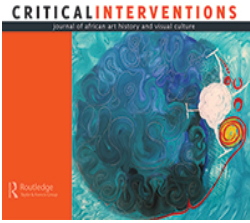


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A PALACE TO RIVAL BRITISH RULE: THE AMONOO RESIDENCE IN GHANA

Courtney Micots, Florida A & M University

African colonial period homes in coastal Ghana, like the stone mansion constructed for Fante attorney Kwamin Atta Amonoo in 1920, visually convey wealth, status, and modernity as well as political resistance to British hegemony. The Amonoo residence combines the British Italianate style with the Fante interplay of symmetrical and asymmetrical elements on the exterior, and it utilizes a Fante courtyard plan. This dialogic presentation expresses the struggle Amonoo and other elites experienced while trying to locate their power within the British administration. A founding and active member of the British West African Conference, Amonoo adopted elements of British power architecture and transformed his mansion into an image about local power. Additionally, the residence, a palace for the son of the regional chief or *omanhen*, exhibits an architectural trend in cultural exchange between Asante peoples and local/foreign influences since at least the eighteenth century. Amonoo's residence, like those of other Ghanaian elites in a colonial period of significant political and cultural transformations, displays the taste of the elite class for Ghanaian modernity and distaste for British imperialism.

The wealthy class first appropriated British architectural styles as a group in the late 1860s during a period of political transition. Although these two-story buildings constructed in brick and stone resemble British architecture, Ghanaian homes actually represent a long-standing tradition of cultural exchange manifested in a deliberately new style of architecture combining local elements with European Palladian and later

British Italianate and Queen Anne architectural styles.¹ The urban Fante people of coastal Ghana have mixed local styles with those from other cultures for centuries, including the construction of two-story rammed earth homes for urban residences in the eighteenth century, likely influenced by Mande builders from northern Sudanese states (Farrar, 1995).² In response to such cultural exchanges in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, cultural anthropologists Christian Huck and Stefan Bauernschmidt (2013) argued that appropriation is “always about cultural relations in the context of an unequal distribution of power” (p. 19). Indeed, Cuthbert (1998) stated, “the history of European colonization of the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Pacific is also a history of wholesale appropriation” (p. 257). Rather, African homes in coastal Ghana, formerly known as the Gold Coast, evince a long history of cultural exchange with the elites making choices that reflect power, wealth, and modernity.

Colonial-era appropriations may appear to many scholars to exhibit the process of cultural assimilation, but I argue that a more complicated process was employed by some of the most prestigious patrons of these residences. I will explain the plan and architectural details of Kwamin Atta Amonoo's family residence first as an example of the Coastal Elite style on the Gold Coast. Then I will demonstrate the agency of these patrons through Amonoo's selection of British power symbols as a means to resist British hegemony by tracing his life and career choices as documented in the coastal newspapers. Amonoo's strategy

appears to conform to one first utilized by statesman and military leader George Kuntu Blankson (c. 1807–1809–August 23, 1898).³ Both patrons constructed massive family residences in the historically significant port city of Anomabo.

THE AMONOO RESIDENCE

The Amonoo residence (Figures 1 and 2) was completed in 1920, under the direction of Kwamin Atta Amonoo (b.c. 1880s–1929), who was the son of Omanhen Amonoo V, a.k.a. Kwamin Tufuantsi (reigned 1901–1921), and a barrister, making him both a member of the ruling and elite classes (“General News,” Feb. 8, 1913, p. 2; “Notes,” Jun. 1, 1916, p. 4).⁴ The



Figure 1. Amonoo Residence, South Façade, Kwamin Atta Amonoo, 1920, stone nog, brick, concrete (paint added later), Anomabo, Ghana. 2009 (author’s photo).



Figure 2. Amonoo Residence, West Side, Anomabo, Ghana. 2009 (author’s photo).

residence is sited on a hill that is known locally as *ohen kokwaado*, or lawyer’s hill, and overlooks the Omanhen’s Palace, a former Dutch lodge, and Fort William, both of stone nog construction (Flather 1966; Anquandah, 1999; Priestley 1969).⁵ Stone nog construction involves packing small stones, shells, corncobs, and other materials with a lime-based mortar into a wood framework to construct walls in layers (Crain 1994).⁶ European forts and residences had been symbols of wealth and power on the Ghanaian coastline for centuries. The immense Amonoo residence was visible to everyone in the town and to passersby on the coastal road; it stands opposite and above European structures, allowing the visible urban arena to become a charged space for revaluing power relationships.

The building is constructed primarily in stone nog and exhibits many features of the British Italianate style: pilasters, cornice, belt course, a ground-floor arcade, quoins, arched windows, and a symmetrical façade. An arcade on the ground-level façade, only recently enclosed, is composed of true arches framed in brick and divided by two-story pilasters (see Figure 1).⁷ Five arches span the façade, and another arch at

each side creates an open arcade. Each arch springs from a heavy impost block about two feet high. Some of these blocks and lower sections of the arches are composed of concrete blocks, used sporadically and intermixed with local brick (possibly an early experimentation with concrete block construction). Bricks are placed lengthwise along the form of the arch to create an attractive band of contrasting color and texture to the stone wall. The exterior of the Amonoo residence has never been plastered and was painted white only recently.

The upper story windows are ornamented with true arches in brick relief above and brick sills (Figure 3). The sills are created with two layers of stepped bricks. The relief arches have a spoke-like design. The cornice is divided into three layers, two utilizing brick laid lengthways and the other a succession of cement forms with a scalloped edge. Created in European molds and shipped to the coast, these scalloped cement forms were popular decorative elements throughout the coast serving a variety of architectural purposes. They are seen in Anomabo on the Anglican Church (c. 1910), and the Tuafo No. 1 *asafo posuban* (c. 1921), a religious shrine used by the *asafo*, local paramilitary groups with communal and religious responsibilities (Figure 4).

Although the roof has been replaced, it seems likely that it originally had a pitched roof with timber supports covered with iron or aluminum-corrugated sheets imported from England. On the eastern side of the mansion lie the ruins of what appears to be an original bathhouse (Figure 5). A reservoir or cistern and a clay pipe leading into the main building may indicate some type of early plumbing.

True arches frame the sides of the arcade, but these arches are not centered evenly between the pilasters (Figure 6). In fact, the arch appears



Figure 3. Amonoo Residence, Windows, Anomabo, Ghana. 2008 (author's photo).

to be cut off by the left pilaster. The true arches across the façade arcade, in contrast, are centered between the pilasters, proving that the asymmetry of the side arches is not an error but a choice. Another example of asymmetry occurs at the main entrance (Figure 7). A much larger entrance door, or double doors, would have stood in place of the current single door. The entablature arch over the door appears abruptly cut off on the left by the side arcade arch. Such combinations of symmetry with occasional



Figure 4. Tuafo No. 1 *Asafo Posuban*, c. 1921, brick and cement, Anomabo, Ghana, 2007 (author's photo).

asymmetrical elements distinguish Ghanaian houses from European ones. In all the homes I researched in Anomabo, asymmetrical elements were juxtaposed within a symmetrical form reflecting local Akan aesthetics. Only the Amonoo residence seems to make this asymmetry apparent on the exterior, leading me to conclude that this was a deliberate choice.⁸ Art historian Robert Farris Thompson has compared African combinations of symmetry and asymmetry to early American jazz and coined the phrase “offbeat phrasing” to describe this phenomenon,



Figure 5. Amonoo Residence, East Side with Nana Kwa Nyanfueku Akwa, Anomabo, Ghana. 2008 (author's photo).



