



A University of Sussex DPhil thesis

Available online via Sussex Research Online:

<http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/>

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the Author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Please visit Sussex Research Online for more information and further details



**‘Wives of the Gods’:
Debating *Fiasidi* and the Politics of Meaning**

Julie A. Jenkins

**Doctor of Philosophy in Social Anthropology
University of Sussex
January 2012**

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Julie A. Jenkins

Date

‘Wives of the Gods’: Debating *Fiasidi* and the Politics of Meaning

In the south-eastern Volta Region of Ghana, a form of female religious affiliation to local shrines commonly known as *trokosi*, has been the subject of a campaign consisting of Christian-based NGOs and various government agencies that has successfully criminalised the practice and organised ‘liberations’ and rehabilitations of the initiates. Protagonists of the abolition campaign argue that *trokosiwo* are illegitimately initiated to specific shrines based on an offence committed by another lineage member, acting as a perpetual figure of restitution. They also argue that the practice constitutes a form of ‘female ritual slavery’ by translating the term *trokosi* as “slave of the gods” and arguing that the socio-economic status and social relations of the *trokosiwo* indicate their ‘slavery’. The highly publicised abolition campaign stimulated a counter-campaign, led by a neo-traditional organisation, that argued that the female shrine initiates are Queen-Mothers (rather than slaves), role-models to their lineage (rather than figures of restitution), and are socially privileged.

Central to these contestations has been the figure of the *fiasidi*, particularly those initiated to shrines in one locality, Klikor. Abolitionists define *fiasidiwo* as being a variant of *trokosi*, despite some key differences. Those that contest this representation justified their position by highlighting the socio-economic position of *fiasidiwo* in Klikor's three shrines and pointing out the critical ways it differed from the representation of the Trokosi Slave. Members of the Klikor shrines also became political actors in the debates that ensued, by developing a close alliance to the neo-traditionalist organisation and creating their own organisation to network with similar shrines.

This thesis considers the debates around *trokosi* and *fiasidi* at the national level and explores in detail the meaning attached to *fiasidi* and her position in the Klikor shrines and community. At its core, is an ethnography of the three shrines, their ritual specialists and initiates. I explore the way in which meaning is ascribed to the *fiasidi*, through narratives of the past, through the symbolism of key rituals and through the structured interactions between petitioners and ritual specialists. A concluding section then considers the intersection between these meanings and the contested terrains of religion in the debates about the Trokosi Slaves.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Setting the Scene	1
The Research	4
Re-evaluating the research questions.....	12
‘Communities of Interpretation’	15
Overview of the Thesis	23
 Section 1: <i>Setting the Scene: The Trokosi Controversy</i> 	
Chapter 2: Abolishing <i>Trokosi</i>: from Local to National to International	26
The North Tongu ‘Vestal Virgins Project’ (1988-1993).....	26
From North Tongu to the National Sphere (1993-1996)	31
‘Liberations’, International Support, and Criminalisation (1996-1998)	35
After Criminalisation (1999 onwards)	37
Conclusion.....	43
Chapter 3: Representing <i>Trokosi</i> to Debating <i>Fiasidi</i>.....	47
District Seminars to the National Workshop (1994-1996)	48
Responses from the Campaign: The Academics.....	52
Criminalisation and the Mobilisation of the ARM (1996 onwards)	56
Conclusion.....	63
 Section 2: <i>The Klikor Adzima Shrines and the Fiasidi</i> 	
Chapter 4: Klikor and the Adzima Shrines	66
The Klikor Traditional Area.....	68
<i>Klikorto</i> or Anlo?	68
Overview of Klikor.....	71
Klikor, a Place of Deities	77
Deities: Cosmologies, Shrines, and Persons	81
The Adzima Deities and the Shrine Complex	85
Conclusion.....	94
Chapter 5: Narratives of the Past: War, Slavery, and <i>Fiasidi</i>	97
Narratives of War: Protection and Relations	99
Adzima, the Anlo, and the Some	99
“The Warriors will get strength”	106
Relations with Neighbouring Communities and Initiates.....	111
Adzima and Slavery: Protection and Wealth	114
Overview of the History of the Slave Trade.....	114
The Adzima Shrines and the Slave Markets of Klikor	119
Protection, Wealth, and Initiates.....	121
Performing Slavery: The <i>Gowu</i>	123
Conclusion.....	129
Chapter 6: The Work of the Adzima Deities	131
The Adzima Shrines: An Overview	132
A Day in the Shrine: The Case of Yaa and Adzo	134

Danger and Protection: Personhood, Well-Being, and Divinations.....	136
Dangers and Ambivalences in Social Relations.....	138
<i>Adzeto</i> , Kinship, and Wealth	140
<i>Dzoka</i> , Kidnappings, and Wealth	142
“Togbui, Save Me”	143
Deities as Dangerous.....	145
‘Beating the enemies’ and ‘being on the straight path’	145
<i>Fiasidi</i> & ‘Closing the Door’: ‘get a blue cloth and add it to a young girl’	149
Conclusion.....	151
Chapter 7: Initiations: Wives of the Deity, Grandmothers of the Family	153
Initiations: An Overview	154
The <i>Gatete</i>	155
Symbols of Marriage	159
Interactions with the Deity	163
Mercy: “They will make this thing thinking that they have finished”	163
Patience: “Their children might be Christians and will not help”	167
A <i>Fiasidi</i> ‘Crying’	170
Being a ‘wife’, Being a ‘Grandmother’	173
Conclusion: “If you do not understand, your house will be ruined”	177
Section 3: Interpenetrating ‘Communities of Interpretation’	
Chapter 8: ‘Communities of Interpretation’: Slaves, Queens, Christianity and	
‘Traditional Religion’	179
Missions and ‘Traditional Religion’	182
The Afrikania Mission and the Afrikania Renaissance Mission.....	184
The Afrikania Mission and the People’s Revolution.....	184
Afrikania Renaissance Mission and Neo-Pentecostalism.....	190
Crime, Sin, and Deities	193
The Trokosi Slave: A Christian Campaign?	199
‘I am his Slave’	200
Atonement Slavery & Sacrificial Lambs	202
<i>Fiasidiwo</i> – Slaves and Sacrifices or Queen-Mothers and Role-Models?	203
Conclusion.....	208
Chapter 9: Conclusion: Queens or Slaves?	210
Bibliography.....	216
Academic Sources	216
Materials on <i>Trokosi</i>	226
Published Academic Materials and Theses	226
Other Materials	228
Media	231
Websites	234
Other Primary Sources	235

List of Maps

Map 1: Regional Map of Ewe Areas	viii
Map 2: The Southern Volta Region, showing principle locations	viii
Map 3: Map of the Volta Region showing Districts	ix
Map 4: Map of Klikor showing some shrines	72
Map 5: Showing trade routes circa 1700.....	99
Map 6: Map of the Anlo boundary in 1784, including Keta.....	102

List of Pictures¹

Picture 1: Mark Wisdom	27
Picture 2: A Tongu Shrine Priest at a TIC meeting	62
Picture 3: Klikor-Agbosome Market.....	66
Picture 4: Togbui Adzima shrine	78
Picture 5: 'Outdooring Day' at Togbui Adzima shrine	107
Picture 6: <i>Gowu</i> performance.....	125
Picture 7: 'Beating the enemies'	146
Picture 8: Ritual procession of <i>Fiasidiwo</i>	175
Figure 1: DVD cover for International Needs Australia.....	45

Acronyms

AM- Afrikania Mission
ARM- Afrikania Renaissance Mission
CHRAJ- Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice
ECM- Every Childs Ministries
FESLIM- Fetish Slaves Liberation Movement
FIDA- Federation for Women lawyers
GLRC-Ghana Law Reform Commission
ING- International Needs Ghana
MI- Missions International
NCC- National Commission on Culture
NCCE- National Commission on Civic Education
NCWD- National Commission of Women and Development
NPC- National Population Council
PNDC- Provisional Defence Council
TIC- *Trɔxovi* Institutional Council

¹ All photos were taken by Dana Romanoff and used with permission. She is an American photo-journalist that was in Klikor for four months during my research.

Acknowledgements

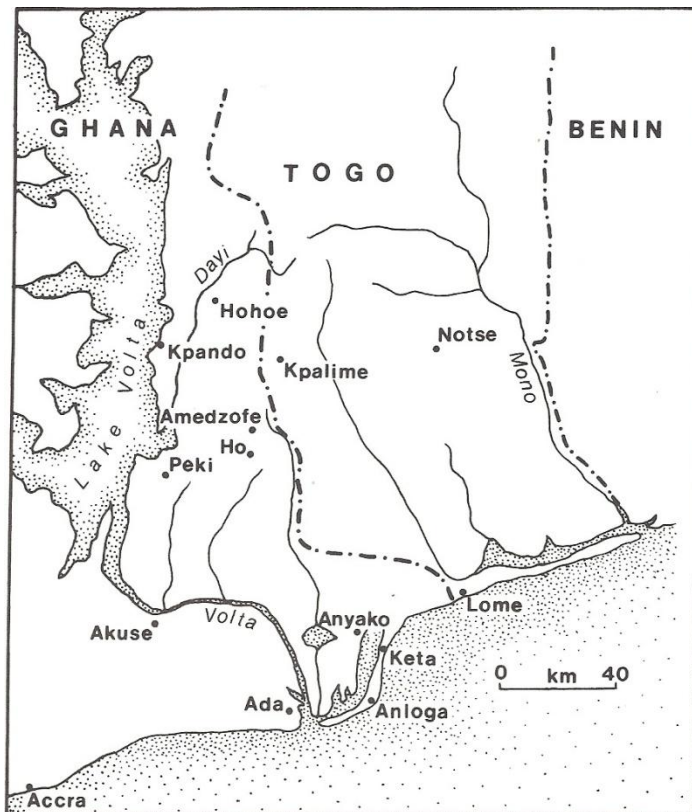
Portions of this project were funded by the Association for Sociology of Religion and the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust. I am thankful for the assistance that each provided me.

In Ghana, I wish to thank above all the *fiasidiwo* in Klikor, who let me become a part of their daily lives and share in their experiences. My gratitude goes out to my research assistant, Oscar Azameti, who patiently accompanied me throughout my fieldwork and has continued to be a source of support through my writing up period. Likewise, I am grateful to Dale Massiasta, who acted as a gatekeeper into the Klikor community and continued to be a friend. I consider myself privileged to have known him. I also thank the priests and other ritual specialists of the Adzima Shrines for allowing me access to the shrines and putting up with my incessant questions and to Togbui Humali specifically for finding space for me in one of his households. Thanks to my ‘mother’ away from home, Nabia, for allowing me in her home during much needed breaks away from Klikor. Finally, my gratitude goes out to Dana Romanoff, who lived alongside me in Klikor for several months, for the laughs, conversations, and the use of her photographs.

In England, I am grateful to my supervisor, Ann Whitehead, for her insights and feedback throughout this project, from its inception and through many drafts later.

Throughout, many people have offered their friendship, support, and feedback; too many to name individually. However, Simone Hary has been there every step of the way, available for frantic phone calls during fieldwork and late night chats during the writing up period. I would also like to make mention of Natalie Djohari, Gavin Weston, Nicole Blum, Kanwal Mand, and Laurence Clennet-Sirois who have offered moments of intellectual respite, and reminded me when I needed it that I could finish this thesis.

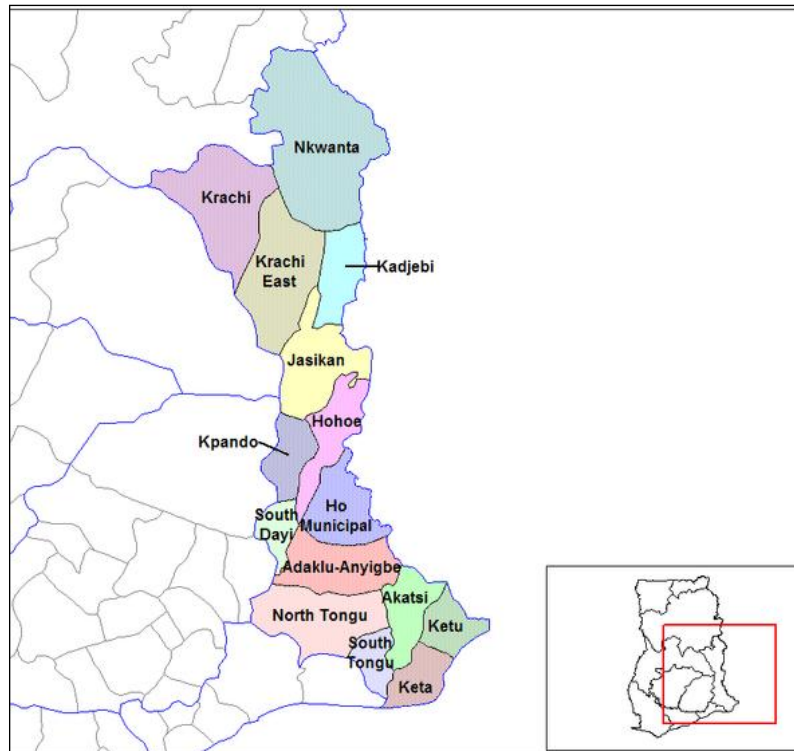
Finally, my parents, Jeanne and Jerry Jenkins have been a source of love, comfort, and other types of support throughout the thesis – thanks for hanging in there and pushing me to continue! Likewise, I am grateful to Jeff, Tania, Sabrina, Niki, Jacque, Jason, and Lauren for believing in me and not complaining too loudly as I lived so far away.



Map 1: Regional Map of Ewe Areas (Meyer 1999a).



Map 2: The Southern Volta Region, showing principle locations. Created by Jacques Brown.



Map 3: Map of the Volta Region showing Districts. (<http://hoinghana.com/DISTRICTS.aspx>)

Chapter 1

Introduction

Setting the Scene

On the 10th of April 1999, the priests, initiates and other petitioners of the Togbui Adzima and two Mama Vena shrines (collectively known as the Adzima shrines) in Klikor, a township and Traditional Area in the Ketu District of the Volta Region, Ghana, gathered at a local secondary school for a *durbar*.² The Adzima priests organised the *durbar* with the assistance of the Afrikania Renaissance Mission (ARM), a neo-traditionalist organisation, and invited members of Klikor and neighbouring communities, regional political appointees, members of the Ghanaian government, and the national press. During the *durbar*, the Adzima priests, the head of the ARM, and Presidential-Aide Kofi Awoonor addressed the crowd under the slogan of “Practicing Tradition in the 21st Century” and protested against what they perceived as recent “attempts to denigrate [sic] our religious institutions” (Adzima Priests 1999, p. 1).

Following the speeches, a group of women danced and circulated throughout the crowd, wearing cloth wrapped tightly around their torsos, their bodies decorated with baby powder and their finest jewellery, and their hair neatly styled for the occasion. These women are categorically known as *fiasidiwo* (pl.; *fiasidi*, sing.), a term formally translated as “fit to be the wives of the chief”, although more commonly translated as “wives of the deity”, and designates their position as initiates of the Adzima shrines. They become shrine initiates for a number of reasons: as a result of a transgression committed by a lineage member or to represent a lineage’s pledge of an initiate made in the distant past in recognition of the actions of the deity in securing protection, wealth, or health. The head of the ARM instructed attendees of the *durbar*, especially the media, “to interact with them [the *fiasidiwo*] and interview them and see if these beautiful well dressed ladies you see here can be called slaves” (Ameve 1999a, p. 2).

The *durbar* was one activity organised in reaction to a campaign run by Christian-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and various government

² A *durbar* is a public gathering of officials. As noted by Lentz, the *durbar* was originally associated with courts in India, that the British subsequently adopted and introduced in Ghana (2001, p. 52).

agencies that mobilised discussions about ‘female ritual slavery’ among the ‘Ewe’ in South-eastern Ghana in the early 1990s.³ Initially, the campaign was inspired by the concerns of Mark Wisdom, a Christian Tongu-Ewe, who claims that he had a vision from God in 1977 instructing him to “free” the *trokosiwo* (pl., *trokosi* sing.), a category of initiates to specific shrines among the ‘Tongu-Ewe’ in the North Tongu district of the Volta Region. Since then, *trokosiwo* have come to be defined as “those who have been appointed by their families to serve in the shrines as *reparation* for crimes committed by other members of the family” (Ameh 1998, p. 41; emphasis added).

Wisdom argued that the practice constituted a form of slavery based upon two issues: the etymology of *trokosi* and the socio-economic position of the initiates. Firstly, he translated *trokosi* as “slave to the god” (*tro*-god/deity, *kosi*-slave).⁴ Secondly, he argued that *trokosiwo* are deprived of their rights in the process of becoming an initiate: sexually and physically abused by the shrine priests, used as labour without compensation, ostracised from their families and the rest of the community, and prohibited from attending school or medical facilities. The two issues are closely related: the etymology of *trokosi* was construed as being indicative of the socio-economic status of the initiates and mobilised to argue that ‘slavery’ was an institutionalised aspect of the practice contemporarily and historically, even in cases where accusations of abuse could not be substantiated.

During the late 1980s, Wisdom mobilised the support of the North Tongu District Assembly, which in turn enlisted the Christian-based NGOs, International Needs Ghana (ING) and Missions International (MI), to assist in formulating and funding projects that addressed the socio-economic position of the initiates, primarily through a literacy program and vocational training school. Additionally, they sought to “modernise” the practice by trying to convince shrine priests and elders to accept money, alcohol, or animals from offending families instead of female relatives as initiates.

As the 1990s progressed, the problems of the Trokosi Slave were well publicised and came to constitute a significant social and political discourse, as the

³ I use the broad term Ewe here to show the way it is used by the NGOs involved in the campaign. This usage is problematic, for reasons that I will discuss later in this chapter. Until then, I will continue to use the term ‘Ewe’. NGOs also in some contexts distinguish the Tongu-Ewe from the Anlo-Ewe; a distinction that can be problematic in itself. These groups are likewise distinguished from the Northern-Ewe (or *Ewe-dome*).

⁴ Technically, the term should be written as *trɔkosi*; however, because it does not appear this way in any of the abolition campaign’s literature, I am going to use the more common *trokosi*.

NGOs consolidated public and governmental support for their activities.⁵ Locally, the core activities of the NGOs' interventions were negotiations with shrine priests and elders and "liberations" in which some *trokosiwo* were released from the shrines and given access to education and vocational skills training. However, a significant aspect of the NGOs' activities came to include addressing practices that they considered to be "variant" forms of *trokosi*. In this vein, initiates known as *woryokwe* in the Dangbe districts and the *fiasidiwo* in the Ketu, Keta, and Akatsi districts of the Volta Region were labelled as respectively the 'Dangbe' and 'Anlo-Ewe' variants of *trokosi* and hence also became the subjects of the abolitionist campaign.

In addressing the variant forms of *trokosi*, the NGOs and other members of the abolitionist movement relied on a systematised representation of the practice as slavery to support their efforts, despite significant variations. For example, the term *trokosi*, specific to the 'Tongu-Ewe', came to be used inter-changeably or as synonymous with *fiasidi* and *woryokwe*. Likewise, the associated argument that slavery is an institutionalised aspect of the *trokosi* practice and the accusations that *trokosiwo* are physically and sexually abused, used as labour without compensation, ostracised and prohibited from attending school or medical facilities were adapted and mobilised to represent the *fiasidi* and other variant forms.

In reaction, participants of NGO organised workshops, especially those from 'Anlo-Ewe' areas, voiced concern about the NGOs' representation of and knowledge about the *fiasidiwo*. They argued that most of the objectionable characteristics associated with the Trokosi Slave were not found with *fiasidiwo*, and some questioned if they could be applied to all *trokosiwo* as well. The most significant source of these contestations was from the Afrikaania Renaissance Mission (ARM), starting in 1998, when discussions were escalating about the criminalisation of accepting *trokosi* or variants as initiates in shrines.

The ARM addressed the abolitionist campaign by employing a well-known and historically poignant argument in Ghana. They argued that the campaign was one of neo-colonial cultural domination, spearheaded by Ghanaian and foreign Christians against practitioners of 'traditional religion'. Using extended linguistic analysis, they

⁵ Like the 'Ewe', the 'Trokosi Slave' is a problematic representation of *trokosi*. As such, whenever I am referring to the representation it will be presented as Trokosi Slave to distinguish it from the actual initiates known as *trokosiwo*. However, I will not specifically address the experiences of *trokosiwo* in the Tongu districts, although I have spoken with several liberated *trokosiwo* and those still affiliated to shrines. To address these adequately, I argue would require another, but yet similar, examination of those initiates and their shrines. Future research may include these initiates.

contested the representation of *trokosi* (which included the *fiasidi*) as ‘slavery’. First, they argued that the practice was not known as the “*trokosi* practice”, but the “*trɔxovi* practice”; *trɔxovi* translated as “a deity that receives children”. The implication here is that they were distinguishing the initiates, *trokosiwo*, from the practice, *trɔxovi*. They also offered an alternative representation of the Trokosi Slave based upon the etymology of the term *fiasidi*, translated as “wives of the chief/deity”. The ARM argued forcibly that the *fiasidiwo* are not ‘slaves’ (abused, socially stigmatised, and occupying a low economic status), they are “Queen-Mothers” (protected, respected, and occupying a higher economic status than other women in the same community). Like the Trokosi Slave representation, this Queen-Mother representation was also applied to the ‘Tongu-Ewe’ variant of *trokosi* and ‘Dangbe’ variant of *woryokwe*.⁶

In part, the Klikor Adzima shrines and their *fiasidiwo* were the basis from which this alternative representation was fashioned, and the ARM mobilised the Adzima priests and shrine members in 1998 when NGO interventions had intensified and proposals to criminalise the practice were introduced to Parliament. With ARM’s assistance, the Adzima shrine priests formed the Trɔxovi Institutional Council (TIC). The TIC aimed to network with other *Trɔxovi* shrines in the Volta Region, to educate the public about the *Trɔxovi* practice and the *fiasidiwo* in defence to NGO representations, and to provide an internal mechanism for dealing with human-rights abuses within shrines throughout the region. The Klikor *durbar* in 1999 was one of the first of the TIC’s and Adzima shrines’ activities and a significant event in the escalating conflict and debates between the ARM and protagonists of the abolition campaign.

The Research

I first came to know about the debates that surround this particular type of affiliation to deities while on a study abroad program in Ghana in 2001. Sitting in a shared taxi in Kumasi, I became intrigued by the topic of a radio talk show: the Trokosi Slave. The presenter spoke of women held captive in traditional shrines in the Volta Region: women who were forced to work for the male fetish priests, raped by these men, and stigmatized in their communities because of their slave status. At end of this discussion, the presenter asked, “how can slavery still exist in Ghana?”, appealing to

⁶Throughout the rest of this thesis, I will refer to this as the Queen-Mother representation, or the Fiasidi-Queen.

the audience to consider the implications of the issue in light of Ghana's intensified developmental efforts and international legitimacy.

Several weeks later, my classmates and I visited Klikor on an organised excursion. During our excursion, our group passed a shrine which the program director identified as one of three shrines in the community that maintained Trokosi Slaves. I decided then to make Klikor and this practice the topic of the required short project for my course. During the research on that short project, I became aware of the extent of the debate about Trokosi Slaves and the considerable effort the NGOs and other global campaigns sought to intercede. I also became aware, through my discussions with *fiasidiwo*, a local knowledge keeper, and other members of the Klikor community, of the articulated set of alternative representations and interpretations of the initiates and their criticisms of the NGOs.

My DPhil research in 2004 began with two objectives: to explore the activities and discourses of the national and international actors in the Trokosi Controversy and to examine the position of the *fiasidiwo* by basing myself in the Klikor Adzima shrines. I aimed to explore in detail the practices of the Adzima shrines and the position of the *fiasidiwo* within them; specifically with questions about the type of dependency relationship that characterised the relations between the *fiasidiwo* and both the deity and shrine priest. I also wanted to examine how the meanings associated with the *fiasidiwo* interacted with their social and economic relations outside the shrine context.

Additionally, I wanted to give a voice to the alternative representations presented to me during my previous brief experience in Klikor, particularly in light of the more powerful 'slave' representation. I was interested in the way the arguments of those who contested the 'slave' representation were often met with suspicion, exemplified by this statement from historian Emmanuel Akyeampong (although the sentiment is by no means limited to him):

“those who have risen to the defence of Fiasidi in Anlo are powerful chiefs, indigenous priests, and educated ‘traditionalists’ pledged to uphold African ‘culture’ in the face of Western/Christian encroachment. Their definition of Fiasidi appears to be at variance with the popular perception, but again the influential position of these power brokers seems to have eliminated or weakened any internal movement for the abolition of Fiasidi. The defence of Fiasidi is history according to the powerful, and we are yet to hear the version of the *disempowered* Fiasidi” (Akyeampong 2001b, p. 20, my emphasis).

To Akyeampong, the contestations over the NGOs' representations through the *fiasidi* are products of cultural and political 'brokers' who hold substantial influence and power over people's (understood as 'local') lives, marginalising the effectiveness of those who seek to abolish the practice. From my own standpoint and previous experience in Klikor, I began with the converse assumption that both male and female practitioners' understandings of the practice were more likely being marginalised by the abolitionists, who had been able to effectively manipulate the language of rights and slavery to national and international audiences.

Five years on, I understand that aside from the fact that these standpoints arise out of different cultural perspectives (Akyeampong is Ghanaian and I am American) and various academic and political traditions, both of these assertions are simultaneously true, registering different types of power relations and inequality. At the time, what Akyeampong and I shared was the view that to untangle and better understand the competing versions, one must listen to the initiates and understand their experiences from their perspective. However, his prior categorisation of the *fiasidiwo* as "disempowered" suggests already what he expected to find: that a gendered and socially situated voice of the *fiasidiwo* would offer a radically different "version" than that of those who offer the Queen-Mother representation. Hence, it would likely support the efforts of abolitionists.

My research was also undertaken because to date no anthropological research has been conducted about the *fiasidi* initiates and the deities to which they are affiliated, despite the fact that the contentious *trokosi* and *fiasidi* has inspired so many debates beyond the communities that practice this type of initiation. Ethnographic studies of contemporary Ewe-speaking religious communities have overwhelmingly focused on *vodhun* deities and spirit possession (cf Lovell 2002; Rosenthal 1998). Some academic studies about Ewe-speaking communities have mentioned the *fiasidiwo*, such as Fiawoo (1959), Greene (1996a), Abotchie (1997) and Geurts (2002), each of which I will discuss throughout the thesis. However, in these four cases, their discussion of the *fiasidiwo* does not reflect intensive research of this type of religious affiliation - understandably as this is not the central aim of their work.⁷ Each deal with the *fiasidiwo* initiates of the Nyigbla shrine in Anloga, which has held a prominent

⁷ Nor do I think they would make the claim that they have done so. Nonetheless, their work is often brought into the discussion of the *fiasidi* within the *Trokosi* Slave literature, precisely because there is a lack of adequate studies dealing with the topic directly.

position within the socio-political history of the Anlo, and to a lesser extent the Nyigbla shrine in Afife. Although their discussions are about the same shrine, their interpretations of the *fiasidiwo* vary considerably, perhaps because they occur at different time periods and come from several theoretical standpoints.

In contrast to the *fiasidiwo* initiates, there is a limited amount of primary research that examines *trokosiwo*; however, most of this has been commissioned by the NGOs and other organisations involved in the contemporary debates (cf Dovlo & Adzoyi 1995; Nukunya & Kwafo 1998).⁸ These overall share several characteristics: they utilise rapid surveys of various shrines and represent a small number of formal interviews with shrine priests, elders, and initiates. These methods are well suited to the practical aims of making policy recommendations, included in each report. However, while these techniques allow for breadth, transecting multiple locations and actors, they do so at the expense of depth and a grounded understanding of the issues at stake.

Despite the limited primary research on either *trokosi* or *fiasidi*, a number of different sets of literature include discussions about the Trokosi Slave by drawing heavily on representations of the Trokosi Slave found in the media, the arguments of the NGOs, and occasionally the NGO commissioned reports by Dovlo and Nukunya. These sets of literature are explicitly proscriptive and prescriptive, and written by those involved in the national debates about the Trokosi Slave. For example, Boaten (2001)⁹ situates the Trokosi Slave within a consideration of Ghanaian and international law, in order to assess the usefulness of these in application. Quashigah (1998)¹⁰, Ababio (2000)¹¹, Ameh (1998, 2001)¹², and Quist (2005) propose strategies for the NGOs and

⁸ These sets of primary literature on *trokosi* are difficult to obtain in Ghana and even more difficult to obtain outside of Ghana.

