

# AKAJA: A GA SONG TYPE IN TWI<sup>1</sup>

by M. E. Kropp Dakubu\*

## 1. Introduction

This paper concerns a group of less than a dozen songs which are sung by members of an Accra patrilineage called Ajorkor Okine We (ajólkə òkái lwe, "lineage of Ajorkor's son Okine"). These songs are apparently not sung by any other organized group, or at any rate not as a single corpus under the name Akaja (akajá). The body of songs together with a horn and drum text (blɛ kɛ tswɛnshɛn)<sup>2</sup> and a "talking drum" text (obonú) constitute the "state music" of this lineage, which belongs to it alone. These three corpi are played as part of the Homowo celebrations, at the yam festivals that precede Homowo, and at important funerals. The songs in particular are sung on the week-end of Homowo and for important burials and funerals during the wake.

## The State Music of Ajorkor Okine We: Schedule of Performance.

	Blɛ	Akaja	Obonu
1. Nii Sɛi Yɛlɛ Yeli (Stool Yam Festival)	played at Mayera	—	played in Mayera, 3 weeks before Homowo
2. Hãaji Ayele Yeli (Twins' Yam Festival)	—	—	played on Friday, about 2 weeks before Homowo, at Mayera
3. Homowo: <sup>3</sup>			
1. Thursday	played at Mayera and on the way to Accra. Given libation at Atukpai	—	—
2. Friday	—	—	—
3. Saturday	played all day accompanying Gbese chiefs sprinkling kpekplei and in Ussher Fort.	sung accompanying kpekplei sprinklers	—
4. Sunday	played in morning during nɔɔ wala (greetings) and at Atukpai house in the evening.	sung in Atukpai house in the afternoon and evening.	—

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1. An earlier version of this paper was given as a staff seminar at the Institute of African Studies in May 1972. I would like to thank my colleagues for their helpful comments made at that time. I am of course solely responsible for any remaining short-comings.

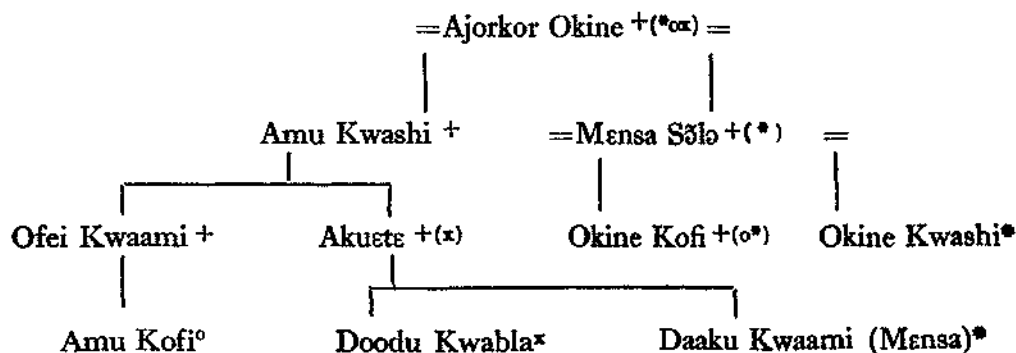
2. For the horn and drum text, see M. E. Kropp Dakubu, 'The Language and Structure of an Accra Horn and Drum Text', *Research Review* Vol. 7 No. 2, 1971, pp. 28-45.

3. This was the situation prior to 1970. Since the rift with Gbese (see section 2) the entries for Homowo Saturday do not apply.

- |                            |  |              |  |
|----------------------------|--|--------------|--|
| 4. Gbele<br>(Death)        | (for elders only, both male and female)<br>played at wake<br>accompanies corpse<br>to cemetery;<br>requires libation<br>and fowl before<br>restoration to<br>Mayera stool room | sung at wake | played at Mayera   |
| 5. Yara feemo<br>(Funeral) | (for elders only)<br>played at wake<br>libation and fowl<br>required as after<br>burial  | sung at wake | played at Mayera<br>or on different set<br>of drums if in Accra. |
| 6. Tsu mli Woo             | It was reported to me that ble was played during the night before the emergence from confinement of a new Otublohum Jaase Manche, on Friday, February 26, 1971.                |              |  |

The language of these three corpi is Twi, although only in Akaja are the words actually vocalized. The normal language of nearly all the members of Ajorkor Okine We, and the only one they all speak with assurance, is Ga. A few know only Ga. The lineage members who are most active in maintaining the musical tradition are grandsons and a son of two senior sons of Ajorkor Okine himself, the founder of the lineage. All of these older men claim to speak Twi well, although the author has observed that they seem to speak it with a Ga accent.

#### Patrilineal Descent of the Leading Ajorkor Okine We Musicians



+ deceased

° obonu player

\* ble player

\* leading singer in Akaja.

