

SALAGA IN 1892

Adolf Krause, the German scholar-trader, was living in Salaga when it was invaded by the rebel forces of Kabachewura Issifa and his Dagomba and Nanumba allies. The date was Monday, December 5th, 1892, and marks the end of the reign of Napo as chief of Kpembe, the twin town of Salaga and residence of the royals of Eastern Gonja. In the following year, Issifa was enrobed as Kpembewura Isanwurfo II, an office which he held until his death in 1897.

Issifa was the first chief of Kpembe from the Kanyase dynasty for many decades. The mode of succession to the Kpembe chiefship was complicated. Three dynastic segments of the ruling dynasty of Gonja lived in the town, Singbung, Lepo and Kanyase. However the last two of these, whose founders were said to be twins, counted as one for the purposes of succession. When the reign of a Singbung chief had ended, it was the oldest of the senior chiefs of the Lepo or Kanyase segments who was entitled to succeed. For a number of reigns the system had worked to the exclusion of the Kanyase section. Whether this state of affairs was the result of accident or design is not altogether clear. But Kanyase were growing increasingly powerful by the end of the 1880's partly owing to the dealings that their chief, Asumani, had with Inspector Firminger, who acted as recruiting agent for the Gold Coast Constabulary and as trader on his own account. They therefore pressed for the rotational system to be established on the basis of strict alternation between the Lepo and Kanyase sections when it was their joint turn to provide the next chief. While Lepo agreed in principle, they disregarded the arrangement in practice. When Kpembewura Bangbanga, from the Singbung section, died, he was succeeded by Napo of Lepo in April 1892. Issifa, who then held the chiefship of Kabache, the second in seniority within the Kanyase section, withdrew from the capital to Litinkpa in the North in order to raise a rebellion against Lepo, who were subsequently assisted by Singbung and most of the Salaga Muslims. With Dagomba and Nanumba support, Issifa defeated the combined forces and entered Salaga and Kpembe with his allies on Monday, December 5th, 1892, the inhabitants having fled south before his advance.

Later some of the refugees started to trickle back and the Dagomba forces began to withdraw. But the new regime still depended upon the support of the northern kingdom for a number of years.

Krause lived in the Salaga area for some two and a half years between 1892 and 1894, and the letters he wrote back to the German newspaper, *Kreuz-Zeitung*, are translated below. The last of these refers to a visit to Kpembe of G.E. Ferguson, which ushered in a period of intense competition between the Germans and the British for control of the area, a struggle which eventually ended in the division of the Neutral Zone that these powers had established there a few years earlier.

The dispute arising out of Ferguson's visit had to do with the nature of the Treaty into which he entered with Isanwurfo II. Krause understood this to be a Treaty of Protection, whereas in fact it was a Treaty of Friendship and Trade, such as both powers had agreed it was necessary to conclude with the authorities within the Zone, lest a third European power, France, should decide to do so before them.

It was hardly surprising that Krause's informants, and possibly the Gonja themselves, could not distinguish between these two forms of treaty, with their very different international implications. Nor that, after thirty-one months without news, Krause himself should be out of touch with the latest diplomatic manoeuvres in Europe. But his misinterpretation of the treaty was at least partly responsible for the immediate increase in European activity in the Salaga region between 1894 and 1897, as well as in a running dispute between Germany and England.

Krause's letters about Salaga appeared in the *Kreuz-Zeitung* on November 6th, 1894. Their publication caused an immediate stir in Germany and paraphrases of them were transmitted to London by the British Ambassador. These versions later appeared in the printed Colonial Office Papers on West Africa but a translation of the full text is given below because of their importance in the history of Northern Ghana.

"From Togoland"

Supplement of the Neue Preussische (Kreuz-Zeitung). No. 520. Berlin,
November 6th, 1894.

From the African traveller, Gottlob Adolf Krause, the following letters have reached us:

Krachi, on the Volta, Togo.
September 13th, 1894.

Dear Sir,

I have today received your letter of May 5th, 1892. For more than two years and seven months I had been without any news from Europe. Today I received mail which covers the period from the end of January 1892 to October 1892, so there is now only a year and seven months of which I have been without news.

I last wrote to you on December 9th, 1892 immediately after the destruction of Salaga. As it is doubtful whether this letter came into your hands (it has not reached us) I will enclose a shorthand copy of it with this letter (No.1 below).

My letter of September 5th of this year from Yeji will be sent off at the same time as this letter.¹ (No.2 below).