Figure 6. Amonoo Residence, Southwest Corner, Anomabo, Ghana. 2009 (author's photo).

which can be found in Akan drumming, festival parades, textile patterns (*kente*), and architecture (Thompson 1974, p. 13). Art historian Roy Sieber, discussing the placement of pattern of a men's strip-woven textile with asymmetrical elements, stated, “the careful matching of the ends of the cloth dispels the impression of an uncalculated overall design” (Sieber 1972, p. 190).

The plan (Figure 8) consists of two large halls of varying size toward the front and a row of chambers on one side of the courtyard. Thus a local courtyard plan was utilized (Hyland, 1997).⁹ This differs from the British Palladian plan used in several other elite homes on the coast where the hall and chamber plan was preferred; this plan incorporates two equal-sized large rooms or halls adjacent to each other with



Figure 7. Amonoo Residence, Entrance, Anomabo, Ghana. 2009 (author's photo).

four equal-sized chambers, one accessed from each side of the hall, creating a symmetrical plan. In Amonoo's plan the upstairs is identical with an enclosed veranda across the front and over the arcade. Partial steps to the courtyard veranda were originally constructed with stone nog and brick facing. Wood steps once completed the incline to the upper story. The original interior had wood plank floors upstairs. The ground floor is now cemented, but once may have been cobbled or swept ground. A separate set of rooms was built in the back far corner, with the ground floor room serving as a kitchen.

The Coastal Elite style is a term I have devised to explain the combination of local and European architectural styles utilized by mainly

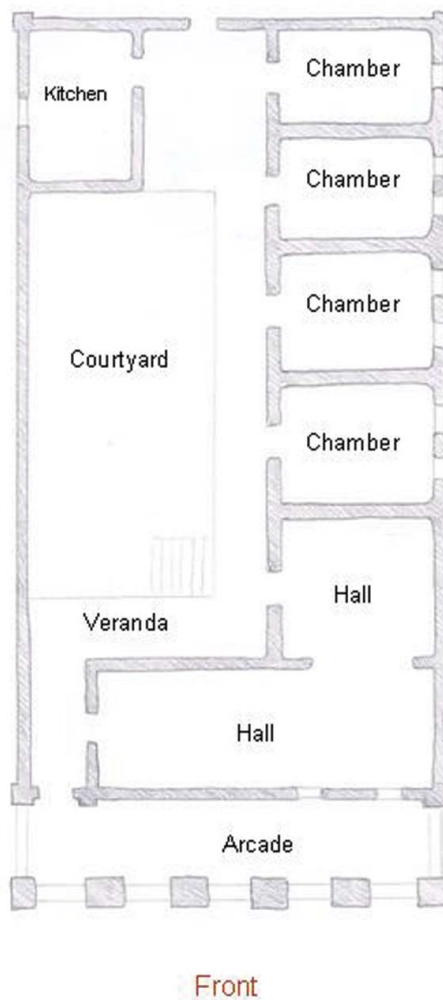


Figure 8. Plan, Amonoo Residence, Anomabo, Ghana (author's drawing).

the upper local classes in urban cities throughout the African and other Atlantic coasts. Amonoo's architectural choices exhibit an altered British exterior and a familiar interior aligned with local ideals of spatial organization and aesthetics. As such, his grand residence fits into the Coastal Elite style, yet his choice to mix the British Italianate with Fante offbeat phrasing on the exterior

and his use of the courtyard plan are particular to his palace (Micots, 2015; Mark 2002).¹⁰

KWAMIN ATTA AMONOO

It is likely that Amonoo, a.k.a. Ata-Amonu, was born in the 1880s, but family members could not remember specifics, and no documentation exists. He died in December of 1929. His ethnicity was Fante, the Akan group that has occupied the central coastal territory of Ghana for more than 500 years. The middle name of Atta is applied to a twin, yet no information on his twin, male or female, is available. What little is known about Amonoo derives mainly from newspaper accounts; this information provides important clues toward understanding how one patron negotiated his patriotic Fante ideals with his struggle to retain power within the British colonial empire.

His character was described in a letter by an unnamed source from Nigeria printed after his death: “during his sojourn here I contracted an intimacy with him and found him to be a man who shunned snobbishness. He mingled with the proletariat, notwithstanding his professional or social status. Everybody has his or her own faults, but the deceased was very much liked if not for anything, at least, for his hospitality, affability and great sense of honour” (“General News,” Feb. 1, 1930, p. 6). During World War I, Amonoo volunteered for duty with the Gold Coast Regiment on November 24, 1915. He was made a corporal and served in the Cameroons, receiving a bronze star (“Report,” Aug. 26, 1916; “Metal Card,” 1915). He had returned to Ghana by October 14, 1916, when he appeared in a new play by Kobina Sekyi, a.k.a. William Esuman-Gwira Sekyi (1892–1956), called *The Blinkards*. Performed in Cape Coast, the play was a parody of manners, specifically targeting local elites who

adopted English clothing, speech, and habits. Amonoo acted in one of the lead roles, that of Mr. Onyimdzi, the young barrister (“Notes,” Oct. 19, 1916). Thus it seems he was able to make fun of himself as well as others who were negotiating the colonial context. Proceeds from the play were donated to the Red Cross Fund (1916).¹¹ While the play is a biting critique against the appropriation of all things English, it does not necessarily disregard learning from others and gleaning the best for one’s own culture. This is exactly what Sekyi and Amonoo appear to have done. They appeared at other coastal events together and were likely friends. They were barristers and diplomats, yet Sekyi is best known today for *The Blinkards*. Neither man ever took an English name, unlike so many other members of the local elite class.

Both Amonoo and his father Amonoo V supported the Aborigines’ Rights Protection Society (ARPS) (“The Gold,” Oct. 15–22, 1914).¹² The organization was founded in 1897, in reaction to the British administration’s restrictions placed on Fante land and mineral rights as well as the creation of a Legislative Council, which had only two African unofficial members. Local chiefs and other members of the elite class worked together to affect change through petitions, public demonstrations, and an aggressive press campaign (Denzer, 2014). Elites were typically Western-educated men who had achieved a certain level of success as merchants, professionals, or reverends. In the colonial period, those members of the elite with the greatest income and political involvement made conscious choices of appropriation to express their identity and status visually, while other patrons probably copied homes in the Coastal Elite style to achieve the appearance of similar success. After World War I, ARPS campaigned for veteran rights and benefits. ARPS was the foremost local political entity struggling

for representation within the British colonial administration. Sekyi eventually served as president of the organization in the 1940s, following his uncle Henry Van Hein (1857–1928). Amonoo V signed the ARPS “Declaration or Constitution” in 1916 pledging support of the organization “to continue and [be] permanently established so the intent that the natural rulers and the inhabitants of this country may have facilities to carefully study and learn from time to time legislative measures and watch the acts of the Government so as to protect and by timely criticisms and strenuous effort fully profit by Her late Majesty’s aforesaid Royal command” (“Gold Coast,” Apr. 6, 1916, p. 5). Numerous leaders of the hierarchy and elite class signed the document; they were clearly working together to continue the goal of self-empowerment first issued by the Fante Confederacy. The Confederacy (1868–73) was formed to provide security and protection for the Fante against the Asante, their main enemy, to establish and maintain self-government, and to achieve modern development. After imprisoning most of the leaders, the British Empire created the Gold Coast Colony in 1874.

