, because of the matrilineal system that also exists simultaneously in the nation. The analysis of oral histories from the matrilineal culture of the Asante did decenter Western narratives of the War of the Golden Stool. It reinterpreted the war's impact by centering the Nana Yaa Asantewaa's climb to power in 1900. By decentering Western narratives, the study was able to utilize oral histories to showcase the vital role of women in Asante society and how that helped propel Nana Yaa Asantewaa to her position as the commander of the Asante Army during the war.

With the study's findings, the hypotheses were supported and further enhanced because the Asante Kingdom's patriarchal system's complicated gender dynamics, the critical position of the queen-mother, and her post-menopausal age in the Asante Kingdom gave way for Nana Yaa Asantewaa to lead the Resistance against the British. And the anomalies that occurred leading up to and during the war of the Golden Stool- fragmentation of the confederation, hole in power structure, and the presence of a woman at the emergency meeting- led to Nana Yaa Asantewaa using the already established governmental system that allows for her to have a certain amount of power in politics. The hypotheses was built on a theoretical framework by Aidoo, which claimed that Asante Queen-Mothers could access more power when there was no available or effective male when she had private resources and when ritual constraints no longer applied. This framework is generalizable to the Asante

and the Akan nation in which the Asante exists, as all kingdoms in the nation are both matrilineal and patriarchic. However, this is not generalizable on a larger scale as it requires both of these systems to coexist. On the other hand, this framework challenges conventional Eurocentric narratives in the study of war, by highlighting the cultural construct that women engage in, and pushes for the reforming of the narrative- not only in feminist texts. The Asante is not a matriarchal society, but it does not adhere to all the trimmings of a patriarchal society as women have a semblance of power no matter how limited. Western literature focused heavily on the patriarchy but failed to incorporate the importance of matrilineal systems in Asante foreign and domestic policy. However, outside of this case study, the exclusion of women's role and impact from the academic literature is endemic. Because of these biases, they failed to tell the whole story of Asante because it is a kingdom built upon women.

The study's strengths are the oral histories accessible in its native language- as direct translations are not always possible or may fail to communicate what is otherwise apparent in the other language. The theoretical framework was also very significant as it was set up by Aidoo, who is Ghanaian- and oral histories were also centered in her literature. The in-depth analysis of this one case study explores not only the questions proposed but will also allow for the dissection of other Western narratives of world histories. The study's normative implications are the push to center African women in African history as the push to decolonize history and politics pushes on. The alternative portion of this study that showcases Asante's oral histories on the subject on the virtual stage also forces decolonizing the forms of academic works and how they are presented. This study shows the importance of oral histories in framing narratives as the days of histories being written by victors fall

behind. Some limitations of the study were the lack of resources and access to what resources are available. Due to the pandemic, some of the additional resources sought after in Ghana were inaccessible. The framework was also limiting in generalizability as it can be applied only to specific situations where matrilineal systems and patriarchy coexist.

For further research, I would recommend a deeper dive into the makings of the existing western narratives of the war and its significance during and after the colonial era. It can also be expanded to look empirically at other primary sources such as newspapers from that period, which will allow the study to look at how they helped frame the narrative of the acceptable war today. I would also look further into how women are characterized when they are in the commander's role versus that of men by looking at Achebe claiming that female leadership in Asante was not cloaked in masculine symbols as shown elsewhere.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

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Mankya Palace Museum

Nana Yaa Asantewaa, Obaa-panin at Nana Yaa Asantewaa's traditional home.

Pictures and figures:

T.E. Bowditch, The First Day of the Yam Custom. Engraved by R. Havell & Son. The engraving contains the following language in addition to the caption: "Drawn by T. E. Bowdich Esqr, Published Decr 2, 1818 by John Murray, Albermarle Street."

(18422003). *The illustrated London news*. London: Illustrated London News & Sketch. Public Domain

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Achebe, Nwando. "Politico-Religious Systems And African Women'S Power." *Holding the World Together*, 2019, 61–79. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvfjcxvh.7>.