From Sofo in Kete (near Krachi), who is recognised as the Hausa chief by the Germans, I have today received news which weighs heavily upon my mind. According to this Germany is involved in a war with France. The Germans are said to have conquered the French and to have killed their king. Can this be true, and does this war perhaps explain the events which I recount in my letter of the 6th inst.? Has England used this war to take possession of the Neutral Zone of Salaga etc.?

In Krachi the building of a station will be started in the autumn. Of the rectangle of forts which the situation of Togo demands - Kpandu (SW of the Salaga) and Atakpame (SE) in the south, and Krachi (near Salaga) and Fosoga in the north - the first will then have begun. The situation in Krachi is not satisfactory and the new station is sure to create peace and security. The head priest of the Odente fetish seems to be a great intriguer. He lives in enmity with the King: recently he was going to the station at Bismarcksborg, no-one quite knew why, but on the way he was stopped and persuaded to return home.

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1. From Yeji I went down the River Volta to Krachi. This reach of the Volta was new to me, but as I had not got a watch that worked I did not make an exact survey of the river.

The King of Krachi recently intended to send an embassy with some ivory to the English governor in Accra, in order finally to discover what their position really was. They were supposed previously to have belonged to the English; for some years it had been said that the English had handed them over to the Germans, but the English had never told them about it, and they were not happy with this situation. The King, a mild old man with a white square-cut beard, who is both peaceful and reasonable, visits me two or three times a day. I have clearly explained to him the situation in which he finds himself. In answer to my direct question as to whether he had been done any injustice by the Germans, he replied in the negative. It was only the manner in which they had been transferred from their former master to a new one, he said, which had offended them. Indeed, as the former masters had not even told them about this matter, they did not know at all whether this were so or not.

I think it probable that should a renewed attempt be made by the Germans to persuade the King of Krachi to accept the German flag, the desired effect would be forthcoming, as above all the building of a German station will show the King that the English will not further be concerned with the country - so far as it lies to the East of the Volta. In fact the King of Krachi has never been under English protection - of that I could give him proof - but all those tribes east of the Volta who until the Ashanti war of 1873/4 were subjects of the Ashanti and who then freed themselves when the English had destroyed the Ashanti power, regarded themselves from that time as dependent on the English. If the King of Krachi has since the first attempt of Captain von Francois, steadfastly refused to accept the German flag, this has not happened because he disliked the Germans but because he believed that he was under English protection.

When Lieutenant von Doering, the head of the German station of Bismarckburg in Adele, was here some time ago, he chained up one of the biggest scoundrels in the land, the head slave of the chief priest, but then set him free again.

Formerly a Hausa trader called Malami lived in Kete, a somewhat shifty man with a not altogether faultless past. Once he bought slaves from the Salaga people without possessing a penny to pay for them. Under cover of darkness he escaped and took the slaves to Lome. The Salaga people wanted to be indemnified by Malami's family, which he had left behind, but they did not do so because of the intervention of the elders of Kete, and peacefully waited for payment for months until Malami returned from Lome.

This man now possesses a document issued by the German station at Misahohe in which Dr. Gruner says that "Chief Malami of Kaleki is the protegee of the station of Misahohe" and which also bears the signatures of the Commissar S. Puttkamer among others, and requests that support be given to the owner of the document. Not it appears that this Malami came into possession of this document by dishonourable means, and was in any case helped further by an error of Dr. Gruner's. In Kete there are only two Hausa chiefs recognised by the Germans: the first, Sofo, and the second, Abdul Bedi, though it would be best if the latter were demoted. Dr. Gruner appears not to have known that "Kaleki", or more properly Karaki, is the Hausa name for Krachi and Kete, for in Togo Krachi is usually written as "Kratiji".

Malami has now gone to Salaga and has there become Maiungua, that is, chief of a quarter: thereby he is an official of the King of Kpembe. As such he can hardly have any further justification in continuing to keep this document, the more so since the English may see the presence of this man in Salaga as an infringement by the Germans of the treaty about the neutrality of Salaga.

I am now going to the coast, and, as soon as the doctor has given me clearance, to Europe. When I left Berlin in November 1889 I thought I would return in May or June 1890 at the latest. These six or seven months have now become five whole years. With this year it is 26 years since I first touched African soil.

With best wishes I sign myself gratefully

Yours sincerely,

G.A.K.

Salaga, December 9th, 1892.

Dear Sir,

A civil war has broken out in Salaga, in which the weaker and rebellious party has got the support of the King of Yendi in Dagomba.