All three of the corpi are attributed to Ajorkor Okine, the founder of the lineage, although it is agreed that later players may have altered or added to them, particularly in Akaja. Akaja was taken up by Mensa Solon and passed on to his sons, but in the present generation Daaku Kwaami, a grandson of Amu Kwashie, is recognized as the best singer. He learned from Okine Kwashie, who is still regarded as the authority but whose voice has become too feeble for him to act as the only leading singer in a group. The choice of who is to carry on the tradition seems to depend entirely on individual interest and ability. Okine Kwashie's own sons say they are simply not very interested. Doodu Kwabla says that for many years only the descendants of Mensa Solon sang Akaja. Nowadays when Akaja is sung, a dozen or more other members of the lineage, both men and women, join in the chorus, including those descended from the one other son of Ajorkor Okine who has known living descendants.

## 2. *Historical Background*

To understand the significance of these songs it is necessary to have some understanding of the historical and geographical background. The members of Ajorkor Okine We live mainly in the suburbs of Accra and in various places along the road towards Nsawam. Many farm in small villages along the courses of the Nsake and Doboro, tributaries of the Densu. Several of the older people, including Amu Kofi, Doodu Kwabla and Okine Kwashie, live and farm at Manchie and Jaala, farm settlements near the Kyiribra, a tributary of the Doboro. They are traditionally in charge of these lands, where a number of Ewe families are also farming. However the lineage stool-room and shrines are at Okineman, the Ajorkor Okine We section of Mayera, which is near the Nsake about half-way between the village of Nsake in Akwapim, to which it is connected by a path, and Pokoase, to which it is connected by a usually impassable road. Okineman is said to have been founded by Ajorkor Okine himself. There is also a small family house at Atukpai in Accra. Its regular occupants include only one member of the lineage, a middle-aged woman, but the others gather there on important occasions such as Homowo.

According to tradition, Ajorkor Okine's father Amu Borh (bòò) came to Accra from Akwamu, and his people joined the Otublohum division (akútsò) of Accra. But Ajorkor Okine, né Oto Tsuru (Oto the Red) lost a chieftaincy dispute with his half-brother Oto Din (Oto the Black,) and left Otublohum to settle at Atukpai, that is, on Gbese land. He is said to have severed all connection with Otublohum, and changed his name to the Gbese name Okine. This is why until very recently Ajorkor Okine We joined Gbese for the formal celebration of Homowo, although they now insist that they were never actually part of Gbese.<sup>4</sup> The late Otublohum Manche Nii Amu Dakwa II confirmed to me in the presence of Doodu Kwabla that the quarrel between Otublohum and Ajorkor Okine We had been patched up, and that the people belong to Otublohum.

Mayera consists of three very distinct divisions: Okineman, Okuleman, which is Gbese, and Osofoiaman. The recent rift between Ajorkor Okine We and Gbese seems to be based on a dispute over land between Okineman and Okuleman. Ajorkor Okine

4. In his list of Accra names, Mr. A. A. Amartey includes Ajorkor Okine We in Gbese. Inspection of the genealogy indicates however that they have probably never used Gbese names other than Okine (cf. A. A. Amartey, *Omanye Aba*, Bureau of Ghana Languages, Accra, 1969).

We apparently claims to have its land directly from Akwamu, not through Gbese. Whatever the historico-legal situation actually is, it seems highly likely that Ajorkor Okine We has been closely associated with this area, particularly the Manchie-Jaala farms, for a long time and prior to the association with Atukpai. The oldest members of the lineage were born at Manchie. It even seems quite possible that they have been there since before Accra acquired hegemony over the region so that when Amu Borh "went to Accra," he perhaps did not so much change his location as change his social and political focus. Today, the people of Manchie and Mayera travel to Accra every month or so, for social and economic activities, even though Nsawam is very much closer.

It also seems certain that a language shift from Twi to Ga took place, probably some time around the middle of the nineteenth century. This need not have been a sudden or particularly drastic event. Ajorkor Okine's mother (Ajorkor) is said to have been from Teshie, and at least some of his wives are said to have been Gas. Probably he himself and his children were bilingual in Twi and Ga, a situation that very largely persists to-day. Almost 80 per cent of Ajorkor Okine We people to-day know Twi, although Ga is very definitely their "mother tongue," and apart from a few exceptional cases, their first language.

It is also quite possible that both Twi and Ga were in the repertoire of Amu Borh. This writer has observed that in the Akwapim town of Nsake, with which the people from Manchie are on friendly terms, many people are able to speak and understand Ga.<sup>5</sup> The shift in language need not have been a shift from Twi to Ga, but a shift in the relative order in which both Twi and Ga are learned. Today, knowledge of Twi seems to be lost altogether among only a few, mainly persons who have spent their entire lives in Accra.

