

## THE REGIONAL BOUNDARIES OF GHANA 1874—1972

by

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### The Regional Boundaries of 1874—1906

THE northern boundary of the British sphere of influence, comprising the Gold Coast Colony and Protectorate, and the kingdom of Asante, initially indicated in the Treaty of 1831 and subsequently elaborated in the Treaty of Fomena in 1874, was first delimited on a map in 1873. While the Governor favoured the delimitation, the Colonial Office was divided on the issue. Some officers felt that such a boundary could not be accurately determined, and in view of the impending negotiations with Germany and France, it was inopportune to commit the British Government to any boundaries.

However, those in favour of defining the northern boundary of the Gold Coast Colony pointed out that :

“There is of course a good deal to be said in favour of an undefined boundary, and we may be saved trouble at times, by being able to say that we don't know whether such and such a locality is actually within our Protectorate or not . . . But this is a rather unsatisfactory kind of policy, and in the event of some really urgent question arising, where it might be of vital importance to speak decisively on the subject, we should look foolish if we could not do so”.<sup>1</sup>

The northern boundary of the Gold Coast Colony as then defined and delimited, is illustrated in Fig. 1. This boundary, intended to indicate the limits of the territorial jurisdiction of the Asante and British and to stabilise their relations was centered on the river Pra, a convenient physical divide. By 1895 when the boundary between the British and French spheres of influence had been defined from the coast up to latitude 9° North and that between the British and Germans had been defined up to the confluence of the Volta and Daka Rivers, the boundary between the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti was as shown in Fig. 2.

The Pra was reaffirmed as the boundary between southern Ghana and Ashanti when the latter was occupied by British Troops in January 1896. Kumasi, the seat of the Government of Asante, was declared a civil station on 8th February, 1896, the date of departure from Cape Coast harbour of the “SS. Coromandel” until then the headquarters of the Ashanti Expeditionary Force. On the same date a “Resident in Ashanti” responsible to the Governor of the Gold Coast, was appointed and charged with the administration of “all the Ashanti and the other tribes between the Pra and the 9th parallel of latitude”.<sup>2</sup>

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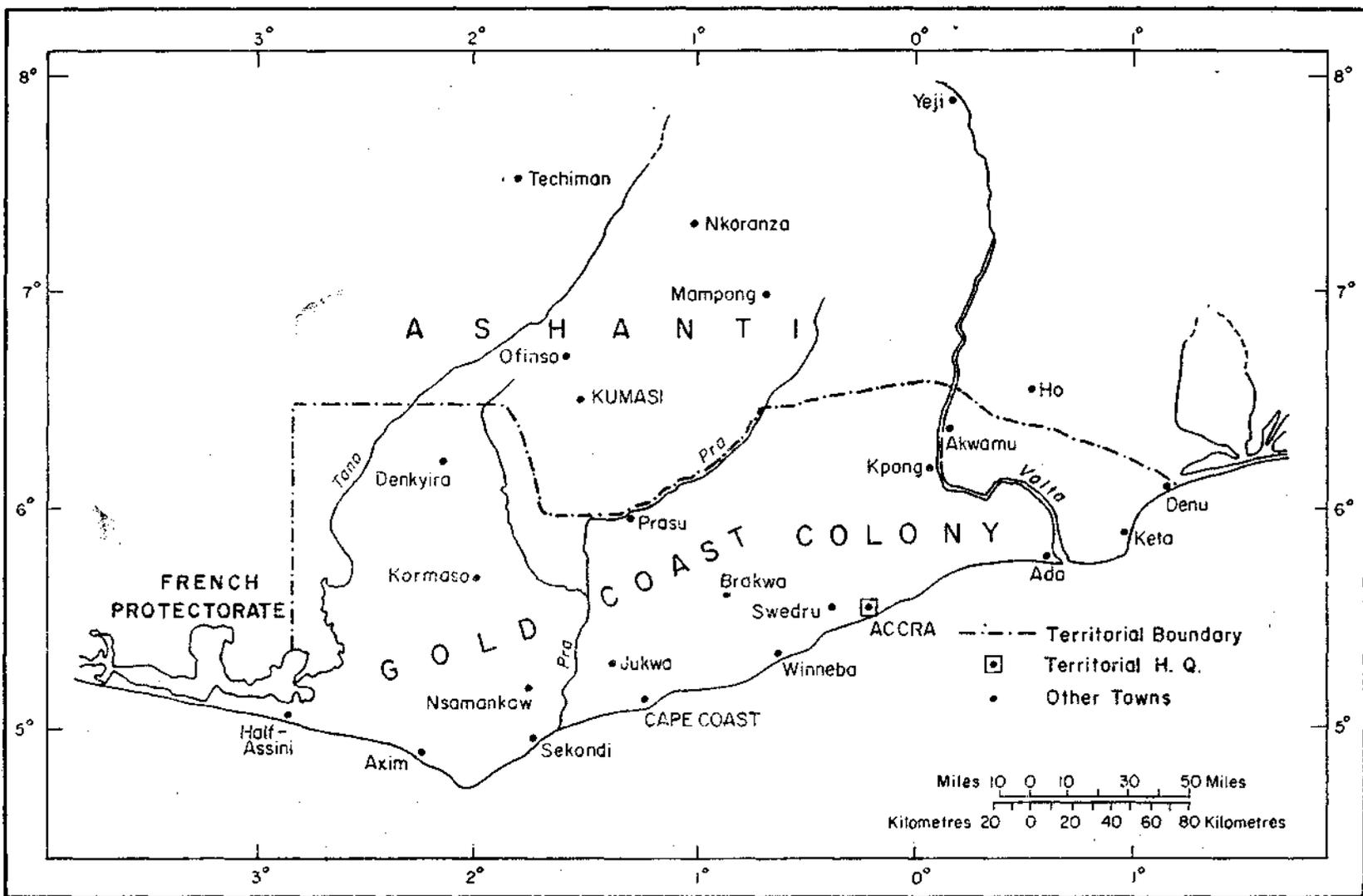


FIG. 1 GOLD COAST COLONY—ASHANTI BOUNDARY, 1831

(Adapted from Wyld's map of the British possessions on the Gold Coast 1873)

At a time when European powers were deliberately imprecise in the definition of the interior limits of their coastal possessions in Africa, it seemed politically inexpedient for the British to have clearly stated the northern boundary of Ashanti. The 9th parallel of north latitude was, however, an inoffensive and safe boundary since it was the recognised interior treaty limit between the British and the French in the West and also abutted on the western boundary of the Neutral Zone established between the British and the Germans in 1888 (Fig. 3).

For all practical purposes however, Kintampo, a caravan centre of some importance, was considered to be the northern limit of immediate active British interest. The establishment of a post here in August 1896 was the first step in the British attempt to secure the roads and promote trade between the coast and the interior.<sup>3</sup> It was hoped that news of the British presence in the town would enhance their prestige among the people farther north, thus facilitating future penetration. It was also the aim of the British to develop the town into an important trade centre as an answer to Salaga, located in the Neutral Zone. The town was also strategically located as a watch tower for the observation of the proceedings of the French, Germans and Samory, the slave raider.

The scramble for territory beyond the treaty limits of their coastal possessions led to a triangular race into the interior by the French, British and Germans. Kintampo, hitherto the northern limit of keen British interest was proclaimed the headquarters of the colonial forces operating in the "Gold Coast Hinterland" on 12th August, 1897 mainly because from the town the Officer Commanding the British troops could "readily communicate with various detachments operating in the Hinterland as well as with Kumasi".<sup>4</sup>

Although the change in the status of Kintampo probably altered the effective northern boundary of Ashanti it was a few months later that a definite change of boundary was effected. On 6th December 1897 the sphere of influence of the "Commissioner and Commandant of the Northern Territories" was defined as being "exclusive of Ashanti proper."<sup>5</sup>

Since Ashanti as constituted by the 9th parallel was composed of ethnic groups, the problem then became one of deciding what these groups were and the extent of territory assigned to each. Assuming that there has not been any major change in the ethnic distribution of Ashanti-Brong Ahafo since 1897, the implication would be a Northern Territories Ashanti boundary as shown in Fig 3.

With the northward thrust into the Northern Territories in November 1896 most of the men available were channelled into upholding British territorial claims north of the 9th parallel and the Resident of Ashanti, supported by a skeleton detachment of troops, could not exercise his influence over an extensive territory. Nor could he contain French intrigues along the Anglo-French boundary in the West.



Although this boundary had been defined from the coast as far north as the 9th parallel, the fact that it had not been demarcated made it a fertile source of dispute. The possibility of conflict was further enhanced by the fact that either by omission or by the establishment of new settlements, several towns quite close to the boundary had not been shown on the map illustrating the boundary line. Prominent among such settlements was Sikassiko which, by reason of its proximity to Bondoukou in the French sphere, and by its being a minor but important trade centre in a rich agricultural area, was coveted by both the British and French.<sup>6</sup>

Besides he had to cultivate the friendship of the inhabitants in the neighbourhood of Kumasi who were the most hurt by the occupation of Ashanti. However, the Commissioner and Commandant of the Northern Territories could easily deploy his troops over a more extended territory. The Ashanti-Northern Territories boundary of 1897 was thus intended to exclude from Ashanti all possible areas of conflict with the French and Germans.

The 8th parallel, first made the northern boundary of Ashanti in 1898 (Fig. 4), was confirmed on 1st January 1902 when the northern Territories and Ashanti were proclaimed a Protectorate and a conquered Colony respectively (Fig. 5). The choice of the 8th parallel, of latitude was mainly due to the importance of the location of Kintampo which reflected in a large measure the prevailing difficulties of transport and communication between north and south.

Human portage, the system of transport then in vogue was very slow, unreliable and uneconomic. A series of transport relay stations had to be established along the extended lines of communication between the coast and the interior. The collection, organisation and supervision of the carriers also presented problems. Kintampo, located to the south of the Black Volta and not too far from it, became an ideal base depot and the forwarding station for the Northern Territories since all the official goods traffic was from south to north.

The town was also conveniently situated for supervising the crossing of the river and channelling transportation into the Northern Territories. Kintampo's space relations could only thus be effectively exploited by its inclusion in the Protectorate. To effect this in an unexplored country where little was known of ethnic boundaries, the 8th parallel was an obvious choice.

The Ashanti Rising of 1900 and the increasing number of seekers of concessions underscored the political necessity and economic expediency of defining clearly the boundaries of Ashanti so as to deal expeditiously with the various problems that would arise in connection with mining operations and to facilitate the punishment of the rebels. The belief that, "the absence of gold ornaments on the natives north of the 8th parallel of latitude is as marked as their general use by the natives of Ashanti"<sup>7</sup> also made the boundary economically significant. It was virtually regarded as the limit of mineral-rich and the barren rocks.