Nwando Achebe is the Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and Faculty Excellence Advocate for the College of Social Science. She is a Jack and Margaret Sweet Endowed Professor of History and was the founding editor in chief of the *Journal of West African History*. Achebe studies oral history in studying women, gender, and sexuality in Nigeria. In this article, I utilized her section on the Asante empire and the power of the Queen-Mother. It presented the Queen-Mother's position as a counterpart to the King's position. This was significant because it helped classify the Queen-mother's position, not as subsidiary to the King.

Afshar, Haleh. 2004. "3. Women and Wars: Some Trajectories towards a Feminist Peace." *Development, Women and War*: 43–59. doi: 10.3362/9780855987039.003.

Haleh Afshar is a professor in the Department of Politics that teaches Politics and Women's Studies at the University of York. Her article helped to look at women and

wars and helped in theorizing patriarchy. It gave an outlook on how patriarchy exists in war and how it reflects society, and how women are also actors in war.

Agyeman-Duah, Ivor. Osei Boateng. 2000. Yaa Asantewaa: a woman of iron. BBC's New African Woman.

Ivor Agyeman-Duah is a Ghanaian associate economist and academic. His article focuses more on Nana Yaa Asantewaa's role in catalyzing the war by laying out how it started. I utilized the speeches by Nana Yaa Asantewaa in the article, and it helped me analyze the public opinion of Nana Yaa Asantewaa.

Aidoo, Agnes Akosua. 1977. "Asante Queen Mothers in Government and Politics in the Nineteenth Century." *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 9(1): 1–13. doi: 10.1111/j.1749-6632.1997.tb48124.x.

Agnes Akosua Aidoo is a specialist in policy advocacy on children's and women's rights. This article was from which my theoretical framework for this paper is built upon. Though she does not focus on Nana Yaa Asantewaa for her case studies, she focuses on other Queen-Mothers who have been excluded in western literature, which help set up a pattern of Queen-Mothers who break the norm of Asante society. She also explores the villainization and masculinization of women who take up mantles of power.

Akyeampong, Emmanuel, and Pashington Obeng. 1995. "Spirituality, Gender, and Power in Asante History." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* Vol. 28, No. 3 (1995), pp.481-508. doi: 10.1007/978-1-137-09009-6_2. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/221171>

Emmanuel K. Akyeampong is a Professor of History and African and African American Studies. Washington Obeng is a theologian, author, cultural communicator. This article explored religion, gender, and politics in Asante culture. It explored how the Asante is built off of women but exists in patriarchy due to spirituality. For example, menstruation being sacred and destructive simultaneously shows the usual spaces that Women in Asante exist and how that limits their position. This fits right into why Queen-Mothers who rose above their stations were usually in a post-menopausal stage. The cultural ideals of the respect of the eldest played a considerable role.

Amoah, Lydia. *Changing Roles of Akan Queenmothers: a Study of Nana Yaa Asantewaa II: Changes in Female Traditional Authority in Ghana*. LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2014.

This gave both a historical overview of Asante Queen-Mothers' role and how it has evolved throughout the years. I used it to better understand the nuances present in such a role where one is in a power position but must maintain all femininity.

Amoah-Boampong Cyrelene, Agyeiwaa Christabel. (2019) *Women in Pre-colonial Africa: West Africa*. In: Yacob-Haliso O., Falola T. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of African*

Women's Studies. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77030-7_126-1

Cyrelene Amoah-Boampong is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of History in the University of Ghana. Christabel Agyeiwaa is entering the Ph.D. program History, studying women's contributions to Africa's socio-economic development over time. This article presents the women of west Africa dynamically, not just in the home but within communities. It showcased how the women negotiated, contested, complemented, and transformed their societies in the social, political, economic, and religious realities of pre-colonial life in West Africa. This help establishes why women needed to be showcased more in literature because they played active parts in their communities.

Ampene, Kwasi. "Female Song Tradition and the Akan of Ghana: the Creative Process in Nnwonkoro." *Choice Reviews Online*, vol. 43, no. 07, 2006, doi:10.5860/choice.43-3939.

Kwasi Ampene is an Associate Professor of Music in the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance at the University of Michigan. Specializing in the Akan people's musical traditions, he researches the performance of historical and social memory, politics, values, ideologies, and religious philosophy in Akan court music. The article showcased the importance of the nuances that existed within the music and each instrument's purpose and tune. He inspired me to present the study in a different form to showcase the oral sources I had acquired in a musical format.