Perhaps the socially important shift is not the shift in the language actually spoken best by people, or the shift in which language is learned first, but a shift in which language is considered to be the *man ywiemo* ("town language").<sup>6</sup> To-day, all Ajorkor Okine We people report that Ga is their *man ywiemo*. This is true even of a few who were born in Adeiso or Berekuso and learned Twi first. Two such people still speak Twi better than Ga, but Ga is nevertheless their *man ywiemo*.

Amu Borh is said to have "come from Akwamu," and his son Oto Tsuru *alias* Ajorkor Okine to have been "born in Accra." It has been pointed out that this may have been essentially a change in political affiliation, rather than a change in physical location. It is suggested that the language shift may have been of a similar nature. We cannot know precisely what languages this father and son spoke, except that both must have spoken Twi, and the son must have spoken Ga as well. But even if both spoke both languages equally well and learned them in the same order, it is also highly likely that Amu Borh's *man ywiemo* (or rather, in Twi, *kuro nkasa*) was Twi, but that Ajorkor Okine's was Ga. Shift in the first language actually learned could have preceded

5. It was explained to me that several people there had Ga fathers. It is also said that Ajorkor Okine's son Amu Kwashie married an Nsake woman.

6. The necessity of distinguishing "mother tongue" from first language learned is argued in M. E. Kropp Dakubu, 'Multi-lingualism in a Ga Lineage', paper read to the Second Inter-disciplinary Seminar in Family Research in Legon in June 1972, forthcoming in the proceedings of the seminar. Comments on bilingualism in Twi in Ajorkor Okine We are based on that paper.

or followed this shift in linguistic identification, and may well have been different for different offspring of Ajorkor Okine.

When Ajorkor Okine broke away from Otublohum, he adopted Akaja, Obonu and Ble as his personal musical emblems, and they are regarded as such by his descendants. All are broadly interpreted as war music, full of defiance against his enemies, and this spirit is closely linked with the reputation of Akwamu as a conquering nation. Twi is thus a suitable language for this music for two reasons: its significance as the kuro nkasa of the earliest of the performers' remembered ancestors, and its association in the minds of the descendants with a glorious warlike past with which they identify themselves.

The purpose of these remarks has been to show why it is that songs in Twi can occupy such an important place in the cultural life of a now essentially Ga-speaking lineage. It is not a case of the second language having special prestige. Ajorkor Okine and his people consider themselves happily related to both Ga and Twi. These languages inhabit different spheres of their lives, and neither is under pressure from the other. It should also be pointed out that singing in Twi is not at all uncommon among the Ga, and there are several song types, such as Tuumatu, that include songs in both languages. These are sung both by persons of Akan descent and by others.

### 3. *History and Sources of the Songs*

I have asked various people at various times about the origin of Akaja songs. It is generally agreed that they are war-going songs (ta yaa lálla). In 1969, Doodu Kwabla told me that songs 2 and 4 (ref. section 5) were composed by Ajorkor Okine, but that 1, 3, 5 and 6 are by his father Amu Borh, or the Akwamu people before Ajorkor Okine's time. He said that song 7 was by Okine Kofi, a grandson of Ajorkor Okine. In 1971, Daaku Kwaami said that songs 2 and 4 were by Mensa Solon (Ajorkor Okine's son), not by Ajorkor Okine himself. It may be noted that in the 1967 version of song 2, the name Okine is called, but in the 1971 version it is replaced by Mensa. A week earlier, Okine Kwashie had said that all the songs were by Ajorkor Okine, and referred to his quarrel with his patrilineal relations. This does not necessarily contradict the statements by Doodu Kwabla or Daaku Kwaami, because the name of Ajorkor Okine is often used to personify the whole lineage.

The explanation given later by Amu Kofi seems reasonable. According to him, Ajorkor Okine originated Akaja. I interpret this to mean that he actually composed some songs and created his own distinctive versions of others. His son Mensa Solon took them up, and added some new words but not new songs. Mensa Solon's son Okine Kwashie continued the tradition, and this branch of the family maintained them at Homowo. In the last few years others (such as Daaku Kwaami) have become interested and learned them from Okine Kwashie.