According to one description of Amonoo V, “He was an able and wise ruler. . . His administration was all that should be desired. He was a man of great intellectual force. He was bold and ever ready for criticisms. He was a deep thinker. His suggestions were wholesome” (“History,” n.d., p. 11). Amonoo V’s accomplishments include the partial construction of the road connecting Anomabo to Cape Coast that is now used as the coastal highway. Descendants remember that Amonoo V was Western educated and instigated a number of measures to improve local quality of life, such as the construction of modern public toilets and fining those who continued to use the beach. He also served as an official member of the Legislative Council as of September 1916 (n.d.).

His son Amonoo appears at various events in Cape Coast in the late 1910s, along with fellow barristers. He is mentioned along with barrister William Renner and Doctor Beckley in 1917, as “gentlemen [who] have embraced Teetotalism not because they could not control themselves, but in order to be an example to their fellow young men” (“News,” Sept. 22, 1917, p. 4). He was in the company of barrister William Ward Brew (1878–1943) and Sekyi at a garden party in honor of barrister C. Woolhouse Bannerman, the new police magistrate, in 1919 (“Garden Party,” Aug. 16, 1919).¹³ Amonoo and Brew were friends who worked together on several legal cases and in the British West African Conference.

The British West African Conference arose from discussions of self-rule and a united British West Africa that began in 1914, but gained momentum after the end of World War I among the local hierarchy and coastal elites; many were members of ARPS. J. E. Casely Hayford, Brew’s cousin, inspired the united West Africa movement through an awareness of shared political disabilities under the colonial government in all four of Britain’s West African colonies: Gold Coast, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Gambia (Kimble, 1963). One meeting, held in the Gold Coast port town of Elmina on November 14, 1919, served to inform the public of the proposal to create the British West African Conference; similar meetings were being conducted in the other colonies. The meeting was attended by Casely Hayford, president of the Western Province Section, and members of the Central Province Section: Van Hein, president; Brew, vice president; and “Prince Ata-Amonu, B.L.,” joint secretary (“British,” Jan. 3–10, 1920, p. 5). Van Hein gave the first speech wherein he explained that the purpose of the conference was “to press our rights with the British government in view of what we had done toward the results which had

been achieved by British Arms in the recent War. It was stated that as a result of combined organisation and proper representation, a measure of autonomy was on the point of being granted to India and other parts of the British Empire.” In addition to veteran’s rights and local representation, Van Hein stated that the conference would

include the Reform of the Legislature. This was most essential as it would enable the whole Country to take a great deal more interest in its affairs than was possible at present, thus to have an effective control over its finances. . .to secure the opportunities for the best Educational Institutions. . .Moreover, it would enable each locality to be properly represented at the Legislative Council. . .If we had control of our internal affairs all evidences pointed to the certainty of our having had these educational and other institutions provided for ourselves long ago, as evidenced by the Constitution of the Fanti Confederation. (1920)

Thus local leaders were making a direct connection to past efforts to press their rights to modernity and self-governance. Amonoo and Brew also spoke, and the proceedings were considered a “success from every point of view” (“Editorial,” Jan. 3–10, 1920, pp. 5–6; *The Lagos* Jan. 28, 1920, p. 7).¹⁴ In early 1920, Amonoo V attended a similar meeting in Cape Coast that was headed by J. E. Biney, newly elected president of ARPS; also present were Amonoo, Sekyi, and Brew. Van Hein, then treasurer of ARPS, was also in attendance (“Editorial,” Jan. 3–10, 1920).¹⁵

The first official meeting of the British West African Conference was held in March 11–12 and 15–24, 1920, in Accra with delegates from



a. The 1920 Inaugural Conference at the Rodger Club, Accra, of the National Congress of British West Africa

From left to right, seated: A. B. Quartey-Papafio, H. Van Hein, Dr. H. C. Bankole-Bright, F. W. Dove, G. Masche, T. Hutton Mills, Manche Kojo Ababio, J. E. Casely Hayford, Prince Bassey, Duke Ephraim, Patriarch J. G. Campbell.
Standing: E. E. Offiong, Rev. M. C. Hayford, A. Newton, E. Ofori, S. R. Wood, W. G. Essien, C. J. Bannerman, S. A. Quagrain, Adeniji Oluqubi, Adesoye Deniga, S. D. Bervell, J. B. Nelson, W. Ward Brew, Aklagba Sawyer, J. E. Emissang, F. Arkhurst.
Balcony: J. Kitson Mills, L. E. V. McCarthy, J. H. Coussey, J. M. de Santana, C. A. Barnes, Dr. F. V. Nankabruce, J. T. Addy, C. J. Reinhardt, W. E. G. Sekyi, H. Quartey-Papafio, A. Vandermey, Dr. C. E. Reinhardt, Prince K. Atta Amonoo, K. Quartey-Papafio, H. R. Ribeiro, J. Glover Addo, J. M. Opong, R. S. Sackey.

Figure 9. British West African Conference Attendees, Atta Amonoo is on the balcony, standing sixth from right in a white suit, March 1920, Rodger Club, Accra, Ghana.

all four colonies (Figure 9; “The First,” March 20–27, 1920; Kimble, 1963).¹⁶ Amonoo, Sekyi, and Brew were in attendance. Although Amonoo V was not present, he spoke previously in support of the conference. Officers were elected, including barrister T. Hutton-Mills as president, Casely Hayford as vice president, and Van Hein as co-treasurer (“The First,” March 20–27, 1920). Legislative, administrative, educational, sanitary, and medical reforms were discussed. Amonoo introduced a discussion on the “Representation of West African Views in London” on the 23rd (“British,” April 9–17, 1920, p. 6). Delegates also proposed to raise £100,000. The unnamed author of an article that appeared in a Sierra Leonean newspaper exclaimed, “We must take for granted that progress is nowhere automatic but has got to be fought for and even died for; and so we must FIGHT OUT our own portion of the money requirements of the Conference” (“The Accra,” March 27, 1920, pp. 8–9).¹⁷ Although the Conference was felt to have been a success, it is not clear if any real political results were

achieved. Meetings continued to be held on the Gold Coast between local members, and funds were raised, though not nearly close to £100,000. A delegation without Amonoo made the journey to London in September of 1920, to express the delegates' views ("Saltpond," Aug. 14, 1920; Kimble, 1963).¹⁸ While the delegates did not demand the Gold Coast become an independent nation, they did press "self-determination," as a resolution "to preserve unreservedly all and every right of free citizenship of the Empire and the fundamental principle that taxation goes with effective representation" (Kimble, 1963, pp. 384–385).¹⁹ However, over the next two years, the Conference essentially broke down as chiefs and members of the elite class disputed, the other colonies waned in support, and London paid little attention to the ideals of "self-determination" ("Editorial," May 14, 1921, p. 4).²⁰ By 1925, the Legislative Council, first established in 1850, became the recognized "forum for the expression of national opinion, and as a possible basis for responsible African government. . . Europeanized political institutions gradually superseded traditional forms of government" (Kimble, 1963, p. 403).

