

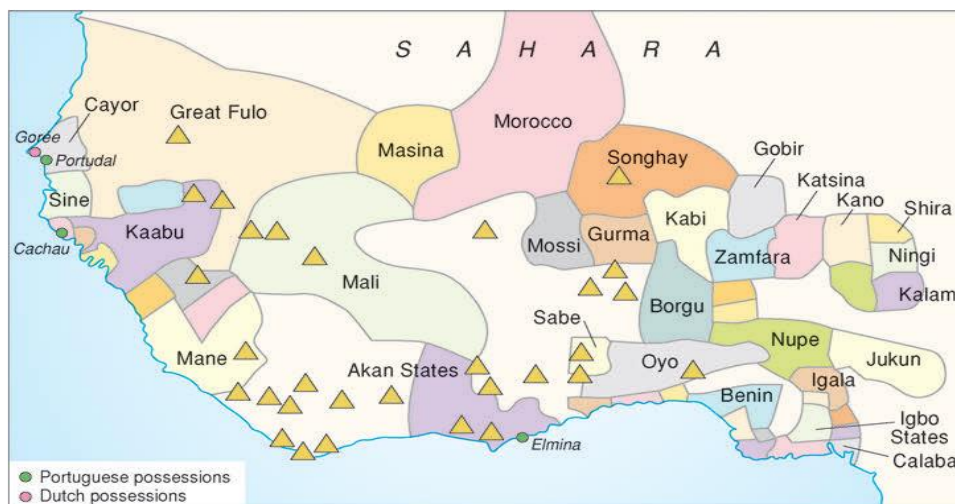
Case study the Ashanti Kingdom



The Ashanti Kingdom (also known as the Asante Empire) was a powerful West African state that dominated much of present-day Ghana from the 17th to the 20th century.

Founded by Osei Tutu I around 1701, it was renowned for its sophisticated military, rich gold resources, and complex political organization.

The coast of West Africa before the arrival of Europeans



Before European colonisation, the West African region was part of a thriving trade network.

West Africans exchanged their goods for goods from traders in the Sahara Desert, Europe and the Middle East

Africa has produced two-thirds of all gold ever mined, since the beginning of time. Between the 11th and the 17th centuries, West Africa was the leading supplier of gold in the world.

The Ashanti and their early contact with European traders and explorers

The Ashanti kingdom, or Asante, dominated much of the present-day state of Ghana. It was ruled by an ethnic group called the Akan, which in turn was composed of up to 38 subgroups.

Gold Coast began encountering European traders in the mid-1400s, when the Portuguese began trading with coastal peoples.

West Africa had a long history of connection to trans-Saharan gold trade, and from the 15th century was drawn into trade with Europe, in gold and increasingly in slaves.

The Ashanti kingdom had emerged from the mid- 17th century, benefitting from access both to rich agricultural resources and gold, much of the labour for production of which was provided by a domestic slave trade.



By the early 18th century, one of the Akan kingdoms, the Ashanti (also called the Asante) controlled many of the other kingdoms in the area.

It also controlled the trade routes to the coast and some of the richest gold mines in Africa.

The early European explorers and traders were so astonished by the richness of the gold in the area, that they called it the Gold Coast.

At first the early Portuguese traders and explorers were interested in the gold in the Akan states.

Their interest in the area later expanded to include tens of thousands of slaves.

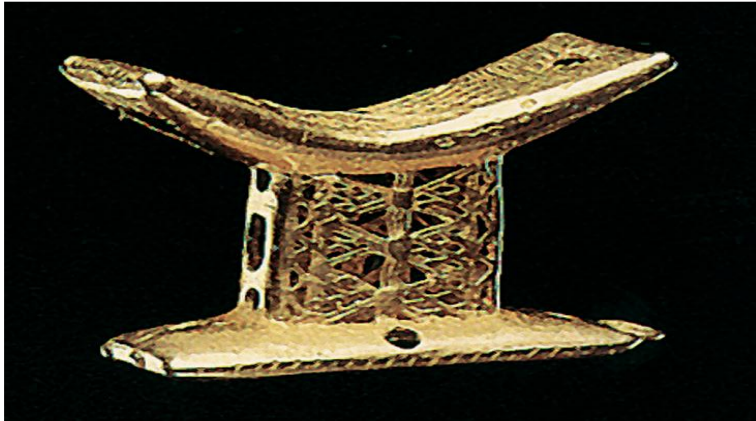
In the early years, Ashanti traders got horses and guns in exchange for people(slaves).

Africans were kidnapped by fellow Africans who would march their captives to the coast where they would sell them to European slave traders at Elmina.

The slaves were kept in prisons called barracoons at Elmina Castle where they waited before they were shipped across the Atlantic Ocean

Later they began to exchange cloth, metal items, copperware and brassware.

The British and the colonisation of the Gold Coast



The myth of the Golden Stool

The Golden Stool is a sacred symbol of Ashanti unity and nationhood.

The Golden Stool motivated the Ashanti during their resistance against British colonialism.

No one could be a legitimate ruler without the stool.

The British colonisers and the War of the Golden Stool

Between 1824 and 1901 the British fought four wars against the Ashanti.

The Ashanti defeated the British Empire in the first three wars but, in the end, the Ashanti kingdom became part of the British colony called the Gold Coast.

In 1896 the British occupied the Ashanti capital, Kumasi. They sent King Prempeh and several chiefs and elders into exile.

Major Hodgson was appointed as the British Governor in 1898. He wanted to defeat the Ashanti once and for all. At a meeting in 1900, he demanded that the Ashanti leaders hand over the Golden Stool so that he could sit on it.



Yaa Asantewaa, the Queen Mother, persuaded the Ashanti to fight back.

The Ashanti and the British fought battles in what became known as the '**War of the Golden Stool**'.

The British also recruited some local groups that were enemies of the Ashanti. The British finally defeated the Ashanti in 1902. Asantewaa and other Ashanti leaders were sent into exile to join Prempeh I. The British took over the Ashanti kingdom, and it became part of the British colony of the Gold Coast.

Results of colonisation for the Ashanti Kingdom

Ashanti lost many golden treasures.

After the defeat of the Ashanti, the British soldiers collected all the gold treasures from the palace.

Many of these items are displayed in British museums today.

The Ashanti people lost their independence

The Ashanti were forced to work for wages and to pay taxes to the British colonial government.

People were forced off their own land and onto farms or into factories where they worked for low pay.

Power was taken away from the Ashanti leaders.

Results of colonisation for Britain

The British grew richer

The British took as much as possible from the Gold Coast with as little cost as possible to themselves.

They spent money on things that would improve their ability to remove wealth and natural resources

from the Gold Coast.

They built railways and roads, but only to be able to get the resources that they wanted as quickly as possible to the harbours where they could be shipped off to Europe.

Conclusion

The Ashanti Kingdom was a powerful, wealthy, and well-organised African state.

It had strong leadership, a successful economy, and an effective army.

The Ashanti are an important case study because they show that Africans had advanced kingdoms and did not accept colonisation without resistance.