It is nevertheless possible that a few of the songs have been borrowed from elsewhere. Song 11 is said to be a Kpanlogo song, and was apparently included briefly and then discarded. I have been informed that song 10 is probably an Elmina Adenkum song about the Brenya lagoon.<sup>7</sup> When they were asked, at Jaala, the people

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7. Information from Mr. B. A. Aning.

agreed that the river referred to was at Elmina. They said that at one time Ajorkor Okine We people had played Adenkum, but that those people were now dead. However, at an earlier interview Daaku Kwaami had said that the Baanya river was the name of a stream that once flowed through Gbese, and that in this song the warriors of Gbese are compared to the flowing stream. This is interesting both as an example of local re-interpretation and as a reflection of the Gbese association. I have heard the same song played by an Obintim group in Tema, and I have been told by a member of Ajorkor Okine We that it occurs in the Kanja music of the Oku We lineage of Gbese. There have been a few instances of inter-marriage between Ajorkor Okine We and Oku We.<sup>8</sup>

#### 4. *Performance*

It seems that the composition of the corpus is not entirely stable. When I first recorded the songs during Homowo in August 1967, songs 1 through 6 were sung. I recorded them again during Homowo in 1969, and this time there were nine songs, the same first six plus songs 7, 8 and 11. When they were recorded again in 1971, it was said that song 11 was not Akaja at all, but a Kpanlogo song that was often sung with Akaja. No mention of this was made when I transcribed it in 1969, and at the time the people said that that was the entire cannon. At the 1971 recording session, songs 1 through 7 were sung, plus song 10, a new one. They then realized they had forgotten two, and added 8 and 9, also new, on a later occasion.

The 1967 recording was made at Ajorkor Okine We in Atukpai, and transcribed with the aid of Doodu Kwabla. The interpretation of that transcription is his. In 1969, the songs were again recorded at Ajorkor Okine We in Atukpai. There were approximately equal numbers of men and women. Four pairs of bamboo clappers (*má*) were used, two by women and two by men. One of the latter was leader. According to my notes he played a different and more complicated rhythm and led the singer. There were also two *odonó* drums. These have vocalizations. Drum I was played by Amu Kofi, and Drum II by Doodu Kwabla. The leading singer on that occasion was Okine Kwashie. Several people danced to the music.

In 1971 a recording was made at the Institute of African Studies. Only one woman came along. Only Amu Kofi played *odonó*. Doodu Kwabla this time beat one bamboo clapper against the edge of a drum. One person used clappers, and the rest clapped their hands. The two songs added later at Jaala had no accompaniment, because the pre-Homowo ban on drumming (*odadao*) was in force. For these recordings the lead singer was Daaku Kwaami, who was not present at the earlier recordings because he farms at Enchie in the Western Region. The 1971 transcriptions were made with his assistance, and the interpretations are his. The tapes made in 1971 have been deposited in the Institute's Archives.

#### 5. *The Texts*

Each song is given in one or more transcribed versions. Each different line is numbered, with the Twi on the left and the English on the right. The Twi is given in

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8. This fact is of potential significance, because Adenkum, where the song may have originated, is performed by women.

a standardized orthography, and in a broad phonetic transcription of the interpreter-singer's pronunciation in square brackets below. No repetitions are given in the transcription, but variations on a line are given, with the same number as the original line, plus one or more prime marks. Thus in the 1971 version of the first song there are four versions of line 1:

- 1 ose Anowa mma
- 1' Anowa mma e buo
- 1'' Obi mma
- 1''' Anowa mma

For several of the songs, the pattern in which lines were repeated in the 1971 performance is shown schematically after the transcription. These schema are to be read from top to bottom and then from left to right.<sup>9</sup> Roman numerals in brackets at the bottom of a column indicate a complete set of repetitions. Thus the first song begins with line 1 repeated three times, followed by lines 2, 3, 4, 5:

1 1 1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
(I)

This was followed by another group, consisting of a variation on line 1 (1'), repeated, then lines 2, 3, 4, a variation on line 4 and then line 5, ending with a second variation on line 4 and line 5 again.

1' 1' 1' 1'  
2 4'  
3 5  
4 4' 4''  
5 5  
(II)

This was followed by a kind of section coda, consisting of two occurrences of line 1, followed by lines 4' and 5. Songs 1 and 5 had the most complicated repetition patterns.

In this section each text and its recorded variations are given, followed by comments on its interpretation, structure and linguistic features.

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9. The analysis into lines and groups is based on the method outlined in Dakubu 1971, *op. cit.* in Note 2.