At the height of the Conference movement, Amonoo constructed his residence in the Coastal Elite style. On August 31, 1920, he held a housewarming party in Anomabo at his new residence. A notice was posted in the newspaper that stated the Band of the West African College of Music played and "a most enjoyable time was spent" ("General," Sept. 4, 1920, p. 2). Outside of this one notice, no other report exists to document if Amonoo used, or planned to use, the palace to negotiate his political position or ideologies, discuss his architectural choices, or make connections between them. Therefore, while the reasons for his architectural choices cannot be known for certain, I contend that Amonoo deliberately

chose a strategy that utilized architectural symbols of British power to subdue the power of the Other, while claiming power and status for his himself and his people. Van Hein also incorporated the British Italianate style for his home named Charity-Ville (Figure 10). Interestingly, the large residence is located on a hill overlooking Cape Coast with its back facing Cape Coast Castle and Government House (or Heritage House as it is known today), the previous seats of British administrative power on the coast. This siting facing the west appears deliberate because normally homes faced the ocean, or south, to take advantage of the best breezes. The ruins of Charity-Ville exhibit sections of construction in swish, stone nog, brick, and concrete; thus I believe it was built in stages between 1880 and 1920. The floor plan cannot be discerned.

In early 1921, Amonoo traveled with Brew to Calabar, Nigeria ("General," Feb. 5, 1921).²¹ They may have visited on Conference business or for a legal case; it is not stated. Amonoo, however, was being considered for the position of police magistrate for the Gold Coast port town of Winneba by March ("General," Mar. 12, 1921; "Mixed Pickles," Dec. 17, 1921). Amonoo



Figure 10. Charity-Ville, Henry Van Hein, c. 1880–1920, *swish*, stone nog, brick, concrete, Cape Coast, Ghana. From Doortmont, *The Pen-Pictures of Modern Africans and African Celebrities* by Charles Francis Hutchison, fig. 161, p. 428.

became embroiled in family disputes after his father's death in late March ("Anomabu," Jun. 25, 1921). Thus he traveled several times during this period between the Gold Coast and Calabar on behalf of his political and familial commitments (*The Gold*, Feb. 5, 1921; *The Gold*, Aug. 25, 1923; *The Gold*, Dec. 27, 1924). By 1923, he was residing in Calabar (*The Gold*, Aug. 25, 1923).²² He was elected, by a thin margin, to the Legislative Council of Nigeria in 1923 (*The Gold*, July 28, 1923; *The Gold*, Sept. 29, 1923; *The Gold*, Nov. 3, 1923). Instead of outright rejecting the British system, Amonoo and many of his local colleagues struggled to gain power within the colonial system.

Architectural historian Ikemefuna Stanley Ifejika Okoye has illuminated the connections between the two British colonies, noting that exchanges had flowed between both since the 1870s. Grand residences in southeastern Nigeria share the architectural hybridity and the clients' motivations of those on the Gold Coast, while reflecting each location's cultural specificity. Okoye asserted:

For, by imagining power as inherent in an object...by imagining power as almost graspable in a physical sense; by dissociating power from the European possessor of it, a very different conclusion might then result from their performances of mimicry. That is, such a relocation of power as is inherent in the architectural innovations of the period allows the mimicry of Europe to operate as a means of attempting to restore something previously usurped. (Okoye, 1995, pp. 92, 595)²³

I contend that this "relocation of power" on the Gold Coast was first attempted by George

Kuntu Blankson and followed by other elites, including Amonoo. This relocation of power was mirrored in the efforts of the Fante Confederacy and the British West African Conference.

On his way home to retire at his residence in Anomabo in mid-December 1929, Amonoo died in a motor accident on the coastal highway west of Accra, somewhere between Adaiso and Bawjiase. His funeral was held in Anomabo on January 28, 1930 ("Rambling," Dec. 27, 1929; *The Gold*, Jan. 4–11, 1930).²⁴ After his death, his *abusua*, or mother's family, which continues to own it today, inherited the residence. Amonoo's grandson, Inspector Acquah Harrison (b.c. 1925) is the current *abusuapanyin*, or family head. He remembers living in the residence after his father's death in 1940, when he and his mother came to Anomabo from Sekondi. Harrison lived there until 1944, when he joined the army to serve in World War II. Family members continued to live in the residence until 1963, when the roofing had deteriorated to such a point that the family was forced to abandon the structure. The once grand house stood vacant and soon became overgrown—so much so that many of today's elderly residents remember that as children they believed dwarfs lived there. When Amonoo's wife died and another family member became the *abusuapanyin*, they allowed the Anglican Church to use it free of charge as the site of their middle school from 1968 until 1986, when the school was moved into Castle Brew, where it operated until 2015. The family placed a new roof on the Amonoo residence in 1980. Another church used the building from 1986 to 1989. Then, sometime between 1989 and 2003, the family allowed the Kwegyir Aggrey Secondary School to use the residence as a Boys Hostel in exchange for repairs (A. Harrison, personal communication, July 11, 2009). Unfortunately, over the years the

structure has suffered from damage and renovations, some of which have compromised its original elegance.

**COASTAL ELITE STYLE AS RESISTANCE:
GEORGE KUNTU BLANKSON'S ADDITION,
A COMPARISON**

George Kuntu Blankson (1809–August 23, 1898), a prominent merchant, diplomat, and military leader from Anomabo, was an active member in the Fante Confederacy and constructed what may have been the first home constructed in the Coastal Elite style in the late 1860s around the time of the formation of the Confederacy in 1868 (Priestley 1969; *The Gold Dec.* 10, 1881; *Gold Coast Survey*, Feb. 13, 1931).²⁵ This comparison is important for establishing a resistance strategy used by future members of the elite class.

Blankson was one of several prominent members of the elite class from Anomabo belonging to the Fante Confederacy. He delivered the “Constitution of the New Fantee Confederacy” to C. S. Salmon, acting administrator in Cape Coast, on November 30, 1871. Without reading it, Salmon had most of the prominent leaders imprisoned for treason (British administration letters of Arthur E. Kennedy, Dec. 1, 1871; Dec. 16, 1871; Jan. 2, 1872; F. Fitzgerald to the Earl of Kimberley, Dec. 16, 1871; J. Pope Hennessy to the Earl of Kimberley, Jun. 6, 1872; Earl of Kimberley to Robert William Keate, Mar. 10, 1873).²⁶ Thirty-three leaders of the Fante hierarchy had signed the document on November 18. The reasons behind their intention to create a centralized assembly of chiefs are stated clearly in the first sentence:

Whereas we, the undersigned kings and chiefs of Fanti, have taken into

consideration the deplorable state of our peoples and subjects in the interior of the Gold Coast, and whereas we are of opinion that unity and concord among ourselves would conduce to our mutual well-being, and promote and advance the social and political condition of our peoples and subjects, who are in a state of degradation, without the means of education and of carrying on proper industry, we, the said kings and chiefs, after having duly discussed and considered the subject...have unanimously resolved and agreed upon the articles herein after named. (“Constitution,” Dec. 16, 1871)

Forty-seven articles follow that create a “National Assembly” of the “Fanti Confederation” composed of the undersigned “for the purpose of more effectually bringing about certain improvements...in the country” (1871, Articles 2 and 3). Some of these included “to make good and substantial roads,” “to erect school-houses...and obtain the service of efficient school-masters,” “to promote agricultural and industrial pursuits,” and “to develop and facilitate the working of the mineral and other resources of the country” (1871, Article 7, Sections 3–6). These improvements were viewed as part of the modernity embraced from Western culture. Despite the hierarchy serving as the founders, “educated” men held all the elected and appointed offices, including king-president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary (1871, Article 15; Amendment B, Nov. 24, 1871).²⁷ However, the assembly would “see that summonses, writs, &c. issuing from the British Courts...are carried into effect with as little delay as possible” (1871, Article 36, Section 7). Thus, while the confederacy was trying to centralize and empower themselves,

they also recognized an assistance to the British administration, though this is stated deep within the document in Article 36. The constitution, which blatantly went against British colonial policy to divide and rule, was not accepted by the British administration, and the Confederacy disbanded in 1873, as both the British and Fante became focused on the Anglo-Asante War of 1873–1874.