⁹ Boaten is an associate professor at the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana and had previously given a report, "The Chief as a tool for change in the Trokosi System" during the 1995 First National Workshop on Trokosi. His representation of *trokosi* is much closer to the way in which the practice has been represented within the media, particularly as these are his primary sources (cf Boaten 2001).

¹⁰ Quashigah is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Law at the University of Ghana and has served as the co-ordinator of the Human Rights Study Centre (1998, p. 193). He also acted as a 'rapporteur' during the 2nd National Workshop (ING 1998, p. 11).

¹¹ Anita Heyman Ababio, once the Executive Director of the Ghana Law Reform Commission, presented papers at the 1st and 2nd National Workshops, as well as drafting Ghana's Law Reform Commission and FAWC's recommendations to the government regarding the legal basis in prohibiting the practice. In 2000, Ababio complemented her previous activities by writing a MA thesis at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, about *trokosi* in relation to cultural and individual rights and women's empowerment. She is concerned with effective policies and practices to ensure the empowerment of the liberated *trokosiwo*, which as she argues must take into consideration the community and its needs.

interested organisations to use in their campaigns. Each addresses issues that were relevant to national discussions about the Trokosi Slave, such as the usefulness of legal criminalisation.

Other materials about the Trokosi Slave have been published and are readily available in the international community which situate the practice within larger discussions of human rights (Owusu Ansah 2002; Woods 2001; Bilyeu 1998; Goltzman 1998; Rinuado 2003; Amoah 2007), contemporary forms of slavery (Herzfeld 2002; Miers 2000; Miers 2003; Bales 2005), violence (Preston & Wong 2004), and immigration law (Bhabha & Young 1999). These almost exclusively rely on secondary reports: international media reports, publications associated with abolitionist groups found on the internet, or each other.¹³ This is problematic for a variety of reasons, the least of which is that the international media's portrayal tends to be overly-sensationalised, biased, and often ethnocentric, and does not even correspond in all cases to abolitionists' or the NGOs' claims (see Eckardt 2004 for an interesting analysis of some of the variations).

My field research, carried out between July 2004 and October 2005, aimed to fill the gap in knowledge about practices associated with the *fiasidiwo* and to challenge the hegemony of rapid surveys as the primary method utilised by predecessors by conducting a detailed ethnographic study. The primary method I utilised was participant-observation. Other methods included interviews, which ranged from being informal conversations to more structured ones, and the collection of oral histories from a number of *fiasidiwo*. However, I was careful about employing overly structured interviews, because these are often employed by investigation teams associated with the

¹² Ameh's PhD thesis (2001) seeks to understand how *trokosi* has been defined as a social problem and why the actions of ING have been successful, as opposed to other NGOs who have addressed *trokosi* and its variants. He argues that they generally can be seen as using 'culturally sensitive' policies. *Trokosi* therefore becomes a case study in arguing that the adoption of a 'cross-cultural universals' approach is the best way in which one should address issues of human rights in the context of 'traditional African practice' (Ameh 2001, Ameh 1998, p. 36-37). Ameh also asserts that his PhD fulfils the "need for a well-researched, integrated, valid, and reliable body of knowledge and information about Trokosi" in light of the "fragmented accounts" where "NGOs, media, activists and other stakeholders involved in the trokosi controversy all presented whatever little information they had on the issue as the 'gospel truth' about Trokosi" (Ameh 2001, p. 24). However, Ameh's strength does not lie in producing reliable information about *trokosi* as a practice, but rather by succinctly analysing the way in which *trokosi* has come to be seen as a social problem and how interest groups have struggled over definitions and effective policies of eradication. He subsequently presented a paper at the 1st Regional Workshop on Ritual Servitude.

¹³ The exception would be Rinuado (2003), who combines the international media reports with that of Dovlo & Adzoyi (1995) and several of the workshop papers.

abolitionist campaign, with which the members of the Klikor community had experience. As Cohen suggests,

“..we must dispel the suggestion of any similarity between the ethnographic interview and the interview conducted by the journalist and the opinion sampler. The latter two are imposing arbitrary features on the respondent’s mind: the respondent is required to provide an answer to a question that is none of his making. The anthropologist, by contrast, is using conversations with informants largely to discover the appropriate questions to ask” (1984, p. 225).

His insight convinced me that it was important not only methodologically, but practically, to distinguish myself in the community from these other types of ‘research’.

I started my research in the midst of the annual month-long Kli-Adzima festival, the festival aimed towards the three Adzima deities located in Klikor. The festival environment was a useful starting point because it entails a succession of practices in the shrines and the involvement of a substantial number of *fiasidiwo*, other shrine members, and petitioners. During the festival activities, I could easily situate myself into the shrine community and begin to build relationships with those that would come to be my main informants. It was at this point that the practices and relations in the shrines are in stark relief, and I spent a substantial time afterwards attempting to untangle the implications of my conversations and observations.

While the annual festival is an important site for the performance of one’s relationship to the deities, it is not representative of the shrine practices or the relationship that the *fiasidiwo* have with the shrines throughout the rest of the year. As a result, I settled myself into a rhythm of activities that allowed me to explore the multiple aims of my research. I typically visited at least one of the three shrines for a portion of the day to observe petitions, offerings, and the weekly arbitrations held at the shrines. I also attended the weekly service of the Klikor Afrikaania Renaissance Mission, which many of those associated with the Adzima shrines also attended.

The rest of my time was spent with *fiasidiwo* of all ages; following and assisting them in their daily activities (cooking, going to market to sell or buy, etc.) and talking about issues that had arisen in their daily lives. One of the most valuable experiences during my research was living in a household owned by one of the Adzima priests (although he was not in residence there) with two of his wives (both *fiasidiwo*), several of their children, and a grown son from one of the priest’s previous marriages. Additionally, a relative of the priest and his wife (also a *fiasidi*) occupied a section of

the household. This granted me the fortunate experience of examining the dynamics of everyday life and concerns of several *fiasidiwo*.

Welcome interruptions to my daily routines were initiation ceremonies for *fiasidi*. These did not occur regularly and I had the opportunity to observe only five, and with varying levels of access. In all three of the shrines, I was always permitted to observe the public aspects of the initiation ceremonies. At times I was included in the non-public ceremonies; at other times, I was excluded. This in part reflected the different perspectives of the three Adzima priests about how much I should be allowed to witness, as well as the wishes of the initiates and their lineage members.

I also visited several other shrines identified by abolitionist campaign as *trokosi* shrines in the Volta Region, including the Nyigbla shrine in Afife, the Tomi and Sui shrines in Anloga, the Korle shrine in Tefle, and the Tchaduma shrine in Old Bakpa (Bakpa-Kebenu). Initially, these visits were planned to possibly set up another short term field-site to get a wider understanding of initiates' experiences in shrines other than those in Klikor and in those that use the terminology of *trokosi* rather than *fiasidi*. However, during these short visits I realised that while there are similarities between shrines, each also had their own unique set of histories and practices. After using a variety of data collection methods in the Adzima shrines and with the *fiasidiwo* in Klikor over an extended period of time, I was not convinced that spending a considerably shorter amount of time in one of these shrines would be useful.

These shrines were also familiar with NGO researchers, journalists, and investigation teams visiting for a few hours for an interview inspired by the Trokosi Slave debate, a technique that my long-term ethnographic study in Klikor was designed to challenge. In the end, I understood these visits as an opportunity to observe the way shrine priests, elders, and initiates reacted to researchers who approached them in this manner. Even the most innocent of questions on my part produced politicised responses, aimed at addressing the Trokosi Slave debate.

In relation to the other aims of my research that concerned the activities of the abolitionist campaign and their central protagonists and the political nature of their discourses about human rights, modernity, women's development and slavery, I conducted interviews with the directors and representatives of the four primary NGOs involved in the abolitionist campaign and the ARM. I also acquired an extensive collection of newspaper articles, reports and letters related to the debates. I was, however, partly unable to gain access to the NGOs, beyond these conversations. One

NGO distanced themselves when they realised that I did not need them to act as my primary gate keeper in my research and seemed wary after I told them my research was based in Klikor. I was never able to arrange subsequent meetings with them, despite many attempts and visits.

Another NGO, after several interviews with key personnel, invited me to accompany an American missionary who came to provide ‘sexual counselling’ to liberated *trokosiwo*, although the missionary vetoed the invite at the last minute. In contrast, another NGO director welcomed me into his home in Adidome on several occasions for extended conversations about *trokosi*, *fiasidi*, and Christianity; however, due to his declining health and tensions with other involved NGOs, he was no longer very active in the abolition campaign. Likewise, the final NGO director was happy to set up interviews for me with the *trokosiwo* that she had in her care, although she too was no longer actively involved in the abolition campaign.

In relation to the anti-abolitionists, national representatives of the ARM were happy to answer my questions, but they could not quite understand why I wanted or needed to talk to them due to my experience in Klikor - to them my experiences surely should have been sufficient for me to obtain a “true” understanding of the *fiasidiwo*. Fortunately, I was included in meetings of the Trɔxovi Institutional Council, organised by the Adzima priests, which brought together priests and priestess from several different shrines to discuss issues relating to the abolitionist campaign.

Although my success with the NGOs varied, I was presented with the opportunity to observe on separate occasions the interactions between the Adzima shrine ritual specialists and a photojournalist, documentary film-crew, and representatives of the United States Embassy. The photojournalist lived alongside me in Klikor for a number of months. The documentary film-crew filmed at the Adzima shrines and interviewed the priests and a number of *fiasidiwo* for a day, as a part of a larger project. The embassy representatives conducted a short interview with the Adzima priests and allowed me to accompany them during their interviews with other shrine ritual specialists, governmental officials, chiefs and NGOs throughout the Volta Region. These opportunities were important because they revealed the way those in the Trokosi Slave debates mobilise their representations to various audiences and characterise the nature of the debates themselves.

Re-evaluating the research questions

During fieldwork and my initial analysis period, I became aware of the extent to which the problematic that informed my research was a product of the way in which representations of the *trokosiwo* and *fiasidiwo* are reified through engagements between the various protagonists around the abolition campaign. By the time of my research, the conflict and debates between the ARM and protagonists of the abolition campaign had been occurring for several decades and the representation of *trokosi* and *fiasidi* as Slaves or Queen-Mothers were firmly entrenched in opposition to one another. At the time I was unaware of the politicised nature of the Queen-Mother representation and interpretation, the way each representation was systematised at the expense of a more nuanced understanding, and the extent to which the Klikor shrines had become involved in the national debate. Implicitly this influenced how I initially approached my research in a number of ways.

For example, although the abolitionist campaign constructs the experiences of *fiasidiwo* as being the *same* as the Trokosi Slave (i.e., sexually and physically abused, forced to work for the priests without remuneration, stigmatised, etc.), they do recognise that variations exist in the practice, specifically with regard to the treatment of the *fiasidiwo*. In some sources, the *fiasidiwo*, understood to be the ‘Anlo-Ewe’ variant of *trokosi*, is noted to be “less harsh” and not to entail physical and sexual abuse, labour without compensation, or the prohibition from attending school or medical facilities (cf Dovlo & Kufogbe 1998; Nukunya & Kwafo 1998; Ameh 2001). In looking at reports of NGO workshops and governmental investigation teams from 1994 to 1995, it seems that in their local interventions, the NGOs were also aware of this variation to an extent.

While I differ in my understanding of the implications of these variations, nevertheless my initial research questions involved many of these issues as potentially characterising the initiates’ relationships to the shrine priests and other members. I found evidence that the relationship between the *fiasidiwo*, the priest, and the shrine community was one in which labour is highly restricted and compensated within the norms of patron-client networks, that sexual relations only exist between the priest and the *fiasidiwo* that he is formally married to, and that some *fiasidiwo* have obtained higher education, economic success, decision making roles, and land ownership. These findings in themselves did not constitute a refutation of the claims being made by the

abolitionists, for reasons that I will discuss below, but I had let this problematic dominate my early sense of what the research should be about.

The reason that these issues do not provide much insight into the practices associated with the *fiasidiwo* in the Klikor Adzima shrines is that even though protagonists are aware that these variations exist, they argue that there are common problematic elements of the practice and that each variant constitutes a form of institutionalised ritual slavery. Their view is informed by an understanding that the ‘Ewe’ can be seen more or less as a homogeneous group and religious practices can be understood systematically as an ‘institution’ – an idea reified by academics commissioned by the NGOs to conduct ‘research’ and make policy recommendations. As a result, the practice and meanings of *trokosi* associated with a few shrines in the Tongu districts are used as a prototype to which other variants can be compared to discern differences in treatment, length of initiation, and other social aspects. However, they do not examine the ritual elements of the practices or the meaning ascribed to the initiates in these different locales. As such, their understanding of the practice as a form of bondage or institutionalised ritual slavery is formed *prior* to their comparative examinations.

Since abolitionists understand the practice to be a form of institutionalised ritual slavery, despite actual variations in practice, the basic common element that they have identified is that the initiate is offered to the shrine without her consent to act as a perpetual figure of restitution for another’s offence. They argue that this is objectionable by drawing on a combination of human rights, slavery, and religious discourses. At the very least, they are raising questions of volition to justify their position that all variations are and should be subject to NGO interventions and the 1998 legislation that criminalised the practice.

Even though abolitionists point out when pressed the issue of volition to make their categorisation of the practice as ‘ritual slavery’ fit every variation, in the debates themselves, fought in the newspapers and seminars organised by the NGOs, the recourse for both the abolitionists and anti-abolitionists is highlighting the socio-economic position of the initiates and whether their interpretations of Slave or Queen-Mother have been legitimised by an academic authority. Abolitionists point to evidence generated from some shrines in the Tongu districts about the *trokosiwo*’s relationship to the shrine priests (forced and uncompensated labour and sex), illiteracy and poverty. Conversely, anti-abolitionists, like the ARM, counter these with evidence

generated from some of the shrines in the Anlo districts (Akatsi, Keta, and Ketu districts), presenting a very different picture of the initiates within the shrine and in their socio-economic relationships.

While ‘academic evidence’ becomes a resource used by protagonists in the debates about the nature of the practice, this ‘evidence’ can also be seen as a political agent in its own right, through attempts to address and counter the assertions of opponents. For example, the previous reports commissioned by the NGOs and those written based on secondary research by those involved in the abolitionist campaign often directly address the alternative representation of Queen-Mother; it is here that the assertions of systematic ritual slavery based on the issue of volition comes out most clearly. Likewise, two reports have been championed by the ARM for considering their representation and arguments seriously (Eckhardt 2004; Romanoff 1999). While these reports were not commissioned by the ARM, they do support claims that the practice is much more complex than the NGOs present and that the claims of the ARM have some legitimacy. These reports in turn have been thoroughly criticised by some in the abolitionist campaign (cf Ameh 2001). In effect, the relationship between research/researchers and the debates about *trokosi* is itself an arena of contestation.

During the course of my research I became wary of feeding into the debates in this manner and in a way that favours one set of interpretations or that trivialises the abuses that may have occurred in other shrines in the Volta Region. My experiences with the documentary film-crew in Klikor suggested to me that both the Adzima priests and the producer of the documentary wanted me to take on the role of providing ‘evidence’ to legitimise a set of claims in contrast to the other.

I was more unsettled by the interpretation that one American director of an NGO organising “liberations” had of our conversation. At the end of our conversation about her perspective on the Trokosi Slave, her NGO’s role in the abolition campaign, and the liberation she was currently organising, she asked about my impressions of the Klikor shrines. This set the stage for a discussion about the variations in the practice and meanings associated with the initiates between shrines, issues that she was well aware of. Much later, I found out that she had referenced the discussion on her organisation’s website. It reads:

“A few months before the liberation [at a shrine in Aflao] I entertained a visitor who was researching the practice of trokosi. She asked what ECM’s goals were and what kind of compromise we would accept. I stated that we were not interested in any compromise. We were interested in the total liberation of every slave and in the abolishment of the practice. We are not interested in reforming the system. We are interested in getting rid of the whole mess. Our answer is still the same. We are talking about the practice of trokosi, of course. NGO’s have no authority to stop traditional practices in shrines themselves, as champions of religious liberty, we could not support that anyway. We CAN and we MUST support getting rid of the practice of slavery” (ECM n.d.).

This statement revealed to me the way in which my ‘findings’ are perceived to be confrontational by the abolition campaign and understood to be asking for a “compromise”. As such, the findings elicited this robust reassertion of the slave discourse from the NGO director to legitimise her organisation’s role in organising ‘liberations’. She did not make these comments in our actual conversation, but instead they were mobilised on the larger stage of her organisation’s web-site.

This, then, is her public discourse of contestation, and one that refers to other events that occurred around the time of our conversation and that she details prior to her statement here. These concern the difficulties that she faced during a liberation that she was organising at the time because the ARM and TIC convinced the shrine to cease negotiations with her NGO. She subsequently was able to re-establish relations with the shrine and they eventually agreed to “liberate” the initiates.

The issues regarding the link between the terms of political debates and the problematic of particular pieces of research has forced me to re-question what this thesis should be about. While my research covers a wide range of themes, addressing the *fiasidi* in a way that prioritises her socio-economic status and her relationship with the shrine is akin to starting in the middle of a very complex situation and runs the risk of reifying the polemics established by the debate. The debate demands an answer to the question “is this slavery or not”. This is similar to the way those examining female genital mutilation are often compelled to examine their material: in “either/or terms...either in terms of cultural relativism or politically informed outrage” (Walley 1997, p. 406). Arguments that complicate the issue are often misread as cultural relativism, subjected to unfounded criticism, and generally felt to be unsatisfying no matter what kind of evidence is offered.

‘Communities of Interpretation’

This thesis examines the practices, relations, and meanings attributed to the *fiasidiwo* at the Adzima shrines in Klikor during a time when these are the subject of public debates at a local, national, and international level. To me, the appropriate way to explore the complexities surrounding the *trokosiwo* and the *fiasidiwo* is to examine them in relation to a mobilisation of and contestation over *meanings* within a number of different settings and socio-political contexts. At the core of the debates is the meaning attributed to the words *trokosi* and *fiasidi*, taken from their etymology; one lends itself to an interpretation of Slave, the other to an interpretation of Queen-Mother.

Since these serve as a lens through which the experiences of initiates are represented in the debates, despite the actual experiences of initiates and the meanings attached to their position, we need to question how different types of meanings associated with *fiasidiwo* are produced, legitimised, and authorised in a variety of contexts. I argue that these issues must be accounted for before any serious discussion or examination of the specific gendered experience of the *fiasidiwo* or how they negotiate their position as such.

“It [the Trokosi/Fiasidi Institution] prevails among the Ewe and Adangbe peoples of the South Eastern coast of Ghana...The practice is however common to the Ewe/Fon speaking people along the West Coast of Africa ie. [sic] in Togo and Benin. The practice is linked with certain gods and shrines. It is therefore inextricably linked with the religious beliefs and practices of the people...” (Dovlo & Adzoyi 1995, p. 1).

In order to answer these questions, I must address the political mobilisation of ‘Ewe culture’ and ‘Ewe religion’ from the outset, found within the NGO commissioned reports and in everyday discourse about the contested practices. As I have previously noted, protagonists can partly dismiss variations between the treatment of initiates by invoking what Brenner has called, in another context, the “What-the-Yoruba-Believe-Syndrome”. As Brenner shows, this is often “characterised by the production of cosmologies which purport to demonstrate what one or another social grouping ‘believes’” (1989, p. 88). Although Brenner is criticising academic literature, his statement holds true for the way in which the various interlocutors in the Ghanaian context explain *trokosi* and its variants - that it operates, in all the areas that it is reportedly practiced, on the basis of a shared and coherent belief system among a social group, in this case the ‘Ewe’.

“The status of girls committed to the shrine is theoretically ambiguous. The controversy that surrounds the interpretation of the name Trokosi is indicative of this. Whereas some insist that the name means “wives of the gods”, others insist that it means “Slaves of the gods”. Tro means God. Kosi is variously translated as Slave or Virgin or wife. In our opinion Kosi translated as ‘slave’ is more meaningful in usage and practice than ‘wife/virgin’” (Dovlo & Adzoyi 1995, p. 1).

In the clash over meanings, the recourse to ‘Ewe culture’ can be understood as a political strategy intrinsically connected to the ways in which different meanings attributed to *trokosi* and *fiasidi* are legitimised in discourse and the kinds of ‘academic evidence’ cultivated within the debates (cf Steegstra 2004). Those commissioned by the NGOs or other organisations were in part asked to provide a systematic and coherent account of ‘Ewe culture’ and ‘Ewe traditional religion’ (cf Dovlo & Adzoyi 1995; Nukunya & Kwafo 1998).

It is within this context that I am explicitly “writing against culture” (Abu-Lughod 1991) and wish to invoke an understanding of the Klikor Adzima shrines as a “community of interpretation”, for much of the same reasons as Fardon:

“Rather than supposing a Chamba culture, I assume instead a complex institutional context (of clans, cults, localities, gender prerogatives and so on) that only sometimes coincides with the Chamba ethnic boundary. The partiality of everyone’s view is assured both by the divergent individual access to communities of interpretation and by the fact that these institutional matrices of knowledge are themselves not defined uniformly in different Chamba places” (Fardon 1990, p. 9).

While Fardon is speaking within the context of Chamba ethnicity and religious interpretations, his points resonate with my own research at the Klikor Adzima shrines and of the Trokosi Slave debates generally.

Like in Fardon’s ethnographic context, too much research has pointed to the diversity within ‘Ewe’ peoples for any one claim at describing the ‘Ewe culture’ generally, language, political and kinship structures, and religious practices to be convincing. Much of this research has actually been conducted by Dovlo and Nukunya, the primary academics co-opted into the Trokosi Slave debates. While much of the early literature on ‘Ewe’ groups emphasised their commonalities, they did so within the context of colonialism and Christian missionary activities, when such constructions were useful to the practical concerns of colonial administrations and missions.

The emphasis on commonalities between ‘Ewe’ groups was important within the colonial context because pre-colonially, the ‘Ewe’ were composed of a large number of autonomous and semi-autonomous states (*dukwo*) (Amenumey 1986, 1997). These states have also been variously described as “politically autonomous groups” or “tribes” (Nukunya 1969a, p. 1; cf Fiawoo 1959, p. 146), or “sub-tribes” (Manoukian 1952, p. 10). At various points in history, these states have politically aligned themselves with one another; at some points retaining their political independence, while in others being submerged within different sets of political or social classification (cf Greene 1996a; Amenumey 1986; Amenumey 1997; Crowther 1927; Manoukian 1952). Contemporarily, this diversity is expressed through the designation of Traditional Areas, a term that refers to historical political organisations.

While political alliances and claims to sovereignty were important in the way Ewe communities negotiated the colonial administrations (cf Crowther 1927), these first studies prioritized culture, in relation to social organisation and sets of beliefs, and while written about specific localities, made some claims for its ability to be generalized. This ability was particularly reflected in their titles, like in the case of *The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* by A. B. Ellis, the District Commissioner of Keta from 1878-79, published in 1890 (Ellis 1890; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 63-64).¹⁴ This was followed by Barbara Ward’s 1949 MA thesis bearing the title *Ewe Social Organisation* (cf Fiawoo 1959, p. 11-12; Fiawoo 1974a; Nukunya 1969a, p. 16), and Madeline Manoukian’s 1952 study for the Ethnographic Survey of Africa prepared by the International African Institute entitled *The Ewe-Speaking People of Togoland and the Gold Coast* (cf Manoukian 1952).

However, some of these early authors were aware of the limitations to any claims of cultural uniformity. For instance, Manoukian notes,

“they are not culturally entirely homogeneous...*Dialect* tends to change from one sub-tribe to another, and certain *religious cults and rituals* are peculiar to particular tribes” (1952, p. 9-10, emphasis added).

It was those limitations that drove the distinctions made between the diverse sets of Ewe communities by Ghanaian (and often Ewe) researchers after Ghana’s Independence in 1958. In relation to those located in Ghana, they were marked as ‘Northern-Ewe’ (also referred to as *Ewe-dome*) and ‘Southern Ewe’ (in contrast to

¹⁴ Others have rightly pointed out that Ellis’ work primarily focused on Dahomey and has generally been discredited by subsequent studies (Nukunya 1969a, p. 15).

those in Togo). These then were also subdivided; particularly relevant here is the distinction drawn between the ‘Tongu-Ewe’ and the ‘Anlo-Ewe’; a distinction that became the basis for collections of studies for comparative purposes (cf Fiawoo 1974a; Nukunya 1997a) and within which recent scholars have situated their research (cf Fiawoo 1974b; Nukunya 1969a; Nukunya 1974; Kumekpor 1970).¹⁵ It is on this basis, in addition to the distinction with the Northern-Ewe, that Nukunya, in a context outside the Trokosi Slave debates, notes that generalisations for all of the Ewe in south-eastern Ghana are “misleading” (Nukunya 1969a, p. 2), particularly as the Anlo-Ewe and Tongu-Ewe have been shown to have variations in dialect and social structure (Fiawoo 1974a, p. 163-164; Nukunya 1969a, p. 2).¹⁶

While variations in social organisation and dialect were increasingly noted by Ewe scholars in the post-Independence context, ‘traditional’ religious practices were not being examined in the same manner. Rather, these were in the process of being examined and ordered in terms of ‘beliefs’ and seen as representative of a coherent system of thought and cosmology. Brenner (1989) and Shaw (1990) argue that the prioritisation of ‘belief’ and ‘cosmology’ over practices and diversity is underpinned by the way the study of ‘African traditional religion’ has historically been mediated by Christianity and Christian concepts.¹⁷ For example, Shaw (1990) argues that the starting point for most accounts of ‘African traditional religion’ were through the work of missionary-ethnographers, who carried with them assumptions about what religion constituted. Overwhelmingly, missionaries in the West-African context saw religion similarly to that as the Bremen Missionaries, who wrote extensive ethnographies about the ‘Ewe’ - as Meyer shows, they saw religion as “a system of representations with regard to God that was shared by believers” (1999a, p. 62). This understanding of religion, as a “matter of symbolic meanings linked to ideas of a general order”, is as Asad points out, “a view that has a specific Christian history” (Asad 1993, p. 42).

¹⁵ Even these two classifications are problematic, as they were partially constructed by colonial administrators. For example, the Tongu-Ewe category, a term which refers to those “by the riverside” (Nukunya 1997, p. 8), include the Agave, Sokpoe, Bakpa, Vume, Mepe, Tefle, Battor, Mafi, Duffor, Volo, and Fodzoku; groups that historically were politically aligned to the neighbouring Ada (considered to be ‘Dangbe’) and Akwamu (Amenumey 1997, p. 17; Crowther 1927). Likewise, the Anlo-Ewe can refer to both a linguistic and political community. Historically, the Anlo have represented an autonomous state; however, the work of Greene indicates how “the Anlo have defined the groups that collectively constitute their society has changed considerably over time” (Greene 1996, p. 3).

¹⁶ Geurts further complicates this picture of dialect variations by noting that there are over a hundred different dialects among Ewe communities (2002, p. 22).

¹⁷ ‘African traditional religion’ is also a problematic term because of its connotations that religious beliefs are held uniformly throughout Africa and the idea that these beliefs and practices are authentic and unchanging throughout time (Shaw 1990; Steegstra 2004).

In addition to the problem of Christian mediation being linked to the way missionary-ethnographers conceptualised religion, it is also related to the aim of their studies: to find elements of transferability between Christianity and ‘African traditional religion’ in order to make Christianity meaningful to local populations (Shaw 1990; cf Peel 1994, 2003; Meyer 1999a; Horton 1984). The framework of finding homologies between ‘African traditional religion’ and Christianity was then taken up by African nationalists, although for a different purposes (cf Iwodu 1962; Mbiti 1969, 1970; Gaba 1965, 1968, 1969, 1997). These accounts arose out of nationalistic concerns in the ongoing process of African independence and focused on exploring the concept of the Supreme God in the African context. At one level, African nationalists aimed to challenge the derogatory writing styles and ideas of the missionary-ethnographies (Shaw 1990). At another level, some were also concerned about, as Meyer expresses it, “How to be both Christians and Africans at the same time?”, and how to produce an appropriate synthesis between the posited dualism of Christianity and ‘traditional religion’ (Meyer 1992, p. 98; cf Adadevoh 2005).