Asirifi-Danquah. 2007. *The Struggle between Two Great Queens, 1900-1901: Yaa Asantewaa of Edweso, Asante and Victoria of Great Britain*. Ghana: Asirifi-Danquah.

Asirifi-Danquah presented the War of the Golden Stool through Queen Victoria of Great Britain and Nana Yaa Asantewaa of Edweso. While exploring the political actions taken before, during, and after the War, he challenges the role of women in War by centering two women from opposing sides and highlighted their use of the power they held to weave a story on the War. This was instrumental in establishing the necessity of including female action in the War and centering Nana Yaa Asantewaa.

Beechey, Veronica. "On Patriarchy." *Feminist Review* 3, no. 1 (November 1979): 66–82. <https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.1979.21>.

Veronica Beechey was a pioneering feminist sociologist who was a Professor of sociology. Her article *On Patriarchy* explored different kinds of patriarchy and established base understandings of it and was a significant first step in my search for scholarship on patriarchy and how systematic it is.

Boahen, A. Adu. Emmanuel Akyeampong. 2003. *Yaa Asantewaa and the Asante- British War of 1900-01*. Accra, Ghana. Sub-Saharan Publishers.

Adu Boahen was a Ghanaian academic, historian, politician, and professor at the University of Ghana. As a politician, he notably was a candidate in the 1992 Ghanaian presidential election, representing the main opposition, New Patriotic Party. His book on Nana Yaa Asantewaa was very groundbreaking because it centered the Asante's voice and utilized oral history to explore the role that Nana Yaa Asantewaa played in the War. While in Ghana, he was heralded as to having written one of the best books on such topic, as it was closer to the Asante oral history of the War.

Brempong, Arhin. 2000. "The Role of Nana Yaa Asantewaa in the 1900 Asante War of Resistance." *Ghana Studies* 3(1): 97–110. doi: 10.1353/ghs.2000.0004.

Arhin Brempong, in the article, played out the role of Nana Yaa Asantewaa in the War and why she was so instrumental in the outcome of the War. I used this as part of the Ghanaian literature on the War as it stressed the importance of Nana Yaa Asantewaa in catalyzing the War.

Chowdhury, Farah Deeba. 2009. "Theorising Patriarchy: The Bangladesh Context." *Asian Journal of Social Science* 37(4): 599–622. doi: 10.1163/156853109x460200.

Farah Chowdhury is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Gender Studies, and is currently a Scholar In Residence at Global Labour Research Centre, York University

Darden, Jessica Trisko, Alexis Leanna Henshaw, and Ora Szekely. 2019. *Insurgent Women: Female Combatants in Civil Wars*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Jessica Nicole Trisko Darden née Trisko is a Canadian academic and activist. She is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at Virginia Commonwealth University. Alexis Leanna Henshaw is currently an assistant professor at Troy University. Ora Szekely is a professor in the Department of Political Science at Clark University. This article centered around female actions in conflicts and looked at patriarchy's role in spinning different narratives about women in conflict. This helped me explore patriarchy and war and their effects on a given society.

Eisenstein, Zillah. "Constructing a Theory of Capitalist Patriarchy and Socialist Feminism." *Insurgent Sociologist*, vol. 7, no. 3, 1977, pp. 3–17., doi:10.1177/089692057700700301.

Zillah Eisenstein is a Professor of Politics at Ithaca College, with specialty in the politics of class, sex, and race; political theory; feminist theories and gender construction. This article was supplementary in looking at patriarchy and resistance to it to assist in theorizing patriarchy.

Farrar, Tarikhu. "The Queenmother, Matriarchy, and the Question of Female Political Authority in Precolonial West African Monarchy." *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 27, no. 5, 1997, pp. 579–597., doi:10.1177/002193479702700501.

Farrar Vincent Tarikhu teaches at City College of San Francisco in the Department of African American Studies and the Department of Social Science. This article highlighted female authority in West Africa and the different governmental systems that existed while highlighting women who broke out of the norm like Nana Yaa Asantewaa. It had a section on Nana Yaa Asantewaa and her significance in Asante at the War.

Kaminski, Joseph S. "Sound Barrage: Threshold to Asante Sacred Experience through Music." *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 45, no. 2 (2014): 345-71. Accessed December 7, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43198652>.