*Song 1*

1967 version:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Anowa ano bu o<br>[anowaánò buo]   | Anowa (?) regard!                        |
| 2. Nsu aboro nkyene<br>[nsú aburo ntsré]                                      | Water surpasses salt.                    |
| 3. Yekum yansere<br>[yɛŋkú yenslé]  | If we fight we don't laugh.              |
| 4. Me dee, Nana Amma Aberewa, gye me ara<br>[mí! di nàá! ma àblewá jè mi ala] | As for me, Old Amma, except me as usual. |
| 5. M'asem ne o, dabiara<br>[maásem nì oo debiara]                             | This is my continual trouble.            |

1971 version:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. ɔse Anowa mma<br>[ósè anúwà má]                            | He said, Anowa come                     |
| 2. Nsu aboro nkyéne<br>[nsu áblo ntsíɛ]                       | Water has beaten salt.                  |
| 3. Kum (?) ne sere<br>[ŋkū nísíɛ]                             | His friend (? Killing? ) laughs at him. |
| 4. M'ada m'Anowa Aberewa gye me<br>[mála mànúwà ablewá jè mi] | My friend Old Anowa help me.            |
| 5. M'asem ne o, dabi<br>[maá!seni òó debi]                    | This is my trouble, future.             |
| 1' Anowa mma e buo<br>[anuwá mèe buóo]                        | Anowa come (?)                          |
| 3. [ŋkú lislé]  |   |
| 4. Anowa Aberewa gye me                                       |   |
| 4' Me dee m'Amma Aberewa gye me ara                           |   |
| 1'' Obi mma<br>[obí àmmá]                                     | Somebody come.                          |

1''' Anowa mma

4'' Oni bi Nana Amma Aberewa gye me      A mother's child Nana Amma Old  
Lady help me (except me)

1	1	1	1'	1'		1'	1'	1''	1'''	1'	1'	1'''	1'	1'''	1'	1'''	1'
		2		2					2				2				2
		3		3					3				3				3
		4		4	4'	4''	4'		4''		4''		4				4'
		5			5	5	5		5		5		5				5
		(I)		(II)					(III)				(IV)				(V)

1'	1'	1'	1'	1'	1'	1'
4				4		4
5				5		5

Both Doodu Kwabla (in 1967) and Daaku Kwaami (in 1971) thought that Anowa was the name of a woman. Doodu Kwabla thought that she was an Akwamu woman, from before the days of Ajorkor Okine, but he could not fully interpret line 1. He also thought that Anowa in this song was being abused for bad behaviour. In view of line 1 of the 1971 version, and the recurrence of Anowa in later songs, I think it more likely that it is the name of a deity being invoked. It has also been suggested that the first syllables are originally *ena* 'mother,' and that the first line should be interpreted 'mother alas!'<sup>10</sup>

Note that *nkyene* (line 2) is always pronounced with *l* or *r* instead of *n*. In the 1971 version line 3 also sometimes occurred with *l* instead of *n* in *ne*. It seems that replacing *n* before nasalized vowels with *l* is a feature of "Ga accent" in Twi, and can be related to a sound change in Ga whereby *n* between nasal vowels became *l* or *r* during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The display of the repetition pattern indicates that in the 1971 performance the song was sung completely through five times. Line 1 or a version of it was always repeated a few times at the beginning. The second and third times through, lines 4, 5 were repeated, with variations on line 4. The final repetitions of 1 4 5 constitute a sort of coda, and reflect the repetition of 1 4 5 the third time through. The lines that are repeated with variations, 1 and 4, are supplicatory, and call upon Anowa (or *ena*), but the lines that state the argument of the song (2, 3 and 5) are not varied and are not repeated unless preceded by 1 or 4.

### Song 2

1967 version:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Okine Ashiampon, odonno meys den<br>[okāf āfiāmpən odonó mi ye den] | Okine Ashiampong, odonno, what shall<br>I do? |
|--|---|

10. If 'Mother, alas!' was the original line, it certainly does not have this significance to the current performers.

2. Nnimmo nnimmo nti meawu  
[nimo nimo nti mɛɛwù] Because of malicious gossip I have died.
- 2' Nnimmo nnimmo nti yɛawu ara  
[nimo nimo nti yɛawù aá] Because of gossiping we die always.
3. M'asem susu aka metiri mu  
[maasém susu akà mi tirémù] My troubles have remained in my head.
4. Enti yɛbɛyɛ dɛn?  
[énti ɛbɛyɛ dɛn] So what shall we do?

1971 version:

1. Odonno meye dɛn? Odonno, what shall I do?  
1' Mensa, odonno meye dɛn? Mensa, odonno, what shall I do?  
2' Nnimmo nnimmo ara yɛawu a Because of gossip we have died.  
1 Odonno meye dɛn? Odonno, what shall I do?  
3. Asem susu aka metiri mu My troubles have remained in my head.  
1a Odonno Odonno.  
2'' Nnimmo dodow ara yɛawu a  
2''' Nnimmo nnimmo nti na yɛawu a  
1'' Abrampa, odonno meye dɛn?  
1''' Mensa Abrampa, odonno meye dɛn?