It is within this process that the majority of examinations of ‘Ewe religion’ took place. For example, Meyer’s research on the Bremen Mission working in Ewe communities during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century shows that the production of ‘ethnographies’ about ‘Ewe religion’ was central to the activities of mission. ‘Ewe religion’ was considered to be “the reservoir of terms from which the missionaries selected appropriate *signifiants* to translate the Pietist *signifiés* (and excluded others)” (Meyer 1999a, p. 60). Much of the ethnographic work about ‘Ewe religion’ was conducted by Spieth and Westermann¹⁸; both of whom were also involved in the standardisation of the Ewe language and the creation of an Ewe Christian discourse (Meyer 1999a, p. 59-60).¹⁹

Meyer argues that the missionary-ethnographies, rather than reflecting Ewe religious practices, were congruent with their perception of religion according to Pietist ideals and emphasised ‘religion’ as a “system of representations” (Meyer 1999a, p. 60-62). In contrast, these missionary-ethnographers’ informants spoke about “service to particular gods with particular names...[these] did not form a fixed system of

¹⁸ See Spieth (1906, 1911) and Westermann (1935).

¹⁹ Spieth worked extensively on Bible translations and Westermann compiled several dictionaries and other publications of the Ewe language. Westermann also eventually became a professor at the University of Berlin and helped establish the International African Institute. He also edited the journal *Africa* (Meyer 1999a, p. 59-60).

representations and practices to be shared by everyone. In every Ewe state, town, clan and family, people worshiped different gods” (Meyer 1996a, p. 62). Subsequent studies about ‘Ewe religion’ were influenced by the creation of the Ewe Christian discourse and aimed at finding the appropriate synthesis between Christianity and ‘Ewe religion’ through an examination of the similarities between the two (cf Gaba 1965, 1968; Adjakpey 1982).²⁰ In sum, representations of ‘Ewe religion’ owed as much to the structure of Christian thought as they did to ethnographic investigations.

Much of this historical and politically driven production of knowledge about ‘traditional religion’ shapes contemporary discourses about the Trokosi Slave, particularly in light of acknowledged differences between diverse sets of Ewe populations. In this thesis, I attempt to unsettle this construction of ‘Ewe religion’ by paying attention to the way meanings are generated and authorized in specific histories, localities, relations, and shrines. In this vein, I do not consider the *fiasidi* to be an unproblematic variation of *trokosi*. However, while I contend that we need a locally situated perspective, these meanings have now also taken on regional, national, and international significance. In order to examine the meaning attributed to the *fiasidiwo* and the Trokosi Slave debates in this manner, I take on the insights of other anthropologists researching religious practice in West Africa generally and in a number of diverse Ewe communities.

One critique of early accounts about ‘traditional religion’ as a coherent set of shared beliefs and cosmologies is that these exclude a wider understanding of the structures of power and their link to the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, and experiences associated with belonging to or participating in specific communities geared towards specific deities (Brenner 1989; Meyer 1999a; Lovell 2002). This is not to say that Ewe peoples do not have a sense of a ‘cosmology’ or underlying ways in which interactions with the metaphysical are understood. Generally, as I will discuss in detail in Chapter 4, metaphysical entities are conceptualised as occupying a space that resembles the physical spaces that people transverse and are enmeshed within relations to other metaphysical entities and humans. Moreover, people understand their relationship to deities through idioms of kinship and experiences of well-being. However, as did Lovell in the context of the Watchi-Ewe in Togo, I found that understandings of a cosmology and the ways in which deities are situated within it are

²⁰ See Adadevoh for an extended discussion of these and the works of other academics/religious reformers, such as Dzobo and Dovlo (2005).

fragmentary and diverse. Additionally, religious knowledge is in part formed through the specific relationships and experiences that individuals have with particular deities and shrines (Lovell 2002, p. 58-59; Lovell 1993, p. 163-164).

The implication here is that knowledge about particular metaphysical entities is not held uniformly. This is particularly the case with the plethora of different deities that can be found in the Volta Region generally and in Klikor specifically, and the different kinds of practices and understandings associated with them. People do not learn a cosmology, but are rather drawn into relationships with and experiences of the metaphysical on the basis of particular events, and through this process, they gain knowledge about these.

While knowledge is in part experiential, I also take on the argument made by Brenner that knowledge is also transmitted by a variety of ritual specialists in “ritualised contexts” (1983, p. 99). Within the context of the Klikor Adzima shrines, ritual specialists include shrine elders and priests, in addition to diviners. The relationship between diviners and shrine priests is complex, because, in the context of the Adzima shrines, neither holds knowledge about the Adzima deities exclusively. Diviners are understood to hold knowledge about one’s relationship to metaphysical entities and the intentions of these entities. In this sense, even shrine elders and priests are reliant on diviners to impart certain sets of knowledge. However, shrine priests and elders are officiates of ritual practices and transmit knowledge through these and through their interactions with petitioners.

Connected to the issue of the fragmentary nature of knowledge about cosmologies and deities is a tension between the ways in which these are shaped by and situated in local social and political contexts and interact with wider social and political contexts. Anthropologists and historians exploring the social history of the diverse set of Ewe polities, undoubtedly influenced by Ranger and Kimambo’s call for including the study of ‘traditional religion’ within a historical analysis of Africa (1972), best exemplifies the complexity entailed. For example, Greene shows in relation to the Anlo polity that historically different deities, their shrines, and ritual specialists were intricately connected to regional interfaces between groups, shifting boundaries of exclusion and inclusion of communities and peoples, and the ways in which socio-political power was negotiated and legitimised. It was in relation to these dynamics that many religious practices, such as initiations, were developed (1996a, 1996b, 1997, 2002a). While my examination of the Adzima shrines and the *fiasidiwo* is not

historical per se, the dynamics highlighted by historical studies in a related context give insight to the embeddedness of deities and shrines in social and political hierarchies and are a site through which relations with neighbouring communities are legitimised and maintained.

However, as previously discussed, the meanings associated with the *fiasidiwo* that are generated and legitimised in Klikor through a variety of mechanisms are mobilised and partly reshaped in contrast to the Trokosi Slave on a regional, national, and international scale. It is here that the understanding of the Adzima shrines as a ‘community of interpretation’, to which people have varying access, is important. Rosenthal’s ethnography on the *gorovodu* and *Mama Tchamba* orders in Togo and Ghana reminds us that participation in certain types of shrines constitutes a “spiritual imagined community” with a “loose regional and religious network”, which communicates and coordinates activities on occasion (Rosenthal 1998, p. 1). In the Klikor context, the Adzima shrines make claims to authenticity, which are imparted within a “religious network” created by the Trɔxovi Institutional Council.

Overview of the Thesis

At its core, this thesis is an ethnography about the Klikor Adzima shrines, ritual specialists, and initiates and the intersection between them and the contested terrain of religion and slavery. I investigate the Adzima shrines as a “community of interpretation” (Fardon 1990), in which meaning is ascribed to the *fiasidiwo* at a time in which these are being debated at a regional, national, and international level. As a ‘community of interpretation’, the meanings associated with the *fiasidiwo* and their relationship to the Adzima deities, the shrines, and the Klikor community are informed and legitimised by a unique set of social and political relations, histories, and ritual specialists.

The thesis is organised in three main sections. The first is entitled ‘Setting the Scene: The Trokosi Debates’ and includes Chapters 2 and 3. By utilising a diachronic account, these chapters examine in more depth the local and national debates about *trokosi* and *fiasidi* and show how concerns about *trokosi* set into motion a variety of protagonists who made claims and counter-claims about the *trokosiwo* and the *fiasidiwo*. They also briefly highlight the way different kinds of protagonists involved

in these debates and the mobilisation of support brought into play particularly powerful discursive configurations.

The second section presents the core ethnographic material of my thesis. It moves the debates about the *fiasidiwo* from the national sphere to an examination of practices at the three Adzima shrines in Klikor. Chapter 4 provides an overview of Klikor and describes the position of the Adzima deities, shrines, and their initiates within contemporary Klikor social and political hierarchies. It also examines how deities are grounded within human sociality through the relationships between them, their ‘shrine-owners’, and initiates and begins to describe how these relationships form the Adzima shrines’ ritual complex.

Chapter 5 explores several historical narratives mobilised by the Adzima shrines’ ritual specialists and other residents of Klikor to explain the central position of the shrines and its initiates in Klikor. These narratives highlight that the shrines are conceptualised as being important to Klikor’s social and political interaction with neighbouring communities and that initiations of the *fiasidiwo* set up long-term relationships between Klikor and neighbouring communities and between the lineages that own the Adzima shrines and others through idioms of hierarchy and kinship. They also highlight the role of the Adzima deities in the past, and how these roles are connected to their present meanings as “war deities” and as offering protection to petitioners confronted by danger and how this relates to the meanings ascribed to the *fiasidiwo*.

Chapters 6 and 7 examine the production of meaning ascribed to the *fiasidiwo* through engagements between petitioners, the Adzima deities, and a set of ritual specialists in the shrine ritual complex. Chapter 6 focuses on the ways in which the Adzima deities in the contemporary context are set within a moralising discourse in which they can become dangerous to humans, particularly as a result of transgressions towards the deity or its children. In these cases, a ritual mechanism needs to be employed to “close the door” on the dangers presented by the deity, one of which is the initiation of a *fiasidi*.

Chapter 7 then takes up the issue of how meaning is ascribed to the *fiasidiwo* and their role in “closing the door”, by examining the initiations of two *fiasidiwo*. In the context of the initiation, shrine ritual specialists, members and initiates interpret symbolic aspects as being indicative of a marriage. However, I argue that those that are experiencing the danger posed by the deities are focused on short-term resolutions. It is

in this context that the ritual specialists involved in the initiation process, which includes a diviner in addition to the Adzima priests and elders, emphasize that the success of the initiation in “closing the door” does not end with the initiation of a *fiasidi*; rather the mediation of danger through the *fiasidi* is an ongoing process. The lineage’s well-being is dependent upon its continual support of the *fiasidi*, as a perpetual figure of mediation, and her role as an initiate of the Adzima shrines.

The third section of this thesis moves to consider the wider religious and moral landscape that underpins the Adzima shrines’ and the ARM’s engagement with national debates about the *fiasidiwo*. In this, I consider the Adzima shrines to be one ‘community of interpretation’ that partly overlaps with the aims of the ARM. Both the ARM and the Adzima shrines contrast themselves to Christianity, and as such conceptualise the abolitionist campaign as being a part of a wider process of producing negative imagery about ‘traditional religion’. Their response to these is a particular representation of *fiasidiwo* as Queen-Mothers.

Chapter 2

Abolishing *Trokosi*: From Local to National to International

As indicated in the Introduction, the Trokosi Slave abolition campaign and a perspective on *trokosi* as ‘slavery’ constituted a significant social discourse in Ghana that gained momentum during the 1990s and continued during my fieldwork from mid 2004 to late 2005. This chapter contains a broad overview of the main protagonists and their activities; outlining in more detail, the development of the abolition campaign.²¹ It examines the shifting concerns and subsequent activities focused on Tongu shrines and their initiates in the Volta Region, into a national campaign that took up the issue of slavery and human rights violations in other shrines throughout the southern Volta Region and Dangbe districts.²²

The North Tongu ‘Vestal Virgins Project’ (1988-1993)

The Trokosi Slave abolition campaign officially began with the inception of the North Tongu ‘Vestal Virgins Project’ in 1988, although it was preceded and shaped by the efforts of Mark Wisdom, a member of the Mafi-Dugame community (North Tongu), during the previous decade. Wisdom claimed to know all the “secrets” of the Trokosi Slave shrines and emphasised he had conducted informal research and was a member of a shrine-owning lineage. His characterisation of the practice (as a type of slavery that involved sexual and physical abuse, and forced labour) and the initiates (as being perpetually hungry, inhibited from obtaining education, and socially stigmatised) was the basis for representations and concerns promoted during the abolition campaign. Wisdom laid the groundwork for how the practice and experience associated with *trokosi* was understood and represented during the abolition campaign and he has remained influential throughout. I will first examine how Wisdom initiated concerns about the *trokosiwo* initiates before moving on to discuss the ‘Vestal Virgins Project’.

²¹ This chapter and the next are based on the examination of primary data of newspaper articles, NGO and other governmental reports, letters, and other types of unpublished documents, in addition to my interviews with NGO representatives. I have cited in text any direct references, if I have drawn on Ameh’s work (see below) or other published materials. I have also footnoted other material when relevant – although it is not an exhaustive list.

²² See Ameh (1998, 2001, 2004a, 2004b) and Pimpong (1998) for other perspectives on the trajectory of the *trokosi* abolition movement. Ameh’s account is the most comprehensive.



Picture 1: Mark Wisdom. Photo by Dana Romanoff (used with permission).

According to Wisdom, his role in the abolition campaign began in 1977 while he was working as a French teacher in Lome (Togo). There he had a vision that, in brief, featured a giant that was holding a community captive and Wisdom was directed to “liberate” the people suffering under the giant’s rule. He claims that following the vision, he was disturbed about its meaning and soon quit his job and returned to the North Tongu district. Over the next couple of years and several visions later, Wisdom’s mission became clearer: Jesus was commissioning him and investing him with spiritual power to challenge the authority of deities and their priests and to “liberate” the *trokosiwo*.²³

It was not until 1982 that his activities began when he organised a meeting for the chiefs, shrine priests, and other community members of the Mafi-Traditional Area (North Tongu). As Wisdom recalls, he urged those at the meeting to stop offering and accepting *trokosiwo* into the shrines and to replace them with offerings of alcohol, money, or animals. He recounts that the group agreed with his suggestions; however,

²³ While I do not go into Wisdom’s visions in detail, it is important to the way in which Wisdom understands his role and contests the role of others in the campaign. Wisdom was partly marginalised in later years of the campaign because he lacked the same kind of resources that other protagonists had and his overt Christian perspective. As Curly explores in a different context, dreams, their interpretations, and their recital establish authority (1983). Wisdom has written the account in his book (2001) and he recited it to me a number of times. It highlights that he was instructed to initiate the campaign, but also that the police and other governmental institutions are not able to effectively deal with ‘traditional religion’. When talking about the dream, Wisdom argues that only he was invested with the power to “liberate” the *trokosiwo*.

when libations were about to be poured to signify the release of the *trokosiwo*, a dissenting priest persuaded the group to wait for two weeks. Two weeks later at the second meeting, the priests again refused and requested more time.²⁴

In response to the priests' delay, Wisdom wrote a letter to Flt-Lt. J.J. Rawlings, who had led a military coup the previous year and took over the country under the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). In the letter, he petitioned Rawlings to abolish the practice of initiating *trokosiwo*, legally and forcibly, and instruct the chiefs of the Mafi-Traditional Area to punish shrines that refuse.²⁵ The Secretary of Culture and Tourism responded to the letter and organised a press conference for Wisdom to discuss his concerns, held on 24 January 1983.²⁶ Following the press conference, Wisdom remained in Accra and wrote a series of articles in 1984 entitled the "Abolition of Outmoded Customs" in the *Daily Graphic*, a state-owned newspaper.²⁷

As indicated by the title of Wisdom's series of articles in the *Daily Graphic*, during this period, Wisdom situated the contentious practice into a discursive framework that is often mobilised in Ghana, although from different perspectives, that questioned the relationship between 'traditional customs' and 'modernity'.²⁸ In characterising the *trokosi* practice as an "outmoded custom", Wisdom argued that it, while being a form of slavery and limiting the rights of women, also contributed to illiteracy in the North Tongu District.

As others have discussed, Rawlings revitalised this kind of discursive framework during the 1980s by drawing upon the idea embedded in the Adinkra Sankofa symbol of 'retrieving' and 'restoring' cultural traditions. The approach was similar to that of Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, who argued that Ghana's 'culture' was central to the way in which the independent country would respond to the colonial legacy and interact with the rest of the world. Within this framework, 'culture' is conceptually located in the 'past', lost due to the effects of colonialism, and needed to be 'retrieved' in order to create a sense of nationalism.

²⁴ Wisdom (1982, 2001).

²⁵ Wisdom (1982).

²⁶ Ministry of Culture and Tourism (1982); Kokutse (1983).

²⁷ See Wisdom (1984a, 1984b) and Wisdom's account of the abolition movement (2001).

²⁸ Wisdom indicated in his letter that he had organised the previous meeting in accordance to Rawlings' call for the "modernisation of customs which retard national development" reported by the state-owned *Daily Graphic* during their coverage of a *durbar* that formerly granted legal status to the Greater Accra Region (Wisdom 1982; cf Duah 1982).

Rawlings, on the other hand, was critical of post-colonial relations and the corruption that characterised previous governments, expressing this distance through the concept of the 'Revolution'. For him, 'culture' was a way for Ghanaians to differentiate themselves in the process of development and 'modernisation' and would be essential for Ghana's success. Like Nkrumah, the 'retrieval of culture' was not just about the reproduction of customs and traditions from the 'past'; these should be critically evaluated and reformulated based upon their usefulness to national development (Meyer 1999b, p. 103; Heath 1997; Steegstra 2004, p. 305-306).

While Wisdom situated the *trokosi* practice in a powerful discourse at the time, this was interwoven with a modernistic Christian discourse. He compared the *trokosiwo* to the devotees of Vesta in Ancient Rome, arguing that *trokosi* was not unique to southern Ewe communities, but rather represented a practice that could be seen around the world. However, as Wisdom argued, the practice was abolished in other locales and in Ancient Rome specifically because of the influence of Christianity. To Wisdom, Christianity was a necessary stage in Ancient Rome's development and progression to modernity. Likewise, Wisdom stated that every society will remain "in a rude state of civilisation" until Christianity is adopted and "all practices that impede progress and true civilization" eradicated.²⁹

Despite Wisdom's appeal to Rawlings and editorials in the *Daily Graphic*, he was not successful in mobilising widespread support until 1988 when he approached U. S. Clarke, the North Tongu District Chief Executive (DCE).³⁰ Together, they initiated the 'Vestal Virgins Project', a name inspired by Wisdom's comparison of *trokosiwo* to the devotees of Vesta in Ancient Rome, and then taken up by the North Tongu District authorities (cf Ameh 2001, p. 194; Wisdom 2001). The 'Vestal Virgins Project' represented a collaboration between the North Tongu District governmental authorities, chiefs, and members of the community to institute "modifications" of the practice on the authority of the District Assembly and traditional rulers. The proposed modifications were identical to those that Wisdom had suggested previously: the replacement of initiates with other types of gifts, such as money, alcohol, or animals. However, shrines priests and elders ultimately ignored their calls for modification (Ameh 2001; Dovlo & Adzoyi 1995).

²⁹ Wisdom (1984a). See Wisdom (1984b, 1995).

³⁰ Note that prior to 1992, district organization was known as the District Administrations, headed by a PNDC District Secretary. After the democratic transition in 1992, District Administrations became District Assemblies and District Secretaries became District Chief Executives (Ameh 2001, p. 199).

The ‘Vestal Virgins Project’ also aimed to provide literacy and skills training to initiates in a number of shrines. To implement the training program and secure funding, the DCE enlisted the help of several NGOs. Initially, the DCE approached the Tongu Youth and Child Evangel (TOYACE),³¹ a local Christian NGO started by an Ewe man living in Canada, and requested that they provide literacy training to initiates (cf Ameh 2001, p. 190-191).³² Sharon Titian, a Canadian missionary working with the organisation, took up the request and began training volunteers; however, the project was abandoned at the instruction of the TOYACE director. Upset by the decision, Titian left TOYACE in October 1990 and formally established Missions International³³ (MI), self-described as a “non-denominational Christian charity”.³⁴ Titian relocated to Adidome permanently and began to assist the DCE with the ‘Vestal Virgins Project’.³⁵

In addition to Titian, the DCE also invited International Needs Ghana (ING), a Christian NGO based in Accra, to assist with the funding and implementation of the literacy and vocational skills training program.³⁶ Rev. Walter Pimpong established ING in 1985 after he completed his Masters degree in theology at Trinity International University in Illinois (USA) (Ameh 2001). ING is a “front-line” NGO affiliated with the International Needs Network, described as a “ministry that shared the gospel by partnering with Christian nationals around the world and helping them serve God in their own countries” (IN Network n.d.). The Network consists of “supply-line” International Needs offices in, amongst other countries, Australia, Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, that financially support the activities of “front-line” International Needs NGOs.³⁷

The inclusion of Titian and ING was important to the success that the ‘Vestal Virgins Project’ had in relation to the training of initiates. Initially both sought funding from international and Ghanaian (secular and religious) organisations; however, ING was in a better position to secure funding through their “supply-line” partners than Titian. ING eventually took over the literacy and vocational skills training in the

³¹ TOYACE is the local counterpart of a Canadian NGO called Grace Canada, both founded by Bestway Zottor (TOYACE n.d).

³² Titian (1990).

³³ Missions International is also known Titian Ministries International/ Missions International (MI n.d.).

³⁴ See MI (n.d).

³⁵ See Titian (1990, 1992). In addition to addressing *trokosi*, her ministry includes an orphanage, school, feeding program, and pastors’ training program. Currently, she also organises a Christian worship service on Sunday at the MI headquarters and hosts Canadian and American volunteers.

³⁶ International Needs Ghana changed their name to International Needs Network Ghana in 2008 (ING n.d.). I will, however, refer to them as International Needs Ghana (ING) throughout this thesis.

³⁷ IN Network (n.d.).

building allocated by the District Assembly for this purpose.³⁸ Titian and Wisdom played the important role of approaching the priests and elders of shrines in the North Tongu district (with the help of the District Assembly and Social Welfare) to request that they allow the women in their care (all of which were presumed to be *trokosiwo*) to attend literacy and vocational skills training in Adidome (cf Ameh 2001, p. 190-192).³⁹

From North Tongu to the National Sphere (1993-1996)

Up until 1993, the activities of the ‘Vestal Virgins Project’ were limited to the North Tongu district. From 1993 to 1996, several inter-related issues characterised the development of the abolition campaign, moving it from the confines of North Tongu to the national sphere. First, the NGOs expanded their activities to other districts in the southern Volta Region and greater Accra to address similar or “variant” practices and initiates, identified as the *fiasidiwo* and *woryokwe*. Secondly, there was a heightened importance in securing funding from international organisations and developmental aid programs in order to expand their activities and maintain those in the North Tongu district.

Thirdly, the NGOs introduced a media campaign and continued to build alliances with other governmental and non-governmental agencies to garner public, political, and financial support. The media campaign and the building of alliances solidified the opinions of individuals, NGOs, and governmental agencies that the Trokosi Slave and the system that enslaved her was a problem to Ghana and situated it in concerns for the country’s overall development and appeals for human (women and children’s) rights. Lastly, discussions about the Trokosi Slave at a national level debated strategies of modification or abolition and the role of legal instruments to do so.

Although one of the explicit aims of the abolition campaign at this point in time was to address identified variants of *trokosi*, some attempts to this effect were made prior to 1993. For example, in 1990, the North Tongu DCE made appeals to Rawlings and in 1991 spoke at a conference organized for other District Chief Executives in the

³⁸ The relationship between ING and Titian (MI) in the ‘Vestal Virgins Project’ was one partly characterized by conflict, particularly over the building allocated for the Vocational Training Centre. Although ING eventually took over this building and successfully implemented these programs, Titian also continued to run a separate training centre after she obtained a building for her organization.

³⁹ Titian (1990).

Volta Region about the Trokosi Slave (Ameh 2001, p. 195). However, these attempts were not successful until 1993, when the issue was taken up by the NGOs enlisted to help on the ‘Vestal Virgins Project’.

ING and Wisdom, under the guise of his newly founded organisation, The Fetish Slaves Liberation Movement (FESLIM)⁴⁰, developed the ‘Modernisation of the Trokosi System in Ghana Project’, which included an educational campaign and framework to address practices in other districts in addition to the already established activities of negotiating with shrines and training initiates in the North Tongu district. This project reflected the NGOs’ continuing strategy of addressing the practice associated with *trokosi* through education and dialogue with shrine priests, elders, and community members and advocating for ‘modernisation’ through the replacement of initiates with offerings of money, alcohol, or animals.

In order to fund the project, ING and FESLIM made applications to several international aid organisations, particularly those administered through foreign embassies in Ghana. Eventually partial funding was secured from the Royal Danish Embassy (DANIDA) for a two-year period (1994-1996).⁴¹ A portion of the funding was allocated to ING to continue activities and seminars in the North Tongu District and to organise a national workshop. Another portion of the funding was allocated to FESLIM to organise seminars in five other districts and to continue Wisdom’s research on the practice and its variant forms.⁴²

After securing funds for the expansion of the NGOs’ activities beyond the North Tongu district, Wisdom organised seminars in 1995 for the South Tongu, Akatsi, Ketu, Keta, and Ada districts. The seminars were designed to educate traditional and local government authorities, and priests about how the practice constituted a series of human rights violations by enlisting the help of local representatives of the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) and the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). At each seminar Wisdom, a representative of the CHRAJ, and a member of the NCCE (who is also a Queen Mother of the Tefle Traditional Area) presented papers. At the end of each seminar, participants were invited to state the actions they would take to address the Trokosi Slave problem in

⁴⁰ I was unclear from my conversations with Wisdom when he formally established FESLIM; however, Ameh indicates that it was in 1994 (2001, p. 180).

⁴¹ Wisdom (1994).

⁴² See, for example, Wisdom (1994).

their districts. If priests were present, they were encouraged to declare their support for ending the practice through modification.

In addition to interacting with community officials and members, a media campaign was mobilised. Starting in 1993, newspaper articles and editorials frequently appeared in the *Daily Graphic*, *Ghanaian Times*, *the Mirror*, *Peoples and Places*, and the *Ghanaian Chronicle*, to garner support for the NGOs.⁴³ In part, the media campaign put pressure on other governmental agencies (such as the National Commission on Culture (NCC)) to become more involved in the abolition campaign (cf NCC 1994; Pimpong 1995, p. 15). Many of these agencies also sent investigation teams to various shrines (for example, the NCC and CHRAJ in 1994).⁴⁴ However, the media campaign also brought the practice to the attention of the public and located the issue firmly in the realm of wider national debates about human rights, development, and culture.⁴⁵ In doing so, public appeals and debates within governmental agencies centred on the use of legal instruments to deal with the practice.

The first article about the Trokosi Slave was published in the tabloid *The Mirror* on 6 March 1993 by Amoah, entitled “1000 Girls Kept as Slave Wives...Under Trokosi System” (cf Ameh 1998; Ameh 2001). The article aimed to inform readers about the practice and the efforts of the NGOs.⁴⁶ However, like subsequent articles, it generated a public response in the form of editorials calling for and debating the appropriate way to “abolish” *trokosi*; for example, as Ameh details, the article was quickly followed by a letter to the editor entitled “Give the Trokosi girls their freedom now” (Ameh 2001, p. 210). This sentiment was reaffirmed when, in April 1994, Vincent Azumah reported in *The Mirror* that the initiates at the Vocational Training Centre in Adidome were “rebellious” against the priests by refusing to return to the shrine (Ameh 2001, p. 211).⁴⁷

As Ameh details, closely following the media coverage of the “rebellion” in 1994, Kosi Kedom, a Parliament member representing Hohoe South, addressed Parliament and called for a law to “abolish” the *trokosi* practice and a parliamentary

⁴³ Three journalists appear to have been particularly active: A. E. Amoah; Vincent Azumah, who later worked for ING briefly before starting his own *trokosi* related NGO with Juliana Dogbadzi; and Audrey Gadzekpo, who later became a Professor of Communications at the University of Ghana (cf Ameh 1998, p. 44).

⁴⁴ See NCC (1994) and Short (1995).

⁴⁵ “Anyone who reads our local dailies would agree that the Trokosi Problem has assumed some importance” (Pimpong 1995).

⁴⁶ Amoah (1993).

⁴⁷ I have been unable to locate the three articles detailing the “rebellion”.

debate (2001, p. 212, 251).⁴⁸ Two days later, the *Ghanaian Times* covered the inauguration of the Upper East Region Women's Wing of the NDC in which they reported that Rawlings supported the review of 'outmoded customs' for modification and linked it to the Trokosi Slave.⁴⁹ Two weeks later, *The Mirror* featured an appeal to Rawlings from a fifteen year old *trokosi*, who attended school with Sharon Titian.⁵⁰ Titian wanted to "pay for the freedom" of the girl but the shrine priest refused (PUM 1995, p. 4; Ameh 2001, p. 212).