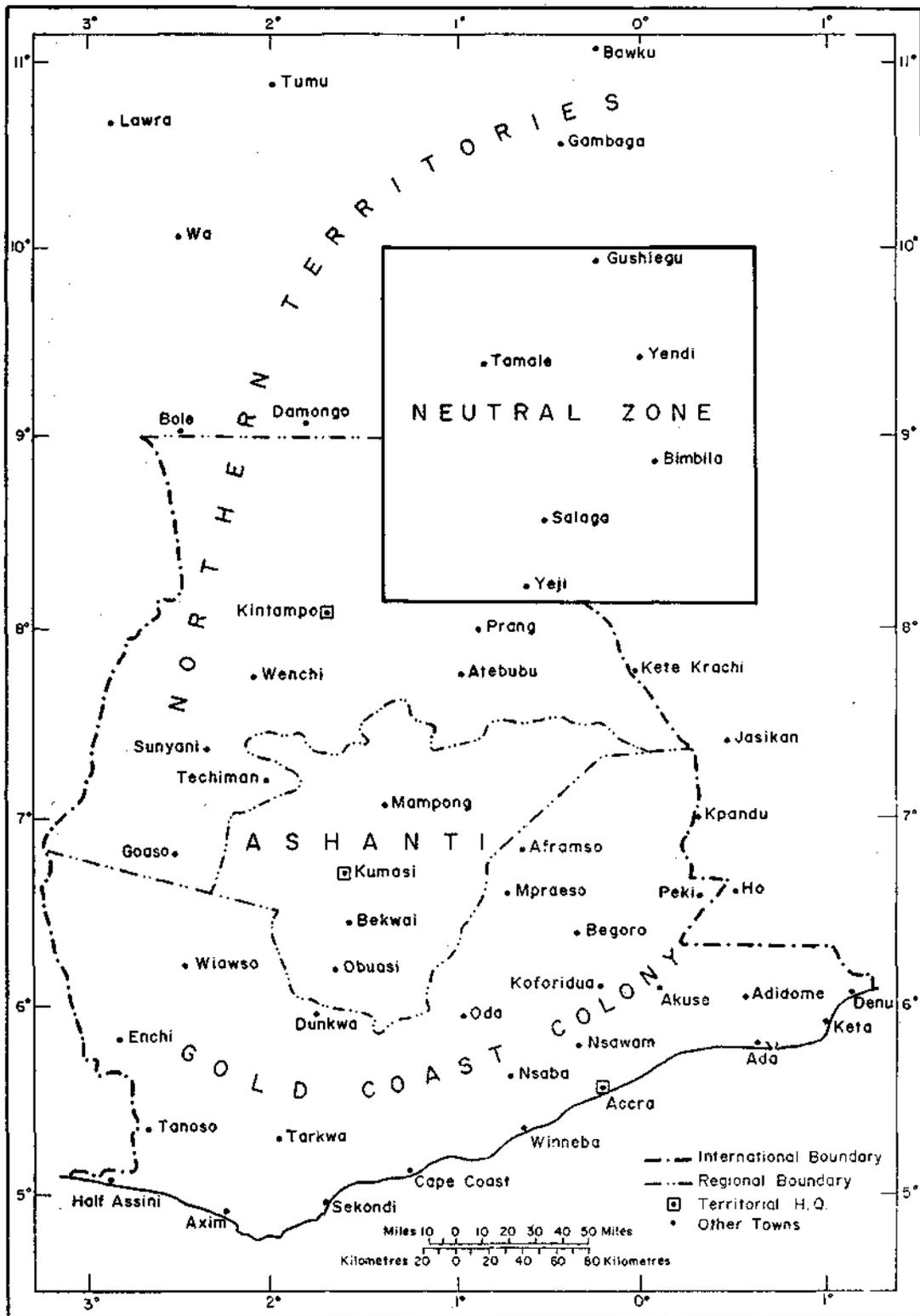


FIG. 3 REGIONAL BOUNDARIES, 1896-97

The 8th parallel, running through the transition zone between the forest and savana, was also significant as the approximate limit of such forest products as cocoa, rubber and kola nuts. The inadvisability of including any area that had been considered as part of the Northern Territories after July 1898, if only to exclude the inhabitants from the punishment to be meted out to the rebellious Asante, partly explains the retention of this latitude as a regional boundary.

Between 1900 and 1902 the question of recasting the Gold Coast Colony-Ashanti boundary was raised but no significant alteration was effected. It had been argued that the geographical location of Kwahu and Sefwi made it "more convenient that they should be included for administrative purposes in Ashanti".<sup>8</sup> The possibility of establishing protectorates and separate administrations for the two areas had also been considered.<sup>9</sup> In 1901, however, the Governor indicated that he did not think "the Sefwis and Kwahus would understand or appreciate any difference being made in their status to that of the other tribes in the interior."<sup>10</sup> As the Asante were to be treated as a conquered people and punished for rebelling, it was considered proper to exclude the Sefwi and Kwahu who had not participated in the uprising from that administration.

Besides, in Sefwi and Kwahu the laws of the Gold Coast Colony were, to some extent, successfully administered and the people were accustomed to taking their cases to the colonial courts. The 1895 boundary was therefore retained. The inclusion of Kwahu and Sefwi in the Colony made it a compact territory. The regional boundaries which became operative on 1st January 1902 survived until 1907 when they were recast.

### **The Regional Boundaries of 1907—1913**

After the definition of the internal colonial boundaries of the Gold Coast in 1901 a War Indemnity Tax was imposed on Ashanti as a punishment for the 1900 revolt while the sale of spirituous liquor to the indigenous people of the Northern Territories was formally prohibited. Col. Northcott, the first Commissioner and Commandant of the Northern Territories had banned the importation and sale of spirits in the Protectorate in 1898 because he considered them poisonous and productive of crime and indiscipline, especially among the troops. While trade spirits were unsatisfactory commodities for a poor population, he felt that the local beer (pito) brewed from guinea-corn, was "a vastly more wholesome drink, and supplies stimulant for the conviviality proper to funerals and social gatherings of other kinds".<sup>11</sup>

He also argued that although this prohibition deprived the government of a certain and easily collected revenue, the welfare of the community as a whole should be protected against the advantage of a small class of traders who could easily find less objectionable outlets for their commercial energies.<sup>12</sup> He stressed that "the introduction and sale of spirits to the Northern Territories would . . . be an unmixed evil, for which the return of an increased revenue would be no equivalent".<sup>13</sup>

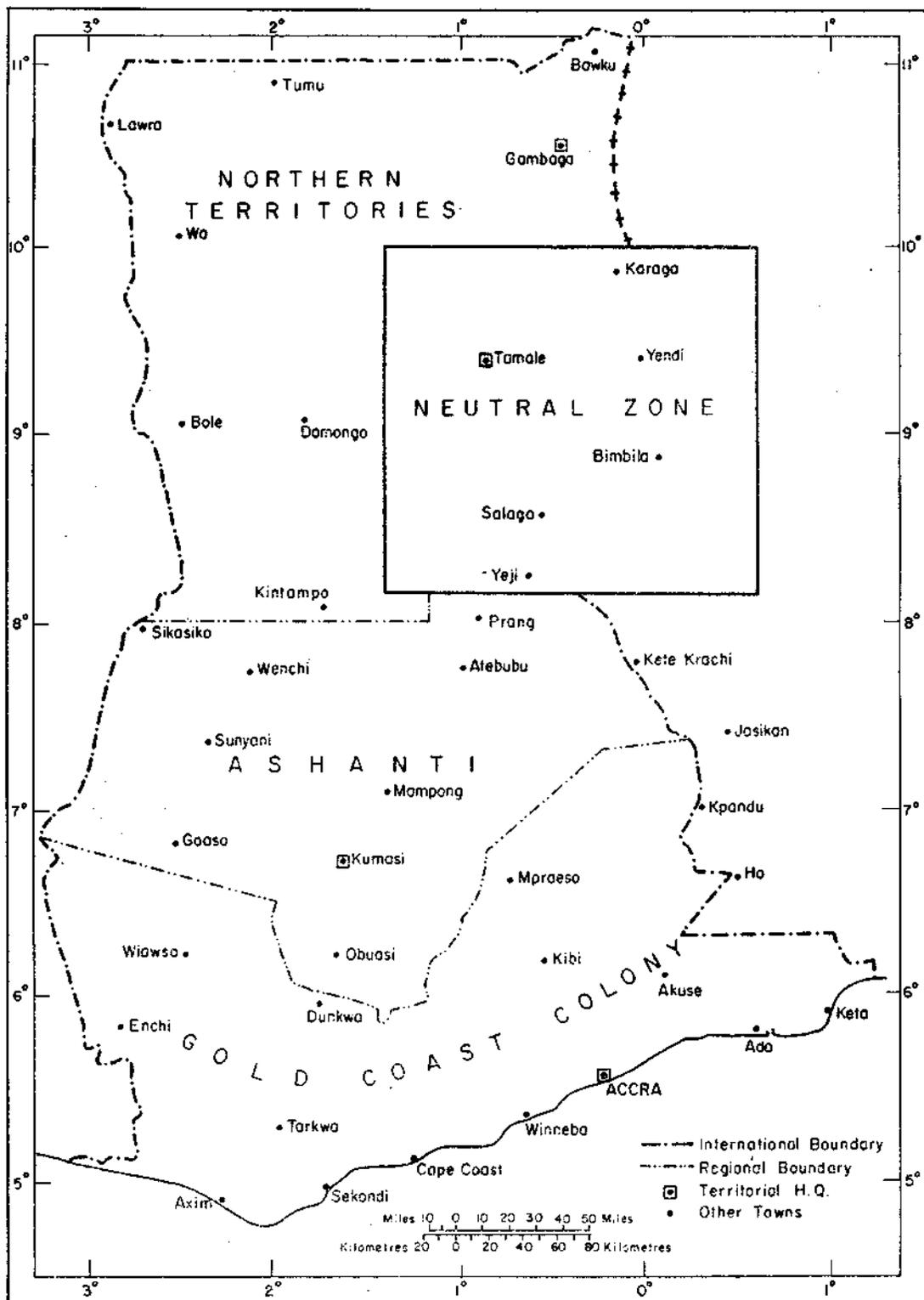


FIG.4 REGIONAL BOUNDARIES, 1898

(Adapted from C.O.96/321)

In 1901 Northcott's ban was formally enforced in pursuance of the spirit and objectives of Article XCI of the Brussels Act of 1890 which stipulated in reference to Africa that "in the regions of this zone where it shall be ascertained that, either on account of religious belief or from other motives, the use of distilled liquor does not exist or has not been developed, the powers shall prohibit its use".<sup>14</sup>

The medical and nutritive properties of pito have, occasionally been claimed as a cure for pellagra <sup>15</sup> and as "an ideal stimulant, assuaging thirst and producing a feeling of well being without intoxication and with no aftermath beyond a possibly healthy stimulation of peristalsis".<sup>16</sup> It should however be pointed out that pito varies in its alcoholic content from place to place, according to the tastes of the indigenous people and depending upon the method of preparation. The stronger varieties can produce intoxication as much as the imported spirits.