1	1'	1a	1	1'	1a(x4)	1''	1a(x4)	1a(x4)	1	1'''	1a(x4)	1	1a(x4)	1a	1	1'
	2'	2''			2'''		2''				2'		2''			
	1	1			1						1a		1a			
	3	3			3		3				3		3			
	(I)	(II)			(III)		(IV)				(V)		(VI)			

In 1967, Doodu Kwabla said that this song was composed by Ajorkor Okine, a great drummer in his youth. His appellation, Okine Ashiampong, occurs in it. In 1971 Daaku Kwaami sang the song with the name of Mensa, and the appellation of Mensa, Abrampa, in line 1, and said that the song was the composition of Mensa Solon. Note that line 4 does not occur in the 1971 version, but perhaps it should be considered a variation on line 2.

The repetition pattern is quite simple. The return to the first line at the end is a common stylistic device.

Another characteristic of Ga pronunciation of Twi is that across a word boundary, adjoining vowels are assimilated but not contracted. Thus in line 1, \*me áwù is pronounced mɛɛwù, not méwù or máwù, and in line 3 \*me asem is pronounced maasem, not m'asem. This is apparently characteristic of Akwapim Twi,<sup>11</sup> the variety with which we would expect most Gas to have most contact on grounds of geographical proximity.

11. Information from Mr. A. C. Denteh.

### Song 3

1967 version:

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Agyebinsa a Anowa a (×2)<br>[ajebinsāá ànówāá]               | (names)                               |
| 2. Ohene Taki se obarima nni hō<br>[Ohéne tàkí sɛɛ blámà ní hō] | King Taki said there is no man there. |
| 3. Mese obarima wō fie<br>[mise blámà wō fie]                   | I said there is a man at home.        |
| 4. Enti fa me kō edom ano<br>[enti fa mi kō ódomano]            | So take me to the war front.          |

1971 version:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Agyebinsa ei Anowa ei (×2)                              | (names)   |
| 2. Ohene kra se obarima nni hō                             | The King sent word that there was no man there. |
| 3. ɔsɛ obarima wō ha                                       | He said a man is here.                          |
| 3' Wōsɛ obarima wō fie                                     | They said a man is at home                      |
| 1' Agyebinsa ei  |   |
| 4. Fa me kō amane e<br>[fa mí kolo àmane o]<br>also [kloo] | Take me to the war front.                       |

1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	2		2		2		2
	3		3'		3		3'
			1'		1'		1'
			4		4		4
			(I)		(II)		(III)

In 1967, Doodu Kwabla said that Anowa was the name of a very proud Akwamu woman, and that Ajebinsa (a large type of pepper) was her nickname in Ga. He said that Taki (line 2) was Taki Tawia I of Accra, who was chasing Anowa and quarrelled with the men of the house, who were away at war at the time. Taki affronts the group with which the singer is identified.

In 1971 it was agreed that Anowa and Ajebinsa were war gods, no longer worshipped and known only through the song. In this version the name Taki does not

appear. The challenging chief was said to be an Ewe chief who boasted to Taki, who this time is identified with the singer's group. In both interpretations, the song is related to Taki Tawia I and the Awuna wars, in the first half of the nineteenth century. Of course this might also be a reinterpretation of an older song relating to even earlier events. It is supposed (by the singers) to be from before Ajorkor Okine's time, that is, from Akwamu days.

Ajebinsa is Ga for the largest type of pepper, but this does not seem to be how it is used here. It has been suggested<sup>12</sup> that it is probably originally the Twi name Gyeberi Siaw.

The repetition pattern is quite simple. The first time through, most of the lines are given and then repeated before the group is completed. As an opening device this pattern occurs quite frequently.

#### *Song 4*

1967 version:

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Wodi womma me<br>[wúdi wúàmá mǐ] | You eat you don't give me.              |
| 2. ɔse menkɔwe ɔbo                  | He said I should go chew stone.         |
| 3. ɔwɔ sika menni bi nti            | Because he has money and I haven't any. |
| 2. ɔse menkɔwe ɔbo                  |   |
| 4. N'ase sɛn?<br>[nasélsɛŋ]         | What does he mean?                      |
| 5. Hena na ɔwe ɔbo?                 | Who chews stone?                        |

1971 version:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Wodi womma me aa ei                                | You ate you didn't give me.                                |
| 6. Woma Nkranfo                                       | You gave to the Gas.                                       |
| 1. Wodi womma me                                      |  |
| 2. Wose menkɔwe ɔbo                                   | You said I should go chew stone.                           |
| 5. Hwana na ɔwe ɔbo?                                  | Who chews stone?   |
| 7. ɔbo sika ana aba? Ohĩa ne ana?<br>[ɔbó sɛkaánaába] | Has money come from stone? Or is it<br>because of poverty? |
| 8. Asem neɛ   | This is the problem.                                       |
| 5' Mese hwana we ɔboɔ?                                | I said who chews stone?                                    |
| 6' Woma Akwapim                                       | You gave to Akwapim  |
| 6'' Woma Asante                                       | You gave to Ashanti  |

---

12. By Professor J. H. K. Nketia.

1	1				1				1	1	1				1	1	1			
6	6								6'	6''	6				6	6''	6'			
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1				1	1	1	1	
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2'			2	2	2				2	2	2	2	
5		5	5			5'				5						5	5	5		
					7		7	7			7								7	
					2		2	2			2								2	
					8		8	8			8								8(x4)	
					(I)		(II)				(III)								(IV)	

It seems to be agreed that this song means that one should share with one's relatives in preference to strangers. It is interpreted as the complaint of Ajorkor Okine, who composed it, against his brother Oto Din.