Media articles, especially those associated with the parliamentary debate, spurred ongoing discussions about the utility of a national law versus ongoing educational programs and district level mandates.⁵¹ Additionally, many questioned whether a new law should be created or if already established legal instruments could address the practice, such as the 1992 Constitution and the various international treaties that Ghana had previously ratified. Many considered these instruments as adequate to address the practice effectively; this position was advocated by the NCCE and CHRAJ during the district seminars.

Circumventing these debates in governmental agencies and the public, Kedom "introduced a motion on the 'Abolition of Dehumanising Customary Practices' which asked Parliament to urge the Government to investigate dehumanising customary practices with the aim of either reforming or banning them altogether" on 29 June 1995 (Ameh 2001, p. 253-255).⁵² After a series of debates and the review of a report compiled by Titian (MI) about some of the *trokosiwo* in her care, the motion was passed (Ameh 2001, p. 255).⁵³ As a result, the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights investigated a number of shrines (Benyiwa-Doe 1998). The Ghana Law Reform Commission also made recommendations to amend the Criminal Code to include the practice, based partially on Federation of Women Lawyers' (FIDA) investigation in 1992.⁵⁴

The NGOs' activities and the debates about the effective use of legal instruments culminated in the 1995 'National Workshop on the Trokosi System',

⁴⁸ The address was also covered in the media: Fynn & Okyere (1994), Rynolds & Gasu (1994).

⁴⁹ Mensah & Arsene (1994).

⁵⁰ Adda-Dontoh (1994).

⁵¹ Ameh (1998), Dovlo (1995), and Benyiwa-Doe (1998) report that the media attention given to the Trokosi Slave was an incentive for the Parliamentary Hearings.

⁵² Fynn & Okyere (1994).

⁵³ Korstanje (1995).

⁵⁴ Ababio (1995); Ghana Law Reform Commission (1995); Benyiwa-Doe (1998).

organised by ING and the Green Earth Organisation.⁵⁵ National representatives of government agencies, directors of NGOs, traditional authorities, and the media gathered to educate and discuss strategies for dealing with abuses of the Trokosi Slave. Although programs geared towards the education of shrine communities and the training of *trokosiwo* were a part of the ongoing operations of the NGOs, ING used this workshop to re-formulate their strategies with the aim of ending the affiliation that the *trokosiwo* have with the shrines.⁵⁶

The questions raised and subsequent discussions at the seminar resembled the debates in the media and governmental agencies: Should the practice be “modified” through education or outright “abolished” through legal instruments? At a local level, how can traditional rulers be utilised and at a national level, how can the 1992 constitution be implemented to address *trokosi*?⁵⁷

While questions of whether or not the *trokosi* practice should be formally abolished through legislation were debated on a national level, the national workshop also partly re-affirmed ING’s existing strategies of education and dialogue (cf Pimpong 1998). They continued with activities of training *trokosiwo* and sponsoring district workshops in 1995 and 1996, specifically for Traditional Rulers and to a lesser extent shrine priests and elders.⁵⁸ However, these had not been successful in ending the *trokosiwo*’s affiliation with the shrines and in 1996 they initiated another type of strategy: “liberations”.

'Liberations', International Support, and Criminalisation (1996-1998)

From 1996 onwards, the NGOs and government agencies added a new strategy, liberations, to their ongoing repertoire of educational programs, dialogue, and training initiatives. This period was also characterised by the stepping up of international media and NGO interest, in a bid to secure additional funding for the NGOs’ programs. The process of gaining financial support through international media and organisations resulted in international pressure and campaigns directed towards the Ghanaian government to criminalise the practice, in addition to those already occurring at a

⁵⁵ This conference was held on the 6 and 7th of July 1995, sponsored by DANIDA. See ING (1995).

⁵⁶ See ING (1995).

⁵⁷ See ING (1995).

⁵⁸ See ING (1996, n.d.a).

national level. Criminalisation finally occurred in 1998, with an amendment to the Criminal Code, although no legal action has been taken against any shrines to date.

Liberations partly represented a culmination of the previous educational strategy of ING, which focused on talking to the shrine priests and elders about the problems of the practice and the need for “modernisation”. The “liberation” strategy aimed to get the shrine priests and owners to agree to “release” or “liberate” the initiates in their care, to forgo ongoing affiliations to those who had already passed through the appropriate initiation rituals, and not to receive new initiates. To motivate the shrine priests and owners to “liberate” the initiates, the NGOs presented them with economic incentives, such as money, cattle, or corn mills.

However, the NGOs were wary of the appearance that they were ‘buying’ the initiates, particularly to their international funders. They argued that compensation would economically allow the priests to liberate the initiates, based upon the understanding that the initiates, as ‘slaves’, were essential to the livelihood of the priest. This endeavour partly replaced the process of education with one of negotiation about the amount of compensation needed for the shrine priests and owners to be willing to liberate the *trokosiwo* or its variants.⁵⁹

The first liberation occurred at the Dada Piem shrine at Big Ada in July 1996, facilitated by ING.⁶⁰ Soon ING performed another set of liberations in North Tongu in November of 1996.⁶¹ Subsequently, liberations of initiates at shrines have become common as a mechanism of abolishment and continue to the present. These have been achieved both by the NGOs separately and through collaboration by pooling financial resources.⁶²

The liberation exercises raised another set of concerns: identifying the needs of “liberated” initiates and how these could be met. To address the issue, ING employed a Ghanaian psychologist to conduct a “needs assessment” shortly after the first liberation in 1996. On the psychologist’s recommendation and continual re-evaluation, ING

⁵⁹ For example at the Fievie liberation in 1997, 54 *trokosiwo* were liberated through the payment of ₵3,000,000 and two cows (Kawak 1997).

⁶⁰ See Ameh (2001, p. 222).

⁶¹ See Ameh (2001).

⁶² For example: Sentinelles Movement (Swiss NGO) liberation of Volo shrines in 1996; ING liberation of Korli shrines in Tefle, January 1997; FESLIM liberation at Fievie on 30 August 1997; ING/FESLIM liberation at Adidome of Mafi-Dugame shrines, Tsaduma in Bakpa, and Avakpe shine of Avekpodome on 4 September 1999 ; ING and ILO liberation of Akatsi shrines 10 July 2002; ING/ECM liberation of shrines in Agave on 31 January 2003; FESLIM/ECM liberation of Aklidokpo shrine on 22 January 2004; ECM liberation of Sovigbenor shrine in Aflao, 9 December 2005.

instituted programs aimed at the “psycho-social rehabilitation” of the initiates and their children.

To this end, ING distributed money to liberated initiates and enrolled them and/or their children at the ING Vocational Training Centre in Adidome. If initiates or their children were young enough for school, ING assisted in paying for their tuition fees. They also instituted a way to monitor liberated initiates through periodic visits by staff to assess their “reintegration” into the community and address other social problems they may have encountered. Additionally, ING offered counselling and focus groups for liberated *trokosiwo*, designed to “begin the process of repairing any emotional-psychological damage to the women as a result of their incarceration” and “reorientation of their personal constructs about themselves, society, and various aspects of life: marriage, responsibility, work, God, men...” (Puplampu 1996, p. 8). Despite these programs, problems ensued: some liberated initiates returned to the shrine, others gave the money received from the NGOs to family members, and others did not receive the money promised at all (cf Ababio 2000; Nukunya & Kwafo 1998; Aryeetey et al 2000).

In order to fund liberations and rehabilitation programs, increased importance was placed on mobilising international support through the international media and building alliances with international organisations. Although Wisdom (FESLIM) was active in this process to a degree, ING and Titian (MI) were better positioned to mobilise international media and obtain financial support for their activities. For example, ING heavily relied on their “supply-line” affiliates (particularly affiliates in the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, and Canada) to secure funding for their projects through fund-raising and media campaigns.

From 1996, the media in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, and Australia started reporting on the Trokosi Slave and the activities of FESLIM, ING, and MI. The *Independent on Sunday* (UK) published the first international article on 16 June 1996, entitled “Slaves of the Fetish Priest” by Emma Brooker. This was soon followed by another in *The Times* (UK). The Trokosi Slave and the activities of ING were also featured in a 1997 documentary called *Innocents Lost*, produced by True Vision in collaboration with Channel 4 (UK) and HBO.⁶³ In the United States, the most influential media interventions have been the 1997 broadcast entitled “Trokosi”

⁶³ *Innocents Lost* (1997). Woods also wrote an article based upon his experience and in support of ING in the *New York Law School Journal of Human Rights* (cf Woods 2001).

on CBS's *60 Minutes*, a feature on CNN in 1997, articles in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* in 1997, and a broadcast on NBC *Dateline* in 1998.⁶⁴

Some of these media reports described journalists' journeys to Ghana to investigate the practice with the assistance of ING, FESLIM, or MI - who acted as interlocutors in explaining the practice and led journalists to shrines with which they had developed a working relationship. Other articles were based upon media releases by international NGOs that ING and FESLIM had previously been in contact or collaboration with. For example, ING and FESLIM contacted several anti-slavery and human rights organisations, such as Anti-Slavery International (UK), the Anti-Slavery Society (Australia & US), and Equality Now (US). After a representative of the Anti-Slavery Society met with ING and FESLIM in 1995, they developed a brochure and a media campaign in 1997 to collect funds for both ING and FESLIM.⁶⁵

Collaborations with anti-slavery and human rights organisations also intensified an international campaign aimed at the Ghanaian government, recommending that they should develop a framework to address the *Trokosi* Slave and its variant forms. This process initially started in 1995, when Anti-Slavery International submitted a report to the United Nations Economic and Social Council Commission on Human Rights' working group on contemporary forms of slavery.⁶⁶ By 1998, when a proposal was submitted to Parliament to criminalise the *trokosi* practice and its variant forms, Equality Now organised a letter writing campaign to members of Parliament and President Rawlings, encouraging them ratify the proposal.⁶⁷

Throughout this period, discussions continued in Ghana about whether the practice and its variant forms should be abolished by new and specific legal sanctions, despite NGO activities urging priests to "liberate" the initiates and "modify" the practice by accepting other types of gifts from petitioners. At the Second National Workshop in 1998,⁶⁸ the call for specific legal abolition was widespread, supported by NGO groups as well as the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) and the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA). The contributions of participants reflect this insistence:

⁶⁴ Brooker (1996); Kiley (1996); French (1997); Duff-Brown (1997); Arnet (1997).

⁶⁵ See "The Forgotten Slaves: Report on a Mission to Investigate the Girl-Child Slaves of West Africa" (Anti-Slavery Society n.d.).

⁶⁶ Anti-Slavery International (1995).

⁶⁷ Equality Now (1998).

⁶⁸ The Second National Workshop was held on the 27-29th April 1998. It was organized by ING and sponsored by the British Council (ING 1998).

“Alberta Quarthey, Chairperson, National Commission on Children: Ghana boasts of her position as being the first country in the world to have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. I have a duty of having to defend Ghana’s record on the rights of the child. Waiting for years to educate and convince people to change might not be very favourable to the children at the receiving end. Trokosi is immoral, wrong and indefensible.” (ING 1998, p. 16).

The *trokosi* practice was officially “abolished”, or rather criminalised, on 12 June 1998, through an amendment to the Criminal Code Act 29 (Criminal Code Amendment Act 1998, 554):

“Whoever (a) sends to or receives at any place any person; or (b) participates in or is concerned in any ritual or customary activity in respect of any person with the purpose of subjecting that person to any form of ritual or customary servitude or any form of forced labour related to a customary ritual commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not less than three years.” (Criminal Code Amendment Act 1998, Act 554).⁶⁹

After Criminalisation (1999 onwards)

Although the *trokosi* practice and its variant forms were criminalised in 1998, the Ghanaian government has taken no specific legal action to prosecute anyone involved in the practice to date. This has been a source of contention for some of the Ghanaian public, who often appeal to the government through the media to prosecute. Yet others argue that despite the lack of enforcement of the law, the passage of the criminal code strengthens the position of NGOs in their negotiations with shrines (cf Ababio 2000, p. 83). The NGOs and other protagonists believed that after the passage of the law, negotiations about the liberation of *trokosiwo* would be easier because the NGOs had the law supporting them and the priests faced possible prosecution. They also anticipated that the remaining shrines that had not undergone liberation would rush to do so immediately following the passage of the law in order to enjoy the benefits offered by the NGOs, while avoiding the penalties.

These expectations were not necessarily realised and negotiations and liberations have continued through the collaboration between and the individual efforts of FESLIM and ING. This period also included the continual, if not increased,

⁶⁹ The amendment goes on to state, “(2) In this section ‘to be connected in’ means- (a) to send to, take to, consent to the taking to, receive at any place any person for the performance of the customary ritual; or (b) to enter into any agreement whether written [or] oral to subject any of the parties to the agreement or other persons to the performance of the custom, ritual; or (c) to be present at any activity connected with or related to the performance of the customary ritual”.

attempts to secure international funding and mobilise the international media. It was also characterised by the emergence of other NGOs wanting to participate in liberating the *trokosiwo*.

The NGOs, particularly ING, continued to bid for funds from international organisations and secured financial support for their programs from a number of international developmental aid organisations in addition to Christian organisations. For example, in 1998, ING was able to secure funding for three years for a micro-credit financing project from AusAid and International Needs Australia in a collaborative scheme (AusAid provided a portion of the funding, while International Needs Australia provided a portion). They have been able to renew this funding to date for a succession of three-year projects involving the Vocational Training centre.⁷⁰

ING was also successful in bids for funding from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the US African Development Foundation, and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). However, a portion of ING's funding was also obtained from their other International Needs partners in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, which continued with media and fundraising campaigns. Instrumental in these have been two documentaries produced by International Needs Australia and International Needs US.⁷¹ Additionally, publicity has been generated by enlisting the support of Christian singer, Nicole C. Mullen, who wrote the song "Gon Be Free (Freedom)" in recognition of the *trokosiwo* initiates and highlighted the Trokosi Slave and the efforts of ING during her US tour.⁷²

The campaigning efforts of the International Needs partners in Canada, Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom have continued to be partly directed towards the international media. The most influential of these has appeared in *The Times* (UK), *Newsweek* (US), and *The Los Angeles Times* (US) in 1999, *BBC News* in 2000 and 2001, a feature in the fashion magazine *Marie Claire* in 2005, *The Independent* (UK) in 2006, and *The Telegraph* (UK) and *BBC Radio 4* in 2007.⁷³ Many of the articles feature the accounts of two liberated *trokosiwo*, Juliana Dogbadzi

⁷⁰ See International Needs Australia (1999)

⁷¹ See International Needs Australia (1999).

⁷² International Needs Network USA (n.d).

⁷³ Midgley (1999); *Newsweek* (1999); Simmons (2000); Sakyi-Addo (2000); Hawksley (2001); Sevcik (2005); Robson (2006); Pflanz (2007); *BBC Radio 4* (2007).

and Mercy Senahe. ING sponsored both women at different points in time to visit International Needs partners to assist in fund-raising efforts.

Additionally, as mentioned in the Introduction, during my research in Klikor, an American photographer, a Belgian documentary film-crew, and an investigation team from a foreign embassy visited to examine the *trokosi* practice. An Italian journalist also came to the Klikor shrines one day, but was not granted an interview; he did however conduct interviews in other shrines in the Volta Region. Similarly, an Australian youth organisation called the Oak Tree Foundation, which financially supports ING through International Needs Australia, were in the area to make a documentary about the Trokosi Slave. They also approached the Klikor shrines for an interview, but their request was denied.

Two other projects have emerged in the international domain, unrelated to the funding and media campaigns of the NGOs and their international partners. The first of these was the 2009 release of *Punctured Hope*, a feature film produced by Toronto Pictures, Inc. dramatising the life of a Trokosi Slave.⁷⁴ The screenplay for the film was written by a Nigerian Evangelical Minister who works in Ghanaian television, based upon the life story of one *trokosi*, who was subsequently chosen to represent herself in the film. Although directed by the president of Toronto Pictures, the film uses a Ghanaian cast. While media releases about the project do not detail any specific NGOs in Ghana, the director contends that he made the film to increase international awareness on the subject.⁷⁵ The second is a novel entitled *Wife of the Gods* by Kwei Quartey that follows a Ghanaian detective on his pursuit to find the murderer of a young Ewe doctor and delves into how her death is related to the *trokosi* practice.⁷⁶

Finally, in addition to FESLIM and ING, other NGOs have tried to become involved with the liberation exercises; notable among them being Every Childs Ministries (ECM) and the Trokosi Abolition Fellowship International (TAFI). Although the director of TAFI, Stephen Awudi Gadri, is the biological brother of a priest at one of the contested shrines, the organisation, like many similar Ghanaian organisations, has not been completely successful because of its inability to secure international funding.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Previously media releases had indicated that the film would be released in the summer of 2006; however, it was finally released in 2009. It was filmed in 2004.

⁷⁵ Delson (n.d).

⁷⁶ Quartey (2009).

⁷⁷ See Gadri (2010).

Every Childs Ministries (ECM), as a newly emerging NGO addressing *trokosi* in 1999, was potentially the only one of these that was able to manage liberations. Their ability to secure funding was less problematic as ECM is an American Christian mission organisation, founded by (American) John and Lorella Rouster, and has been active in other parts of Africa since 1985. ECM's offices in Ghana, established in 1999, are run by Ghanaian staff who are responsible for a number of projects: they facilitate a street children project in Accra, manage the Haven of Hope orphanage, train youth oriented Bible teachers, and organise the 'Character Building from the Bible' program based in public and private schools.⁷⁸

In 2003, ECM became involved in the Trokosi Slave campaign and collaborated with ING during the liberation of a number of shrines in Agave. The following year, 2004, ECM collaborated with FESLIM in the liberation of another shrine in North Tongu. Subsequently, ECM has worked in conjunction with ING providing "counselling" to the liberated women, through periodic home visits, and sponsoring education or skills training.⁷⁹

By 2005, they felt confident after helping in the previous two liberations and negotiated with and organised the liberation of the Sovigbenor shrine in Aflao (Ketu District). Problematically, abolitionists, researchers, and other practitioners have never identified this shrine as associated with the *trokosi* practice or its variant forms. I had a conversation with a Sovigbenor shrine elder about whether the shrine initiated *fiasidiwo* or *trokosiwo*, to which they indicated that they did not. However, a different set of initiates and devotees are affiliated with the shrine.

One of the reasons that ECM identified the Sovigbenor shrines as a *trokosi* shrine is that they generalise the term *trokosi* to be applicable to all types of initiates in Ewe shrines rather than a specific category of initiate or a specific practice. Likewise, ECM currently has started a process of researching and negotiating with shrines in Togo and Benin to liberate *vodhunsi* (wives/initiates of *vodhun*). Unlike the *fiasidiwo* and *trokosiwo*, *vodhunsiwo* have been the subject of many anthropological studies. None of these have suggested the position of these initiates is marked by the kinds of elements indicated in the accounts of the *trokosi* practice (cf Lovell 2002; Rosenthal 1998).

⁷⁸ See ECM- Ghana (n.d).

⁷⁹ ING and ECM liberation of Agave shrine on 31 January 2003; FESLIM and ECM liberation of the Aklidokpo shrine on 22 January 2004.

Employing the terminology of *trokosi* in this way creates a space in which a completely new set of initiates and shrines can be “liberated”. This understanding is one that Wisdom certainly hoped would occur to some extent, as he also defined different types of initiates in other shrines as being ‘slaves’ as well. He particularly focused on *Yewe* initiates, amongst others, indicated in the controversial slogan of FESLIM: “*Thunder God Worship the next target*”.

Conclusion:

This chapter outlined the development of the Trokosi Slave abolition campaign and its movement from the North Tongu Districts to being a topic for national and international discussions. The Trokosi Slave abolition campaign, in all historical contexts and shapes, drew on a particularly powerful image of slavery and mobilised this to both Ghanaian and international audiences. Before I move on to examine the local contestations that this produced, let me briefly discuss the image of slavery as it was one central catalyst for contestation. Additionally, it shaped the subsequent way academics have written about *trokosi*, further reproducing this image. This is demonstrated by the discussion of *trokosi* by Suzanne Miers as a form of ritual slavery:

“In its extreme form, it [ritual slavery] is a type of bondage that is lifelong and hereditary, as well as including both forced labour and sexual slavery. It may therefore be closer to classic slavery than are some of the examples discussed above. In the Trokosi system in Ghana, for instance, girls, some very young, are offered to the gods in expiation for the sins of their relations or to end family misfortunes. Theoretically, they may be dedicated only for a few years, after which they can be redeemed by their families. However, the priests can set a high price, and if the girl dies without being redeemed, she must be replaced by another virgin. Thus, the system may be perpetuated beyond a lifetime” (Miers 2000, p. 739- 740).

When the abolitionist campaign asserted the image of the *trokosiwo* and *fiasidiwo* as ‘slaves’, they appealed to both the category of modern forms of slavery and partly the historical structures of domestic slavery in the southern Volta Region. These categorisations were utilised in varying ways and in different contexts, depending on the audience and the types of contestations presented against them. The distinction between the two was often blurred in engagements with other protagonists,

the Ghanaian public, the international community and funding organisations, and those who contested their representation.

Slavery has long held a place in the Western imagination and continues to do so today with modern forms of exploitation being framed within historical and regional conceptions of slavery. As explored elsewhere by Miers and Kopytoff (1977), to Euro-American audiences, slavery is thought about as the commoditisation of people, which can be bought, sold, and inherited as property. In this framework, being a slave is characterised by the owners' absolute rights over the slave, their labour, and their future. This construction of slavery is largely influenced by chattel slavery experienced in the Americas, and as Miers and Kopytoff point out, the antithesis to slavery from this perspective is that of freedom, which is associated with "autonomy and the lack of social bonds" (1977, p 4, 17).

The term and specific image of slavery as dominated by the historical experience of chattel slavery has been acknowledged to be problematic in the African context of historical institutions of domestic slavery. In contrast to the previous construction of slavery, where the idea of "freedom" is rooted in ideas about "autonomy", Miers and Kopytoff show that in the African context, belonging to a kinship or lineage structure is what makes one "free". Slaves, on the hand, lack this membership to their own kinship structures in the state of slavery, although they may have been gradually incorporated into a kin group through idioms of kinship and procreation (1977, p. 17). With incorporation over one's lifetime or successive generations, a slave's status could take on new dimensions, while remaining possible points of contestation in competition for resources, titles and offices (Miers & Kopytoff 1977).

However, when the abolitionist campaign invoked that the practice associated with *trokosiwo* and *fiasidiwo* was historical form of domestic slavery, they did not cite historical practices of raiding, trading, and selling of slaves that occurred in the southern Volta Region.⁸⁰ They notably have not had an extended discussion about these historical processes, outside the claim that *kosi* means "slave" and arguing that historically this referred to slaves (cf Dovlo & Adzoyi 1995). Instead, abolitionists' preferred to use the term "ritual slavery" in their descriptions. This term indicated the

⁸⁰ I will discuss these in Chapter 5.

practice's embeddedness in the culture and 'beliefs' of the Ewe at large and distinguished it partly from other historical forms of slavery and pawnship.

They also strongly drew on ambiguous concepts of modern forms of slavery, to which the category of ritual slavery has been added (cf Miers 2000; Ameh 2001). Both of these highlighted the initiates' lack of rights and social bonds in the context of being an initiate. While she was initiated based on her embeddedness in a lineage structure, through the misdemeanours of her kin, abolitionists argued that she lost these after initiation. In a state of slavery, she experienced the physical and sexual abuse of the priest, forced to work without compensation, restricted from leaving the shrine or attend school, and stigmatised by the community.

Van der Anker argues that the invocation of the term 'slavery' and analysing modern forms of exploitation in relation to it "guarantees a larger audience" (van der Anker 2004, p. 19). I agree with de Witte's (2008) assessment that the abolitionist campaign, in garnering support and funding for their activities, likewise ensured an audience through, what McLagan describes in relation to international human rights organisations and their media, "emotional persuasion" (2003, p. 606). She notes that this includes the use of:

"symbols, images, and stories of suffering in such a way as to form identification with the suffering of an "other" and thereby emotionally engage and persuade their audiences of a cause's moral worth. Through this process, we as viewers become connected to a political project and can be moved to actions" (McLagan 2003, p. 606).

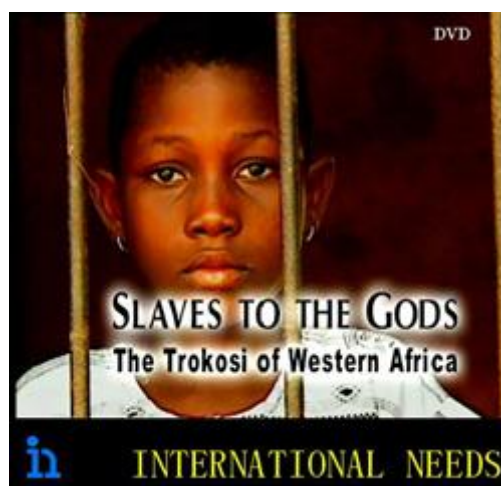


Figure 1: DVD cover for International Needs Australia (INA n.d.)

While all appeals made by the abolitionist campaign featured the life stories of initiates and highlighted their suffering (the content of which far exceeds what can

feasibly be discussed in this thesis), the above image demonstrates the strategic use of symbols to garner international support and points to the content of later contestations. To Euro-American audiences (including Australia), the bars in front of the *trokosi* are a powerful symbol representing incarceration and the lack of “freedom”. To a Ghanaian audience, without the words framing how one should read the image, this is just a girl staring out of a window; most household windows have bars of this sort to deter criminals.

Defining *trokosi* as slavery and the subsequent imagery of slavery mobilised by the abolitionist campaign was a central site of contestation by practitioners and others in Ghana. Before calls for legislation and the expansion of the abolitionist activities to include the *fiasidiwo*, contestations did not necessarily have a public presence. Rather these were mobilised at a local level in the North Tongu district or in the seminars organised by the NGOs. However, once the call for legislation and the NGOs’ activities expanded outside the North Tongu district, a significant set of contestations emerged that questioned, amongst other things, the representation of the Trokosi Slave, particularly as it applied to the *fiasidiwo*. The next chapter aims to address the contestations and the questions they raised about the *fiasidiwo*.

Chapter 3

Representing *Trokosi* to Debating *Fiasidi*

From the outset, Wisdom considered the *trokosi* initiate to be the same as *fiasidiwo* and *woryokwe*. As indicated in the last chapter, the practice of accepting *trokosiwo* is most represented as a type of ‘slavery’, based partly on an etymological analysis of the term *trokosi*: slave (*kosi*) of the god (*tro*). However, the way in which the practice came to be understood as a form of slavery was influenced by (at best) the experiences of initiates of shrines in the North Tongu districts and (at least) the perspective of Wisdom.

The evidence offered for the representation of *trokosi* as ‘slavery’ was that initiates experienced restricted movement, forced-labour, sexual abuse and were prohibited from obtaining education. Represented as thus, the *trokosi* practice seemed to carry the hallmarks of a practice that restricted, if not denied, the rights of the initiates and naturally attracted the concerns of governmental and international agencies, particularly those charged with addressing human rights violations.

It was through this lens that calls for modification and abolition were situated and Wisdom and ING expanded their activities into shrine communities in the other six districts in the southern Volta Region that had also been identified as having “fetish slaves”. The activities of the NGOs and abolition campaign included advocacy and educational seminars in these communities and made the argument that the shrine practices constituted a human rights violation and needed to be “modified”. However, the abolition movement was met with a significant set of contestations that sought to refute the representations of their campaign and to contain its actions. In doing this, many drew upon a particular understanding of the *fiasidiwo* as “wives of the deity” generally and the socio-economic status of *fiasidiwo* in Klikor.

This chapter aims to explore the mobilization of these contestations that offered a different understanding of *trokosi* through the *fiasidi* and the debates that this inspired. It shows the way these occurred at both a local and national level separately, which then converged in 1998 to provide a powerful opposition to the abolition campaign.