Joseph Kaminski is an Adjunct Faculty in the Music Department, teaching world music and music history.

Tieku, Augustine Kofi. *Tete wo Bi kyere : History & Facts about Asante Kingdom & Ghana*. Kumasi Krofrom: Schrodinger's Publications, 2015.

This book was a great start in looking at a chronological history of the Asante, which predominantly relied on oral histories. I used it to get the overall story and history of the Asante, which help highlight some of the differences between the western literature I had access to, and sources like these. It also touched on the war of the Golden Stool without going fully into the details.

McCaskie, Tom C. 2015. *Asante, Kingdom of Gold: Essays in the History of an African Culture*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.

Tom McCaskie is a Professor of History focusing on the culture of Asante and Africa. His works created the groundwork for my study to be built upon because he gives a detailed look at Asante's history, politics, and culture, which helped me find sources to build upon.

Mccaskie, T. C. 2007. "The Life and Afterlife of Yaa Asantewaa." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 77(2): 151–79. doi: 10.3366/afr.2007.77.2.151. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40026704>

Okyere, K. 2016. "When Yaa Asantewaa Meets Deborah: An African and Biblical Dialogue on Women Leadership in Liberation War Heritage". *Colonial Heritage, Memory and Sustainability in Africa: Challenges, Opportunities and Prospects* (pp. 169-194).
Kojo Okyere is a Lecturer in the Department of Religion and Human Values at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana.

Owusu-Sarpong, Christiane. "The Predicament of the Akan 'Queenmother' (Ohemmaa)." *Reinventing African Chieftaincy in the Age of AIDS, Gender, Governance, and Development*, University of Calgary Press, 2014, pp. 201–248.

Christiane Owusu-Sarpong is Doctor of literary semiotics and is teacher at the Department of Languages at Kumasi University. This article help set up my questions and it looks at the predicament of the Akan Queen-Mother. This was significant because it looked at the matrilineal system that exist in the Akan as well as the patriarchy and how that forms the basis of politics. Spelling out the responsibilities of the Queen- Mother as well as the restrictions highlighted the complex responsibilty she held.

Rattray, R. S. 1929. "Ashanti Law and Constitution." *African Affairs* XXVIII(CXI): 305–6. doi: 10.1093/oxfordjournals.afraf.a100422.

Robert Sutherland Rattray was a British Anthropologist and Military Official in Africa, who collected African material, and wrote about the history of the Asante.

Stoeltje, Beverly J. "Asante Queen Mothers." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, vol. 810, no. 1 Queens, Queen, 1997, pp. 41–71., doi:10.1111/j.1749-6632.1997.tb48124.x.

Beverly J. Stoeltje is a professor in both the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology and the Department of Anthropology at Indiana University (Bloomington). She also serves as Affiliate Faculty in African Studies, American Studies, Cultural Studies, Gender Studies, and at the Russian-East European Institute. This article helped me set up the Asante power structure, establishing the hierarchy that existed at the time and the Queen's role- Mother within the hierarchy.

Wasserman, B. "The Ashanti War of 1900: A Study in Cultural Conflict." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 31, no. 2 (1961): 167-79. Accessed December 7, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1158104>.

Wilks, Ivor. R.c.c.l. 1976. "Asante in the Nineteenth Century - Asante in the Nineteenth Century: the Structure and Evolution of a Political Order. Cambridge University Press, 1975. Pp. Xvii 800. £16.00." *The Journal of African History* 17(1): 137–39. doi: 10.1017/s002185370001481x.

Ivor G. Wilks was a British Africanist and historian who specialized in Ghana. He was also a Professor Emeritus of History at Northwestern University in Illinois, USA.

Woehrle, Lynne. "Patriarchy and War." In *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*. : Oxford University Press, 2010. <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195334685.001.0001/acref-9780195334685-e-528>.

Lynne Woehrle is a sociology professor and director of the Peacebuilding Certificate program. Her article on patriarchy and war was used alongside Aidoo to set up my theoretical framework. It helped establish the importance of patriarchy in the military and the military's role in upholding patriarchy. As the Asante were an empire at the time, the military was at the

center of its power structure. This helped me look at how that affected Asante women and their roles in war and how that is represented throughout history.