The Dagomba army has advanced against Salaga with astonishing rapidity. At the news of the army's approach on the night of December 4/5 the inhabitants of Salaga were overtaken by a frenzied fear and rushed out of the place in wild flight. Out of a total of about 12,000 inhabitants, not 200, including the sick, can have remained in the town. I was quite alone with a freed native boy aged between seven and eight. On the 5th the Dagombas entered Kpembe, the King's residence near Salaga, and Salaga itself. Since then Salaga has been plundered and ravaged by fire, which broke out soon after the general exodus.

Up to the present I have not been touched either by fire or by people. So far hundreds of looters have been kept off by words alone.

The Dagomba army consists of about 200 cavalry and 2,000 foot: The King of Kpembe has fled through Kulipi and Sabon Gida to Alfai, whose chief he was before being elected chief of Kpembe at the beginning of April 1892. Alfai is meant to belong to the German territory of Togo.

The refugees have gone into German territory (Bajemeso, and Kete near Krachi) others to Kulipi, Yeji, Kafaba; many have taken the road to Dagomba.

The Dagomba army had orders not to enter Salaga, but only to take the present Chief of Kabache to Kpembe as Chief of Kpembe and to capture the present Chief of Kpembe and kill him. The army gave in to the lure of booty however. The Dagomba army is stationed east of Kpembe, but various princes sleep at night in Salaga with their booty. Orders are now being awaited from the King of Yendi: is the army to return home or to pursue the present King of Kpembe, which would mean taking the war into German territory?

Abdul Bedi, who is recognised by the Germans as the second Chief of the Hausa in Kete near Krachi and who is always acting the upstart, came to the assistance of the King of Kpembe in a ridiculous way, only to return home at once. The English might construe his action as an offence against the agreement regarding the neutrality of Salaga.

My "latest" news from Europe goes back to the end of January 1892.

In this year I have been ill with dysentery again for five months.

In the coming year, 1893, when it will be 25 years since I first touched African soil and four years since I saw my home, I am thinking of going to Europe.

With best wishes I sign myself gratefully,

Yours faithfully,

G.A.K.

(Translated from Gabelsberg shorthand in Berlin November 3rd, 1894.
Dr. Weip, Nollendorfstr. 34. Shorthand expert of the Reichstag).

Yeji, September 5th 1894.

I left Salaga, or rather the ruins of Salaga, on August 30th and I arrived here on the 31st. The distance between Salaga and Yeji is small, about 57 kilometers, but it is more than enough for a sick man whom a doctor in Europe would not allow to walk two steps, let alone a two days march of 57 kilometers, wading through water eight times. But in Africa the thing is very simple, you just have to do it.

Yeji is situated on the right bank of the river Volta, in English territory, on the road which in one direction leads from Salaga via Atebubu to Ashanti, and in the other goes via Atebubu and Okwau to Accra on the Gold Coast. Since the destruction of Salaga in December 1892, a number of the Salaga refugees have settled down here in grass huts, where they felt quite safe until a short time ago when the greater number of them fled further into English territory as they feared an attack of the new King of Kpembe (Salaga).

Since I left Salaga only a few days have gone by but they have brought events which are of great importance for this part of the world and of special interest to Germany.

In the year 1888 an agreement was reached between England and Germany, by which Salaga and its territory were declared neutral, and both countries undertook not to establish sovereignty over it. I do not know if the full text of this treaty has ever been published. (It has not been published). It has been learnt from other sources that the neutral zone includes not only the territory of Salaga but also Yendi and Gambaga. In the official memorandum of the German government about the Anglo-German treaty of 1890 concerning the delineation of the spheres of influence of both parties in Africa, reference is made to the neutral zone in which it is stated: "In the case of undertakings which would affect this neutrality Germany would be able to demand the right of priority by virtue of the protective treaty negotiated by Captain von Francois".

Has this Anglo-German agreement of 1888 been recently cancelled, have the views and demands of the German government which I have cited recently been relinquished? I do not know. (No). For two years and seven months events in Europe and in the whole of the civilised world have been to me as a book closed with more than seven seals and during that time I have received news neither from Europe nor from the coast - except for one single drop of news - but it seems to me unlikely, indeed utterly impossible that Germany should in the meantime have given up rights guaranteed by treaty. And if these rights in the neutral zone have not been surrendered by Germany, then they have been most grossly violated by England. Salaga has been put under English protection, Gambaga, Wale Wale, Mangu (Sansanne Mangu) have been put under English protection, together with Wagadugu, the capital of Mossi, which in 1886 I was the first European to visit. The King of Belusa in Mogho, the land of the Mossi,

rejected the English, and the King of Yendi in the land of Dagbong or Dagomba also refused to engage in negotiations after the English had made a treaty with Mangu. He said that Mangu belonged to him and he had fought it for years. And even now, after Mangu had received the English flag, he would kill every Mangu man who dared to come to Yendi.