District Seminars to the National Workshop (1994-1996)

As I discussed in Chapter 2, from 1994 onwards Wisdom and ING expanded their activities to address practices that they conceptualized as being the same as *trokosi*, in addition to their activities in the North Tongu district. These activities included organizing a series of seminars in seven districts of the southern Volta Region identified as having variants of *trokosi* (including North Tongu) and a National Workshop. The district seminars aimed to educate shrine communities, including chiefs and district-level governmental authorities, about the *trokosi* practice and to persuade them to make modifications. The National Workshop in 1995, on the other hand, aimed to educate the Ghanaian public and governmental and non-governmental organizations about the practice and strategize about the best way to affect changes. Within both of these sites, some participants challenged the representation of the Trokosi Slave. While these challenges can be seen in all the district seminars and often pertained to alternative understandings and statuses of *trokosiwo* in localities that actually applied the term *trokosi* to their initiates, I focus here on those that were mobilized via understandings of the *fiasidiwo*.

The district seminars that concern this project were held in Denu in 1995 and Klikor in 1996.⁸¹ These aimed to address the *fiasidiwo* in the shrines in the Ketu district, particularly the Adzima shrines, and the Klikor Paramount Chief (*Fiaga*) and Adzima shrines' priests and elders were in attendance. By the first seminar, they were aware of the concerns identified regarding *trokosiwo* in North Tongu; during the previous year, the Klikor *Fiaga*, along with the Adidome Paramount Chief (North Tongu), assisted the National Commission on Culture (NCC) in their investigation of the Adzima shrines and one shrine in the North Tongu district (the Bakpa-Kebunu Tchaduma shrine).⁸² The Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) also sent a team to Klikor in 1994.⁸³

Through the Klikor *Fiaga*'s experience in the NCC investigation, he knew that there were particularly important differences between *trokosiwo* and *fiasidiwo* initiates; one of these differences related to him personally. Representations of the Trokosi Slave indicate that the initiates and their children are socially stigmatized, which leads

⁸¹ See Daily Graphic (1995).

⁸² See NCC (1994).

⁸³ See Massiasta (1996) and Short (1995).

to difficulty in finding suitable marriage partners. Additionally, as socially stigmatized persons, the progeny of *trokosiwo* and subsequent generations are excluded from positions of power, particularly the chieftaincy. In contrast, the Klikor *Fiaga* is the grandson of a *fiasidi*.

As a result, during these encounters, the Klikor *Fiaga* and the Adzima shrines' priests attempted to explain how the practice operated and the experiences of *fiasidiwo* in Klikor, in contrast to *trokosiwo* in North Tongu. To them, "modification" meant analysing the practice to identify issues that could be improved upon - a process that would necessarily be different for each shrine. The priests particularly emphasized that Klikor generally did not have adequate educational facilities; it was suggested that the NGOs and government might help in making sure the *fiasidiwo* were educated and vocationally trained.⁸⁴ The Klikor *Fiaga*, on the other hand, argued that the priests should not be required to divorce the wives they had prior to becoming a priest (an issue that also affects those who are chosen to become chiefs).⁸⁵

Both the organizers and the official participants of the district seminars recognised the distinctions that made the Klikor *fiasidiwo* different from the *trokosiwo*. However, they disagreed with the Adzima priests, arguing that the practice was still problematic and that modification should include an agreement not to accept *fiasidiwo* as initiates. To this, the Adzima priests refused; however, they did reach a consensus amongst themselves on a set of standards that they felt they already upheld:

"In order to meet Human Right demands, it was agreed that:

1. Nobody should be kept by force in any of the shrines for crimes committed by his or her ancestors.
2. Nobody should be forced out, without any offence committed in the shrine.
3. Any female that, might be brought to the shrines as a Fiasidi, must be accepted. After custom performed, she have right to go anywhere she like.
4. Those who may not like to move out, of the shrines because of the comfort of the shrine must do so.
5. Finally the priest must do all within their power (a) to see their free movement, (b) the priest should see to it that the family of the Fiasidi have educated them for their future prosperity" [sic] (Adzima Priests 1996a).

⁸⁴ Similarly, the investigations of the NCC and the CHRAJ had not thrown up the same kind of issues described of some shrines in the North Tongu district in the Klikor shrines. Rather, their focus on modification was the lack of educational opportunities available.

⁸⁵ The Klikor *Fiaga*, Togbui Addo, presented papers at most of the later district seminars and the National Workshops. See INGb (n.d); NCC (1994); ING (1996).

In response to the issue of not accepting *fiasidiwo*, they wrote a letter to the CHRAJ that in part attempted to explain the *fiasidiwo* in Klikor again and argued:

“the Trokosi or Fiasidi in Klikor (3) three Adzima shrines are freely to do everything like or they wish. They go to school, they learn trades, even those want to be a farmer have land to farm. Trokosi or Fiasidi in Klikor (3) Three Adzima shrines are difference from others. Trokosi was brought by our forefathers to stop bad doing” [sic] (Adzima Priests 1996b).

Although the priests of the Adzima shrines were attempting to make their contestation known to those attending the district seminars and to the CHRAJ, they also relied heavily on the assistance of a local intellectual, Dale Massiasta.⁸⁶ Massiasta was well-known in Klikor as being a ritual specialist, local historian, knowledge keeper, and founder of his own research centre (which I will discuss further in Chapter 4). Despite not completing secondary school, Massiasta has produced pamphlets and books on the history of Klikor and ‘African traditional religion’, often critiquing the earlier missionary texts about the ‘Ewe’. Massiasta was also well-suited to assist the Adzima shrines; he once acted as the secretary for one shrine’s arbitrational court, he was married to the grand-daughter of a *fiasidi*, and at least one of his father’s wives was a *fiasidi*.

Massiasta’s first encounter with representatives of the abolition campaign occurred in 1994, during the investigation conducted by the CHRAJ. Although the CHRAJ intended to speak with the Klikor *Fiaga* about the practice, he was not available that day and Massiasta was called to take his place. Massiasta notes that during this encounter he was unimpressed with the CHRAJ because of their lack of knowledge about the practice under investigation; specifically he cites their understanding that the “so-called Trokosi system is the same in all the areas studied” (Massiasta 1996, p. 1).

By 1996, after the Adzima Priests had encountered the abolition campaign several times through investigations and district seminars, Massiasta was asked to write letters to representatives of the abolition campaign on behalf of the Adzima priests.⁸⁷ Through these letters and his conversations with the Adzima priests, the Klikor *Fiaga*, and others, Massiasta played a key role in starting the process of strategically challenging the Trokosi Slave representation generally, but particularly in reference to

⁸⁶ Like many Ghanaians, Massiasta chose this name himself.

⁸⁷ Massiasta complained in hindsight that the Adzima shrines should have mobilized more forcibly beforehand, but rather left it up to him.

the *fiasidiwo*. He did so by emphasising that the initiates were “Queens” and “role-models” for lineages that had committed some type of crime.

While the *fiasidiwo* were being discussed between the Klikor Adzima shrines’ priests and the NGOs, with the assistance of the Klikor *Fiaga* and Dale Massiasta, the issue of *fiasidi* was also being addressed at the national level, particularly in the National Workshop. Here contestations were mobilized by Dr. Dartey-Kumordzie and Col. A. K. Amuzu (otherwise known as Ameamu Gakpleazi). Both became influential in subsequent years by writing a number of essays and newspaper articles against the idea of the Trokosi Slave; however, I will for now focus on Dr. Dartey-Kumordzie.⁸⁸

At the time, Dr. Dartey-Kumordzie was affiliated with the Hu-Yahweh Centre, a neo-traditionalist research centre, although he had previously been considered for the leadership of the Afrikania Mission (Gyanfosu 1995, p. 347). He sought to explain *trokosi* through an understanding of the *fiasidiwo* and address why abuses might have occurred in Tongu shrines, whereas they were not in shrines that have *fiasidiwo*; he did not completely dismiss the accusation that abuse occurred in some of the Tongu shrines (even though he is often represented as if he has). In his attempts to address the potential differences between the two, he mobilized an argument that set a firm contrast between categories of the ‘past’ and the ‘present’ and the ‘Anlo’ and the ‘Tongu’.

From his perspective, the ‘Anlo’ shrines, which initiate *fiasidiwo*, represent an ‘older’ form of the practice that has subsequently been corrupted in the ‘newer’ ‘Tongu’ shrines. Within the ‘older’ (Anlo) form of the practice, he argued in a similar fashion to Massiasta that women were trained as role-models of morality; the women would then have a hand in teaching their children this morality, creating “virtuous citizens”. In contrast, the ‘Tongu’ shrines misunderstood the term *fiasidi*, as “wife of the deity/chief”, and it was corrupted as *fiadedi*, meaning “wife of the priest/chief” (PUM 1994, p. 5-6; Quashigah 1998, p. 197).⁸⁹ Given this view that the ‘Tongu’ shrines have “misunderstood the original purpose,” he proposed that the practice should be revived as it ‘originally’ existed and follow the example of the ‘Anlo’ shrines (PUM 1994, p. 5-6).⁹⁰

⁸⁸ See ING (1995, 1998); Amuzu (1999); Gakpleazi (1999a, 1999b, 1999c); Humali (2002).

⁸⁹ Sources suggest that Dartey-Kumordzie also had a “heated discussion” with Sharon Titian (PUM 1995).

⁹⁰ In light of Dartey-Kumordzie’s understanding of the problem, he proposed “to set up schools in order to revive the original meaning of Trokosi” (PUM 1994, p. 6), although this has not occurred to date.

The engagements between the abolitionist campaign and those that contested the Trokosi Slave representation and NGO activities influenced the structure of subsequent contestations. At the local level, practitioners were flagging the ways in which the *fiasidiwo* differed from the *trokosiwo*. The NGOs and governmental representatives recognised some of these, but still advocated for modification in the form of replacing initiates with other types of gifts. This led to a much more strategic contestation from Klikor by the Adzima priests and Massiasta, who were starting to believe that the abolition protagonists' insistence on modification was linked to their Christian perspective and a desire to "abolish" 'traditional religion'.

This was exacerbated by encounters with Wisdom, who was organising the district seminars in 1995. The Klikor *Fiaga* expressed concern about Wisdom in his address during the 1996 workshop for Chiefs. His address, summarized by the official workshop report, noted that the Denu district seminar in 1995, attended by shrine priests, elders, and practitioners, was problematic:

"the very introductory lines of the main speaker [Mark Wisdom] at the seminar attracted a lot of misgivings. According to Togbui Addo VIII [Paramount Chief of Klikor], the speech was a 'disaster' as it sought to compare the cultures of other tribes with the Trokosi practice and projected those other cultures as being much more superior. This really incensed the people, he said." (ING 1996).

The issue being highlighted here is Wisdom's 'Vestal Virgin' argument, which informed the title of the initial abolitionist project.

These suspicions about the intentions of the abolitionist campaign, along with the arguments of Dale Massiasta and Dr. Dartey-Kumordzie, were a precursor to a much more significant set of contestations that took up some of the issues that they had outlined. However, before I move on to discuss these more elaborate and organised refutations, I want to examine some of the abolitionist campaigns' responses to the arguments made by those in Klikor and Dr. Dartey-Kumordzi.

Responses from the Campaign: The Academics

A number of questions and problems were raised for the abolitionist campaign by the Klikor *Fiaga*, Dale Massiasta, the Adzima priests, Dr. Dartey-Kumordzie, and a number of other Chiefs and practitioners who questioned the representation of the Trokosi Slave. In particular, the abolition campaign needed to adequately address these alternative claims in order to refute them, posing questions about the following issues:

the meaning of *trokosi*, its relationship to ‘Ewe traditional religion’ generally, its origins and aims, and the degree to which the representation of the practice within the Tongu districts could be generalized for the southern Volta Region and Dangbe districts. Additionally, the abolitionist campaign needed to justify their inclusion of shrines that initiated *fiasidiwo*, if the practice differed in significant respects from that of *trokosi*.

However, the protagonists of the abolition campaign had no way of addressing these questions, as up until this point, the information available about *trokosiwo* and the *fiasidiwo* had only been based upon the experiences and accounts of individuals who brought the practice to the public’s attention, particularly Mark Wisdom. As a result, and in response to Dr. Dartey-Kumordzie’s and others’ arguments, participants of the first National Workshop, held in 1995, raised the lack of research and knowledge about the practice as a key issue which needed to be addressed in order to develop effective strategies to deal with the problem.

At this recommendation, the leading abolitionist NGO, International Needs Ghana, commissioned Dr. Elom Dovlo, a lecturer in the Department of Religion at the University of Ghana, and A. K. Adzoyi, a postgraduate researcher, to research the *trokosi* practice. Their report offered a systematic and coherent overview of the practice and its position within ‘traditional religion’ and the ‘beliefs’ of the ‘Ewe,’ although it was primarily based upon a small number of shrines in the Tongu districts (cf Dovlo & Adzoyi 1995). ING commissioned Dovlo and Kufogbe to do further research in 1997 on the “geographical spread” of the *trokosiwo* and *fiasidiwo*, in order for the organisation and other interested parties to know the number of shrines and initiates involved.

This was followed by a study by Dr. Nukunya, a lecturer in the Sociology Department at the University of Ghana, and a group of research assistants, commissioned by the National Population Council (NPC), through the Population Impact Project (Ameh 2001, p. 255).⁹¹ Nukunya’s aim was similar to Dovlo’s: “take a census of all the Trokosi shrines in the Ewe and Dangbe areas...find out all about the nature and modes of operation of the system with emphasis on the Tongu areas” (Nukunya & Kwafo 1998, p. 4). In all three cases, the goal of the research was to suggest recommendations; as Nukunya argues, “It is only when we are quite clear about

⁹¹ This research was later incorporated into the 2003 edition of *Tradition and Change* (cf Nukunya 2003).

these that any meaningful attempts can be made to introduce reforms. After all, we cannot change something we don't fully know or understand" (Nukunya & Kwafo 1998, p. 4).⁹²

In the case of Dovlo's 1995 and Nukunya's 1998 reports, it is clear from their accounts that their understanding of *trokosi* is based exclusively upon shrines within the Tongu districts. This is then extended to create a coherent and consistent representation of the shrine practices as 'a system' and set of 'beliefs' applicable to all Ewe communities. However, even the representation drawn here for the Tongu districts is problematic. For example, Nukunya acknowledges that variation exists between different shrines located in the Tongu districts, particularly in relation to treatment of the *trokosiwo* based upon age and status, the support and care of the woman's children, and length of commitment (Nukunya & Kwafo 1998, p. 32, 36, 38). Although acknowledged, these variations are not analysed or drawn upon in characterising the system. The image that the reader is left with is that of a coherent cultural system that applies to all, according to Nukunya, 26 shrines within the North and South Tongu districts (Nukunya & Kwafo 1998, p. 13; Nukunya 2003, p. 257).⁹³ This type of systematisation by extension has been characteristic of the abolition debates.

The contestations by those who have come to the defence of the *fiasidiwo* about how far one can generalise this representation is apparent in inconsistencies within both Dovlo and Nukunya's reports. For example, although Dovlo's initial research does not extend beyond the Tongu districts, he correlates the *fiasidi* with *trokosi*, calling it the "Trokosi/Fiasidi institution" (Dovlo & Adzoyi 1995, p. 1-2; Dovlo & Kufogbe 1998). He briefly notes that there is variation within the practice and status of initiates; however, he admonishes the attempts of "certain shrines to draw conclusions for the whole institution", referring to those who have refuted the claims of the abolitionists with "what they conceive as positive elements" (Dovlo & Adzoyi 1995, p. 2). He goes on to argue that even though they are only focusing on the practice as found within the Tongu districts this "in no way exonerates other practitioners of their obnoxious practices" (Dovlo & Adzoyi 1995, p. 2).

⁹² It is unclear from Dovlo & Adzoyi (1995) what their research methodology was. Nukunya's research assistants prepared interview questionnaires for priests, *trokosiwo*, librated *trokosiwo*, and visited shrines within the Tongu districts as well as the Dangbe districts and the (Anlo) Keta and Ketu districts for comparison. In the Tongu districts they covered 10 shrines out of the 26 identified there (1998, p. 21).

⁹³ Dovlo & Kufogbe estimate that there are 27 shrines within the Tongu districts (1998, p. 91).

Dovlo's later work clarifies his position in relation to the *fiasidi*, in that it notes some variations between different localities (beyond the Tongu/Anlo division); although these are in relation to variations in duration of commitment, amount of labour performed, and in marriages. In this type of examination, *trokosi*, apparently the Tongu variant, is used as prototype against which others are compared (Dovlo & Kufogbe 1998, p. 97). Likewise, Nukunya's research also used the Tongu representation as a basis for comparison with other districts. His assessment of the *fiasidiwo* in the 'Anlo' districts is based upon his research assistants' rapid survey of one of the Adzima shrines in Klikor and the Tomi and Sui shrines in Anloga.

Since Nukunya considers the issue in relation to 'beliefs' and uses *trokosi* as a prototype, when noting that there are differences in treatment of the *fiasidiwo* (they are "treated more humanely"), he concludes that this only because they do not live at the shrines and as such "the undesirable things associated with the system in the Tongu area could not be meted out to them" (Nukunya & Kwafo 1998, p. 49). In other words, the treatment of the *fiasidiwo* is only seen as a result of circumstance. He recommends:

"Nevertheless, it would be advisable not to distinguish even this aspect from the Tongu practice. The practice provides among others, for the committal of innocent girls into shrines and cults against their will; they are forced into sexual and marital unions without their consent; they are made to wear symbols of identity including the raffia leaf, *eshi*, again against their will; and the association with the Troxovi shrine attaches a stigma to them through no fault of theirs. As such despite the protestation to the contrary, the Fiasidi system like the Trokosi system deserves the strictures being levelled against it" (Nukunya & Kwafo 1998, p. 49).

As indicated, he justifies the inclusion of the 'Anlo' shrines in the representation of *trokosi* and the interventions of the NGOs based on the notion of "consent", which to him indicates that the shrines "bear all the hallmarks of the Trokosi system and should be treated as such" (Nukunya & Kwafo 1998, p. 71). However, the issues highlighted in the representation of *trokosi* go far beyond that of consent, making the recommendation misleading.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Although I have chosen not to focus on this issue here, I will note that these are misrepresentations of the *fiasidiwo* in Klikor as well. For example, as I will describe in following chapters, the *esi* is a symbol of one's affiliation with deities in relation to protection and can be worn by petitioners, in addition to *fiasidiwo*. Additionally, the issue of consent is mobilized here in absolute terms; they are understood as not having volition because of their subordinated relationship to the shrine deity and priest. However, the issue of volition is more complicated in practice than portrayed in these representations.

Criminalisation and the Mobilisation of the ARM (1996 onwards)

When discussions intensified in the media during 1996 on whether or not *trokosi* would be criminalized, contestations over the activities of the abolitionist campaign increased, particularly in relation to the *fiasidi*. As I noted before, the arguments of the abolitionist campaign with respect to abuses occurring in the shrines that accept *fiasidiwo* were not supported by members of these communities or the research subsequently conducted. As a result, the abolitionist campaign had to justify the inclusion of the *fiasidiwo* in their activities and the subsequent legislation that might address it. Amongst themselves they did so through the arguments and academic credibility of Dovlo and Nukunya, who argued that at the core the *fiasidiwo* were similar to that of *trokosiwo*, in that they had no volition in whether or not they were initiated. As a result, the public representation of *trokosi* as ‘slavery’ became stronger and distinctions were not made between the two.

Locally, efforts were made to provide even more information. For example, the Anlo Awoamefia⁹⁵ petitioned Parliament to suspend the discussions on regulation, so that the Anlo Traditional Council could prepare a report for Parliament about the *fiasidi*.⁹⁶ Similarly, Klikor resident and knowledge keeper, Dale Massiasta, wrote a memorandum to Parliament entitled *Religion and Human Rights: The Question of the Fiasidi System in Klikor*. His aim, partly, was to correct misinformation about the *fiasidiwo* (and to a lesser extent the Tongu *trokosiwo*) by examining the practice and meaning attributed to the initiates in Klikor. Like his earlier statements to representatives of the abolitionist campaign and those of Dr. Dartey-Kumordzie, Massiasta claimed that the *fiasidiwo* are “made a moral model for the others in the affected family to emulate”, in that she is married to the deity (1996, p. 9).⁹⁷

However, unlike others, Massiasta incorporated the language of human rights into his argument and how these relate to religious freedoms:

“My contention in this regard is that religious beliefs or practices and human rights, as a political tenet, are issues to be handled with care. Secondly, I contend that to propose religious freedom only by prescribing [sic] religions is a

⁹⁵ Awoamefia is the Paramount Chief of the Anlo state.

⁹⁶ Anlo Traditional Council (1996).

⁹⁷ Amuzu’s perspective is influenced by Massiasta. Particularly, he cites a portion of Massiasta’s research in how many *fiasidiwo* or their children own houses in Klikor, as compared to non-*fiasidiwo* women - 60% of the houses owned in Klikor by women are *fiasidiwo* or a child of a *fiasidi* (Massiasta 1996).

cunning way to deny that freedom. Lastly, if legislation should be made to the effect of abolishing the system, similar systems should be incorporated in that legislation” (Massiasta 1996, p. 2).

In making this argument, Massiasta compares the *fiasidiwo* to Catholic nuns (although he is aware that others contest this comparison), claiming to do so to expose the biases of Emile Short, the commissioner of the CHRAJ, to demonstrate that groups being held collectively responsible for “sins” is not unusual in religious systems (characterising Catholic nuns and priests as being symbolic of the “first sacrifice”), and to illustrate that “by deciding to belong to or join a religious group, one has actually decided to forgo certain rights and liberties, at least for a time” (Massiasta 1996, p. 4).

Massiasta is also highlighting a key issue that represented a general feeling among those in Klikor; perhaps the main focus of the abolition campaign was not a concern about the welfare of the initiates. To them, the issue of the welfare of the initiates in Klikor had been addressed. Instead, those in Klikor were coming to an opinion that the campaign increasingly represented an attack on ‘traditional religion’; an opinion that they justified by examining the religion of the protagonists of the abolition campaign, Christianity, and the dominant place of Christian organizations within the abolition campaign. For Massiasta personally, this was one episode of a much longer battle:

“I personally regard the present outcries against African religious practices as the usual outcries from those cultures of domination, cultures that are bent on imposing alien thought processes on Africans” (Massiasta 1996, p. 2).

This type of understanding of the abolitionist campaign’s motivations, as a contest and power struggle between Christianity and ‘traditional religion’ in post-Independence Ghana, shaped subsequent contestations against the abolition campaign and were the most strongly mobilized by the Afrikania Renaissance Mission (ARM) in 1998. At this point and in reaction to the impending criminalisation of the *trokosi* practice and its variants, the ARM started to publicly intercede by organising media events that questioned the activities of the NGOs. Their aim according to the then leader of the ARM, Osofo Kofi Ameve, was to “expose the gigantic fraud now called Trokosi” (Ameve 1999).

One of the reasons that the ARM was drawn to the Trokosi Slave debate was because the organisation itself was formulated in the midst of a much wider and ongoing conversation about the appropriate relationship between ‘traditional religion’

and Christianity. The ARM was organised by Osofo Kofi Ameve after a series of leadership conflicts in the early nineties in the Afrikania Mission. The Afrikania Mission was formed by Rev. Vincent Kwabena Damuah on 22 December 1982; the same date that he publicly resigned from the Catholic Church, in which he had been a priest since 1957 (Gyanfosu 1995, p. 276-277; Bediako 1995).⁹⁸ In line with its predecessor, the ARM “has set itself the task of redefining, reforming and renaming the Religion of Afrika” (Ameve n.d, p. 11), in light of their perspective that Christianity was one form of colonial oppression (I will discuss this issue more thoroughly in Chapter 8). One of the ARM’s central activities, like the Afrikania Mission, was the establishment of local branches of the organisation throughout many areas in Ghana which hold weekly services to worship local deities and ancestors.

Central to the ARM’s activities in challenging the abolitionist campaign and its representation of the Trokosi Slave was a collaboration built between them and the Klikor Adzima shrines. This began after representatives of the ARM read Massiasta’s memorandum to Parliament and sought out the Adzima shrines in Klikor.⁹⁹ The ARM eventually assisted the Adzima priests and elders in creating the Trɔxovi Institutional Council (TIC) in 1998.¹⁰⁰

Before discussing the ARM’s and the TIC’s activities, we need to examine the role of the Klikor Adzima shrines, the meaning ascribed to the *fiasidiwo* in these shrines, and the ideas of Massiasta in shaping the ARM’s understanding of the *fiasidiwo* more closely. The ARM publicly argued that the *fiasidiwo* were ‘Queen-Mothers’, rather than ‘slaves’, by drawing upon the common occurrence of *fiasidiwo* in Klikor being referred to as *Mamawo*. This term when used in reference to kinship means ‘grandmother’ and is also used as a title of respect for deities and women who have obtained a high level of wealth and socio-political power.

The Klikor Traditional Area does not have an established role of Queen-Mother as a specific type of traditional ruler that may be found in other areas throughout Ghana and the Volta Region. In contrast, the term may be used in the Klikor area to refer to the wife of a chief, which relates to the meaning ascribed to the *fiasidiwo* in practice and etymological deconstruction. While often interpreted as the “wives of the deity”,

⁹⁸ See also Gyanfosu (2002).

⁹⁹ The head of the ARM at the time, Osofo Kofi Ameve, was also originally from Klikor, although living in Accra.

¹⁰⁰ *Trɔxovi* characterizes shrines or deities who ‘receive children’ (*xo*-receive; *vi*-children) and generally currently represents those with *fiasidiwo* or *trokosiwo*.

the term *fiasidi* etymologically means “fit to be the wife of the chief” (*fīa* – chief; *si* – wife; *di* – fit to be).¹⁰¹

The ARM also drew upon ‘evidence’ about the social and economic position of *fiasidiwo* in Klikor that had been outlined by Massiasta and in previous discussions between the Klikor Adzima shrines and the abolitionist campaign. The evidence showed that not only were *fiasidiwo* respected in the Klikor community, many have a higher social and economic position than non-*fiasidi* women in Klikor. As argued by Massiasta, many *fiasidiwo* have gone on to higher education, have social and political leadership positions in the community, and own a greater percentage of houses in Klikor than non-*fiasidi* women (1996).

While the Fiasidi-Queen is a particular representation of the *fiasidiwo* in Klikor, the ARM also systematised their understanding of the *fiasidi* to include the *trokosi* in the Tongu districts (in much of the same way the abolitionist campaign systematised their understandings based upon a number of shrines in the North Tongu districts). To this end, the ARM often claimed that “there is no *trokosi*” as the abolitionists define it in the southern Volta Region. This is a political assertion and intrinsically connected to what they also understood the abolition campaign to be about: the abolition of ‘traditional religion’ by “Christian chauvinists”. To enhance their point, they contradicted the abolitionists’ use of the term *trokosi* as simultaneously indicating an initiate, a practice, and a type of shrine. This, they argued, was an indication of the abolitionists’ ignorance of ‘traditional religion’ because these types of shrines are more appropriately understood as *trɔxovi* shrines or shrines and deities that receive (*xo*) children (*vi*). Since the abolitionists, in the ARM’s perspective, were “Christian chauvinists” and completely ignorant of ‘traditional religion’, the ARM argued that the abolitionists’ claims were “lies” and a strategic attempt at criminally “defrauding” their international supporters.

While the ARM is most associated with their claims that protagonists of the abolition campaign are “Christian chauvinists” or “frauds”, their argument included a much more important counter-representation of the practice concerning the link between initiates and lineage crimes, following that of Massiasta, Dr. Dartey-Kumordzie, and Amuzu. Members of the ARM, such as Osofo Azasu, a lecturer at the University of Winneba, argue that the initiates are affiliated to the shrines because a

¹⁰¹I will examine this issue more thoroughly in Chapter 8.

lineage that committed a crime “is regarded as having failed society by not effectively raising all its members on the path of righteousness and is requested to endow one of its members with property and undergo spiritual, moral and social training in the shrine to serve as a role model for the affected family” (Allotey 1999). This construction of the practice is in contrast to the abolitionists’ representation of the Trokosi Slave as being initiated to “atone” for the crimes of another person as a sacrifice and as undergoing punishment for those crimes.