Lines 3 and 4 do not recur in the 1971 version, nor do lines 6, 7 and 8 in the 1967 version.

This song has a rather complicated repetition pattern. Note that in groups III and IV, variations on line 6 occur in the order 6' 6'' 6 6 6'' 6.' This is a typical mirror-image pattern of repetitions. The different versions are run through, and then again in reverse order. The song ended with the last line repeated four times. Ending a song this way rather than returning to the first line or first few lines seems to be a stylistic feature of songs with a relatively large number of unit lines.

### Song 5

1967 version:

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Aberewa Anowa e<br>[abéleánfwaá e]                   | (name)                             |
| 2. Asem ben ne, asem ben ne?<br>[asém bení a!sém bení]  | What is the matter?                |
| 3. Wu nso wu na wubeye den?<br>[wúnso wu nò abé!ye den] | You too, what would yo do?         |
| 1. Aberewa Anowa e                                      |                                    |
| 2. Asem ben ne, asem ben ne?                            |                                    |
| 3' Eye wu na wubeye den?<br>[eye wú nò abé!ye den]      | If it were you, what would you do? |
| 1. Aberewa Anowa  |                                    |
| 2. Asem ben ne, asem ben ne?                            |                                    |

4. Yenam nyaa a, ɔbəkə Simpā aban-dəw (×2)

[yenam nyaa a ɔbəkə simpā abáádo]

We walk slowly, we go to Winneba Castle.

(repeated from the beginning)

This song was not re-transcribed in 1971. Notice the recurrence of the name Anowa. Line 4 was interpreted as meaning that if people work together, slowly but surely they will succeed. Winneba was said to represent a distant place.

"Aberewa" is my own reconstruction, and its occurrence here may be compared with line 4 of song 1.

In this song and others, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the Akan pronouns for the second and third persons singular. In Twi o means 'he,' but in Ga it is 'you' Ga has no vowel harmony or contrastive v, but in Twi these features result in variations in the pronunciation of each pronoun. The singers' translation is not always consistent.

*Song 6*

1967 version:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1a) Yeasom nawa mu                                | We have seized the bell.                   |
| b) Yeresu mmaawa mu<br>[yɛsɛsɔ mawá mu]           | We are weeping among slaves.               |
| 2a) Agyemu nawa mu                                | Agyemu's bell.                             |
| b) Agyemu mmaawa mu                               | Agyemu's servants                          |
| 3. Ofie nipa ɔkyere me ɔtaa me                    | House person has seized and persecutes me. |
| 4. Monkə na mɔbɛhyia me<br>[múnkə na mubɛhi!a mɪ] | Go and you (pl.) will meet me.             |

1971 version:

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 3. Wokyere me wotaa me                    | You seized me and persecute me.      |
| 5. Memfa meye den                         | I don't care.                        |
| 6. Meate a, meada me hõ so                | I have heard of it and I am careful. |
| 6' Agya Okāi, m'ate a, m'ada me hõ so.    | hmm.<br>Father Okine. . . . .        |
| 6'' M'ate a, m'ada me fɛre<br>[madamfɛle] | I have heard and I have respect..    |

6''' Agya Okāi, m'ate a, m'ada me fere

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6''	6	6'	6'''	6'''	6'''	6'''	6'''	6'''	6
		6''	6'	6'	6'	6'	6'	6'	6'	

In 1967, two different versions were given of the first two lines, here indicated by a and b. Neither seems satisfactory. The song was supposed to mean that Agyemu, being well off, was the victim of envy so that his life was in danger.

The 1971 version does not include these dubious lines at all. Indeed, it hardly seems the same song, except for line 3. This version was said to mean in general that people do not appreciate it when you do them a good turn.

It is possible that in the 1971 version the song has been completely re-cast, because some lines had become so corrupted that the song no longer made sense. This is something that could not be done if the singers regarded the language of the songs as totally foreign, and did not really expect to understand them. In the 1971 version, line 6' calls upon Agya Okine, that is, Ajorkor Okine, so the song is very likely the version of his grandson Okine Kwashie, or possibly of Daaku Kwami. Ajorkor Okine would hardly be likely to refer to himself as Agya ("father").