The negociator on the English side is a young negro of 23 to 25 years, Mr. George Ferguson, who is officially called "Surveyor of Roads", born in the town of Anamabu on the Gold Coast. It seems questionable whether this young man had any knowledge of the existing treaties, also whether he acted on instructions. Perhaps he acted on his own initiative in placing Gambaga, Mangu and Salaga under English protection. That will soon be established and will be known in Europe before this letter arrives. Today the express messenger arrived in Yeji, a non-commissioned officer of the English Hausa force in the Gold Coast by whom Ferguson sends telegrams and treaties to the Governor in Accra. The man⁺ is of course familiar with the Anglo-German agreements and it will now be up to him to condemn Mr. Ferguson's treaties, to ratify them or simply to report back.

Mr. Ferguson arrived in Salaga a few hours after I had left on August 30th. Salaga is a heap of ruins in which you can find here and there some groups of inhabited huts. Only a negligible part of the inhabitants of Salaga who fled in December 1892 at the approach of the Dagomba army has returned. The refugees are living in grass huts (buka) in Yeji, Garin Mallam Shafa, in Kwobia, Yendi, in Bajemeso and especially in Kete, near Krachi in the German territory. All the efforts of the chief of Kabache, who is now the unjustly elected King of Kpembe, to persuade the refugees to return have been in vain: only the people who fled to Mpaha and Tuluwe (Tuhugu), seven house-owners, have been brought back to Salaga by the King of Tuluwe. The new King of Kpembe has neither power nor esteem, neither people nor money, neither intelligence nor discretion; no-one can bear him, not even the King of Yendi who installed him, nor yet his wives who have sided with others. In this unstable situation he thought he could gain support by throwing himself into the arms of the Europeans. These he hopes will build up again what he has destroyed by his criminal ambition: the town and market of Salaga. Thus some time ago he decided to send an embassy to the white man for this purpose, and consulted my opinion through a third person. I simply told him of the contents of the Anglo-German agreement of 1888. As a result he did not send the embassy.

+ The Governor.

From the time of the great flight of the inhabitants of Salaga at the beginning of December 1892, plundering has been an everyday occurrence in Salaga. There have been periods of peace, at other times it has got worse, but plundering has never entirely ceased. Indeed, if a small Hausa caravan had not recently been completely looted just outside Salaga, I should today still be in Salaga rather than safe in English territory at Yeji. Among the Hausa who had been robbed I found carriers, whereas I had not succeeded in finding carriers from outside, as they were afraid that they would be taken prisoner in Salaga and sold as slaves.

The procedure at the declaration of the English Protectorate over Salaga has been described in letters by two separate eye witnesses. One of them is written in the Hausa language, the other partly in Arabic, partly in Hausa. The first is so interesting as to justify a literal translation.

It runs:

It is R.R. who has written down the events which he has seen since your departure.

On Sunday, the first of the lunar month (i.e. 1. Rbei el awwal 1312; 2nd September 1894) the King of Kpembe called all his people together. Ferguson arrived with his soldiers who set themselves up in the King's entrance-hut. Ferguson sat on a chair, he put a big chest in front of him and put ink and paper on it. Then he took a book and read aloud from it but we do not know what he said. Then, when he had finished he asked the king, saying: "What is there between you and the English? I want to hear whether you want them or not". The King said: "There is no doubt that all we Gbanye people here (Gondscha, the name of the inhabitants of the country in which Salaga is situated) were formerly dependants of the Ashanti, but now there are no Ashanti, therefore our land is without a Lord. Disorder has come upon us, yes we have even had a war, we have destroyed and have not been able to create order again. For this reason, I, Jusufu, King of Kpembe (alternatively Kombe, Pami, Pembe) declare that I do not wish that it should remain without a Lord. I recognise the English, I recognise the English, I recognise them, from today they own me and my whole country, they are my masters, I have no other masters but them". Ferguson asked him again and repeated this, as above, three times. Thereupon Ferguson said: "Where are the witnesses?" They said: "Here, the sons of the King

are all witnesses and the Moslems of the town". Thereupon Ferguson took some paper and said: "I will write that today you have become the friend of the English; from today you will have no other friend but them". The King said: "It is so. I agree to your writing it". Ferguson said: "Take the pen". He took it, he wrote (signed). Ferguson said: "Kanyasi (one of the great ones after the King) shall take it (the pen)". He took it, he wrote. So it continued until all the people of Kpembe had finished (all had signed). Thereupon Ferguson said that the Maingua Kuka (a chief of a ward in the town of Salaga) should take the pen. He took it and signed. He said to the Imam (chief priest of the Mohammedan Hausa): "Take the pen". He took it and signed. So it continued until all the great ones of Salaga had signed. Then Agjemaku signed (a trader from the coast residing in Kete in German territory, at present in Salaga), then the Maun from Krobo (a trader from Krobo in the Gold Coast Colony, at present in Salaga), finally the great men among the soldiers, they all took the pen and signed. Now that he was finished he said: "There are three papers. One I will give to you, King of Kpembe; one I will keep for myself and one I will send to Accra". Then Ferguson said: "Good, from today this market belongs to the English, people from all tribes shall come and visit the market, except the French". So it is and so it has happened.