The ARM emerged in national discussions about the Trokosi Slave on 20 January 1999, when they organised a news conference about *trokosi* at the Arts Centre in Accra (cf Ameve 1999a). The Ghanaian newspaper coverage of this conference highlighted one theme of the ARM’s position in its title, “Anti-Trokosi drive is big fraud—ARM”. This came to be the basis of the protagonists’ understanding of the ARM’s overall claims.¹⁰²

Almost immediately, ING and FESLIM countered the ARM’s assertion in the Ghanaian media, by arguing that the ARM was unfairly positioning the issue of the Trokosi Slave into a framework that accused them of “Christian chauvinism” and they reasserted their human rights stance.¹⁰³ Nonetheless, the ARM continued challenging the abolitionist campaign. On 14 September 1999, they wrote to President Rawlings, appealing for him to send out an investigation team to probe into the activities of the NGOs. They made the same appeal to President Kufour in 2001.¹⁰⁴

The ARM also set out to disprove the claims of the protagonists that *trokosiwo* were slaves. One way they did this was to investigate Juliana Dogbadzi, the most publicised liberated *trokosi*, and a few others featured in a *Mirror* article published on 12 December 1998.¹⁰⁵ Dogbadzi had become the ‘spoke-*trokosi*’ par excellence, travelling to the United States in order to appeal for funding on behalf of ING and even attempted to start her own NGO, Survivors for Change, but without much success. She also won the Human Rights Reebok Award in 1999. However, when the ARM investigated her claims, it set off concerns in the abolitionist movement, particularly amongst funders, that Dogbadzi’s accounts were inconsistent with one another.

¹⁰² See Allotey (1999).

¹⁰³ See Hesse & Badu (1999); Wisdom (1999).

¹⁰⁴ See ARM (1999); Gobah (2001).

¹⁰⁵ See *Mirror* (1998).

Eventually, the Paramount Chief of Adidome and the United States Embassy organised a meeting with Dogbadzi to clarify her experiences.¹⁰⁶

Finally, the ARM assisted the Klikor Adzima priests in establishing the Trɔxovi Institutional Council (TIC). The TIC was formed to network with other *trɔxovi* shrines in the southern Volta Region and greater Accra, educate the public about the *trɔxovi* practice in defence to NGO representations, provide an internal mechanism for dealing with human rights abuses within shrines throughout the region, and represent those who have not undergone liberations through NGO intervention.¹⁰⁷ The Council holds regular meetings, alternating locations between each of the member shrines. These meetings have created opportunities for discussions about the nature of the practice between practitioners in different locales and shrines.

Despite the TIC's organisational aims, the council has only successfully been able to recruit a small number of *trɔxovi* shrines. Recently, the TIC began accepting *Yewe* shrines into the council, which have not been associated with the *trokosi* debates

¹⁰⁶ Although I met with Dogbadzi, the Chief of Adidome and representatives of the U.S. Embassy, I do not feel it is ethically appropriate to pursue whether or not Dogbadzi has falsified her account extensively, except to note that the inconsistencies in Dogbadzi's account became a concern for many within the debates. Additionally, the meeting arranged with the Adidome Paramount Chief and the U.S. Embassy is frequently retold to indicate that Dogbadzi was never a *trokosi*. See Ameh (2001) and Eckhardt (2004) for a more extensive discussion of these inconsistencies.

¹⁰⁷ Its stated aims are:

- "a. To formalise the ancient code of ethics for the Troxovi shrines and ensure its adherence by the priests and priestesses.
- b. To register all Troxovi shrines and seek protection and legal guidance for them when the need arises.
- c. To perpetuate the instilling of such values as moral and formal education, healthcare, peaceful coexistence, honesty, justice, devotion to God, social welfare, public security and all human virtues of man.
- d. To eliminate or minimise crime in society by introducing to humanity the original and most enlightened consciousness about God.
- e. To train women and men as role models for families which have become morally and spiritually defective and need rehabilitation.
- f. To sustain moral and spiritual uprightness in society.
- g. To take actions to eliminate human rights abuses, if there happens to be any, in any Troxovi shrine in Ghana; and appropriately re-educate or bring to book the priest(ess) and elders of the offending shrine.
- h. To seek the total welfare of all trained Fiashidi by defending their human rights and base their training on acceptable social norms within the laws of Ghana.
- i. To defend and protect without bias, the interests, aspirations and well-being of the Troxovi Institution.
- j. To educate and inform the public appropriately about matters of concern to the Troxovi Institution and its shrines.
- k. To contribute to the promotion of tourism to shrine areas.
- l. See to or take part in further improvement of our native institutions which are meant for the protection of society's welfare.
- m. To collaborate with other councils or organisations whose aspirations, aims and objectives are found to be similar to those of its own.
- n. To institutionalise the traditional protection of the environment, in particular, and harmless creatures and endangered species.
- o. To promote ecological sanity." (TIC n.d.).

outside Wisdom's proclamation that he would "abolish" them next.¹⁰⁸ However, *Yewe* shrines have historically been the subject of various abolition movements, which re-emerged in 2004.¹⁰⁹

The creation of the TIC was a strategic maneuver, in that the ARM was able to show that priests support their claims, much like the abolitionist movement had used priests in the Tongu district to support their claims. They also participated in many of the activities of the ARM outlined previously. A significant activity was the *durbar* in Klikor on 10th April 1999, inviting the media and other interested parties to examine the shrines and *fiasidiwo* as it was discussed in the Introduction.¹¹⁰ Additionally, the TIC also has written rejoinders to media articles about the Trokosi Slave.¹¹¹



Picture 2: A Tongu Shrine Priest at a TIC meeting. Photo by Dana Romanoff (used with permission).

The TIC and the ARM also began to intercede when protagonists of the abolition campaign announced that they had entered into negotiations for the liberation of particular shrines or approached shrines that were members of the TIC. In some cases, their actions are successful, as with Mama Blewa shrine, a member of the TIC,

¹⁰⁸ *Yewe* shrines are increasingly popular in the southern Volta Region and represent a thunder deity. See Greene (1996a) and Akyeampong (2001a) for an extended discussion of the historical debates about these types of shrines.

¹⁰⁹ See Modey (2004); Lokko (2004); Agbomado (2004); Normanyo (2004).

¹¹⁰ See Ogbamey (1999); Daily Graphic (1999); Ghanaian Times (1999).

¹¹¹ See Humali (2000, 2002).

which rejected a proposed visit from the NCC to discuss the *trokosi* practice in 2005. In other cases, they have not been successful; despite offering support to some of the Agave shrines and the Sovigbenor shrine in Aflao, these shrines agreed to the liberation process.

While the ARM and the TIC have often represented themselves as claiming that the abolitionist movement is fraudulent and that the Trokosi Slave as defined by protagonists does not exist, there is a sentiment that perhaps abuses did occur in some shrines. However, they proposed to deal internally with these abuses through the TIC. The TIC proclaimed itself as understanding what the practice is and is not and would disseminate this knowledge to other ritual specialists. By taking the Klikor Adzima shrines as their model, they understood that problems often associated with the practice would be eliminated or reformed, based upon their interpretation of the practice. In this regard, the “Christian” protagonists of the abolition campaign were not needed to effect modifications and modification did not necessarily need to mean “abolishment”.

This pragmatic aim combined with the aim of contesting the activities of the NGOs led to a contrast between what the TIC and ARM argued were “genuine” *troxovi* shrines and “fake” shrines. “Genuine” *troxovi* shrines were those that had been identified through the ARM’s and TIC’s investigation of various shrines in the southern Volta Region and those that became members of the TIC. These were then published in the *Daily Graphic*.¹¹² “Fake” shrines, on the other hand, were those that either had elements of abuse or had aligned themselves to the abolitionist campaign. The ARM and TIC have also accused the protagonists of the abolition campaign of setting up “fake” shrines in the southern Volta Region in order to elicit more funding from their international supporters.

Conclusion

This chapter offered a brief outline of the way in which opposition towards to the abolition campaign developed. By the time I started my research, these contestations were represented and understood by many commentators as being between protagonists who were concerned about human rights and “intellectuals, who cast the Trokosi campaign in terms of conflict between Western (‘modern’) and

¹¹² See Ameve (2000); ARM (1998).

traditional African cultural values” (Ameh 1998, p. 51). These intellectuals were considered to be instigators of a more widespread opposition which impeded the success of the abolitionist campaign in liberating the *trokosiwo* and *fiasidiwo*.

I have begun to show the way these refutations were developed in reaction to the abolitionist campaign. I have also emphasised how this in part led to a reification of the contrasting representations of the Trokosi Slave and the Fiasidi-Queen. The mobilisation of the different sides to these debates brought into play a number of particularly powerful discursive configurations. The first was the language and imagery of slavery, which played upon different types of meaning and understandings of what slavery is, historically and contemporarily. The second is the contrast between ‘traditional religion’ and ‘Christianity’, which for the ARM and the Klikor Adzima shrines’ ritual specialists is connected to the negative representation of their practices as ritual slavery and their initiates as ‘slaves’. These will be explored in more detail in the third section of my thesis; however, I quickly want to show how this imagery of slavery produced by the abolitionist campaign was a central concern to the Klikor Adzima shrines and influenced their public contestation and engagement with abolitionists or those associated with the abolitionist campaign, such as the international media.

While I was in Klikor, several Euro-Americans came to Klikor to investigate the Trokosi Slave for the international media. One of these was a film-crew who had decided to make a documentary about the Trokosi Slave. The film-crew had contacted International Needs Ghana (ING) to assist them in finding interviews and locations to film, but they had decided that they also wanted to do a segment at the Klikor Adzima shrines since it was the site from which contestations about Trokosi Slave emerged and represented by many abolitionists as the practice at its “worst”. When they initially came to the shrines to make their request, guided by an employee of ING (although the shrine priests were not aware of it), they were told to speak to the head of the ARM for permission.

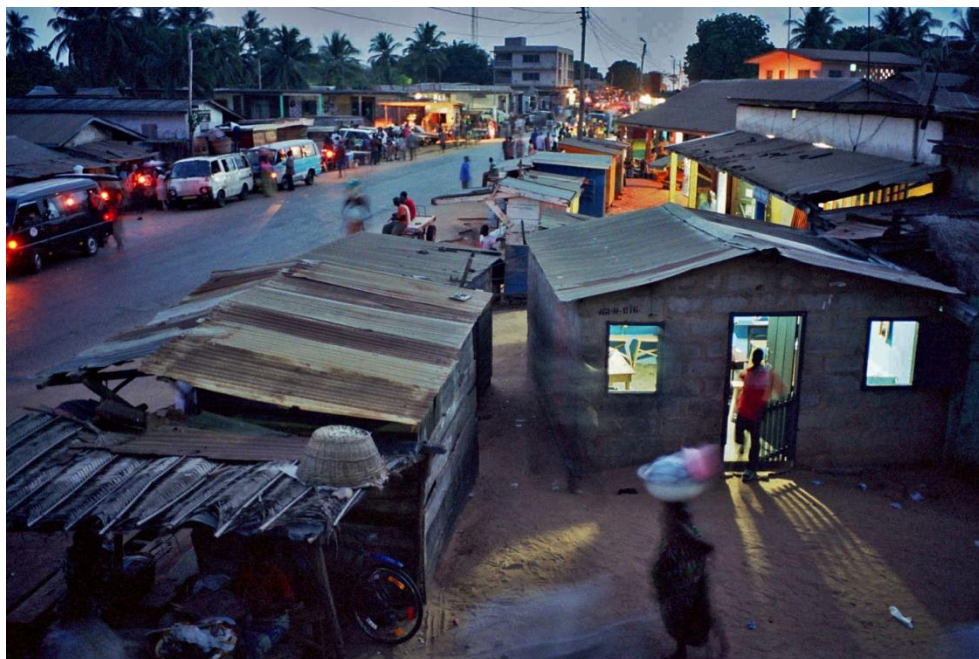
They returned several days later and after a detailed process of negotiation over fees, they were escorted around the shrines by a number of elders and *fiasidiwo*. At one of the shrines, the priest gestured towards the shrine compound and asked, “Does this look like a place where we keep slaves?” The question was followed with a similar one when the crew was introduced to a number of *fiasidiwo*: “Do these women look like slaves?” These types of questions are not peculiar to this particular incident. Occasionally, when the Trokosi Slave abolition campaign was brought up in

conversation, I was also asked by several *fiasidiwo*, “Do I look like a slave?”, while shrugging their shoulders.

This type of reaction and questioning only surfaced during engagements such as these when the Trokosi Slave was highlighted and the *fiasidiwo* and ritual specialists were called upon to defend themselves against the much more powerful assertion of ritual slavery. In contrast, a different set of concerns were highlighted in the Adzima shrines’ interactions with lineages initiating a *fiasidi*; although, these too are shaped by the Adzima shrines’ concern about the relationship between ‘traditional religion’ and Christianity and how these affect others interpretation of the shrine practices and initiates. At this point, I move onto to the main body of this thesis, which entails an ethnographic exploration of the meanings ascribed to the *fiasidiwo* in the Adzima shrines in Klikor. In the next chapter, I explore both Klikor as a community and the centrality of the Adzima shrines in it. I also highlight how relationships are formed to Adzima deities and how the relationships are central to the Adzima shrine ritual context.

Chapter Four

Klikor and the Adzima Shrines



Picture 3: Klikor-Agbosome Market. Photo by Dana Romanoff (used with permission).

A dusty unpaved street leads you from the Accra-Aflao Road to the Klikor town-centre, lined with households and stalls selling tomatoes, chilli peppers, and other types of provisions. At the end of the street, you enter the Klikor town-centre that is marked by the whitewashed shrine of the Kli deity, close to the *Fiaga*'s (Paramount Chief) palace, food stalls, and community water supply. Standing in the centre of Klikor, the centrality of the Kli shrine reflects the shrine's importance in claims of community belonging, territoriality, and historical political autonomy. This is reinforced by the definition of the town's name, meaning "in the footsteps of Kli" or "in the lap of Kli", reflecting oral traditions of the settlement and the formation of the Klikor state under the leadership of Togbui Kli¹¹³ and the guardianship of his deity, Kli.¹¹⁴

Following the various footpaths around Klikor will take you into several different wards, including Afegame ("the big house"), Ablotsivia/Abletsivia ("little London" or "little overseas"/ "deceive you to never return") and Ablogame ("the big

¹¹³ In some cases Kli is also named Addo, Ado, or Adu, reflecting the name of the first *Fiaga* of Klikor.

¹¹⁴ The title *Togbui* is a form of address used in order to show respect. It generally means 'grandfather', and is applied to chiefs, elders, and deities.

place”). These wards are associated with lineage ancestors who are credited with the acquisition of stools (of war, wealth, or chiefly), the ownership of deities, and establishment of their shrines. Setting off these districts are three shrines constructed from cement and painted black with vibrant splashes of red and white; the two Mama Vena shrines in Ablogame and Ablotsivia and the Togbui Adzima shrine in Afegame, collectively referred by locals as the Adzima shrines.¹¹⁵ Each are associated with separate patrilineages in Klikor, although are also central to the protection of *Klikortwo* alongside the Kli deity; the Adzima deities collectively are known to be Klikor’s “war deities”.

The shrines are the central hub of everyday sociality in each ward; women selling peanuts, pure water, and other provisions while men gather around the lottery kiosk. Others, both men and women, use the shrine steps as a meeting place to talk with neighbours, play games, nap, have their hair dyed or nails painted, or to just simply “catch the breeze.” Visitors, barefoot and covered with cloth, periodically enter the shrine compounds accompanied by a resident of Klikor or a *fiasidi* with their arms loaded with bottles of schnapps and occasionally a chicken or a goat. With these visits, the area livens with activity, as people hope to receive a portion of the alcohol or the cooked sacrificed animal served with *dzankple* (made from maize flour and the oil used to boil the goat or chicken). Visits to the shrines with offerings occur more frequently during the annual Kli-Adzima festival, drawing petitioners and initiates from the community, elsewhere in Ghana, and from as far away as Togo and Benin. Even those who are not directly involved in the festival, or choose not to participate, contribute to the overall ambiance of the festival by watching and taking advantage of the economic opportunities that the festival brings to the town.¹¹⁶

This chapter has the dual purpose to introduce the broader Klikor community and the Adzima shrines. The first section contains a cursory glance at Klikor: briefly examining the inclusion of Klikor as Anlo, and giving an account of Klikor’s social, economic, and religious make-up. By broadly situating the three Adzima shrines in the Klikor community, I will be able to move on to describe the establishment of the Adzima shrines and formation of a number of different relationships centred on the

¹¹⁵ *fe* is commonly translated as house or lineage. The shrines were at one time called *Adzimafe* (or *Venafe* etc); although, most prefer to call the shrine *kpome*.

¹¹⁶ Not everyone in Klikor patronise the Togbui Adzima and Mama Vena shrines, or if they do may not do so all the time, preferring other deities to which they may have a closer relationship. However, most people have multiple affiliations with different types of shrines or deities.

Adzima deities through lineage membership and initiation. These same relationships are the nexus through which a wider ritual complex is formed.

The Klikor Traditional Area

Klikor is a small township associated with the Klikor Traditional Area located 106 miles east of Ghana's capital, Accra, and thirteen miles west of Lome (Togo), in the Ketu District of the Volta Region. The Klikor Traditional Area itself covers a large expanse bordering the Wheta Traditional Area to the west and the Dzodze Traditional Area to the north. Although Klikor typically is recognised as bordering the Some Traditional Area to the east, this boundary has historically shifted and continues to be a matter of contestation.

While the Klikor Traditional Area is situated within contemporary Ghanaian political structures so that today it is associated with the Ketu District Assembly, it also has a history of chieftaincy that continues to be important in the contemporary context as a political authority. The head of the Klikor Traditional Area is the Paramount Chief (*Fiaga*). Wards in Klikor are associated with the historical settlement of different areas by expanding and fragmenting patrilineages and each has their own *dufia*, or sub-chief. Before describing the social, economic, and religious make-up of Klikor, let us take a cursory glance at the ways in which those who claim membership in the Klikor Traditional Area understand their relationship to other Ewe communities, particularly the Anlo.

Klikortɔ or Anlo?

Klikor was considered to be an independent state to the north of the more well-known and documented Anlo state situated on the coast until the early-twentieth century (cf Amenumey 1986). Narratives about Togbui Kli are central to *Klikortɔwo* explanations of the formation of the Klikor state and claims to territory. Togbui Kli is credited with leading a group of migrants from Notsie (Togo) carrying both a deity of the same name and the royal stool, and finally settling in the area now known as

Klikor.¹¹⁷ Togbui Kli's royal stool legitimises the authority of the *Fiaga* over the Klikor Traditional Area, setting him apart from other powerful men and lineages in Klikor.

The claim to historical political autonomy and the settlement of the Klikor Traditional Area marks one way residents of Klikor identify themselves, as *Klikortɔwo*.¹¹⁸ However, the *Klikortɔwo* also at times consider themselves to be Anlo-Ewe, a reference that places *Klikortɔwo* into a regional identity and set of relations, particularly in distinction to the categorisation of Tongu-Ewe and Northern-Ewe. The use of the Anlo-Ewe identity by the *Klikortɔwo* is also a significant point in the Trokosi Slave debates when defining variants of *trokosi*. As such, it is useful to examine what underpins the classification of Anlo-Ewe and how the *Klikortɔwo* are situated in it.

The term Anlo-Ewe has been identified with several different points of demarcation; historically, a political group (Greene 1996a; Amenumey 1986, 1997; Akyeampong 2001a), and a cultural/linguistic group (Fiawoo 1959, 1974a; Nukunya 1969a, 1997; Geurts 2002). As a cultural or linguistic group, many academics have included Klikor, in addition to a number of other historical independent polities, in the Anlo classification (cf Nukunya 1997).

As previously indicated in the Introduction, research concerned with identifying the Anlo as a cultural group focuses on social structure and dialect and sets them in contrast to a wider context of the 'Ewe'. Although these studies are generally set in areas considered to be "proper Anlo", i.e. those that have historically fallen within the Anlo state (cf Nukunya 1969a; Fiawoo 1959), Klikor does share the basic features identified in these studies. In brief, the Anlo (and *Klikortɔwo*) are understood to be patrilineal, with lineages (*afedowo*, pl.) and clans (*hlɔwo*, pl.) central to social organisation.¹¹⁹ They also historically have had bi-lateral tendencies, particularly in terms of inheritance of personal property. Whereas property inherited through one's membership to a patrilineage (*afedowo* or *ɛɛfome* – "father's house") stays in the

¹¹⁷ Narratives suggest that these migrants came from the Klikorme ward of Notsie, where Togbui Kli was the Chief. However, narratives about Togbui Kli and the settlement of Klikor vary significantly between informants. In some, Togbui Kli is felt to have led the group from Notsie before the well-known migration and subsequent formation of the Anlo state. In other versions, Togbui Kli is regarded as having played a key role during the escape from Notsie (cf Tobui Addo VII 1978; Massiasta n.d.).

¹¹⁸ The suffix of *ɔ* can be interpreted to mean in this instance citizens or owners of Klikor; *wo* indicates plural.

¹¹⁹ In my experience, the clan is not a unit to which people strongly identify with in Klikor. Informants generally did not speak in terms of clans, and when I brought it up, they in turn referred to lineages. However, clan affiliations are central to claims for being Anlo, even though in daily life it rarely comes up.

lineage, personal property (implicitly understood to be the property of men) was at times inherited by the sister's son (Ward 1955; Nukunya 1969a, 1974; cf Greene 1996a).¹²⁰ This connection of a person to the mother's patrilineage is distinguished by the term *nɔfome*.

Politically the Anlo are organised by a chieftaincy system, central to which is the Paramount Chief (*Awoamefia*). Sub-chiefs are associated with towns, wards, and lineages (Manoukian 1952; Fiawoo 1959; Nukunya 1969a, 1997b; Amenumey 1986; Abotchie 1997; Geurts 2002; Greene 1996a). Klikor political structures also share these features, with the primary difference being that the Paramount Chief is known as the *Fiaga*.

In contrast, or perhaps as a reaction to, those academics that base their understandings on a historical examination of polities do not consider *Klikortɔwo* to be "proper Anlo". While the incorporation of various communities has historically shifted a number of times, based on the expansion and retraction of the Anlo state during the eighteenth to twentieth centuries (Greene 1996a), Klikor was only included as a part of the Anlo polity in 1912, by the then British colonial administration. At this time, the Anlo *Awoamefia* took on an administrative role in relation to the Anlo polity and other communities, which became known as "Greater Anlo" (Crowther 1927; Amenumey 1997, p. 25; Greene 2002a, p. 122).

The organisation of the 'Ewe' into cultural groupings to show variations between subsets exists alongside political and sometimes academic claims to cultural uniformity between groups. These claims emphasise narratives of a common place of origin - Notsie (cf Fiawoo 1974a, p. 163-164; 1974b, p. 168). The migration saga of the 'Ewes' from Notsie (Togo) is a well-known oral tradition among those living in the south-eastern Volta Region. In brief, the oral tradition posits that the Ewe lived in Notsie without incident for some time, after having migrated there previously.¹²¹ However, under the Notsie leadership of Agokoli, tensions rose between the Ewe and the Notsie political leadership which prompted the Ewes' migration to their present locations (cf Kumassah 2005).

¹²⁰ Historical examinations of the Anlo polity also indicate the ways in which many elements of the Anlo social structure, such as the clan system, was developed in reaction to historical events and social dynamics (Greene 1996a). Additionally, Greene argues that these bilateral tendencies developed during the Akwamu occupation of the Anlo during the eighteenth century, as the Akwamu traced kinship matrilineally (1996a).

¹²¹ Prior to Notsie, Ewe groups are argued to have lived in Ketu, in present day Benin. When they left Ketu, they split; some going to Notsie, others to Tado and Wla (Geurts 2002, p. 22; Amenumey 1986).

Anthropologists and historians have explored the migration saga through a number of different lenses. Some historians understand the migration saga as indicating a historical occurrence, dating it to the mid-seventeenth century (Amenumey 1986). Others have argued that the migration saga, as it relates to the Anlo, was important in establishing the political authority of ruling lineages in the Anlo state (Greene 2002a).

Greene also shows that contemporary meanings associated with the migration from Notsie are mobilised to create a local cultural pride, commemorated through the annual Hogbetsotso festival (Greene 2002a, 2002b). Finally, during the early twentieth century, the migration saga featured within the political claims of the Ewe Unification Movement. As Ewe communities were divided between two colonial governments during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Ewe Unification Movement argued that all groups should be unified under one colonial government (Greene 2002b; Meyer 2002).

Klikortwo also utilise the narrative of migration from Notsie in claiming to be Anlo. In doing so, they stress understandings of the patrilineal or affinal relatedness of historical personalities associated with the settlement of territories and the creation of polities and clans. The configurations of these relationships vary substantially between different informants and have historically been mobilised for different kinds of purposes.

Overview of Klikor

The Klikor township is often overlooked when travelling through the Volta Region on the main Accra-Aflao/Lome Road, even though road transects the Klikor Traditional Area. The Klikor town-centre lies somewhat off the main road and is marked only by a small sign, close to one of many small customs stations intermittently placed along the road. The area generally is better known for the town of Agbosome, next to Klikor, and home to one of the regional markets that draws buyers and sellers from long distances throughout the region.

relatives, his wife, and children.¹²³ Each of the priest's wives, his son, and his relative had their own living quarters, and distinguished themselves partly on who and who does not regularly "eat from one pot".

The first "pot" belonged to the priest's third wife and included her children. The second "pot", similarly, belonged to the priest's fourth wife. She had no children of her own, but took into her care the priest's grown unmarried son (and his son) and two of the priest's children from women who had divorced the priest.¹²⁴ The third "pot" belonged to the priest's relative's wife and included her children.

Others were also intermittently incorporated into the household. I, for one, rented a room. Typically, those who rent rooms in households would not necessarily "eat from the same pot" as others in the household. But I was initially incorporated into the priest's third wife's "pot" for practical reasons and only separated when one of her children became seriously ill. At this point, her other children were taken care of by the co-wives and myself. The priest's fourth wife also incorporated others into the household, such as the grown daughter of her sister (who subsequently married the priest's son) and an unrelated 16-year-old girl. The girl's parents informally arranged for her to live with the priest's fourth wife so she could attend school in the area.¹²⁵

Many households, like my own, were supplied with electricity, although service was irregular. Electricity was introduced to Klikor in 1996 through the developmental efforts of the *Fiaga*. A centralised bore-hole and water tap, also established through the efforts of the *Fiaga*, supplied the communities' water. Water was paid for and collected at the tap by household members or delivered for a fee by haulers to fill up water containers associated with each eating unit.¹²⁶ The community also had several public toilet facilities, although many households had their own pit latrines.

¹²³ The other wives of the priest lived in separate households - one was built by the priest's father and the other was associated with the shrine.

¹²⁴ In divorces, since children are the members of their father's patrilineage, they should ideally stay with their fathers. In the case of these two children, they maintained relations with their mothers; one in particular had previously lived with her mother before moving into the household just prior to the time that I moved in and she subsequently went back to her mother's household during the time that I stayed there.

¹²⁵ This brief description can easily segue into a larger discussion about the number of households owned by women and the separate incomes of marriage partners. However, this topic goes beyond the scope of this thesis.

¹²⁶ My own household was equipped with a water tap, although it was never used. One of the wives of the house indicated to me that this was because it created quarrels because the bills were based upon household consumption. Similar issues arose regarding electricity, which was a contributing factor to a series of disagreements in the household.

Klikor (and the region generally) is heavily reliant on farming and trade, which I will discuss in turn. The main crop is maize, although other food staples are grown such as cassava, tomatoes, chilli peppers, and okra. Most farming is done on a subsistence level; although, some farmers do have small-scale cash cropping enterprises, selling surplus products in local and regional markets.

Everyone, male and female, young and old, is in some way connected to a piece of farm land through systems of inheritance or kinship, patronage, marriage, or land purchase. Agriculture is slowly changing with more reliance now placed on paid groups of labourers in addition to kinship ties, patronage, and marriage to plant and harvest crops, depending on the size of the farm and the type of activity (for planting and harvesting more than weeding). Agricultural labourers form groups under the auspices of a tractor owner, who is paid for services based upon the amount of land. The tractor owner, who may or may not actually operate the tractor, will pay the labourers from the fee collected. However, some labourers will occasionally work directly for the farm owner for a wage, especially during the harvest seasons.

The regional markets of Agbosome, Denu, Aflao, Dzodze, Keta, and Akatsi are the primary sites for trade, although stores and kiosks are common in the community. Traders often act as ‘middle-men’ by buying foodstuffs or other goods from producers and other sellers and in turn selling the items at their own stores or regional markets. While goods are obtained from a variety of places, the regional trade system is heavily reliant on the smuggling of goods from Togo. Smugglers are employed to carry items and avoid custom checkpoints at the border and throughout the region.