The 8th parallel of latitude divided the Brong, Mo and Nchumuru between Ashanti and the Northern Territories and the ban on spirits in the Protectorate emphasized the boundary's maladjustment to human realities. In 1902 the Chief of Nkoranza informed the Administration of his inability to pay his share of the war tax because a considerable proportion of his subjects in the Kintampo district were included in the Northern Territories.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Princess Effua Dappa, Regent of Nkoranza complained of the loss of authority over Nkoranza territory in the Protectorate and was promised assistance to maintain her rights over such territory, and the Mo villages north of the Black Volta which recognised her suzerainty.<sup>18</sup>

The Regent had also indicated that she did not receive her share of the fees derived from the swearing of the oath of the King of Nkoranza in the Kintampo district and her subjects who committed crimes and escaped to Kintampo were not sent back to stand trial. At Kintampo the Governor asked the Chief to send the fees and refugees to Nkoranza and informed the people that as soon as it could be arranged "for officers and troops to go up to the Northern Territories by a different route"<sup>19</sup> the Kintampo district would be transferred to Ashanti. Princess Effua Dappa also expressed her wish to come under Kumasi instead of being under either Atebubu or Kintampo. She also asked that a Commissioner should be stationed at Nkoranza and that she would provide free accommodation for the officer.<sup>20</sup>

In 1905 the chief and headmen of Kintampo objected to the ban on the sale of spirits in their country and questioned the sanity of the 8th parallel as a basis for the prohibition.<sup>21</sup> As the boundary divided the same ethnic groups and was invisible on the ground many people could not comprehend the absolute ban of spirits on one side of the line which was particularly irritating to those living just north of the Ashanti-Northern Territories boundary. In view of the difficulty of establishing the line on the ground and the ease with which spirits could be smuggled across it, the Governor directed that

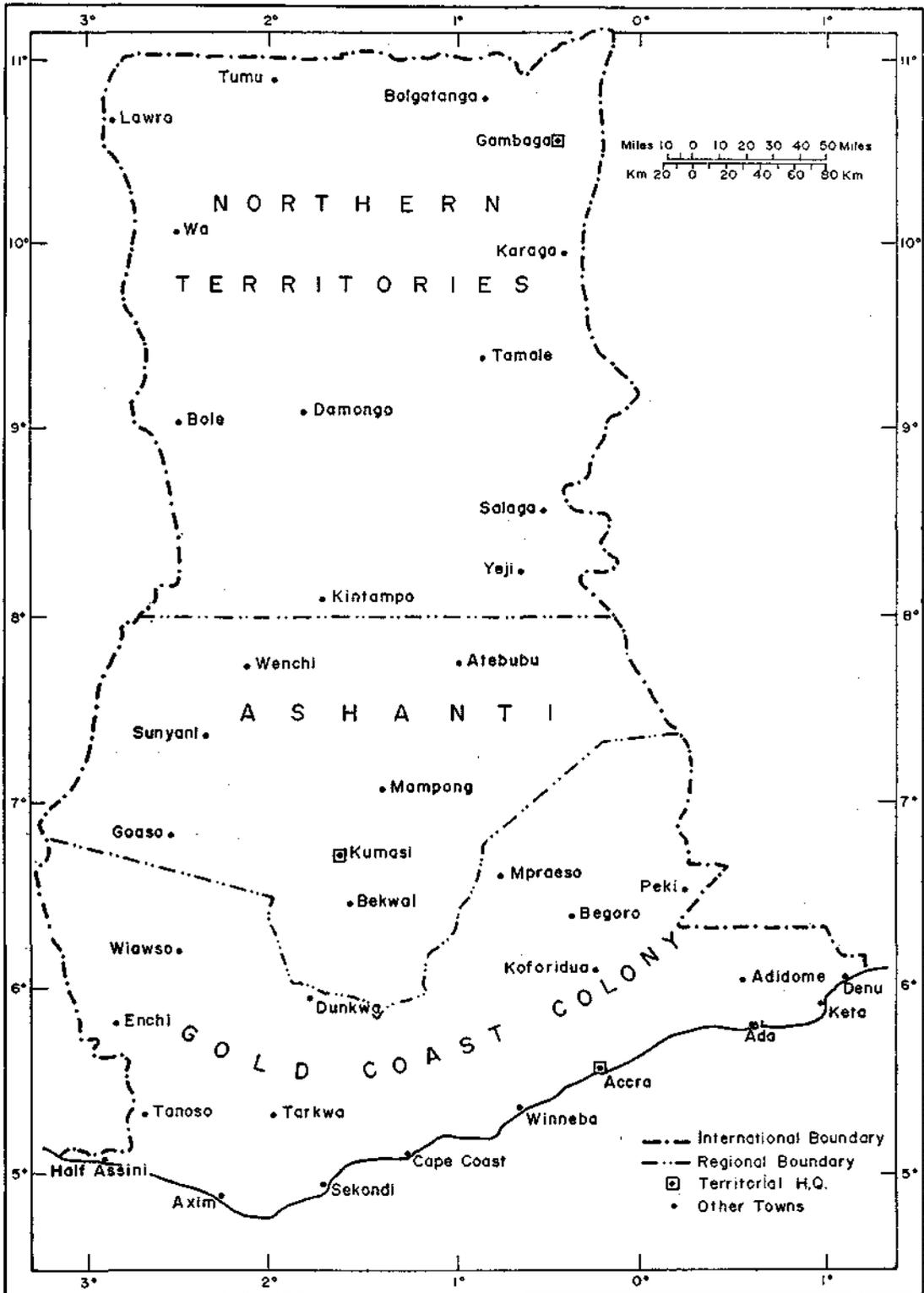


FIG 5 REGIONAL BOUNDARIES, 1902

"a more scientific frontier between Ashanti and the Northern Territories other than the present arbitrary line of 'the eighth parallel of northern latitude'"<sup>22</sup> should be defined by "paying special attention to the tribal boundaries as well as the natural configuration of the country".<sup>22</sup>

The Chief Commissioners of Ashanti and the Northern Territories subsequently recommended that the Kintampo District should be transferred to Ashanti, thus making the Black Volta in that part the new colonial boundary although it too divided the Mo people. Farther to the east it was advised that the territory subject to Brumasi and Yeji should be included in the Protectorate, with the Western boundary of the Brumasi lands as the colonial boundary between Ashanti and the Northern Territories.<sup>24</sup> The Chief Commissioner of Ashanti later expressed his desire to have the Protectorate

"retain sole control over 'PRANG' so that requisitions for labour etc. could never clash with other administrative orders, as might be the case if worked from Kintampo,"<sup>25</sup>

after its transfer to Ashanti.

During the delimitation of the new boundary it was reported that the southern boundary of Prang was the River Pru, while the western boundary of Brumasi was the River Chukow. However the northern boundary of Brumasi was a small stream. As the Chukow was a tributary of the Volta River and partly because the area between Kabako and the Volta was uninhabited, administrative convenience necessitated the continuation of the colonial boundary along the Chukow to its confluence with the River Volta.<sup>26</sup> The boundary between Abeasi and Brumasi was rather difficult to determine as the two towns were separated by a large tract of uninhabited country. A line was therefore fixed to separate Turumi, which was certainly under Brumasi, from Abeasi.<sup>27</sup> The southern boundary of the Protectorate as delimited in 1907 and shown in Fig 6, was the most suitable that could be devised at the time. It combined the advantages of adherence to a maximum of natural features and to ethnic divides. Although this boundary divided the Mo and the Brong people between Ashanti and the Northern Territories, it united the Gonja living south and north of the Black Volta River

The new regional boundary was the political expression of important administrative and transport changes in the Protectorate. All the early experiments to establish a quick and efficient transport system between northern and southern Ghana had focussed attention on the use of the Volta with Yeji as the port and base from which goods sent by river could be headloaded to the headquarters of the Protectorate.

The extension of the railway line from Sekondi to Kumasi in 1903 much enhanced the importance of the land route from Ashanti to the north. Moreover, with the partition of the Neutral Zone and the British retention of Salaga, the main artery of transport between Gambaga and Kumasi was divert-

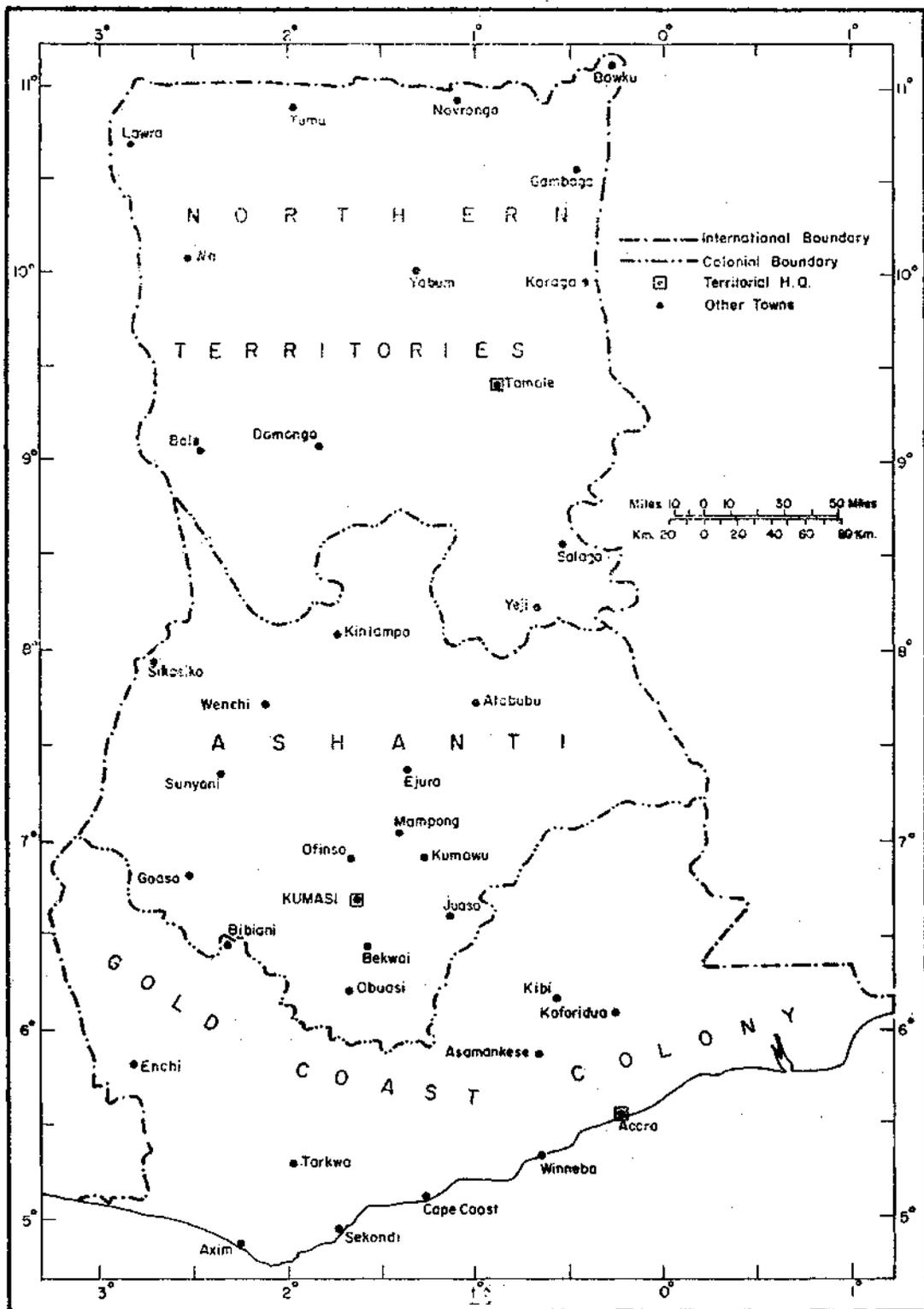


FIG. 6 REGIONAL BOUNDARIES, 1907.

After Gold Coast survey 1911.

ed from Kintampo to that through Yeji and Salaga in an effort to restore the latter to its former importance as a trade centre.

Thus Yeji, located south of the Volta at the point where the main road to the south crosses the river, was a vital link in any scheme of transport, either by land or by water, between the coast and the north. Its inclusion in the Northern Territories was essential for the proper storage and despatch of goods within the Protectorate.

Although it was well known that the Yeji and Prang areas were mainly inhabited by the Brong, a people more closely related to the Asante than Gonja, the economically important section of the population in both towns was Gonja and other people of northern extraction who had settled there as traders. This fact, and the necessity of unified control of transport over the obvious obstacles of the rivers Pru and Volta account for the inclusion of some Brong people in the Northern Territories.

Similarly, the establishment of the main line of communication and transport between Ashanti and the Protectorate in the east rather than in the west, after the final definition of the boundaries of the Protectorate undoubtedly explained the facility with which the transfer of the Kintampo District to Ashanti was effected.