Again Ferguson said: "The King of Mossi has recognised the English; he has even accepted the flag and hoisted it. The King of Mangu (Sansanne Mangu) has recognised the English; he has even received the flag and it has been hoisted in his country. But the King of Yendi has refused; he has said that between himself and all Christians there is only war, never protective sovereignty". He (Ferguson) said further: "Today on the first of your month you, King of Kpembe, have recognised the English; on a Sunday you have become one of theirs". Now Ferguson gave the King a handful of silver. I do not know of what kind, but I believe it was about 20 or 25 pieces, 4, 000 cowries each (i.e. 2 shillings each).

All these things happened while I, X.X., was sitting there, and I too took the pen with my own hand (and signed) on Sunday towards Azzuhur (towards 2 p.m.) on the first day of the lunar month.

Once again Ferguson spoke, saying that he would not leave until his messengers had returned from Mangu and Accra. He told the soldiers that they should walk round the market and wherever they saw a Dagomba man who was stealing, even if it were only a single cowry shell, or maize or yams, they should beat him, take the stolen property from him and return it to its owner. And so they did.

So much for the Hausa text.

What could have moved Mr. Ferguson to exclude the French from the market of Salaga is utterly incomprehensible. It is hardly conceivable that he should have acted thus in accordance with instructions from above. In this regard he may have acted on his own initiative and responsibility. I know from oral reports that my informant was not wrong and did not mishear; the text of the half-Arabic, half-Hausa document with references to the exclusion of the French from the market of the Salaga runs in literal translation as follows:

"After the rains the market of Salaga would be visited ("eaten"); both Igilishi (Englishmen) and Dschaman (the English word: German) can come, but they, the Faranschi (French) shall not come to Salaga".

The latter document goes on to say, among other things:

"The King of Kpembe said: 'The market is in my territory, anyone may come, I have no objection. We fear the Ashanti, but if the Christian brings them here, they may come and visit the market (since the war of the English against the Ashanti of 1873/4 the Ashanti cannot visit the Salaga market), but we will have nothing to do with their chiefs. We will allow them to visit the market if the Christian is responsible for them'.^{*}

A few days after the acceptance of English protection the King of Kpembe sent an embassy to the King of Yendi, who had installed him as

* As Mr. Ferguson gave Kabache the silver coins he told him (according to oral report) that he should buy gin with it.

King of Kpembe. Without the help of the King of Yendi the present King of Kpembe would, even in the most favourable circumstances, still be the ruler of the small village of Kabache, from which he is, even now, often simply called "Kabache". Now the King of Yendi (Dagomba) will have nothing to do with the Christians, and one is anxious to know how he will interpret Kabache's surrender. It is not impossible that bands of Dagomba raiders will once again descend on Salaga.

Note:

The signatories of the treaty signed by Ferguson and dated September 1, 1894, were:

Isifa, King of Salaga and Kombi (Kpembe).
Mengwa, Chief (presumably Mai Ngua, head of a ward in Salaga).
Kanyasuwula (i.e. Nchuani Soali).
Sraka Seidu (Serikin, chief of the Hausa Zongo?)
Lepolwura (Lepowura)
Mambumwula
Sungumwula (Singbungwura)
Bambarawula (Bambaliwura)
Kabachiwula
Kasimpinwula (Kasampui is a village east of the R. Dakar)
Kribiwula (Kilibiwura?)
Mengwa Kuka (Mai Ngua Kuka, head of the Bemu section in Salaga)

Alimani

Witnesses: Mama Gimalah (the Sergeant-Major)
Bossomboy Grunshi (Lance-Corporal)
Chr. A. Affu (i.e. Azzu)
Fredk. B. Morgan (the Maun of Krause's informant)
Thos. A. Josiah
W. Manasseh

The Malami referred to by Krause in his letter from Krachi, 13/9/94, is either the Mengwa or the Mengwa Kuka above. The Agjemaku who also signed the treaty is Azzu or Josiah.

Jack Goody.