Blankson, the son of a Fante chief who had received a British education in Anomabo and Cape Coast, was an elite member of coastal society with links to the Asante Empire. During the period of his involvement with the Confederacy, Blankson initiated the construction of a second addition to Castle Brew (Figure 11). Either the two-story addition was not completed, or followers of the hierarchy damaged it after the Fante chiefs accused Blankson of treason in 1873 (“The Late,” Sept. 3, 1898, pp. 3–4; “The Blankson,” March 31, 1875).²⁸ An arcade of four true arches spans the south entrance and suggests a commercial purpose for the ground floor. The addition appropriated classical details, including arched windows, belt course, and cornice, from the original Georgian manor named Castle Brew by its



Figure 11. George Kuntu Blankson Addition, South Façade, Castle Brew, c. late 1860s to early 1870s, stone nog, brick, Anomabo, Ghana, 2009 (author’s photo).

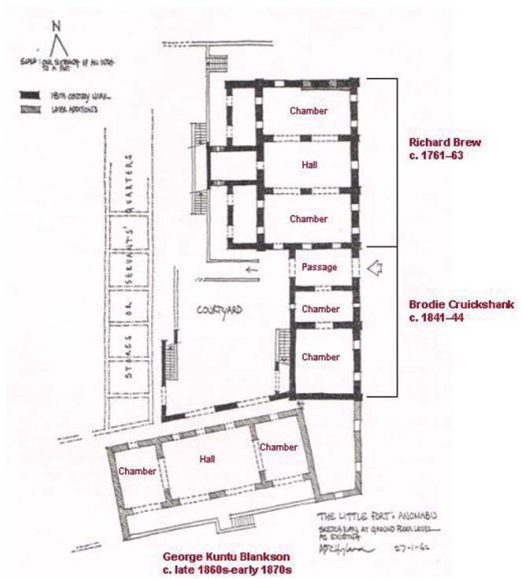


Figure 12. Plan, Castle Brew compound, Anomabo, Ghana (drawing by A. D. C. Hyland from Priestley, *West African Trade*) with my notes.

Irish patron Richard Brew. The plan uses a single hall and chamber design similar to the plan of Castle Brew, with an added porch across the front, a corridor along the courtyard side, and a room connecting the addition to the Cruickshank wing (Figure 12).

Blankson made an intriguing choice to build an addition that incorporated a European architectural style because this was unusual in local architectural practice. By the 1860s, local elites were increasingly appropriating European visual symbols of power, including clothing and furnishings, as a means of exhibiting their modernity. In 1941, British anthropologist Godfrey Wilson expressed the colonial period motivations of urban Africans as a desire to be “full and equal citizens of a modern urban society. If they enthusiastically adopted elaborate forms of European dress and manners, it was to press their claim ‘to

be respected by the Europeans and by one another as civilized, if humble, men, members of the new world society” (Wilson, 1941, pp. 19–20; as quoted in Ferguson, 2002, pp. 553–555). Anthropologist James Ferguson agreed that the adoption of European manners and dress was a means of claiming the “political and social rights of full membership in a wider society” (Ferguson, 2002, p. 555).

Yet, while exterior appearance demonstrated a desire to conform to British ideas of modernity, other messages were being simultaneously communicated by the Fante elites that convey their being equal to the task of self-governance. Blankson’s choice to use elements of European architecture is an obvious symbol of wealth, for the cost to quarry and build in stone was impressive, and status, for it communicates Blankson’s desire to be viewed as a citizen of modern urban society. The façade of the addition directly faces the northwest corner of the British Fort William, creating a visual challenge to British authority. In light of Blankson’s involvement with the Confederacy, it seems disjunctive to interpret his appropriation of a European architectural style as mere homage to European power. As with the example of Amonoo’s residence, I propose that Blankson’s choice of European architectural symbols from Castle Brew and similar European residential forts made a visual connection between his power and that of the Europeans, proving local right to rule through a show of power, wealth, and modernity (Wellington, 2011; “Country,” Aug 31, 1850; Nii D. Nsokie II, personal communication, February 20, 2012).²⁹ Thus his architectural choices reflected similar goals supported by the Confederacy. After Blankson was exonerated in 1875, his reputation was re-established. As he grew older, he became revered as a hero for the many battles he led and won against the Asante as well as his service in the Confederacy

and the Legislative Council, where he served from 1861 to 1873 (“The Late,” Sept. 3, 1898).

Coastal elites constructed large homes in this Coastal Elite style in every major port city along the central coastline from the late 1860s until independence in 1957, yet most examples survive in Anomabo and Cape Coast today. In 1874, the colonial capital was located in Cape Coast, a port town only 15 miles west of Anomabo, once the site of the largest coastal slave-trading port in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with a population of 15,000 by 1807.³⁰ Britain moved its colonial capital in 1877, to the small town of Accra, 75 miles east of Anomabo, and placed political authority in the hands of traditional rulers whom they thought they could manipulate (Flather, 1966). In doing so, they undermined the economic, social, and political status of members of the long-established local urban elite class and attempted to separate them from the British ruling hierarchy (Crowder, 1968). As Gold Coast elites continued to lose power into the twentieth century, they increasingly proclaimed their rights through visual culture. Architectural styles were appropriated as a form of what theoretician Homi Bhabha calls “colonial mimicry,” which “is constructed around an *ambivalence* . . . the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which ‘appropriates’ the Other as it visualizes power” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 122). Blankson’s addition to an older British Georgian style mansion in Anomabo incorporated the popular British Palladian style of the late 1860s. Other homes built in the next decade copied this strategy until the British Italianate and Queen Anne styles found favor in the 1880s to 1920. From the 1920s to independence in 1957, the political climate leaned toward nationalism, and American architectural styles of the Beaux Arts and

Neoclassical Revival were incorporated and transformed into the local vernacular.

Residences of the elite class, such as the Amonoo residence, visually challenge European structures of similar scale and materials. By appropriating the British Italianate style, a style made popular in Britain by Queen Victoria and subsequently adopted by the upper and middle classes, the Amonoo residence expressed a power transference that not only connected the patron to modern ideals but also acted in resistance to British authority by transforming British power symbols into Fante ones. The façade of the Amonoo residence echoes the Palladian arches of the Blankson addition. While brick is laid lengthwise around the arch, dark-gray granite stones are similarly laid lengthwise on the Blankson addition, exhibiting the same aesthetic inclination. However, the Amonoo residence incorporates a local courtyard plan rather than the Palladian hall and chamber plan. Offbeat phrasing is found in the angle of Blankson's easternmost room, though that may also be of practical design for the site, while Amonoo's use of asymmetrical elements are found primarily on the exterior, perhaps creating a bolder statement of refashioning British power on the coast. Blankson may have been the first to appropriate European architectural styles for his addition to Castle Brew, which was continued by prominent members of the community for the same goals of status and visual challenge to British authority on the coast. Consequently, Blankson's adoption of a ground floor arcade has become part of the Ghanaian vernacular today.³¹

The Amonoo residence can also be compared to an earlier house constructed around 1900 in Cape Coast (Figure 13) for Allen Quansah, a wealthy Fante merchant who made several trips to Europe.³² The symmetrical façade is similar to Amonoo's residence, with a series of five arched entrances across the ground floor, belt courses,



Figure 13. Allen Quansah Family Residence, c. 1883, stone nog, brick (cement plaster and paint added later), Cape Coast, Ghana. 2009 (author's photo).

quoins, true arched windows with spoke-like entablatures (since refitted for shutters), and a cornice. Although both stone nog residences use the British Italianate style, the interior plans differ. The Quansah house has a double hall and chamber plan with two large central halls and side chambers, borrowing from the Palladian style as opposed to Amonoo's use of the local courtyard plan.