The need for a revision of the Gold Coast Colony—Ashanti boundary of 1902 was echoed in 1904 when it was pointed out that

“The existing boundaries were settled on the basis of imperfect maps and incomplete knowledge of the limits of tribal land, and in this way instances have occurred when parts of the same tribe have been included under different administrations.”<sup>28</sup>

The boundaries were merely regarded as the best practicable working boundaries which could be devised at the time.<sup>29</sup> The Governor therefore directed that the boundary between Ashanti and the Gold Coast Colony should be recast in the west to conform as closely as possible to the boundary between Sefwi and Asante and in the east to include all Akrosu lands in Ashanti.<sup>30</sup>

He also insisted, with the support of the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti that the best administrative boundary between the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti would be the Obosum river and that it should be the northern limit of Kwahu because “it is undesirable to have the Kwahu Omanhene exercising rights within the Ashanti Administration.”<sup>31</sup> This was in spite of the fact that he had been informed that the River Sese was the boundary between the Dente fetish of Krachi and Kwahu.<sup>32</sup>

In 1906 therefore two commissions were appointed to make accurate surveys of the country along the boundary and collect definite information as to the limits of tribal lands and the spheres of influence of the various chiefs. They were also charged with “the definition of a boundary which, while ad-

hering as far as practicable to natural features should, at the same time, be laid down with due regard to tribal boundaries. . ."<sup>33</sup>

The boundary recommended by the Commissioners after their survey and thorough investigations into the conflicting claims of the chiefs and people, and which was adopted and came into force on 1st January 1907, is shown in Fig. 6. So far as the Ashanti-Sefwi boundary was concerned it was declared that

"impartiality and just consideration of every one's claim has been the point aimed at in laying down the boundary. . . whatever "give and take" there may be in the natural boundaries laid down, no one has lost an acre of valuable land, which they are justly entitled to. . . and the advantages of a natural boundary are so enormous that they ought to be strongly upheld."<sup>34</sup>

The southern boundary of Ashanti defined in 1907 has since been maladjusted owing to the care with which it was determined and partly owing to the reluctance on the part of succeeding Governments to alter it.

#### **The Regional Boundaries of 1914—1956**

After the capture of Togoland in 1914, and subsequent to the definition of the provisional Anglo-French boundary, the British sphere of Togoland was administered as a separate entity until its future was definitely settled. However, the administrative divisions established were closely associated with the three main territorial divisions of the Gold Coast. That part of the former German administrative district of Mangu-Yendi which fell to Britain was attached to the Protectorate while the Kete-Krachi District was linked to Ashanti and Southern Togoland was associated with the Eastern Province of the Gold Coast Colony. The extensions of the regional boundaries into the British sphere of Togoland (Fig. 7) were given legal sanction on 1st January 1920.<sup>35</sup>

The division of the British sphere of Togoland among the territorial components of the Gold Coast was influenced by the ethnic, linguistic and cultural affiliations of the people living in the adjacent areas of the two countries. Thus the Krachi District was absorbed into Ashanti because many of its inhabitants spoke a dialect of Twi. Besides, the former Anglo-German boundary had divided the Krachi lands and the people who in the past had paid tribute to Juaben in Ashanti. They asked to be reunited immediately after the war.<sup>36</sup> As the district geographically adjoined Ashanti, and was considered part and parcel of it, it was absorbed into that administration. However, it soon became obvious that the Krachi District could not be effectively supervised from Kumasi, as there was no direct road or telephone link between Kete-Krachi and Kumasi. The only main road that ran through the district was north-south but Kete-Krachi was almost cut off from Kpandu and Ho by several unbridged and difficult river crossings. The effective link between

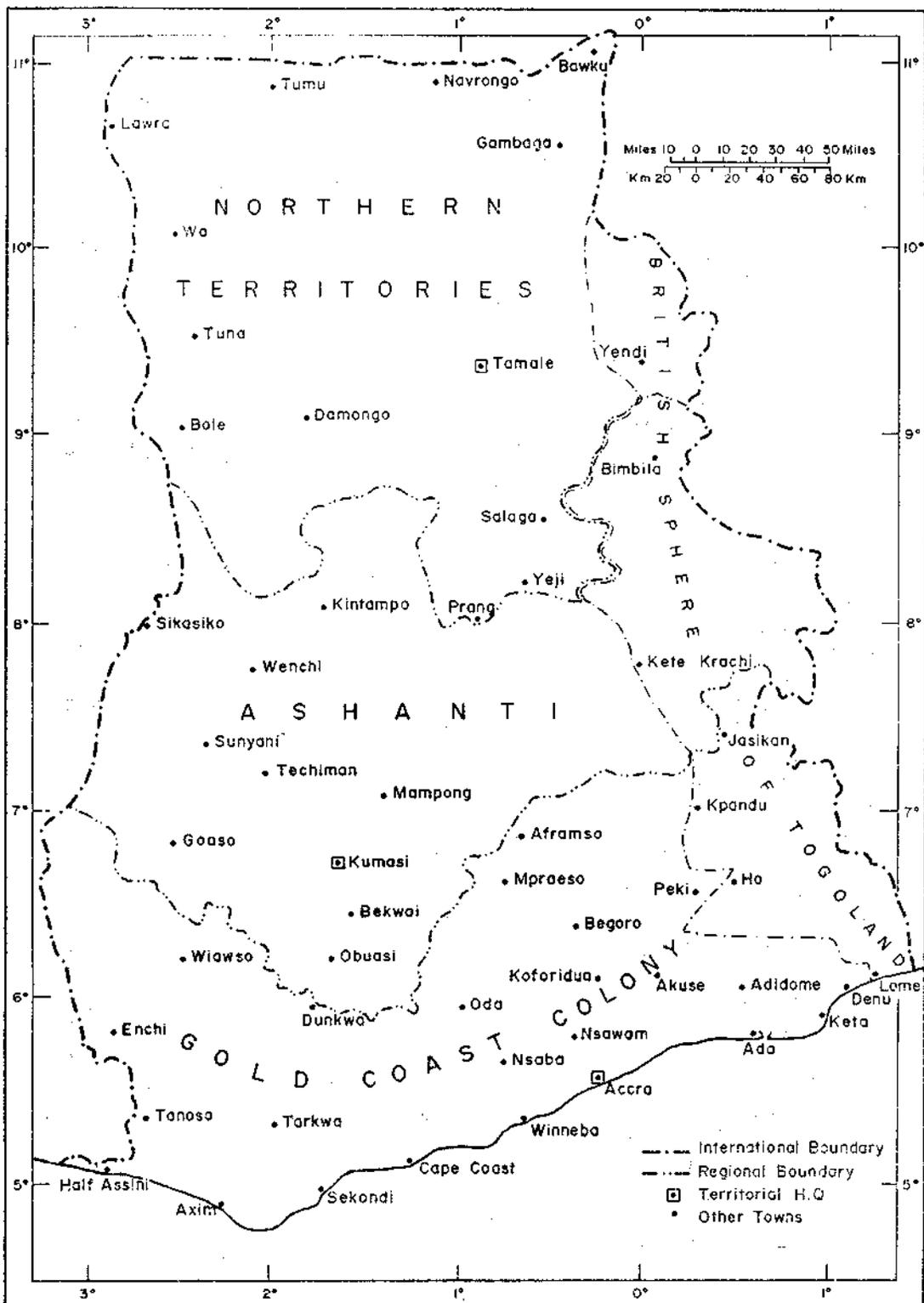


FIG.7 REGIONAL BOUNDARIES, 1914

the district and the Gold Coast was through the Protectorate via Yendi. In 1922, therefore, it was agreed that

"the most convenient solution of the whole matter was to put the Kete-Krachi District under the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories"<sup>37</sup>

because of the absence of any facilities of direct transport and communication between Krachi and Ashanti. The transfer, effected on 1st September 1922, necessitated the immediate construction of a political road linking Salaga and Kete-Krachi (Fig. 8)

In 1928, following the construction of a new road linking Kete-Krachi with Attebubu in Ashanti and in view of the impending introduction of native administration in the Protectorate, it was felt that culturally and linguistically, most of the people of the Krachi district were more closely related to the Ashanti and should therefore be transferred to that administration.<sup>38</sup> For similar reasons the Brong of Yeji and Prang and the few Mo<sup>39</sup> in the Northern Territories were thought to be appropriate for reunion with their compatriots in Ashanti. The Adele and Adjati were, however, to be left in the Protectorate to avoid a salient of Ashanti territory projecting into the Northern Territories, to form a possible refuge for malcontents from the surrounding areas.<sup>40</sup> The proposed boundary, illustrated in Fig. 9, which was to conform more closely to tribal limits by uniting the Mo, Brong and Gonja, was considered more convenient than the large and obvious natural boundary of the Volta and Black Volta rivers.<sup>41</sup>

However, the German member of the Permanent Mandates Commission seriously objected to the proposed change insofar as it affected Togoland under British Mandate, pointing out that the people of Krachi were Guan with their own language but using Twi for commerce and social intercourse with other tribes. He stressed that they came from the south, and had "no real connection with the Ashanti people although they were for a short time under their domination".<sup>42</sup> With an eye on a possible future return to Germany of her former colonies, M. Ruppel remarked that there was

"no necessity for dividing the Krachi district into sections, or for connecting one part with the Ashanti Protectorate which would have the effect of cutting the whole mandated territory still more in pieces than had yet been done."<sup>43</sup>

In deference to these objections the entire internal colonial boundary of the Northern Territories was retained pending further investigations.<sup>44</sup> For the attitude of the Chief of Krachi on the proposed transfer, it was reported that

"while he appeared to be attracted by the thought that he will be able to purchase spirits legitimately and with greater facility this may be the thin end of a wedge, in that he may find himself one day under the domination of an Ashanti State."<sup>45</sup>