One may observe the characteristically Ga absence of vowel harmony, in line 1 of the 1967 version, and line 6'' of the 1971 version ([fɛle]).

The repetition pattern is very simple, but note that the final 3 5 6 sequence is the only one exactly like the first. This is another way of ending by repeating the beginning. All the other repetitions of this sequence of lines have a variation on line 6.

### Song 7

1967 version:

- |                                |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Okāi Kofi, nsukom di me     | Okine Kofi, I am thirsty. |
| 2. Fa nsu behyia me<br>[behia] | Meet me with water        |

This song also was not re-transcribed in 1971. The first line begins with the name of Mensa Solon's son Okine Kofi, now dead. This probably means that the song was his composition or version, since in these songs a name is very often the author's signature, as in song 2.

Note that in line 2 the h of hyia is not palatalized.

### Song 8

1969 version:

- |            |                  |
|------------|------------------|
| 1. Asuoyaa | Yaa of the River |
|------------|------------------|

2. obaa ko wə mu  
[obaakó wə mu]

Only one person is there

1971 version:

2. obaa kǒ

Only one person

1. Asuoyaa

Yaa of the River (name of a river)

3. Osuo amuna

Rain clouds have gathered

4. Nkwanta da mu

The crossroads is here

5. Hwana beyi me  
or Hwana banye me?

Who will deliver me?

Asuoyaa was said to be a river "near Mangoase" in Akwapim. Members of Ajorkor Okine We to-day sometimes farm in that area, north of Nsawam.

### Song 9

1971 version:

1. Worawora okoto

Marshland crab

2. Menim se m'akyiri wə asem

I know that there is something behind me.

3. Mewə adɔɛɛ

I have a loving one

4. M'akyiri tweri boɔ

My back leans against a stone.

5. Abosomaketew

Chameleon

The stone is one's support in time of attack, to have at one's back. An analogy was given in explanation: the stone is to the crab in time of danger as the chief of Nsake was recently to Ajorkor Okine We in their land dispute with Gbese. That is, he supported them.

### Song 10

1971 version:

1. Baanya mma e (x3)  
[baányà mée e]

Banya (Brenya?) come!

2. Nsu ntə na epo mu, w'adan bosonopo [nsú ntó nà pó mù wáadan bosummpo] It hasn't rained but this water (sea, i.e. tidal water?) has become the great ocean.

- |                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Baanya mma e     |                        |
| 3. Obi yenka o      | Nobody has gone        |
| 4. Obi nso mma o    | Nobody has come either |
| 1. Baanya mma       |                        |
| 1' ene Baanya mma e | Today, Banyan come.    |

1 (x3)  
 2  
 1 1 1' 1' 1 (x3) 1'  
 3 3 3  
 4 4 4

This song and song 9 were sung only in 1971. Its origin and meaning have been discussed already (section 3), but it should be observed that the name of the body of water was always pronounced baanya, never branya or benya.

### Song 11

1969 version:

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. [á!ma dodo wókawo ka]                                | a name?                  |
| 2. N'anka a meye bi<br>[nantja mé!ye bi]                | Otherwise I will do some |
| 3. Ene wo Abena, mewo Abena,<br>[èni wàablá m! wo ablá] | It is Abena, I am Abena  |
| 4. Okomfo Anokye, bra o<br>[okomfo anó!tfe bloo]        | Okomfo Anokye come       |

This song was sung only in 1969, and then only by women, because Okine Kwashie was tiring, so it has probably never been part of the Akaja corpus proper. It is included here because it seems to be associated with Akaja.

### Drum Vocalizations (1969)

Since these are partly in Ga, they are probably fairly recent. Drum II is in fact a steady time-keeper.

Drum I. The first three lines are in Ga.

Akajá ñkpó	Akaja is breaking
------------	-------------------

Obáa hũ mashi Àkajá

Oba hú mashi Àkajá

otamfó kata w'ani

Abóá kàkəbó

òsé àkókò kògya ánadwò nsúo

Owíá tẹ́ dén?

Abosom tá bra bà

Ni nta bra bo mpe, ni gyina ha

Ni mpokuá abehwe

Ye me asem ben?

okamfó bedi tan.

Drum II (in Ga)

Kwé, kwés Àkajá

Kwés Àkajá.

If you don't come too I will play Akaja.

If you come too I will play Akaja

Hater cover your face.

Animal mongoose

He said fowl should help fetch night water.

Even in afternoon, how is that?

Many gods came

That stand there.

And young girls come and see.

What is it to me?

A priest will take all (? eat hatred?)

Look, look at Akaja.

Look at Akaja.