COASTAL ELITE STYLE AS RESISTANCE ARCHITECTURE

Thus, from the documented history of Amonoo and the palace he had constructed, it is possible to see a connection between his residence and the sentiments followed in his political career. Together with his father Amonoo V and numerous members of the coastal elite class and hierarchy, Amonoo challenged British authority on the Gold Coast. Postcolonial theorists have addressed issues concerning cultural appropriation as expressions of identity in the global context. Bhabha wrote that the "*menace* of mimicry is its *double* vision which in disclosing the ambivalence

of colonial disclosure also disrupts its authority” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 126). With its altered British façade with elements of Fante offbeat phrasing and courtyard plan for the interior, the Amonoo residence evokes political resistance through its messages of belongingness to the modern world and resistance to British authority through appropriation of power symbols. Historian Michael Crowder has observed that Britain’s system of “indirect rule seemed designed to exclude the educated elite from an effective national role, and was therefore seen as an agency of reaction against the forces of modernization which colonial exploitation had stimulated” (Crowder, 1968, p. 213). A decorated veteran of World War I, Amonoo pursued education, modernity, and self-governance for the Fante people, as members of the Fante Confederacy and ARPS had done before him. The Amonoo residence and other coastal elite homes visualized the tensions in the colony and visually communicated ideals of resistance to the British hegemony.

Architecture was only one medium among several through which the Fante people visually expressed their resistance to British colonization. British power symbols can be seen in Fante art forms that flourished during the colonial period, such as flags, posuban shrines, and Fancy Dress parades. Flags used by the *asafô* were decorated with appliqué or paint and displayed during important public rituals. The *asafô* also commissioned posuban, cement-and-brick shrines, in the form of small forts or ships that were covered in paintings and sculptures (see Figure 4). While forms and imagery of the flags and posuban were partly inspired by European models and iconography, their function was entirely local.³³ The *asafô* incorporated British motifs that could be read by locals as visual proverbs relating to *asafô* power and by the British as forms of allegiance and passive mimicry. Art historians Cole and Ross have

discussed the verbal-visual nexus as a key feature of Akan arts, for “there are relatively few types of Akan art without proverb associations” (Cole & Ross, 1977, p. 9).³⁴ In a similar way, coastal elite architecture of the colonial period can be read as a proverb appearing as a British symbol with allusions to Fante power. A proverb, or a statement of a general truth disguised as a pithy saying, can be seen here as an expression of the difficult situation in which local elites found themselves during the colonial period. The subtlety, or ambivalence, that Bhabha discussed, is found in this verbal-visual statement of the strategies employed by Amonoo and other elites to negotiate their power in the British system.

In another example of Fante resistance art, Fancy Dress is a carnivalesque masquerade adopted around the turn of the twentieth century (Figure 14). Fancy Dress street parades and competitions are composed of young men and sometimes women between the ages of 3 and 45. Fancy Dress voices public commentary on pop culture, social and cultural mores, and local, national, and international politics. A vital creative expression of the lower classes, it is both comedic entertainment



Figure 14. Red Cross No. 4 Fancy Dress group, c. January 1, 1953, Winneba, Ghana. Photo courtesy of Kojo Yamoah.

and a necessary regenerative force in Ghanaian culture.³⁵ Parodies of loose women, British politicians, and other leaders danced alongside fierce warriors, such as Red Indian characters (Micots, “Performing,” 2012). As art historian Doran Ross has aptly stated, the Fante were “fighting with art” (Ross, *Fighting*, 1979). Although no evidence exists of Amonoo participating directly in Fancy Dress, a number of prominent local men and women did.³⁶ In 1919, Amonoo served as a secretary on the Peace Celebrations Committee during which a Carnival and a Fancy Dress Ball were held in Cape Coast (“Programme,” *The Gold*, July 19–26, 1919).³⁷ The public display of these hybrid art forms carrying double messages provided a means for expressing a coded resistance to colonial authority.

Cultural appropriation is an ongoing process in Fante architecture, from eighteenth-century two-story compact rammed earth houses influenced by Mande builders from the Sudanic region, to colonial period residences appropriating the British Italianate and Queen Anne styles and later the American Beaux Arts and Neoclassical Revival styles, to post-independence International Style buildings, to contemporary postmodern concrete homes.³⁸ Historians Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed noted the difference between conversion and adhesion, stressing that adhesion, “understanding of the new as a useful supplement to traditional religion,” was more common than conversion in Africa (Sundkler & Steed, 2000, p. 96). The Amonoo residence exhibits adhesion rather than conversion because of the mix of the British Italianate style and Fante spatial aesthetics and courtyard plan. Thus a British exterior does not denote conversion to British patriotism or direct mimicry. Through the process of adhesion, local patrons appropriated a

cloak of British style that could be viewed by the colonizers as emblems of mimicry, yet they also cultivated a reverse gaze, effectively empowering locals by harnessing British power symbols.

Though he related it to linguistics, I believe coastal elite architecture closely aligns with theorist Mikhail Bakhtin’s ideas of hybridity, where “two points of view are not mixed, but set against each other dialogically” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 30; as quoted in Young, 1995, p. 21). Postcolonial historian Robert Young explained that in “organic hybridity the mixture merges,” while “intentional hybridity sets different points of view against each other in a conflictual structure, which retains ‘a certain elemental, organic energy and open-endedness’” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 361; as quoted in Young, 1995, pp. 21–22). Young continued, “Bakhtin’s doubled form of hybridity therefore offers a particularly significant dialectical model for cultural interaction: an organic hybridity, which will tend towards fusion, in conflict with intentional hybridity, which enables a contestatory activity, a politicized setting of cultural differences against each other dialogically” (Young, 1995, p. 22). Thus if this definition of dialogic hybridity is applied to African colonial architecture on the Gold Coast, it may offer a greater understanding of patron motivations. By constructing a grand palace as a combination of British style and Fante preferences for offbeat phrasing and a courtyard plan, Amonoo was able to portray his status, modernity, and resistance to the colonial hegemony by expressing all the conflicting elements of the charged political environment. Rather than simply mimicking British architecture, the grand African homes built during the colonial period serve as markers of political tensions and resistance.

NOTES

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Color versions of one or more of the figures in the article can be found online at www.tandfonline.com/rcin.