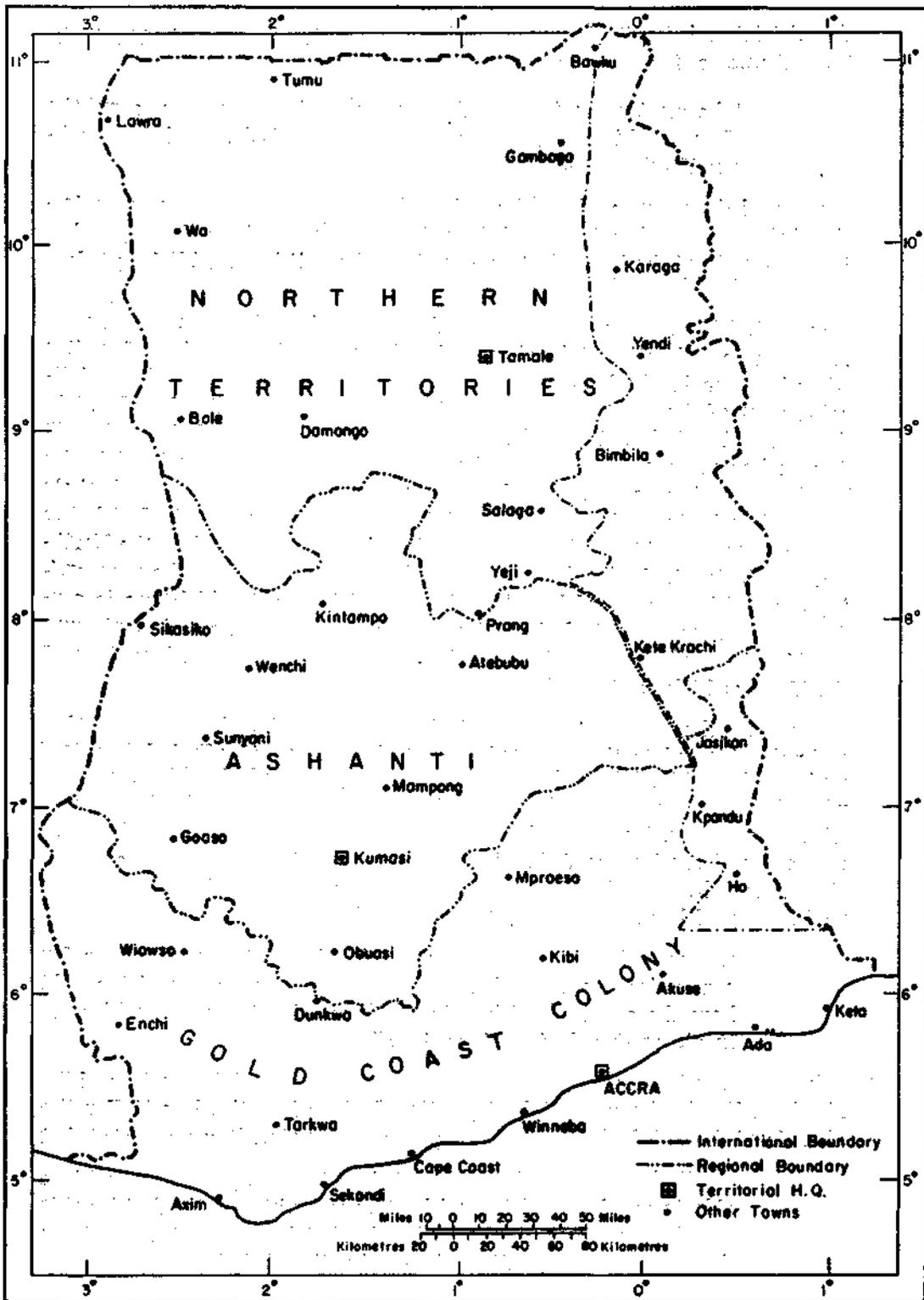


FIG. 8 REGIONAL BOUNDARIES, 1922 (After Gold Coast Survey, 1925)

The reaction of the people was one of self-resignation. They had asked for and were given the assurance, when they were transferred from Ashanti to the Protectorate in 1922 that there would be no further change.<sup>46</sup> Nothing had since happened. the Chief Commissioner declared, "to justify our upsetting the life of a contented people eight years after this arrangement".<sup>47</sup> So the boundary remained unaltered until 1950.

The question of a possible change was reopened in an address of welcome to the Governor in 1946. The Chief of Krachi proclaimed that the political boundary of the district "makes it extremely difficult to make a headway in the march of progress".<sup>48</sup> He claimed that they had been severed from their kith and kin in Ashanti and joined to the Protectorate where they were passive onlookers at meetings in Tamale as they did not understand Hausa or Dagbani. He therefore asked to join either Ashanti or the Southern Section of Togoland under United Kingdom Trusteeship.<sup>49</sup> In October of the same year the Krachi Native Administration reiterated the demand for secession from the Northern Territories, stating that

"From the economic point of view we have little to do with the North, but are in close commercial relation with the people of the South. This is especially so as regards our cocoa and other forest products".<sup>50</sup>

As the people were then fully aware of the benefits of unification resulting from the growth of the native administration, it was demanded that

"the transfer should take place as a whole body of Native Authority. The various tribes forming the Krachi Native Authority have no wish to split up but wish to continue to work together for the good of all."<sup>51</sup>

More than anything else, however, the secession movement was a reaction against the discrimination against the Protectorate in the field of economic development and education, and the severe restrictions on the sale of land and the trade in spirits, guns and gunpowder.<sup>52</sup> In a resolution of 7th March, 1949 the State Council asserted

"Since the British occupation, from August 1914, the Krachi State underwent a complete change from progress to regress in whole-sale stagnation—it was appropriately speaking entirely rejected—a matter of *laissez-faire* until the birth of the Native Administration in 1936. The State, all that time, was supporting itself without a mite of assistance by the Government."<sup>53</sup>

Although the plight of the district might have been a little exaggerated, nevertheless it demonstrated clearly the people's feelings, and their appreciation of the results of British administration during nearly thirty-five years. The State Council blamed the forces of disintegration in the district on the disabilities they suffered by being associated with the Protectorate. They

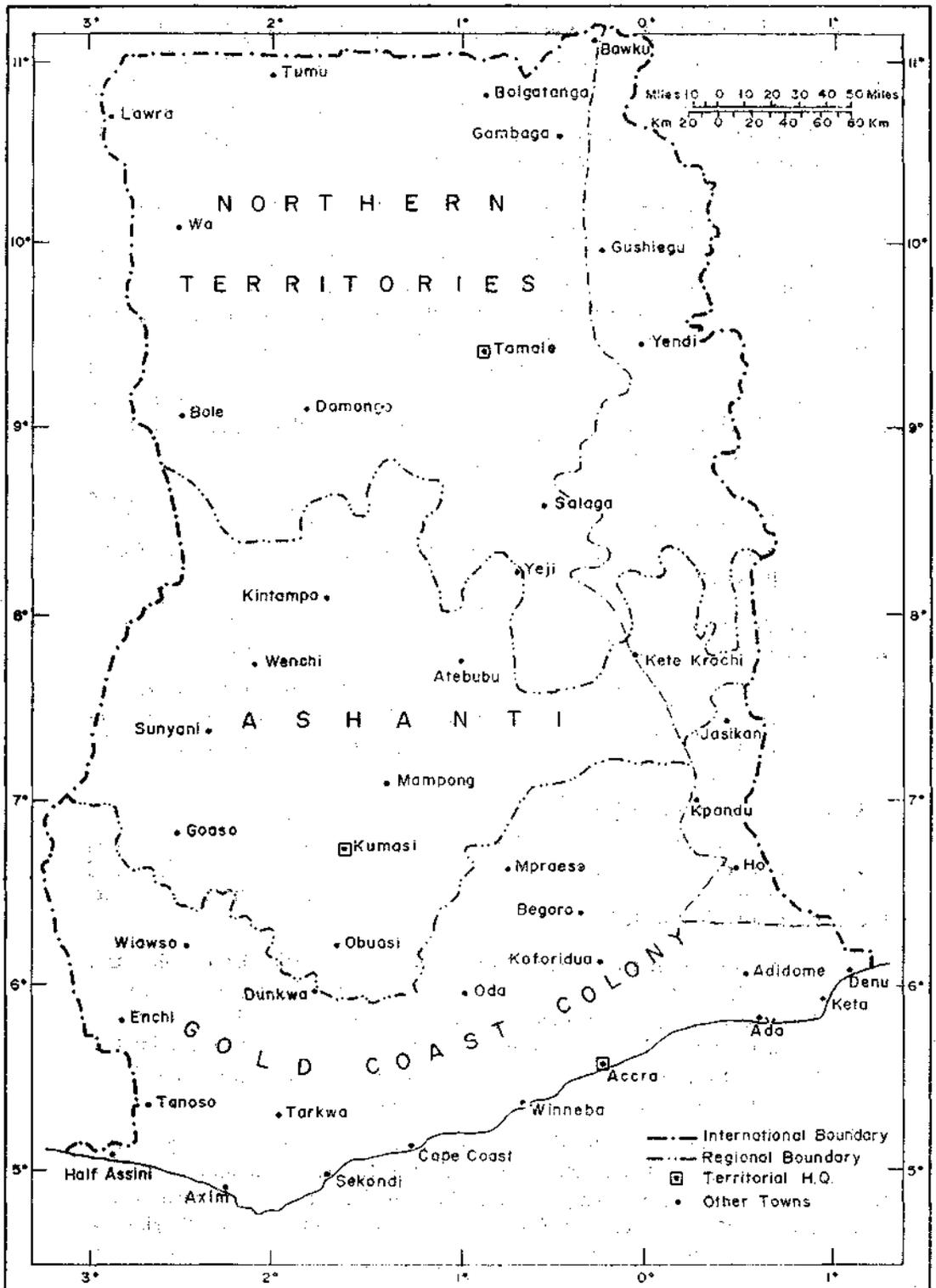


FIG. 9 PROPOSED REGIONAL BOUNDARIES, 1929

therefore demanded the unification of the district with Ho district by 1st April, 1949.<sup>54</sup>

The Administration also favoured a transfer to the Southern Section of Togoland rather than to Ashanti as "the main traditions and links of the people are with the south and their problems and the political approach to them are those of the south".<sup>55</sup> The patterns of their native administration were similar, whilst economically the eastern portion of the Krachi district was more closely linked with the south than with Ashanti. Administratively, the Krachi district was also more accessible to the Ho district than to Ashanti. Nonetheless, the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories was not anxious to see the district withdraw from the Protectorate. He intimated that the people of the Krachi District

"have a contribution to make to its progress, perhaps by the very fact that they are different in some ways. I believe myself that the Northern Territories can do with some southern leaven and that we need to try to encourage a common citizenship between north and south".<sup>56</sup>

But as the movement persisted and gathered momentum, it became necessary to determine the wishes of the people. A vote of the heads of each family or lineage taken in June 1949 showed an overwhelming support for the transfer to the south. The details of the voting were as shown in the following table.<sup>57</sup>

Subdivision	Voting Centres	Village represented	Village not represented	Voting for	
				South	North
Adele	3	11	1	32	
Adjuati	3	12	4	29	
Ntrubu	2	10	1	53	
Tapa	2	6	3	26	
Pai Akrosu	2	4	5	22	
Nchumuru	4	10	8	76	4
Krachi	6	40	4	104	32
	23	93	26	342	36

The District Commissioner, commenting upon the results, stated that

"There was a widespread belief that wealth will follow a change and that the wealth in the south is more a matter of the administration than of natural resources."<sup>58</sup>

But since the wish of the people had been expressed in no uncertain terms, the transfer was effected on 1st December, 1950 as the Trusteeship Council had nothing against it. The colonial boundary of the Protectorate then became as depicted in Fig. 10.