Since the local area is reliant on smuggling goods from Togo, the death of the Togolese President, Eyadema, in February 2005 and the political unrest that followed when Eyadema’s son Gnassingbe succeeded him without an election had several local economic impacts. Trade was reduced due to temporary closed borders and people’s unwillingness to travel into Togo, fearful that the situation would escalate into the political violence that was experienced in the early 1990s during Togo’s democratic transition (cf Ellis 1993). As a result, the price of many foodstuffs rose drastically during this period.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ In addition to farming and trade, a variety of other activities occur. Some of these include harvesting coconuts, processing palm nuts into palm oil, and making *akpeteshie* (locally made gin). In outlying southern sections of the Klikor Traditional Area, fishing and harvesting salt also occurs. Additionally, many often rear animals in households, such as goats, chickens, and ducks for household consumption, ritual purposes, or to sell in regional markets.

In addition to farming and trading, many in Klikor have specialised skills; for example as hair stylists, tailors, mechanics, and carpenters, to which most of their energy is devoted. These specialised skills are taught to apprentices, who work alongside those that have a specific skill. Ritual experts (these include but are not limited to shrine priests) also possess specialised knowledge and skill, earning money and gifts in kind. Healers, various kinds of diviners, and herbalists also have commoditised relationships with their clients. The area is also widely known for *kente* weaving and ritual woodcarving, with many men learning the art and capitalising on the skill.¹²⁸

While some may not have specialised skills, they may own specialised machinery as in the case of the tractor owner; the relatively expensive tractor operates as the basis for economic enterprise. Others who own grinding mills and vehicles will also use these items to generate income based on providing specialised services to the community. This can also include those who have set up calling centres based around their mobile phones, movie houses based around their ownership of a television and VCD or DVD players,¹²⁹ photocopy centres, and letter writing or secretarial services based upon the ownership of a computer or typewriter.

Livelihood and economic strategies rely on multiple activities undertaken simultaneously or seasonally. None of these are mutually exclusive or completely individualised; activities are often undertaken as groups based upon the often intersecting linkages of kinship ties, religious affiliation, or frameworks of clients and patrons. While people specialise and invest in specific activities to various degrees, many have a number of activities upon which they rely. For example, one of the priest's wives that I lived with, at various points simultaneously or alternating, prepared and sold *watchi* (rice and beans) to children at a neighbouring school and sold charcoal out of the house which she obtained in mass quantity from a charcoal "farmer" in Penyi. She also reared a handful of chickens, cultivated cassava on her own small farm, and prepared food for agricultural labourers hired to work on her husband's farm, the crops of which was processed for household and shrine consumption. Three of the

¹²⁸ In Klikor, the preferred term for *kente* is *kete*. Geurts also finds this in the Anloga context, although the term *kente* is used more frequently by the Ghanaian public (2002, p. 28).

¹²⁹ Despite recent advances in video technology, Video Compact Discs (VCD) are still utilised in Ghana. Some people may have adopted DVDs, but in Klikor, during this time period, VCD was the most common platform, though very few people had these devices.

priest's other wives owned their own stores in which they sold a variety of non-perishable provisions (one was located in my household).

Klikor is also the home of the Black Humanity Development Research Centre (BLAKHUD), whose aim is to “document indigenous African culture and civilisation through studies and research” (BLAKHUD n.d.). It was founded in 1994 by Dale Massiasta, the local knowledge broker and ritual specialist referenced in Chapter 3. Massiasta devotes most of his time writing about “Ewe culture” and maintains a museum in his house. Massiasta's reputation as a knowledge broker is in part legitimized by a deity to whom he is an initiate. He claims that the deity mandated him to research and record local history and culture. The deity eventually prohibited him from leaving his compound in order to fulfill this task.

BLAKHUD has been visited by many different organizations, researchers, and other individuals, but generates most of its income from offering cultural excursions to international students with Cross-Cultural Solutions (CCS) and School for International Training (SIT).¹³⁰ Through BLAKHUD, students are led on guided excursions to one of two shrines in Klikor that have agreed to host visitors and an outlying community where *kente* weaving is demonstrated.¹³¹ One or two students from SIT return to Klikor each year for small, month-long research projects as a part of the curriculum; this avenue characterized my own initial introduction to Klikor and the *fiasidiwo*. Efforts have also been made by BLAKHUD to market their excursions to travel agencies; however, the success of this has been limited.¹³²

BLAKHUD understands their organization as promoting “cultural tourism”¹³³ in the region, particularly by marketing shrines and drawing on general perceptions that Klikor is full of spiritually potent shrines and deities.¹³⁴ However, I would not

¹³⁰ Although Massiasta is not cited in any academic research conducted in the region, he is visited by most researchers. For instance, while I was on fieldwork he was visited by the reputable historian, Emmanuel Akyeampong. CCS brings volunteers to BLAKHUD every six weeks for an afternoon, while SIT visits BLAKHUD for two days twice a year.

¹³¹ The two shrines that alternate in hosting students organize a drumming and dancing ‘performance’ involving initiates and other members of the shrine. This type of activity does occur in these shrines, but typically not outside of a ritual context. One of the shrine priests also delivers an informal lecture on ‘traditional religion’, as he is well-educated and periodically lectures at the University of Ghana. BLAKHUD has also aimed to market these shrines, in addition to the Adzima shrines, as tourist sites.

¹³² One group organized by a travel agency visited BLAKHUD during my time in Klikor as part of a heritage tour, in which the participants (African-American) were taken to a local diviner.

¹³³ For further information on BLAKHUD's vision of “cultural tourism development”, see *Tourism in Ketu* (Massiasta 1998).

¹³⁴ BLAKHUD does not currently utilise the Adzima shrines in their efforts (focusing on two other shrines which I will describe later in this chapter); although, it has at times pushed for the Adzima

characterize Klikor as a destination for tourists.¹³⁵ Outside BLAKHUD, the only other place in Klikor that receives regular visitors is the El-Shaddai School and Friends Children's Home, which sponsors volunteers, primarily from Holland. Likewise, BLAKHUD's activities provide extra, but relatively small and irregular, income to a small proportion of *Klikortɔwo*; for example, to those who participate in performances, provide assistance, and interviews and the owner of a guest house in Klikor.¹³⁶

Klikor, A Place of Deities

According to the 2000 *Population and Housing Census*, the Ketu District as a whole has a larger proportion of the population identifying as "Traditionalist" than any other district in the Volta Region, at 46.7%.¹³⁷ Self-identified "Christians" make up 45.1% of the population and Muslims, 1.9%. Specific details for Klikor itself are unknown; however, I expect the percentage of self-identified 'Traditionalists' to be slightly higher than the district percentage. Of course, self-identification in this manner does not necessarily correspond to the plurality of social practice. Many of my informants feel as if one religious affiliation does not exclude other affiliations or practices. They attend Christian churches, make petitions at shrines, visit healers and diviners, and participate in ancestral rites. That said, Klikor has relatively few Christian churches in comparison to other communities in the Volta Region; the churches that are located in Klikor tend to be small Presbyterian or Pentecostal churches. In contrast the churches located in Klikor, several former missionary churches are located in Agbosome and draw membership from Klikor.¹³⁸

shrines to be understood as a site for "cultural tourism" and they are marked on the Tourist Map of Ghana.

¹³⁵ Massiasta died in 2007 and since then many of BLAKHUD's activities have become less regular because of disputes about who should take over the research centre.

¹³⁶ Money is given to Massiasta and then distributed to others based upon their level of involvement.

¹³⁷ The Ketu District is made up of Klikor, Agbosome, Denu, Aflao, Wheta, Dzodze, Penyi, Afife, and Nogokpo, amongst others. The lowest proportion of self-identified "Traditionalists" is found in northern districts, such as Ho and Hohoe. Among the districts associated with the southern areas, the lowest proportion of "Traditionalists" is found in the North Tongu District, followed by the South Tongu District (GSS 2005).

¹³⁸ Several major conflicts have also occurred between local shrines and churches. These will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 8.



Picture 4: Togbui Adzima shrine. Photo by Dana Romanoff (used with permission).

Additionally, a local branch of the Afrikania Renaissance Mission is located in Klikor. As I have noted in Chapter 3, the ARM and the Klikor Adzima ritual specialists were drawn together because of the abolition campaign against the Trokosi Slave, in which both understood the campaign to be set in the wider religious contests in Ghana. Since then, some members of the Klikor community and elders of the Adzima shrines have become ARM *osofos* (priests or officiates) and established a Klikor-branch of the ARM that holds services every Sunday. The Adzima priests occupy a special role in these services and are instrumental in the organisation of the services, alongside the *osofos*. Services feature libations to ancestors and community deities and sermons based on ARM materials, such as *The Divine Acts* (Ameve n.d.) and regional narratives associated with *Afa* codes.¹³⁹

In contrast to the Christian churches, Klikor has a reputation for its deities and their shrines, which are considered to be spiritually potent. Numerous shrines mark the landscape, sometimes in strategically public ways as with the Adzima shrines; others are hidden or obscured from view, tucked away inside rooms of households. These can also be located on the footpaths that transect the community, situated in the natural environment, and embedded at the entrances of households.

¹³⁹ *Afa* is one of the principle divination techniques found in Klikor. Part of the ritual knowledge of *Afa* diviners is the 256 codes that are associated with specific moral narratives. I will explain this further in chapter 6.

Various kinds of deities and spirits are located in these shrines, ‘owned’ by and for specific lineages or individuals. Some of these can also be found in other communities throughout the region generally, although always associated with particular individuals or lineages responsible for their care and establishment of their shrines in each location. In Klikor, those represented are: *Yewe*, the thunder deity (also known as *Hevioso* or *Tohono*); and those linked to *Yewe* such as *Da* (snake deity) and *Agbui*; deities linked to the northern regions of Ghana, known as “kola nut” or *gorovudu* deities; *Mami Watta* (sea deity); *Kratchi Dente* (a deity associated with slaves from Keta Kratchi); *Dzakpa* (crocodile deity); and *Adela* (hunting deity), to name a few.¹⁴⁰ The *Mama Afu* spirit is also prominent in Klikor, associated with a natural spring located on the outskirts of the community.¹⁴¹

A number of these deities and their shrines in Klikor have gained notoriety throughout the south-eastern Volta Region as being powerful, and draw petitioners outside the individuals and lineages responsible for them. Those important in Klikor for these reasons are: the Sofati shrine which houses *Yewe*, *Da*, and *Agbui* deities; and the Awia Shrine, which houses the *Awia* deity along with *Nana Osagyefo* (a kola nut or *gorovodu* deity), and *Mami Watta*.¹⁴² Although their notoriety is based in their ability to draw petitioners, they are also closely associated with the settlement of specific wards in Klikor by specific lineages.

Alongside the Kli deity, the three Adzima shrines occupy a unique position in contrast to these other deities and shrines and are only found in Klikor. The Adzima deities refer to the three *trɔwo* (pl; *trɔ*, sing.); one of the *trɔ* is named Togbui Adzima, while the other two are named Mama Vena.¹⁴³ These are ‘owned’ by different patrilineages in Klikor; as such, they are ‘grounded’ in separate shrines. However, they are collectively understood as being central to the protection of the Klikor state and residents. This sentiment is underscored by Togbui Addo VIII, the *Fiaga* (Paramount Chief) of Klikor, who likens the Adzima deities collectively as a “state religion”,

¹⁴⁰ For more information about these types of deities, which have shrines throughout the southern Volta Region, see these authors: For *Yewe*- Nukunya 1969c, Akyeampong 2001a, and Greene 1996a, 2002a; *Gorovodu*- Rosenthal 1998; *Vodhun* generally- Lovell 1996, 1998, 2002; *Mami Watta*- Meyer 1995b.

¹⁴¹ *Mawu* is also referenced by most *Klikortɔwo* as the High God; the same name used to reference the Christian God. I will discuss the centrality of *Mawu* in relation to the actions of the deities and to Christianity in Chapter 8.

¹⁴² These are two of a number of larger shrines.

¹⁴³ There are considerable differences between categorising a deity as a *trɔ* or as a *vodhun*, although the categorisation process varies significantly between communities and is partly based on the perceived power of a deity (cf Lovell 2002, p. 65-66). However, Fiawoo notes that *trɔ* are “imagined to have animal or human forms” (1959, p. 51).

alongside Togbui Kli, the *trɔ* upon which the Klikor state is centred. Similarly, others frequently explain the Adzima deities' position by claiming that "Togbui Adzima is for Klikor".

Partially, these ideas are succinctly expressed by Togbui Addo VIII in 1988:

"Now the duties of the Priests within and without the Adzima shrine purports more than initiating converts, leading cult inmates in prayers and sacrifices and forbidding the bans. He has become an arbitrator whose decisions are recognized by the community. More than anything else, he determines the quality of life of an ever growing population of inmates and followers, a majority, whose role in our community is overwhelming. In Klikor Traditional Area, he decides when certain actions should be taken, when certain things should be done, and when they should not. For example, at definite periods of the year, he imposes bans on the use of guns, drumming and certain forms of social behaviour. In short, his roles as a traditional priest are synonymous with those of chieftains" [sic] (Togbui Addo VIII, 5 May 1988).

Togbui Addo's sentiment reflects the contemporary importance that the three shrines have in Klikor, by highlighting the shrines' arbitrational role (which will be discussed in Chapter 6) and their power to impose bans on activities throughout the area during the annual Kli-Adzima festival. However, these roles are explained by other *Klikortɔwo* through particular historical narratives of Klikor, where the shrines were established by powerful men associated with the settlement of Klikor and were among the first in the area. These also highlight the centrality of the shrines, their priests, and shrine 'owning' lineages to the historical engagement between Klikor and neighbouring communities as "war deities", which will be examined in the next chapter.

Of importance at this time though is an overarching sense among *Klikortɔwo* that the Adzima deities' power and protection extends beyond the lineages that 'own' them to the Klikor Traditional Area. This is partly due to underlying expressions of relatedness amongst *Klikortɔwo*, where most see themselves as being descendants of two men, Atsu Adzakra and Etse Lilivor, who were among the migrants accompanying Togbui Kli from Notsie to the settlement of Klikor (although subsequent generations are more important in establishing one's lineage membership, rights, and obligations). Oral histories about lineage genealogies recount how Etse first settled in (and established) the Ablogame ward of Klikor and was the first priest to the Kli deity. Atsu settled in the Horne ward of Klikor.

The sons and grandsons of Etse and Atsu are credited with the further expansion of the Klikor settlement and lineage segmentation, principally Togbui Ashipodi, Togbui Aboeshiedu, and Togbui Afadi. Central to the settlement and lineage segmentation process was the acquisition of wealth, stools, and deities. Among these deities acquired were the two Mama Vena and the Togbui Adzima deities.

The idea that the deities are “for” *Klikortwo* is also reinforced in the complex relationship between the three Adzima deities and others in Klikor, principally Togbui Kli. Undoubtedly, the Kli deity has utmost importance to the *Klikortwo* identity and is honoured as such by community members and the Adzima shrines. This is in part the stated intention of the three Adzima priests for why the Adzima shrines’ annual festival is called the Kli-Adzima festival; to recognise the Kli deity’s position in the historical process of claiming territories and providing ongoing protection for the community.

However, normally, people do not petition the Kli deity, unless it is on behalf of the community at large and during the annual Kli festival held in April. The opportunities to do so are rare and community deities have generally been displaced by deities which address individual concerns. The Adzima deities on the other hand provide for both of these needs; they protect the community at large through the performance of annual rites and address the individual concerns pertaining to wealth, success and health of their petitioners. The Adzima deities are for all intents and purposes much more prominent in narratives about communal welfare and the everyday lives of a significant proportion of Klikor residents.¹⁴⁴

Deities: Cosmologies, Shrines, and Persons

It is important to examine the relationship between the three shrines collectively known as the Adzima shrines, and to the people who claim membership in these shrines. However, beforehand, I want to address and clarify how relationships are formed between deities and people, through lineage membership, initiation, and supplications. As recently indicated, most of the deities that are represented in Klikor are widespread throughout the southern Volta Region and Togo. Like Lovell’s

¹⁴⁴ Other deities outlined previously also have political power in Klikor and address the individual concerns of petitioners. However, none of these claim the same type of importance that is attributed to the three Adzima shrines. To the contrary, representatives of these deities demonstrate deference to the Adzima deities by showing their respect during the Kli-Adzima festival and referring to the Adzima deities and priests as their “elders”.

examination of *vodhun* among the Watchi-Ewe, I found that deities are understood to both reside in a “cosmological landscape” and “grounded” into particular locales and the sphere of human sociality, whose power can then be channelled for human use (Lovell 2002). As Lovell notes, the “action of situating gods in this way has to be performed by humans themselves, and involves gods and humans in a mutual process of creation”, at which point deities are located within the narratives, histories, and sociality of those responsible for their establishment (Lovell 2001, p. 74). It is also at this point, that deities begin to take on the characteristics of their human counterparts in addition to conceptualisations of their metaphysical or cosmological qualities.

The implication of Lovell’s argument, that I have found also to be the case in the Adzima shrines, is that the identities of deities when grounded are intertwined with that of their human counterparts and that the “cosmological landscape” can look different depending on one’s relationship to and experience with specific deities, their shrines, and ritual specialists. As such, religious knowledge is not held uniformly among Ewe communities; while people have a sense of a cosmology and the metaphysical qualities of deities grounded in multiple locations, their knowledge about this is informed by their experiences. For Lovell, this argument is set in contrast to earlier French anthropological studies about *vodhun* that attempted make sense of the diverse set of deities found among Ewe communities in Togo by placing them within an established cosmology and situating them hierarchically (2002, p.57). In this research, the argument challenges claims to an overall homogeneous ‘Ewe traditional religion’ centred upon ‘beliefs’, rather than ritual practices, which feature in abolitionists’ accounts and understandings of *trokosi* and *fiasidi*.¹⁴⁵

Patrilineages, segments of a patrilineage, or individual persons are associated with the grounding of deities and the establishment of their shrines. For lineages or segments of lineages, the creation of shrines is associated with a particular ancestor, to which his or her descendants can make claims and supplications. In other cases, deities can be personally ‘owned’. Personally ‘owned’ deities are acquired and grounded for particular reasons; however, they also become embedded within wider social relations through the connection between members of a patrilineage to one another and their ancestors and through systems of inheritance.

¹⁴⁵ See Gilbert (1989) for a similar argument about the relationship between a cosmology and practice among the Akuropon-Akuapem in Ghana.

Deities embedded within the lineage structure based upon the establishment of a shrine by an ancestor can act as a marker of belonging for lineage members, a point similarly shown by Lovell in relation to the Watchi-Ewe and their *vodhun* (2002). This occurs alongside the ancestral stools (*Togbui Zikpui*), acquired by a specific ancestor for his or her achievements in wealth or war and regarded as divinised entities in their own right. Even so, lineages are also in part residential and territorial groupings, associated with wards within towns, villages created around farm land, and other natural features such as streams, palm trees, etc (cf Greene 1981; Nukunya 1969a). As Lovell notes, the expansion or creation of settlements, which features in lineage segmentation, is closely connected to the acquisition, grounding, and establishment of a shrine for a deity (2002; cf Greene 1996a).

In the process of deities being grounded within the sphere of human sociality by their caretakers, they also become embedded within the social, political, and cosmological hierarchy of a community. As shown in examinations of the history of various south-eastern Ewe communities, political and social hierarchies and competition between lineages or members of a lineage, and the formation of polities, have closely been legitimised through the ‘ownership’ of deities. In part, the ‘ownership’ of deities legitimised claims to authority, while also contributing to authority (cf Greene 1996a).

The establishment of a shrine partly indicates that deities are ‘owned’ by a particular patrilineage, segment of patrilineage, or individual. However, the connotation of ‘ownership’ is embedded in a complex understanding of one’s relationship to objects, other people, and deities. The most common way to express possession is through the suffix *tɔ*. Borrowing Rosenthal’s example, being a father or manager of land (*anyigbatɔ*) implies a sense of belonging to the land, which cannot be alienated from the history of those that occupy it. Contemporarily land has become commoditised and able to be sold, although the sale of land is usually fraught with disputes over who actually has the ability to do so. It is within this process that *tɔ* has taken on the characteristic of ‘ownership’ (1998, p. 133).

In contrast, deities are understood as being “in the hands of” (*le asinye*) those responsible for the establishment of the shrine and subsequent guardians.¹⁴⁶ The language of being in or having something in one’s hands is used to describe a person’s

¹⁴⁶ The same phrase was also indicated by Lovell in describing the relationship between *vodhun* and “cult leaders” (Lovell 1993, p. 372).

relationship with objects, other people, and deities. This phrase is often translated as “to have”, but is misunderstood by many as “owning”. However, the relationship between deities and those that establish their shrines is not properly understood as ‘ownership’ per se, which has the connotations of power over and potential for alienation. Rather, as suggested in the phrase “in the hands of” and the underlying idea of *to*, it partly represents a type of belonging centred on the deity. It also represents a relationship of “reciprocal services” between the deity and those who grounded and established its shrine (Rosenthal 1998, p. 134). Those that ground deities are responsible for providing for and maintaining the deity, in order for the deity to then act on their behalf. As Rosenthal notes, the ‘owner’s’ power does not necessarily supersede that of the ‘owned’, a situation that is apparent within this type of relationship to deities, as deities can be the source of problems for their caretakers if neglected (1998, p. 134). Caretakers or guardians are just as much “in the hands of” the deity, as the other way around. The power and ‘ownership’ of both the deity and those with which they are associated are mutually contingent, incapable of being separated from one another.

In addition to the creation of links through the grounding and establishment of a shrine for a deity, which often becomes intertwined within complex notions of lineage membership and space, a second key way in which relations between people and deities can be established is through initiation. Persons can have and often do have a wide array of initiatory statuses with multiple deities located in various communities. In some cases, these initiations represent a formalised relationship between the person and a deity that he or she already has an affiliation to because of patrilineal membership.

However, initiation can cut across notions of patrilineal membership and incorporate people with maternal and affinal ties to ‘shrine-owners’; within some shrines, initiation is “inherited” by a woman from her maternal grandmother (cf Lovell 1993; Lovell 1996).¹⁴⁷ In others, seen with the Adzima deities and their *fiasidiwo* initiates, people may become initiates of deities with which they or their patrilineages or maternal filiations may not initially have a kin-based relation. These initiations are the result of previous encounters with the deity or shrine, often in terms of petitioning or transgressions. In this sense, initiation not only formally establishes a relationship

¹⁴⁷ Possession (or trance) often features in the acquisition and roles of initiates (although this is not the case for the Adzima deities; cf Lovell 2002 and Rosenthal 1998 for accounts of possession among Ewe communities).

between the initiate and the deity, but also reinforces and creates other forms of belonging between people.

People may also be initiates of deities that are not grounded in the same way as others, within a shrine complex; this is particularly the case with *Afa*, a divinatory deity, or deity of “interpretation, oracle, revealer of life signs” (Rosenthal 1998, p. 157). *Afa* is associated with 256 codes (*kpoliwo*, pl.), each of which is connected to various deities and stories; these codes enable *Afa* diviners (*Bɔkɔ*) to “reveal” the unknown to clients. By becoming an *Afa* initiate (*Afavi*), one comes to know his or her personal *kpoli*, or code that governs his or her life (cf Rosenthal 1998, ch 6 for an extended discussion; Nukunya 1969b). The rites of initiation create a partly de-territorialised community of initiates; other *Afa* initiates and a *Bɔkɔ*, a male *Afavi* who has gone on to become a diviner, are called upon to perform the initiation, sometimes from outside one’s lineage or community. Although *Afa* divination is common throughout many parts of West Africa (also known as *Ifa* in other areas), slight variations in practices and codes exist, which reflect different orders of *Afa*, transmitted by ritual specialists through the initiation process (cf Nukunya 1969b).

The final way in which links between humans and deities can be established is through making ‘drink offerings’ (or petitioning/ making supplications) to the deity. While both those who ‘own’ the shrine and initiates can make petitions, others that fall outside these categories often can do so as well. Some people may choose to petition a deity because of the initiation of a lineage member or through affinal relations to the ‘shrine-owners’. However, others may do so based upon the deity’s notoriety. The link created between petitioners with no other type of relationship to the deity is often short-lived; however, petitioning can also be a precursor to the formation of subsequent established relations. In this way, deities are in part conceptualised as continuously attempting to pull persons into established relationships.

The Adzima Deities and the Shrine Complex

As has been previously noted, the shrines collectively known as the Adzima shrines are comprised of the Togbui Adzima shrine in Afegame, the Mama Vena shrine in Ablogame, and the Mama Vena shrine in Ablotsivia. Each shrine is ‘owned’ by separate lineages that trace patrilineal descent from the ancestor known to be responsible for the establishment of the shrine. For example, one of the men

accompanying Togbui Kli to Klikor's present location from Notsie, Atsu Adzraka, and his son, Ashipodi Adzraka (the first of many that have subsequently taken this name as priests of the shrine) are credited with the establishment of the Togbui Adzima shrine (currently located in Afegame).

Atsu settled in and established the Horne ward of Klikor and acquired a stool throughout the course of his life for his achievements. Originally, the Togbui Adzima shrine was also established in Horne, with Atsu's son, Ashipodi, as the first priest of the Togbui Adzima deity. As the lineage grew and segmented, members relocated and established other wards within the area; particularly, one of Ashipodi descendants claimed and relocated to the Afegame ward of Klikor. The Togbui Adzima shrine was subsequently also moved to this area. Similarly, members of the Mama Vena shrines maintain that the son and grandson of Etse, the other migrant accompanying Togbui Kli, established the Ablogame and Ablotsivia wards, reflecting the ongoing segmentation of lineages. In each, these descendants grounded the Mama Vena deity into separate shrines.

While the Adzima shrines are 'owned' by separate patrilineages and have separate histories of who established the shrines, as indicated previously, the three are thought of as a collective. Underpinning the relationship between the three shrines is the understanding the three deities (Togbui Adzima and the two Mama Vena) share a metaphysical or cosmological relationship. This cosmological relationship is expressed in several overlapping ways. The first is through idioms of male-female relations established through marriage; specifically, Togbui Adzima and his two wives, both named Mama Vena.¹⁴⁸ In this way, human sociality is ascribed onto the cosmological landscape, where *trɔ* take on human characteristics.

Mama Vena is also associated by the Adzima ritual specialists with twin-ship - *Vena* refers to the parents of twins (*venorvi*). As such, Mama Vena is often interpreted by ritual specialists as being the "mother of twins". However, the name is also used by various shrine members to creatively interpret the cosmological relationships between deities and explain the presence of the two Mama Vena; they are often thought of as twins themselves. Both of these interpretations by ritual specialists and shrine members are important in attributing power to the Mama Vena deity, as twins in the

¹⁴⁸ Vena is also often transcribed by the shrines as Wena. Initially, I thought this indicated the Ewe letter U; however, several key informants in extended and multiple conversations have argued that the appropriate spelling is Vena.

human sphere are conceptualised as being connected to the metaphysical realm in a way others are not, and as having potent spiritual power. Due to their spiritual powers, mothers of twins are highly regarded (cf Gaba 1965, p. 231-234; Nukunya 1969a, 202-204).

The second way that the cosmological relationship between the Adzima deities collectively is explained by ritual specialists is that at a metaphysical/cosmological level, the three Adzima grounded deities are either “one” or “two”. For ritual specialists who claim that the three deities as grounded are “one” metaphysically, the deities represent localised gendered components of a singular spiritual force; their power derived from the same metaphysical entity. The construction of deities as having dual gender identities that are grounded or situated within human sociality separately is a common feature among ritual specialists throughout the region.

For those ritual specialists who claim that the Adzima deities are “two”, the deities represent a metaphysical marital alliance between the male Adzima and female Mama Vena. The reason, they explain, that there are two Mama Vena in both of the interpretations of the cosmological relationship is because this deity was grounded in two different locations by two different lineages, but fundamentally, they are the same. Additionally, both of these interpretations are used to explain the loose relationship between the Adzima deities and those that bear similar names that are grounded in other Ewe communities.¹⁴⁹

These differences in interpretations indicate that many understandings of the “cosmological landscape” exist simultaneously and are legitimised by different ritual specialists. Ritual specialists’ interpretations of the cosmological do not coincide because they are positioned in relation to the cosmological by their own multiple religious and social affiliations and specialisations. Petitioners act upon these different interpretations of the relationship between the three deities in different ways: some petitioners choose to offer supplications at all three shrines for the same purpose, whereas others claim that when a person offers supplications at one shrine, the appeals are directed to all of the Adzima deities.