¹ The Italianate and Queen Anne styles, the two most popular architectural styles in Britain during the latter half of the nineteenth century, may have been known to Amonoo via direct experience with buildings in Britain, or more likely, pattern books that were distributed across the British Empire. The Italianate, an extension of the classical style, was popular for nearly a century, particularly among the rising middle-class (Sutcliffe 2006). Brick or stone masonry, a roof with a shallow pitch, classical architectural detail, bracketed eaves, bay and clustered windows, verandas, and a tall square tower identify the style. The Italianate style in Britain had its peak popularity when Queen Victoria’s Osborne House was completed in 1851. The style was “codified, developed and promoted in the rush of architectural pattern books from the beginning of the nineteenth century which served an eager market.” These “books provided knowledge in the form of information and advice which empowered their middle class clients” (Hubbard 2003, pp. 56–60).

² The beginnings of rammed earth construction in Ghana have been extensively researched by anthropologist Vincent Kenneth Tarikhu Farrar and archaeologist Kwesi James Anquandah, principally in the Shai Hills and eastern Accra plains. Their findings revealed that this technology may date to the Neolithic period. It may have been independently invented, or it may have been adapted from either the Mandé groups to the north (Western Sudan) or groups to the east such as those from the Dahomey-Yoruba-Benin cultural sphere (modern-day Republic of Benin and Nigeria).

³ The Fante merchant and Methodist George Kuntu Blankson lived in Anomabo for most of his life. Anomabo’s 10 *asafu* companies elected Blankson to be their commander in chief, or *tufuhen*, in 1863 upon hearing that the Asante had invaded the Assin district. Blankson led the companies to war in Mansu after financing much of the artillery. He led these forces along with the 2nd West Indian Regiment against the Asante at Bobikuma. After these successes, Governor Richard Pine commissioned Blankson as lieutenant colonial of the Native Forces. Blankson successfully negotiated with the *asantehene*, or head chief of the Asante kingdom, to reopen trade routes in 1866. He joined the short-lived Fante Confederacy (1868–1873), which attempted to diminish European power on the coast (“The Late,” September 3, 1898). During this time, Blankson commissioned an addition to Castle Brew (c. late 1860s–early 1870s) in the same Palladian style and stone construction method employed by Irishman Richard Brew (Castle Brew, c. 1763–1765) and Scotsman Brodie Cruickshank (first addition, c. 1841–1844).

⁴ The first appearance of Amonoo in the records is a mention in the local newspaper as “Barrister Ata-Amonu” in 1913 (“General,” February 8, 1913, p. 2). It is unknown if he trained specifically as a barrister in England. It is equally likely that he received a general liberal education in England or on the Gold Coast, and

- qualified as a barrister on the Gold Coast sometime afterward. According to one newspaper report, “There were no trained legal men in those days when mandates were indiscriminately granted to semi-educated men to practice as solicitors and barristers of the Supreme Court. On the constitution of the Supreme Court in 1876 provision was made in the Ordinance constituting the same to examine and admit persons who showed an aptitude to qualify themselves as local practitioners. Those who offered themselves were all, with the exception of a few, men who had received sound liberal education in England. Of this galaxy of brilliant local practitioners may be mentioned, George Blankson Jr. . . and others who adorned the Gold Coast Bar with remarkable forensic ability.” (“Notes,” *The Gold* June 1, 1916, p. 4) The Anomabo Traditional Area encompasses an area of roughly 50 square miles and includes 64 villages and towns, counting the city of Anomabo. The chief, or *omanhen*, of the state of Anomabo resides in the city of Anomabo.
- 5 Construction of the impressive two-story structure known today as the Omanhen’s Palace began in 1639 or 1640 as a Dutch lodge. It is possible that Heindrick Caerlof, a.k.a. Sir Henry Carlof, a Polish-born mercenary working for the Dutch West Indian Company and others, was responsible for the original design. The company would have employed local Fante builders to assist in the construction. Work was temporarily halted when the English told the Dutch that the Fante territory had been ceded to the English. Yet, after the arrival of the Dutch commander, Arent Jacobsz van der Graeff (1557–1642), the lodge was soon completed under his supervision (Flather, 1966; Anquandah, 1999). When the second Dutch-Anglo war ended in 1667, the British gained the foothold in Anomabo and began building Fort Charles near the water in the early 1670s. I contend that the town chief inhabited the Dutch lodge during this time and, through appropriate ritual actions, transformed
 - it into his royal palace. Fort Charles was in ruins by the early eighteenth century. The French and British fought for the *omanhen*’s approval for 20 years (1730s–1750s) to build another fort in that location. By the 1750s, the British African Company of Merchants had gained the privilege and began building the fort known today as Fort William, completed in 1759 (Priestley, 1969).
 - 6 This technology was transported from Europe to the coast for European structures and is also commonly found in the Caribbean and Brazil.
 - 7 The Ebenezer Rest Stop and Hotel was built in front of the Amonoo residence, leaving only a 12-inch clearance, essentially blocking the entire façade. Thus the house can barely be seen from the coastal highway and town today. When it was first constructed, however, the palace would have been exceptionally impressive.
 - 8 Coastal elite homes once occupied every major port town on the Gold Coast, but today only a few survive in Cape Coast and Anomabo. The Fante are the dominant ethnic group along the coast in the Central Region of Ghana and are a subgroup of the Akan peoples.
 - 9 Numerous courtyard houses were built in Anomabo and generally all across the Fante region. Fante courtyard plans may have a front row of rooms, one or two rooms deep, with rooms behind that enclose a quadrangle space or courtyard. Architect A. D. C. Hyland stated that this type of construction appears to be indigenous to Cape Coast and Anomabo.
 - 10 Other Coastal Elite homes of the period in Anomabo exhibit offbeat phrasing in the plans, altering the space of a borrowed Palladian hall and chamber plan or Afro-Portuguese *sobrado*, where rooms are arranged alongside a central corridor. Amonoo chose to make this preference visible on the exterior. For more information on the utilization of the *sobrado* plan on the Gold Coast, see Micots, 2015, pp. 42–63. For another example of the African appropriation of the *sobrado*, see Mark, 2002.