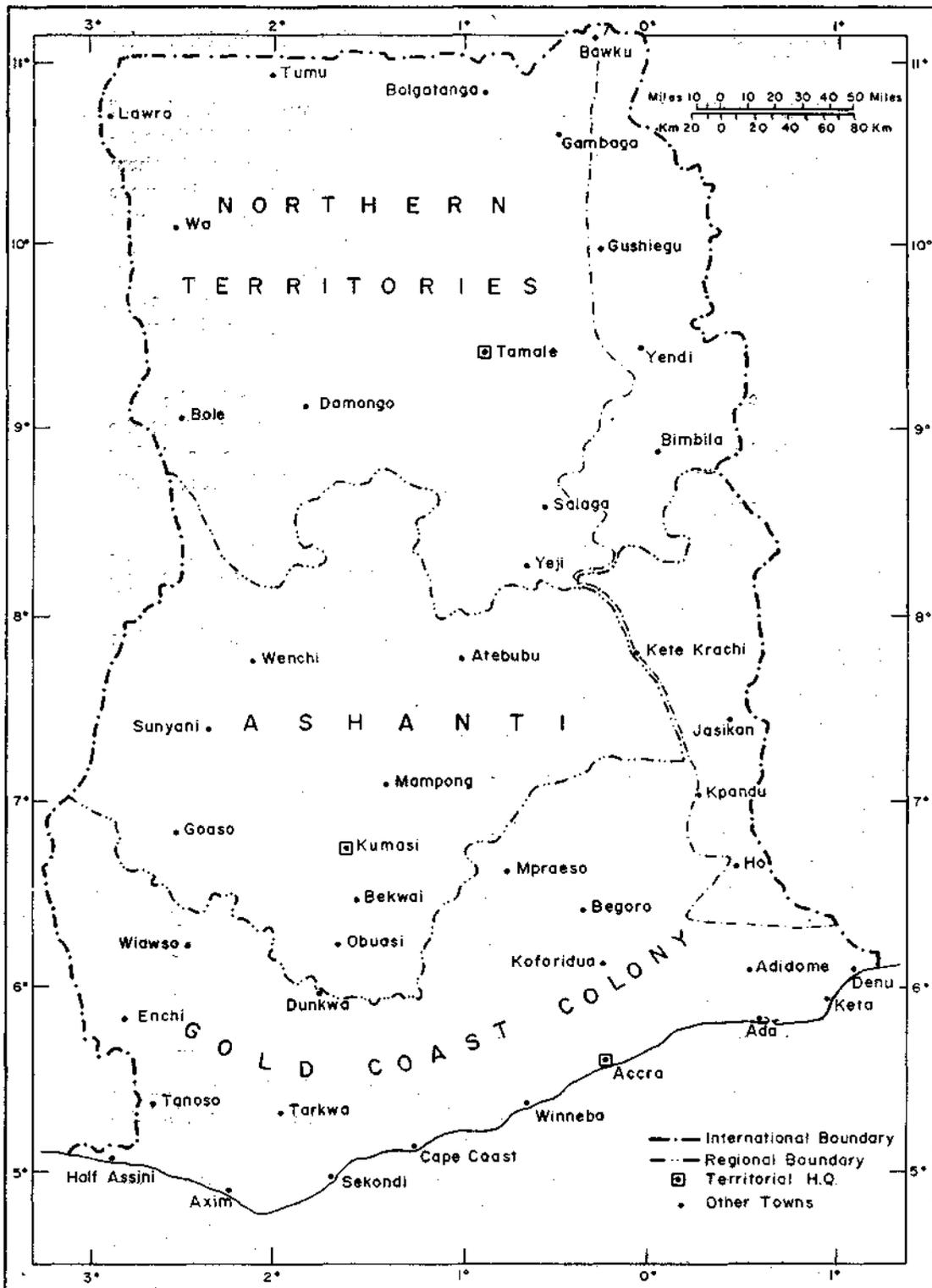


FIG. 10 REGIONAL BOUNDARIES, 1950

(After Gold Coast Survey 1951)

In 1949 the Coussey Committee "bearing in mind not only tribal and geographical factors but also administrative convenience",<sup>59</sup> recommended the establishment of four political regions in Ghana. However the determination of the regional boundaries was complicated by the peculiar status of Togoland and the impending plebiscite to decide whether the Krachi district should continue to be administered as part of the Northern Territories or should be incorporated into the Southern Section of Togoland under the United Kingdom Trusteeship.

The Committee held the view that "the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations may be expected to favour, either the formation of one Administration for the whole of Western Togoland, or alternatively the retention of the present affiliations of the Northern and Southern Sections".<sup>60</sup> It was also decided that whatever the outcome of the plebiscite "the various States/ Native Authorities lying to the East of the River Volta, including those now forming part of the Colony proper (excluding that part of Akwamu State East of the River Volta and also the Guan territories, but including the area of the Tongu Confederacy West of the River) should be constituted into a separate Regional Administration".<sup>61</sup>

This proposal was opposed by the representatives of Asogli, Atando and Buem who favoured the constitution of only the Southern Section of Togoland and Krachi as a separate region.<sup>62</sup> The Committee pointed out that this suggestion was unsound since it involved the creation of a small region of only 140,000 people, economically far from self-supporting. The Committee further stated that the main advantage in adopting its recommendation was that "it would more closely associate the Ewe States of the Gold Coast proper with those of Southern Togoland ... it would also provide what appeared potentially to be a reasonable administrative unit, with an approximate population, including Krachi of 470,000. Furthermore... the subtraction of those states now included in the Colony proper might in certain circumstances, permit a more workable Regional Administration to be established in that Territory".<sup>63</sup>

The opposition to the establishment of a region comprising Southern Togoland and part of the Gold Coast Colony was attributed to the campaign against Regional Administrations inspired by some political parties and the fear of exploitation by the politically and economically more advanced people of the Colony. It was also likely that the purposes of Regional Administration had not been fully understood while "the lack of knowledge as to the future position of Krachi area, with which they naturally wish to be associated"<sup>64</sup> could not be ignored.

The recognition by astute politicians that the union of Southern Togoland with a part of the Colony proper might prejudice the results of any future negotiations for a complete separation of Western Togoland from the Gold Coast must also have been an important factor. However, in 1952, the recommendations of the Coussey Committee on Regional Administration were

implemented. Southern Togoland and part of the Gold Coast Colony became the Trans-Volta Togoland (T.V.T.) Region (Fig. 11).

#### **Unification of Togoland Under British Trusteeship With the Gold Coast and the Regional Boundaries of 1957—1972**

During a meeting of the Northern Territories Territorial Council in 1949, the member for Dagomba East, Mr. J. H. Allasani, tabled a motion that "The Dagomba Native Authority is an entity and that it should not be divided by the arbitrary boundary between the Protectorate and Togoland under British Mandate"<sup>65</sup> Although "the state of Dagbon is an entity culturally, socially and linguistically"<sup>66</sup> the boundary made communication and the exchange of views very difficult between the Protectorate, and the Trusteeship portions of Dagbon.<sup>67</sup> The motion was carried unanimously.

The adoption of the motion for the abolition of the boundary between the Protectorate and the Northern Section of Togoland under United Kingdom Trusteeship seemed to justify the fears expressed by the German member of the Permanent Mandates Commission in 1931. M. Ruppel had objected to the re-union of the Eastern and Western Dagomba districts to form one native authority and the restoration of the domination of the Dagomba over the earlier and truly indigenous people.<sup>68</sup> Denouncing the unification of parts of the trusteeship territory with adjacent areas of the Northern Territories to constitute united native states, he declared that "it seemed hardly compatible with the spirit of the mandate to split the territory into pieces and to amalgamate one after another of those pieces with local districts of the neighbouring colony. Ultimately, there would remain no trace of a separate entity such as each mandated territory constituted."<sup>69</sup>

It was further pointed out in 1933 that the future emancipation of Togoland would be difficult as it would mean the dismembering of the native states, thus created.<sup>70</sup> By the practical, though not legal, abolition of the boundary in 1949, the results of a future plebiscite to determine the destiny of Togoland, as far as the Northern Section of Togoland was concerned, had been virtually pre-determined.

The progress of the Gold Coast towards nationhood brought up the question of the future status of the former German colony of Togoland. The United Nations General Assembly ordered a plebiscite to determine whether the majority of the inhabitants of the Trust Territory under British administration desired either

- (a) the union of their Territory with an independent Gold Coast; or
- (b) the separation of Togoland under British administration from the Gold Coast and its continuance under trusteeship, pending the ultimate determination of its political future."<sup>71</sup>

The plebiscite was held on 9th May, 1956 and out of 194,230 registered voters, 93,095 favoured union with, while 64,492 voted for separation from, the Gold Coast. The results of the plebiscite are summarised below.<sup>72</sup>

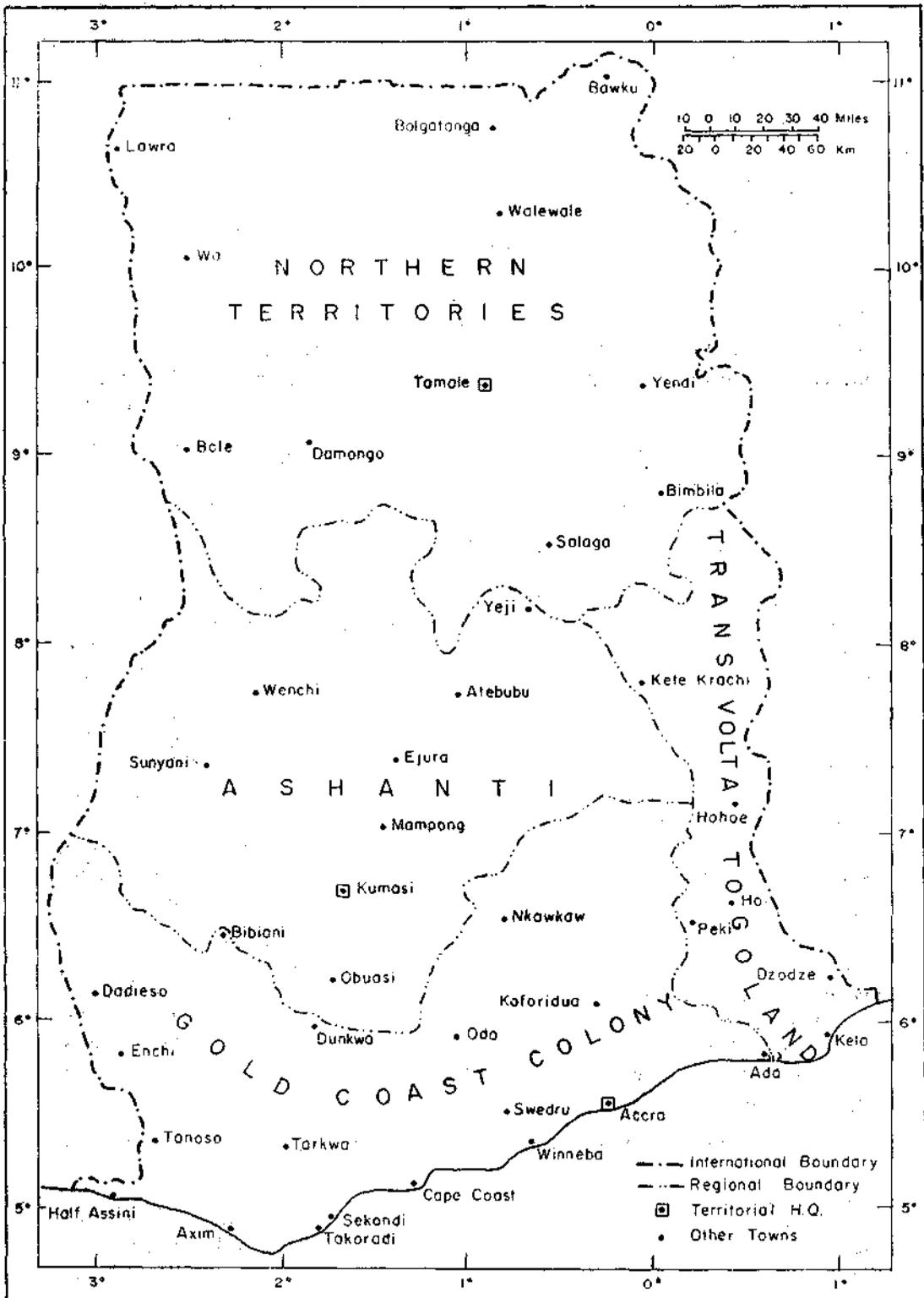


FIG. II REGIONAL BOUNDARIES, 1952

District	Union	Seperation
Mamprusi	17 870	3,429
Dagomba	28,083	6 549
Gonja	3,166	2,729
Buem/Krachi	28,178	18,775
Kpandu	7,217	17,029
Ho	8,581	18,981
	93,095 (58%)	67,492 (42%)

As the results showed a clear majority in the territory as a whole favouring union with an independent Gold Coast, the Trusteeship Council adopted a motion on 31st July, 1956 recommending to the United Nations General Assembly that the Trusteeship Agreement should be terminated as soon as the Gold Coast attained statehood. The General Assembly approved the union of British Togoland with the Gold Coast on the date on which the latter would become an independence state, and advised that on that date the Trusteeship Agreement "should cease to be in force, the objectives of trusteeship having been attained." 73

On 6th March, 1957 Western Togoland and the Gold Coast became the unitary and independent state of Ghana. The Northern Territories were renamed Northern Region while the Western and Eastern Provinces of the Colony, reestablished in November 1953, were constituted Regions (Fig. 12)

Not long after independence, the Eastern Region South centered on Accra was created. (Fig. 12) This new division, politically part of the Eastern Region, was basically an economic unit established to cater for the peculiar problems created by the agglomeration of industries and the influx and concentration of population around the capital of the country. This establishment was however soon abandoned and Accra was constituted a separate district administered directly by the Minister of Local Government and outside the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of the Eastern Region. 74

The creation of the Brong Ahafo Region in 1959 was the natural outcome of a long period of agitation for a separate existence by the Ahafo and Brong people who had been divided between Ashanti and Northern Ghana. Following the Anglo-Ashanti encounter of 1873-74 the gradual disintegration of the Asante Kingdom began and after the occupation of Kumasi in 1896 it was practically dissolved. When the Confederacy was restored in 1935 some Brong divisions opted to remain outside it.

By the late 1940s the Brong secessionist movements in Northern Ghana and Ashanti had reinforced each other. Such a movement in the North had its origins in the abolition of the Yeji and Prang tribunals in 1932 when the two refused to combine and form one native authority. It was then decided that their tribunals would be allowed to function only when a larger state had been formed by amalgamation with either Ashanti, Gonja or other Brong

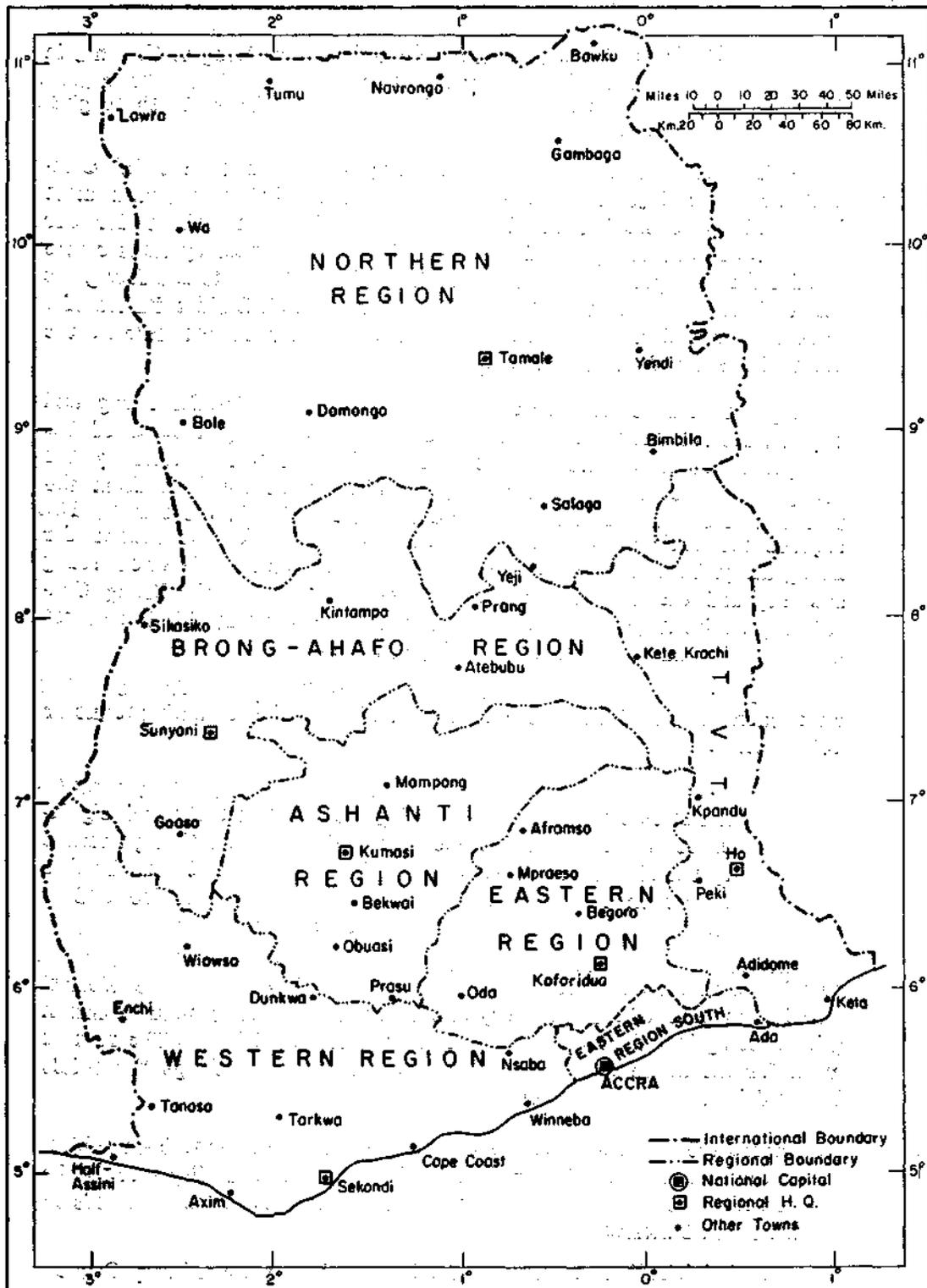


FIG. 12 REGIONAL BOUNDARIES, 1959.

(After Survey of Ghana 1960)

settlements.<sup>75</sup> Yeji and Prang then sought union with Brong settlements in Ashanti.<sup>76</sup> The reasons advanced by the Brong of the Yeji and Prang areas for wishing to leave the Northern Region were very similar to those given by the people of Krachi.<sup>77</sup>

This move, was, however, not encouraged, as the then Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories was anxious that Prang, "the most important cattle market in the Gold Coast should remain under our control".<sup>78</sup> It was also pointed out that this large and wealthy trade centre was for the most part populated by people of the Protectorate and foreigners who took no interest in the Brong unification movement. Besides, its transfer to Ashanti would be a source of inconvenience to the Protectorate in the event of the introduction of direct taxation.<sup>79</sup>

Separate Native Authorities were therefore instituted for Prang and Yeji. In the former, the head of the stranger community instead of the Pranghene was constituted the native authority. He was assisted by the Pranghene, some of his elders and by certain elected members from the trading and commercial 'stranger' communities residing in the town.<sup>80</sup> This angered the indigenous inhabitants and they intensified the search for Brong unity. Their aspirations were partially fulfilled in 1949 when Prang and Yeji and the villages under them combined to form the Brong Confederacy Native Authority. Through this the Pranghene was able to reassert his authority and take over the running of his division.

By 1951 the strained relations between the Brong and Asante chiefs were such that a Committee was appointed with the following terms of reference:

"In the interest of unity and the importance, for future constitutional development, of preserving the historic unity and significance of the Ashanti people, to examine the situation presented by the differences between certain Brong Chiefs and their brother Chiefs in Ashanti which have come to public notice and to consider the steps which should be taken to restore unity".<sup>81</sup>

The secession movement appeared to have had its origins in a land dispute in which the Techimanehene claimed nine villages from the Kumasi Division as part of his territory and other Brong States with common grievances against the Asanteman Council rallied round him.<sup>82</sup> The reasons given for the desire to secede were many. Among other things the chiefs involved in the movement pointed out that:

- (1) before the restoration of the Confederacy they had never been subject to the Asantehene and that the swearing of an oath of allegiance to him was not a pre-requisite for their recognition as Paramount Chiefs in their own States.<sup>83</sup>
- (2) the administration of the oath of allegiance in the Confederacy Council

was repugnant to Brong custom and etiquette and created an inferior status for Brong chiefs which was exploited by the Kumasi clan chiefs.<sup>84</sup>

- (3) the change of name from "Confederacy Council" to "Asanteman Council" was neither acceptable to them nor was it in conformity with the principle of confederation and showed "the intent to subjugate the independent divisions and make them vassal of the Golden Stool."<sup>85</sup>
- (4) they experienced frustration as a result of insults offered them at Confederacy meetings, the prejudice against Brongs as to appointment to membership of Committees and the unsatisfactory system of awarding scholarships from the Ashanti National Fund to the detriment of Brongs.<sup>86</sup>
- (5) the Ashanti Confederacy Courts were too centralised and unwieldy. The slow and expensive administration of justice fell heavily on Brong Chiefs and led to "their returning home much humiliated in indignity and crippled financially"<sup>87</sup>

The Committee recommended that the Asanteman Council should effect such modifications in the administration of the oath of allegiance to the Golden Stool as was "in consonance with modern political and social conceptions"<sup>88</sup> and that the Confederacy Courts should sit in different parts of Ashanti to reduce the expenses of litigants and panel members who should hail from the various localities.<sup>89</sup>

The Committee, and the Asanteman Council both supported the formation of a Council of Brong States to co-ordinate matters of local government. Opposition to the formation of the Brong Council which was then a **fait accompli** would only have made it unnecessarily difficult to heal the breach that had occurred between the Asanteman Council and the Brong States.<sup>90</sup>

Although the Committee reported that from the representations of the Brong "A firm resolve on the part of all to break away from the Asanteman Council was evidenced,"<sup>91</sup> it delayed the publication of its report in the hope that passions would cool down to allow for further consideration of differences with a view to reconciliation. The Committee however had to publish its report in 1955 as a result of certain members of the Legislative Council, the Dormaahene, and the Techimanhene pressing for a decision.<sup>92</sup> The Government found it expedient to create a separate region (Fig. 12) on 4th April, 1959, appropriately designated "Brong Ahafo" to incorporate the Ahafo and Brong people.<sup>93</sup>

After July 1960 administrative theories and practices multiplied. Before the coming into force of the Republican Constitution on 1st July, 1960 the Government decided that the country should be divided into "more effective administrative units".<sup>84</sup> This was to be accomplished by splitting

each of the rather large Northern and Western Regions into two separate political regions.

Not unnaturally, B. F. Kusi, a member of the dwindled Parliamentary Opposition, stretched his imagination to see in the creation of more regions the government's acceptance of the principle of federation which it had rightly rejected at the time of independence in 1957. He urged that the regions should be made effective agents of progress by conferring such powers on them as would enable them to draw up and implement their development plans, subject to Parliamentary approval. He also expressed the hope that the establishment of more regions was not a means of compensating politicians with ministerial appointment.<sup>95</sup>

Mr S. I. Iddrisu, a Member of Parliament from the Northern Region championed the division of the region in these terms:

"The Northern Region of Ghana is a very wide underdeveloped region and it is very likely that it is because of this that the leader of this country feels that this particular region should be divided to facilitate development. It can then be raised to the standard of the other Regions."<sup>96</sup>

He went further, in his usually forthright manner, to provide what was probably the main reason for dividing the country into eight regions. These were necessary, he intimated.

"so that proper ideological pride could be hammered into the minds of the suffering masses and workers"<sup>97</sup>

On 1st July, 1960 the Northern Region was divided into the Northern and Upper Regions, the latter with its headquarters at Bolgatanga (Fig. 13). The definition of the Northern Region-Upper Region boundary took into consideration the desirability of having, as far as possible, about equal populations in the two regions, and the political necessity of adhering to existing and accepted administrative boundaries. The Nayiri saw his inclusion in the Northern Region for what it was: the dissolution of his empire which the British had helped to re-establish. It also saved him the embarrassment of having to sit in the same House of Chiefs as an equal of chiefs formerly subordinate to him and thus enabled him to maintain his prestige.