- ¹¹ He also supported the fund in 1917. “In Aid,” *The Gold*, January 18, 1917, p. 4.
- ¹² Amonoo is listed as one attendee among many coastal elite members at an ARPS war fund meeting held in late September 1914. (“The Gold Coast Aborigines War Fund,” *The Gold Coast Nation*, Oct. 15–22, 1914, p. 2).
- ¹³ C. Woolhouse Bannerman was the great-grandson of James Bannerman (1790–1858), a mixed-race merchant (Scottish and Fante) who became a lieutenant and acting governor of the Gold Coast from 1850–1851. He also helped to introduce the Legislative Council. Doortmont, 2005, p. 118.
- ¹⁴ Repeated in *The Lagos* January 28, 1920, p. 7.
- ¹⁵ Van Hein was also manager of the newspaper *The Gold Coast Nation*.
- ¹⁶ Although it was decided at this meeting that the correct title was the Conference of Africans of British West Africa, it was not used in future newspaper articles or by academics. The “National Congress of British West Africa” was formed at the close of the Conference (Kimble, 1963, p. 383).
- ¹⁷ Caps printed in article. Also, see “British,” *The Gold*, April 9–17, 1920, pp. 6–7; “British,” *The Times of Nigeria*, April 12–19, 1920, pp. 6–7. The articles mention that a group photograph was taken on March 24 of the “Conference Body.” See Figure 9.
- ¹⁸ A meeting was held on July 19 in Saltpond with Amonoo, Brew, and Sekyi giving speeches. “Saltpond,” *The Gold Coast Leader*, August 14, 1920, p. 7. Delegates from all four British West African countries went to London, including Mills, Van Hien, and Casely Hayford from the Gold Coast (Kimble, 1963).
- ¹⁹ Delegates were influenced by American President Wilson’s doctrine of self-determination.
- ²⁰ The Legislative Council debated the formation and goals of the Conference in their meeting on April 25 and 27, 1921. More specifically Casely Hayford led an attack on Nana Ofori Atta, chief of Akyem Abuakwa (reigned 1912–1943), bringing to light Ofori Atta’s views that separated the goals of the Conference from those of the chiefs regarding council appointments. “Editorial Notes,” *The Gold Coast Leader* May 14, 1921, p. 4. Ofori Atta, educated in Basel Missions schools, and Amonoo V both sat on the Legislative Council since 1916; Amonoo V supported Ofori Atta’s views and urged that the powers of the chiefs should be increased. For more information about the ARPS, Conference, and the complex internal politics that eventually divided the chiefs and elite class, see Kimble, pp. 358–403. For an image of both men, see the photograph of the Legislative Council of 1919, in Kimble, plate 3b, opp. p. 100.
- ²¹ He and Brew returned from Calabar January 29, 1921.
- ²² The article stated: “Prince Kwamin Atta-Amonoo, Barrister-at-law, son of the late Honourable Nana Amonu V, of Anamaboe who is now residing at Calabar in Nigeria, arrived here this week with his friends Mr. Lovelace Johnson, and W. Ward Brew, Barrister-at-law who also lately returned from Europe. We gladly welcome Mr. Brew and Prince Atta-Amonu in our midst.”
- ²³ Additionally, in footnote 133, Okoye noted that Lagos was part of the Gold Coast colony from 1874 to 1886.
- ²⁴ Family descendants provided me in 2009 with the location of the accident.
- ²⁵ The Anomabo residence of prominent merchant Samuel Collins Brew (c. 1810–February 2, 1881) collapsed prior to 1929, but was likely constructed in a similar style using brick and stone before 1867, when he filed for bankruptcy.
- ²⁶ Members of the Fante Confederacy William Edmund Davidson, vice-president, James Faustus Amisshah, secretary, and James Hutton Brew, under secretary, were arrested on November 30, 1871, on the charge of high treason. On December 1 and 3, he also had George Blankson Jr. (Blankson’s son), Samuel Ferguson, J. D. Hayford, and two others arrested. Though all these men were eventually released on bond,

- they pursued the injustice of the arrests, and by March of 1873, they were vindicated and allowed “some compensation.” In the letter of the Earl of Kimberley to Robert William Keate, the Earl stated that it is proper to allow them “some compensation” on account of the acting administrator’s proceedings.
- 27 Two members of the hierarchy were elected and appointed as acting king-president until an “educated man” could be agreed upon. On November 24, 1871, the other positions were filled by William Edmund Davidson, vice-president, James Faustus Amissah, secretary, and James Hutton Brew, under secretary; Francis Chapman Grant, treasurer; and Josiah Myles Abadoo, assistant treasurer. Amendment B. Ibid.
- 28 After Blankson’s troops lost an important battle against the Asante in 1873, the Fante chiefs were so angry, they accused him of treason (“The Late,” *The Gold*, September 3, 1898). After long debate in the Supreme Court of Cape Coast, Blankson was acquitted on March 16, 1875, and the chiefs were ordered to pay Blankson £2,000 in damages (“The Blankson,” *The Gold*, March 31, 1875). His reputation was restored, but he backed away from public life (“The Late,” *The Gold*, September 3, 1898).
- 29 Franklin House in Accra, which once overlooked the busy nineteenth-century harbor, may have served as another inspiration for the Blankson Addition, as they share a similar Palladian design and construction method. For an image of the Franklin House in the late nineteenth century, see “Old Trading Post, Christiansborg,” Basel Mission Archives, D-30-1-22, by Rudolf Fisch, <http://www.bmarchives.org/items/show/56003>. Franklin House was built around 1800, probably by a Danish merchant, who used it as a residence and slave-trading fort. Danish contractors taught local craftsmen of the Ga ethnic group how to build this and several other Danish buildings in the area using stone nog. The Danish area is located primarily in sections of old Osu and Jamestown in Accra (Wellington, 2011). By 1850 Danish properties on the coast had been transferred to the British, and thus it was a British property at the time Blankson might have drawn inspiration. It is possible that elderly Ga builders or their descendants assisted with the Blankson addition, or other contractors copied the Franklin house closely. Though this property is not on the list of forts transferred by the Danish, it was likely sold soon thereafter “Country,” August 31, 1850). The property is named after Harry Verney Alfred Franklin from England, who purchased it in 1949. Nii D. Nsachie II, personal communication, February 20, 2012.
- 30 The Asante attack on June 15, 1807, decimated the population of Anomabo, which never fully recovered (Flather, p. 102). Modern Ghana was essentially a British colony from 1874 to 1957, though the Asante kingdom was not fully defeated until 1896. The third Anglo-Asante war ended in 1874, when General Garnet Wolseley, with 2,500 British troops and several thousand West Indian and African troops, including some Fante Asafo troops, defeated the Asante. The last Asante attempt to resist British authority took place in 1895–1896 and ended in Asante defeat. Asantehene Agyeman Prempeh was deposed and sent into exile. However, the coastal area had all the makings of a colony since the signing of the Bond of 1844 (Kimble, 1963).
- 31 The British did not impose building restrictions on locals during the periods when Blankson and Amonoo were constructing buildings. The British read these buildings as assimilation along with the adoption of British manners, dress, and furniture. The coded messages found in all Fante arts of this period were apparently lost on the British. Arcades are used in Ghanaian homes today, not as a political statement but as part of the local vernacular.
- 32 A date of 1883 was provided to me by Quansah’s descendants in 2009, and was not

confirmed with paperwork. It may date closer to the turn of the century.

³³ *Asafo* flags were created in greater numbers in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The first posuban was constructed in 1883. For a short list of references, see Cole and Ross, 1977; Ross, 2007; Ross, 1979; Labi, 2002.

³⁴ Ross has noted the inclusion of British heraldic lions, cannons, cannonballs, dragons, leopards, swords, clocks, the lock and key, warships, whistles, barrels, equestrians, airplanes, picks and shovels, anchors, chains, mermaids, British coats of arms, the Union Jack, a compass, a griffin, and a unicorn in *asafo* arts. Ross, 1979; Ross, 1980; Ross, 1981; Ross, 2007; Cole & Ross, *The Arts of Ghana*, 1977, pp. 186–199.

³⁵ For more information on Ghanaian Fancy Dress, see Micots, “Performing,” 2012; Micots, “Fancy Dress” and “Masquefest,” 2012; Micots, 2014.

³⁶ A particularly lively article describes a Fancy Dress Ball in 1913 in Cape Coast attended by local elites dressed as a Red Indian, an Indian Prince, John Bull, a Spanish Cavalier, and Madam Judy of Punch and Judy. K. A., “A Tribute,” *The Gold*, June 21, 1913, pp. 5–6.

³⁷ “Carnival” was listed for August 25 at 3:30 pm and a “Fancy Dress Ball” for August 26 at Government Gardens in the evening.

³⁸ For the appropriation of the International Style, see Hess, 2006, p. 75; and of Postmodernism, Micots, 2010, pp. 271–272.

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