Simultaneously with the creation of the Upper Region, the large Western Region was divided into Western and Central Regions with their headquarters at Sekondi and Cape Coast respectively (Fig. 13). Earlier in the year the Trans-Volta Togoland had become the Volta Region to reflect the political union of Western Togoland with Ghana. As it was pointed out, the creation of more regions was a means of carrying the administration into the remote areas of the country provided this led to the establishment of more

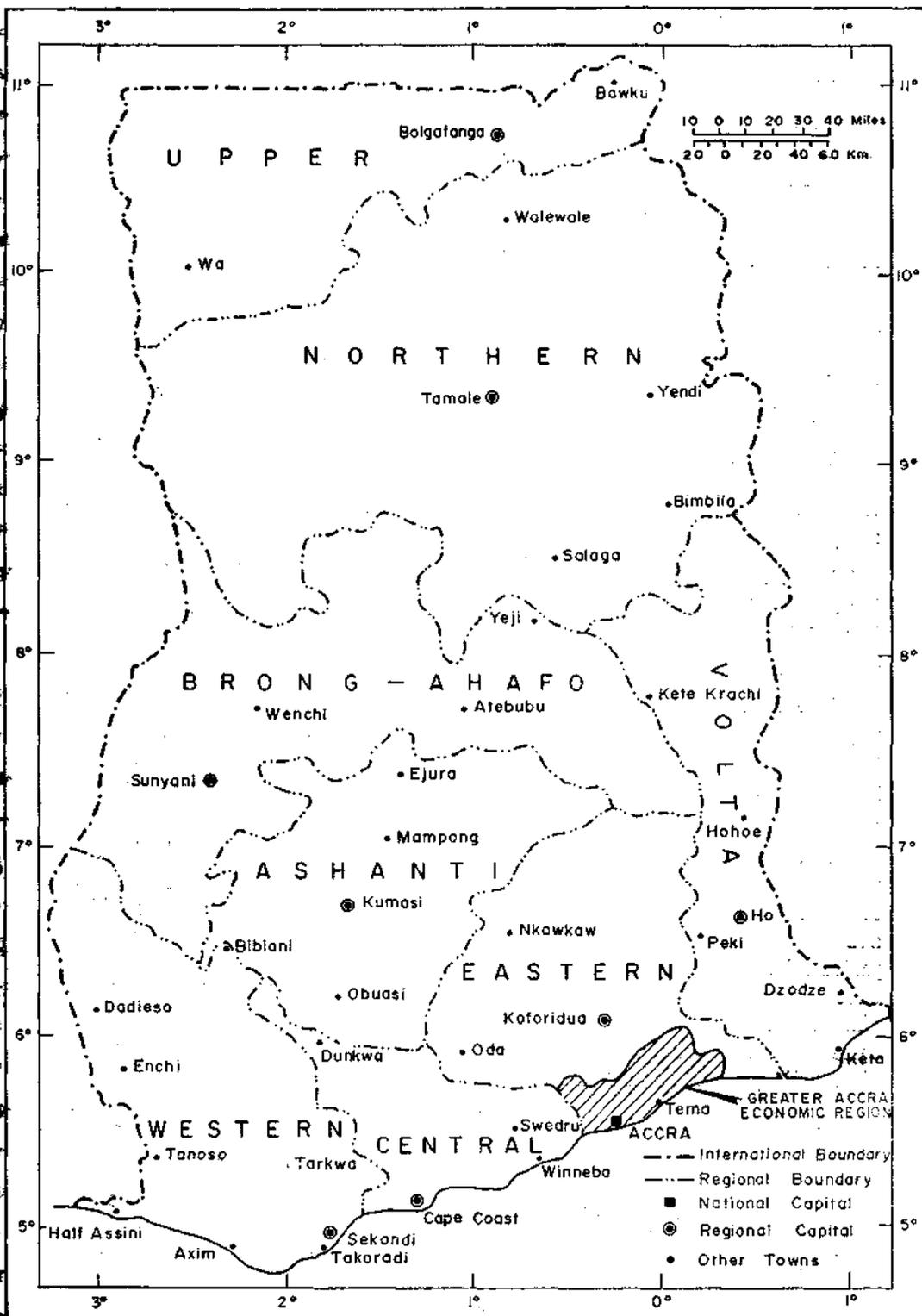


FIG. 13 REGIONAL BOUNDARIES, 1960-72. After Survey of Ghana 1966.

and compact districts. Smaller administrative divisions would enable officers to tour their areas since "a good ruler is the one who is able to get in touch with his people and to know their needs".<sup>98</sup>

The division of the Western Region into two political entities led to demands for a similar partition of the Eastern Region with one of the divisions to comprise the Adangbes, Yilo and Manya Krobos, Osudokus, Shais and Gas.<sup>99</sup> Such a division was considered valid from the point of view of language, customs and ways of living<sup>100</sup> while the inclusion of Accra, the national headquarters, in the Eastern Region denied the rest of the region of its fair share of development as most projects tended to be located in the Accra area.<sup>101</sup> The Government however made it clear that the time was not ripe to divide the Eastern Region into two separate entities though it was their intention to develop Accra, Tema and their neighbouring towns which had distinct problems from those of the rest of the Eastern Region into a metropolis of Greater Accra in the near future.<sup>102</sup>

The economic sub-region of Greater Accra was subsequently established in 1964 (Fig. 13). The boundary between the Northern and Brong-Ahafo Regions was slightly altered by the Delimitation Committee of 1964 without assigning any reasons for the change but presumably to make it conform to the ethnic divide as shown on the map of tribes of Ghana. The Committee appointed in 1971 to investigate the possibility of raising the Greater Accra Region to the status of a political region is yet to submit its report.

### Conclusion

The definition of regional boundaries in Ghana has taken account of population and ethnic distribution as well as traditional allegiance and the need for convenience of administration. Some regions were created in response to the expressed wishes and agitation of the people while others are the outcome of unsolicited and direct government action.

The current regional boundaries closely correspond to the colonial and provincial boundaries of the pre-independence period. During the colonial era, the truncation of traditional states by regional boundaries was avoided and once such boundaries were defined no chief was allowed to exercise jurisdiction across them. Thus the Mo people in the Northern Territories were constituted a separate division independent of the Asantehene in 1912. Similarly Yeji and Prang were raised to paramount status and the Omanhene of Kwahu was prevented from exercising authority over that part of his territory included in Ashanti.

The Nkrumah government maintained this policy but soon after the fall of the regime in 1966 the Nayiri's jurisdiction in the Bawku and Bolgatanga districts was restored while rival claims in Brong Ahafo have led to the appointment of a Committee to determine what authority and support the Asantehene has in the region.

The petition by the chiefs and people of Krachi district to be allowed to

secede from the Volta Region and join either Ashanti or the Northern Region after the 1969 general elections and the long-standing desire for the creation of a North-Western Region to embrace Lawra, Tumu and Wa districts seem to indicate that some of the present boundaries are immature and unstable and may fluctuate with the changing political fortunes of the country. In the immediate future it is most likely that the Greater Accra economic region, which already enjoys all the attributes of the other regions, would be raised to the status of a political region.

The regions, as major territorial divisions of the country, are not merely just convenient units of administration but political entities which have now been given the powers of corporate bodies to initiate development projects. The exercise of jurisdiction by traditional rulers across regional boundaries would cause resentment, unrest and seriously compromise the political identity and corporate nature of the regions.

Yet the functions of regional boundaries have not been specified. What is required is a firm declaration of the political status and significance of the regions. This would mark an important stage in the evolution of the country from a congeries of traditional and often antagonistic states into a modern nation state. Wherever possible regional boundaries should be recast to coincide with limits of traditional allegiance and thus stabilize relations between the various communities in the regions. However, care should be taken to avoid creating a multiplicity of small regions which cannot discharge the onerous burdens of development recently imposed on the Regional Development Corporations.

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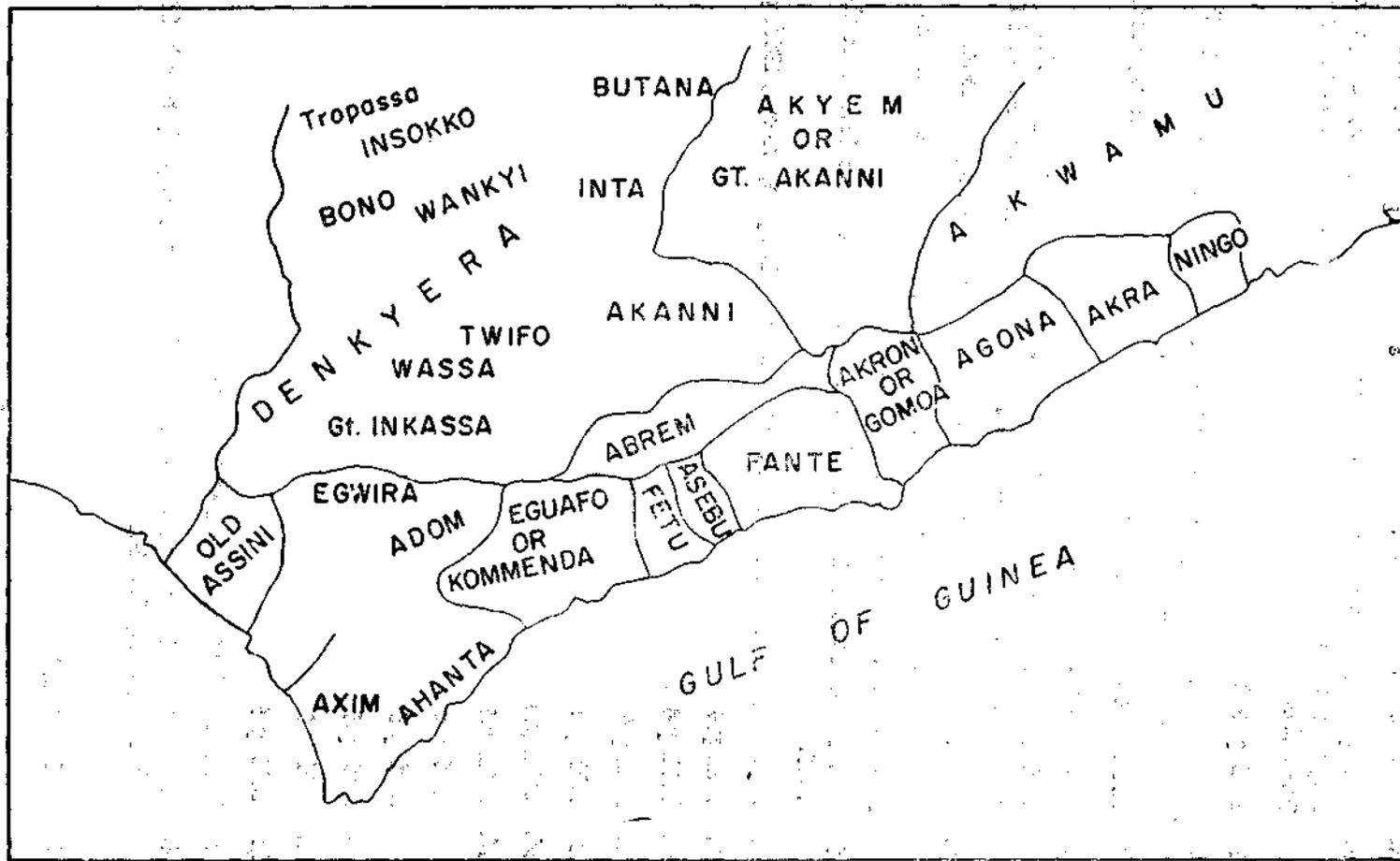
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# STATES OF THE GOLD COAST c 1700



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