¹⁴⁹ For example, there is a Togbui Adzemu in Agave and a Mama Venor in Bakpa. While these have similar names, and are in part conceptualized by ritual specialists as being related cosmologically, they do not share understandings of the grounded or cosmological attributes of the deities. However, some ritual specialists have indicated a historical connection between these shrines through the narratives about how the deities were acquired.

In recognition of the cosmological relationship between the three deities and the social and political relationship between ‘shrine-owning’ lineages, several public rituals are performed by the three priests of each respective shrine collectively. Despite being performed by the three priests, the public rituals are overseen by a specific ritual specialist, referred to as Togbui Fiango. Togbui Fiango’s role as a ritual specialist is to preside over rituals that are collectively performed. The three shrines and deities also share the *tagba*, a term locally referring to a shared shrine located in an uninhabited section of Klikor. Generally, the term *tagba* refers to the “bush”, although in the context of the Klikor Adzima shrines, it was commonly translated to me as the “forest shrine” drawing on a historical understanding of what this landscape looked like prior to settlement. Despite being described as the “forest shrine”, the space is significantly domesticated and is swept weekly by female shrine members and initiates.

The tension of being both separate and collective comes out most clearly during the annual Kli-Adzima festival that lasts a little over a month. The festival is composed of a number of ritualised activities, repeated three times for each shrine/deity. Some of these activities are conducted by the priest of that particular shrine; others are conducted by all three priests and Togbui Fiango. However, participation by shrine members is typically localised to the members (based upon lineage membership or initiation) of that particular shrine.¹⁵⁰

Additionally, there is an implicit hierarchy between the three shrines, which petitioners explain in terms of the metaphysical/cosmological relationship between the deities. For example, during the festival, the performance of the Afegame Togbui Adzima deity/shrine’s activities occurs before those of the two Mama Vena shrines. Similarly, the three priests follow Togbui Fiango in the same order during the performance of collective rituals. However, this hierarchy does not translate into the actual roles or relations between the three shrines and priests (the two Mama Vena priests referred to as “wives” of the Togbui Adzima priest). Outside collective rituals and the festival context, the three shrines and priests are independent from one another and indeed the hierarchy between them may be understood differently once it is situated within the social and political context of Klikor and the reputations of the shrines’ founders.

¹⁵⁰ The exception would be during the rituals associated with the *Tagbayiyi* (“going to the *tagba*”) and the drumming day. Members of the other shrines often attend these activities.

Each shrine's ritual complex draws upon several possible concepts of the way in which relations are established to deities. In addition to members of the 'shrine-owning' lineage, the deities also have relationships with general petitioners and initiates acquired from outside the 'shrine-owning' lineage. These initiations are the basis through which the initiates' patrilineal kin can also make claims of the deity. All of these persons are situated through the use of kinship idioms to the deity and are important, to varying degrees and in specific ways, to maintaining the deity and its shrine during the Kli-Adzima annual festival.

It is through their actions during the annual festival that initiates ensure that the deity will work on their lineage's behalf: for their protection and well-being.¹⁵¹ The Kli-Adzima festival, which will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5 and 7, is composed of a variety of rituals. These are aimed towards the up-keep of the shrine; restoring the deities' protection of their petitioners, established through membership to the 'shrine-owning' lineage or through a non-kin initiate, and to the Klikor Traditional Area; and the harvest of the deities' *bli* (maize). Although the annual festival has features of a harvest festival, its importance exceeds its association with the harvest. Additionally, the Klikor Traditional Area celebrates the harvest annually in a separate festival, the *Bliza*, after the Kli-Adzima festival.¹⁵²

The multi-faceted way in which links between the people and deities are established creates a kind of community centred upon the deity that extends beyond the 'shrine-owning' lineage. In this community, people take on a variety of roles distinguished by their structural relationship to the deity and the 'shrine-owning' lineage. However, in all cases, those with specific ritual roles and formalised relationships to the deity through initiation are distinguished from others through the *bisi* (blue cloth). The *bisi* is a powerful symbol for those in formalised ritual roles in the Adzima shrines.¹⁵³

Members of the 'shrine-owning' patrilineage are referred to as *fiawiwo* (pl.; *fiavi*, sing.) or "children of the deity"/ "children of the chief". As guardians of the deity, or the deity being located "in their hands", the patrilineage has the primary responsibility for the upkeep of the deity and the shrine. As one lineage elder

¹⁵¹ I will discuss the Kli-Adzima festival more thoroughly in Chapter 7.

¹⁵² See Brydon (1981) for an examination of the relationship between crops and deities in Avatime in the northern portion of the Volta Region.

¹⁵³ Media accounts associated with the abolitionist campaign usually only associate the blue cloth with the *trokosiwo* and *fiasidiwo*. In contrast, everyone that has a ritual role in the Adzima shrines wear the *bisi* (blue cloth).

expressed, “the god is my grandfather’s god. I need to be with it, it is in my hand [*le asinye*]... Togbui [the deity] is with us because we are doing the thing for him [referring to the festival].”

The elder is indicating that the ‘shrine-owners’, as previously discussed, are also located “in the hands” of the deity, as well as the other way around. Being “in the hands of the deity” imparts a sense that if the ‘owners’ fail to fulfil their obligations to the deity, the deity can become a source of danger to the lineage members by threatening their overall well-being in order to re-establish the relationship. However, being ‘shrine-owners’ also entails the ‘ownership’ of secrets pertaining to the rituals conducted on behalf of the deity.

The ultimate act of guardianship is the responsibility to provide and formally enstool the priest, a member of the ‘shrine-owning’ lineage dedicated to serve the deity by performing rituals and to facilitate interactions between petitioners and the deity. In the Adzima shrines, the responsibility (and right) to appoint a new priest after the death of the previous rotates between lineage segments claiming descent to the shrine founder. However, this process is characterised by conflict in determining a suitable candidate and which lineage segment should legitimately provide the next heir. These conflicts are increasingly becoming more difficult to solve with ongoing lineage segmentation.¹⁵⁴

The priest’s role is to oversee the ritual and everyday activities of the shrine, discussed further in Chapter 6. Unlike priests of other deities in the area, the Adzima priests do not engage in economic activities outside the shrine, except for farming to supply food for the priests’ households and the shrines. They reside at their respective shrines full time, only leaving occasionally to visit their household-compounds or oversee activities on their farms, unless they have permission from the deity (ascertained through divination).

The priests understand the requirement to stay close to the shrines at all times as a “taboo”, in that if they leave the shrine for an extended period, they could incite the anger of the deity. They are obliged to be available to those seeking the services of the shrine day and night, except when the shrine is closed to petitioners on one market day

¹⁵⁴ The enstoolment of two of the current shrine priests were highly contested for these reasons. In both cases, who had the authority to mediate the dispute was also contested (i.e. the family heads, the *Fiaga* of Klikor, professional and social associations, and the government High Courts). According to one informant, competition between lineage segments in providing a candidate to become priest has only occurred with the last couple of priests. He understands this to be due to the increasing influence of the Adzima shrines and the amount of money the shrines now make.

each week (the shrine is still relatively busy with everyday activities during this day). As a result of their close proximity to the deity and the expectation of being able to perform rituals at any time, the priests adhere to the general ritual proscriptions of the shrines and deity at all times; specifically not engaging in sexual relations (except when the shrine is closed to petitioners), not bathing with imported soap, and not wearing a shirt that covers their arms or shoes.

Currently the priests are referred to as *Togbui*, meaning “grandfather” and designating chiefs, elders, ancestors, deities, and men of high stature. This title reflects their relationship to members of the shrine community and in Klikor generally. Technically, the priests are *fiaviwo*, as members of the ‘shrine-owning’ lineage; however, their structured relationship to the deity imposes a different set of terminologies.

Specialised names such as *amegashie* or *trɔnua* can be used to designate the priests’ relationship to the deities, but are used infrequently.¹⁵⁵ More commonly, the priests are conceptualised as “wives” (*srɔ*) of the deity; although the phrase “wife of the deity” (translated from *fiasi* or *fiasidi*) within the shrines is not typically used in relation to the priests, but rather the *fiasidiwo*. The idiom of “wives” used to describe the relationship that a priest has with the deity implies a certain set of obligations to the deity and maintenance of purity taboos. This is particularly important for these ritual specialists because the unmitigated power of the deity is exposed to them during many rituals. For those outside these specific roles, exposure to the deity’s power, referred to as “seeing the deity’s genitals”, is dangerous and can be the source of prolonged illness.¹⁵⁶

Designated male members of the lineage also take on specific ritual roles performed during the annual festival. These roles are appointed by the lineage or inherited from their fathers. Junior males of the lineage also carry out other types of tasks periodically throughout the year, such as taking the responsibility for sacrificing and cooking animals offered to the deity. Each shrine also has a council of elders (*megbeda*), composed of male members of the lineage who have obtained some level of recognition and respect. The composition of the council often intersects with the lineage hierarchy. The council comes to the shrine to make important decisions, listen

¹⁵⁵ *Amegashie* (literally “big persons’ wife”) is increasingly used only in reference to consultants. *Trɔnua* literally means “thing of the *trɔ*”, but can also suggest “speaking the *trɔ*”.

¹⁵⁶ Lovell, in the context of the Watchi-Ewe, also notes that “the sight of a ‘naked’ deity could kill onlookers” (2002, p. 61).

to, and rule on court cases, and witness major rituals. All three shrines also have a shrine secretary, for the purpose of recording decisions and composing letters on behalf of the shrine. In some cases, members of the council may be those designated with specific ritual roles performed during the annual festival. However, having these roles does not necessarily make one a member of the council of elders, or vice-versa, although they do overlap in many cases.

Designated female lineage members also take on specific roles in relation to the deity, although in a slightly different manner to their male counterparts. Several women from each shrine are designated as leaders (referred to generally as *gbeda* or *nugorgbeda*), who organise the ritualised activities of the women during the annual festival. Like male lineage members with specific roles, the leaders are appointed by the lineage.

In addition to lineage-based members are the sets of relations established through initiation. Included in these are the *Zeklor*, the *Xanuplor*, and the *fiasidiwo*. The relationship between these members and the deity signifies an extension beyond the patrilineage through the incorporation of non-kin persons into the shrine community. Although some *fiasidiwo*, *Zeklor*, and *Xanuplor* are from other lineages in Klikor, most initiates are from neighbouring Ewe communities, particularly from various parts of southern Togo, Aflao, Denu, Wheta, Akatsi, Dzodze, and Penyi.

The *Zeklor* and *Xanuplor* are named as such because of their specific ritual roles at the shrines. *Zeklor* is a ritual name that means “the pot washer”, referring to washing the pots used to brew the maize-wine (*liha*) and cook the *dzankple* during to the festival or other ritual performances.¹⁵⁷ Likewise, *Xanuplor* refers to the ritual sweeper of the inner shrine, the area where petitioners will go to bathe in the ritual or festival performance. Technically, the only time they need to be present is during the festival, when their roles are particularly relevant. However, as the shrines are popular and receive petitioners year round, one of the two is usually on hand to assist the priest (although one of the *Zeklorwo* attends school and rarely appears except at the festival). In this sense, their role in the shrine often goes well beyond that designated by their name. In particular, they take the responsibility of leading petitioners to *amegashiewo*

¹⁵⁷ The significance of the *liha* and *dzankple* will be explored in Chapter 7.

(a type of diviner) when needed and making the ritual reed necklace (*esi*), alongside the appointed male lineage member, for those who have come to bathe at the shrine.¹⁵⁸

The *Zeklor* and *Xanuplor* are pledged to the deity's service, from another patrilineage and often another community. For example, one *Zeklor* recounted that her grandmother petitioned the shrine when she was suffering from a prolonged illness. At the time she pledged that if the deity succeeded in restoring her health, she would send one of her granddaughters to the shrine to become a *Zeklor*. Although their mode of affiliation can be similar to that of the *fiasidiwo*, they are structurally considered as *fiaviwo*, or "children of the deity".¹⁵⁹

Fiasidi is a term that technically means "fit to be the wife of a *Fia* (chief)", although it is most often interpreted as "wife of the deity". The *fiasidiwo* ritually act as the "wife of the deity", participating alongside the *fiaviwo* during the annual festival in activities such as preparing the maize, brewing the wine, and plastering the walls of the shrine. They are initiated for a variety of reasons pertaining to their patrilineage's or maternal affiliation's (*no-fome*) prior contact with the deities and the shrines. Included in these are petitioners pledging an initiate in return for the services of the deity; the transgression of a taboo of the deity, including having sex with a *fiasidi* before she has undergone her second initiation (referred to as *adofe* or "vagina debt"); and as a result of offences to the "children" of the deity, including theft, lying, or attempt at harm.

Through their initiation, the *fiasidiwo*'s patrilineage, maternal affiliations, and children are also to be *fiaviwo*, alongside members of the 'shrine-owning' lineages. In other words, the *fiasidi* initiate brings her kin and her children into a relationship with the shrine. Historically, ritual specialists indicated that the children of *fiasidiwo* were coined with the name *dzatugbui* (female- grinder of the *edza*) and *atitsogbe* (male-cutter and maker of the fence), reflecting their roles within the activities of the annual festival. Contemporarily, all *fiaviwo*, including those that are members of the 'shrine-owning' patrilineage, are considered to be *dzatugbui* or *atitsogbe* (gender respective).

While *fiasidiwo* are conceptualised as "wives of the deities", in relation to the members of 'shrine-owning' lineages, they are regarded as the "mothers" or "grandmothers" (*Mamawo*) of the 'shrine-owning' lineage. In part this is because the

¹⁵⁸ In one shrine, both are unavailable so a representative from the 'shrine-owning' lineage assists in the shrines on their behalf.

¹⁵⁹ The *Zeklor* and *Xanuplor* both regularly distinguish themselves from the *fiasidiwo* by indicating that they do not "come with a stool", a central feature of the *fiasidiwo* initiations, to be discussed in Chapter 7.

fiasidiwo are “married” to the deity, who is understood as being the *fiaviwo*’s father (*fofo*) or grandfather (*Togbui*). However, there is also a good chance that the members of the ‘shrine-owning’ lineages’ mothers or grandmothers are actually *fiasidiwo*, because of the high incidence of *fiasidiwo* marrying *Klikortɔwo*.

Members of the shrine community, in addition to petitioning the deity when the need arises and contributing to the daily activities of the shrine, participate in the annual Kli-Adzima festival based upon a gendered-division of labour. For example, male members (of the ‘shrine-owning’ patrilineage, connected through the initiation of a *fiasidi*, or general petitioners) participate in the ritualised fencing and roofing the shrine. They also collectively attend the *Tagbayiyi* (“going to the *tagba*” where rituals are performed by the priests).

Similarly, female members (of the ‘shrine-owning’ lineage, initiates, those connected through the initiation of a *fiasidi*, or general petitioners) participate in ritualised plastering of the shrine and the preparation of the *liha* (maize-wine) and *edza* (grinded millet and sugar), including carrying the maize, drying the maize, brewing the *liha*, grinding the maize and *edza*, and collecting water from the ritual well. Both male and female members attend the rituals that make up the ‘outdooing of the deity’ and participate during the drumming day of the deity. Ritualised activities during the annual festival and one’s participation are necessary for the upkeep of the deity and contribute to the deity’s power, while also reaffirming the relationship between the deity and the ‘shrine-owning’ lineage.

Conclusion:

In this chapter, I have provided a brief sketch of Klikor and the three Adzima shrines as a platform from which we can examine how the Adzima shrines’ ritual specialists and the Klikor community attribute and legitimise meaning to the *fiasidiwo*, the focus of the next three chapters. I have examined how classifications such as Anlo-Ewe are equally as problematic as the categorisation of Ewe, highlighted in the introduction to this thesis, although both are central to the abolitionist campaign’s engagements with shrine communities. I then discussed the composition of Klikor generally, while highlighting the central role of the three Adzima shrines in the community. I moved on to examine how relationships are formed with deities generally, where they are grounded into particular locations and socio-political

structures, in order to begin to examine the three Adzima shrines' ritual complex. The *fiasidiwo* play a key role in this ritual complex, where meaning is attributed to them through the way that they establish relationships between the Adzima deities and their 'shrine-owning' lineages with non-kin. This examination will continue through the next three chapters.

As I will explore in Chapter 5, narratives about the history of Klikor emphasize the Adzima deities' and their priests' role in regional conflicts and underpin the prominent position of the Adzima deities in Klikor as "war deities". These also place importance on the role of the *fiasidiwo* in establishing on-going relationships between *Klikortɔwo* and neighbouring communities. Similarly, this theme re-emerges in Chapter 7, where an examination of the *fiasidiwo* roles and initiations highlights how non-kin can be drawn into dangerous relationships with the Adzima deities that then are mediated by *fiasidiwo*. The *fiasidiwo* is central to their inclusion into the shrine community as *fiaviwo*. A point not fully addressed in this chapter needs to be re-iterated. Connected to the role that the *fiasidiwo* have in the Adzima shrines, *fiasidiwo* are understood socially in Klikor as "mothers" or "grandmothers". Of equal importance to their roles in the shrines in attributing *fiasidiwo* as such is the occurrence of *fiasidiwo* marrying *Klikortɔwo*. As one elder claimed, "the whole town is the children of *fiasidiwo*. If your mother was not a *fiasidi*, your grandmother is a *fiasidi*". While it may be far-fetched to claim this of the whole town, it is certainly true of most of my informants that I worked with on a daily basis.¹⁶⁰

These importance of the links created by the *fiasidiwo* through their initiation and potentially their marriage to a *Klikortɔwo* was brought home by two incidents that occurred in the last twenty years, one of which while I was on fieldwork. In 1993, the Klikor area was inundated with Togolese refugees as a temporary camp was set up at the Klikor Secondary School. The popularity of the Klikor shrines existed prior to this period, with many Togolese building connections to Klikor through the shrine and the *fiasidiwo*; however, the political instability in Togo during the early 1990s accentuated this relationship. When limited violence again erupted during February and March of 2005 in Lome, at the time of President Eyadema's death and his son, Gnassingbe, being sworn in as successor, some Togolese fled back to Klikor. Several went to stay at the

¹⁶⁰ In the past, it would seem that the *fiasidiwo* were mostly married into the community. Contemporarily, some do marry into the community, whereas others do not. However, some *fiasidiwo* are of the understanding that they should, in order to be close to the shrines.

Klikor Secondary School, but most came to relatives living in Klikor, with whom they were linked through *fiasidiwo*.

Chapter 5

Narratives of the Past: War, Slavery, and *Fiasidi*

Those living in the south-eastern Volta Region during the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries experienced several interconnected processes: slave raiding and trading; wars and conflicts to gain control of land, resources, and trading routes; and colonial rule of the Danes (1784-1850) and the British (1850-1957). This history has been extensively examined by Akyeampong (2001a), Greene (1996a), and Amenumey (1986), primarily in relation to the Anlo and Keta states. Klikor was at the fringes of the Anlo polity and its role in these encounters, through alliances, trade networks, and marriage, was only partially documented by traders, missionaries, and colonial officials.

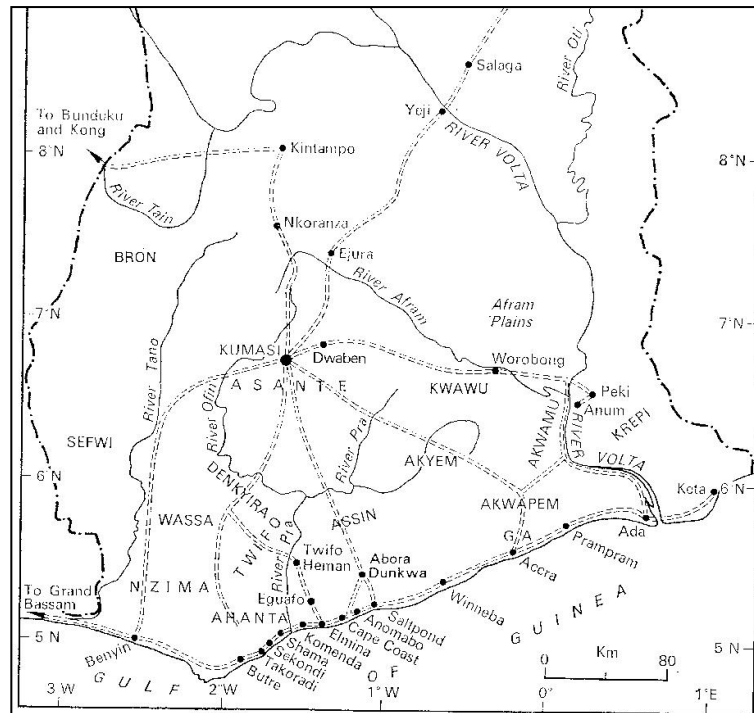
Historical narratives told by members of the Adzima shrines situate the Adzima deities and priests, in particular the Afegame shrine, as prominent in the historical encounters of the *Klikortwo* especially by offering protection in relation to war and slavery. I was informed that war and slave raiding were never a great concern for *Klikortwo*, even when neighbouring communities felt victimised, claiming that the Adzima deities were effective at protecting Klikor and shrine members from danger. What informants emphasise is the role of the Adzima shrines in offering protection to those neighbouring communities that the *Klikortwo* had politically or socially aligned themselves to in successive regional conflicts.

In this chapter, I explore several narratives told by Adzima ritual specialists and Klikor's historian, Dale Massiasta, in relation to a wider understanding of the historical processes that characterised the region. In part, these demonstrate the way the Adzima shrines are understood as being embedded in Klikor's social and political hierarchies and central to Klikor's relations with neighbouring communities. However, the focus of my account is how these narratives represent the *fiasidiwo*'s importance in these social and political relations. As such, I understand them to be a site in which contemporary meanings are attributed to the *fiasidiwo* and the role of the three Adzima deities. By situating the Adzima shrines in a wider historical context, these narratives also situate the *fiasidiwo* in the Adzima shrines and Klikor sociality as "wives" that mediate relations between the lineages that 'own' the Adzima deities, *Klikortwo*, and neighbouring communities.

While my focus here is on the way in which these narratives contribute to particular meanings associated with the Adzima deities and the *fiasidiwo*, these narratives may not only be indicative of contemporary relations. As Arjun Appadurai has argued, the past is not a limitless resource that can be endlessly or arbitrarily manipulated (1981). In other words, these narratives are popular in Klikor because they have a particular resonance with the way people understand and re-tell their history. On the other hand, the relationship between the past and the present is dialectical: present practices and interpretations may be derived from the past, but the past may also be reworked “to make it appear that the past practice has governed present practice” (Peel 1984, p. 113).

Since historical resources about the south-eastern Volta Region have centred on the Anlo state, and little mention is given to the Klikor polity or its religious practices, it is difficult to give a concrete picture of Klikor in these complex historical encounters. Rather, my usage of these narratives is an attempt to understand, as Baum suggests, “the oral narratives’ relationship not only to the events described but also to the narrators and their audiences” (1999, p. 14). A fundamental way in which these are mobilised by narrators is to give specific types of meaning to the *fiasidiwo* and the Adzima shrines.

When examined in relation to the few historical accounts of Klikor by missionaries, traders, and colonial administrators, the narratives presented here might have taken on a different shape, one perhaps more resembling Greene’s examination of the Anlo polity. Particularly, she shows the way in which deities historically were associated with political and social hierarchies, competition between lineages, and the formation of polities and how shrine practices shifted with political power (1996a). At this point, an historical analysis of this nature exceeds the scope of this thesis, although I have detailed the ways in which the oral histories presented fit into the history of the south-eastern Volta Region, as documented by Greene (1996a), Amenumey (1986), and Akyeampong (2001a).



Map 5: Showing trade routes circa 1700 (Fynn 1971, p. 119).

Narratives of War: Protection and Relations

Adzima, the Anlo, and the Some

Before I examine narratives of the Adzima shrines in relation to war, the first narrative about one that occurred in 1784, let me first outline briefly the historical context of the south-eastern Volta Region before this time. As I have noted in the previous chapter, most date the settlement of Ewe speaking communities in the south-eastern Volta Region to the seventeenth century. From this point to the end of the eighteenth century, the Anlo state had numerous conflicts with neighbouring communities to gain access and control over resources and trade networks. Specifically, conflicts occurred with the Ada and their allies to the west, who were known for their prosperous salt industry, and with the Ge (Anexo) to the east (Greene 1996a, 1988; Amenumey 1986, 1997; Akyeampong 2001a, 2001b; Reindorf 1895, p. 123).

While during the seventeenth century trade was intermittent with Europeans, this began to change during the eighteenth century; at this point, the coastal areas of the south-eastern Volta Region became increasingly popular with Dutch, English, and Danish traders in slaves and ivory. As described by Greene and Akyeampong, this

popularity was due to a series of conflicts between the Asante and the Akyem and southern Fante and Ga communities embargoing Asante trade to the coast. Additionally, the expansion of the Akwamu state had serious ramifications to the stability in trade networks throughout the wider region. As a result, European, Akwamu, and Asante traders began to shift their attention to the east of the Volta River (Greene 1996a, p. 36; Greene 1988; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 45-46). The Dutch, English, and Danes started to establish trading posts along the Anlo coast during the beginning of the eighteenth century, initiated by the Dutch in 1713 (Greene 1996a, p. 36; cf Amenumey 1968, p. 101; Debrunner 1965, p. 26). Activities were concentrated in Keta; however, smaller ports were established along the coastline (Greene 1996a, p. 37).¹⁶¹

The first narrative about Klikor's and its deities' role in regional conflicts deals with the Anlo-Dane *Sagbadre* war in 1784. This war formally marked the beginning of European control over the Anlo (although Amenumey (1968) argues that in practice, control did not extend beyond the coast).¹⁶² Before examining the historical narrative, I will outline the established historical research detailing the causes of the war.

Prior to the war, the Danish, who already controlled the ports in Ada, wanted to monopolise the means of trade in and out of the Anlo area (a plan that was initiated in 1780); English and Dutch traders also operated in this area. The Anlo (which included Keta at this point) were insistent on open trade, not wanting to be restricted to specific traders. In order to resist the monopoly, the Anlo destroyed Danish possessions in Ada and Keta. In March of 1784, the Danes finally retaliated to secure their position in Keta and trade throughout the Anlo polity (Amenumey 1986, p. 46-51; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 42- 47; Greene 1996a, p. 82-83; cf accounts by Debrunner 1965, p. 17, Reindorf 1895, p. 124-130). In the conflict, the Danes were assisted by the Ga, Ada, Krobo, Akuapem, Aflao, Be and Ge, which overwhelmed the Anlo military (Amenumey 1986, p. 46-51; Greene 1996a, p. 82-83; Reindorf 1895, p. 127).

When the Anlo finally needed to retreat, they were virtually surrounded by hostile troops, with only a small passage to the north open to them (Greene 1996a, p. 82). Mamattah indicates that this passage included Klikor, Wheta, Kleveme and

¹⁶¹ For example, the Danes established posts in 1716 in Keta and both the English and the Dutch were present in Aflao by 1727 (Greene 1996a, p. 37).

¹⁶² Amenumey notes that this was referred to as the *Sagbadre* war after the Anlo "nickname" for the Danish: "to swallow" (1968, p. 48).

Tsiamé, areas to which the Anlo retreated (1979, p. 631).¹⁶³ Reindorf recounts that the Anlo, realising that they were defeated, asked for peace with the Danes on 27 April while staying in Klikor (1895, p. 128). It was not until June 1784, however, that the war was officially over, with the Anlo defeated and the Danes starting to build Fort Prindsensten in Keta (Amenumey 1986, p. 46-48; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 47; Akyeampong 2001b; Greene 1996a, p. 82-83; Reindorf 1895, p. 129).¹⁶⁴

Narratives presented to me in Klikor about the *Sagbadre* war similarly highlight that a group of Anlo warriors sought refuge in Klikor at the end of the conflict. The Anlo warriors are said to have sought protection from attack in the Adzima shrines; as one ritual specialist states, “when the Anlo refugees came to Klikor, they became *trɔmeduklu* [enter inside the god as *klu*]. They were untouchable, couldn’t be attacked.” The implication of the warriors’ incorporation into the shrines as *trɔmeduklu* will be explored later, although it suggests that the Anlo refugees sought sanctuary in the shrines. What is important at this point is the image of the Adzima deities as being powerful and how, in this instance, ritual specialists link the deities’ power to an understanding that the Anlo were not attacked while they were in Klikor. I will return to this point later.

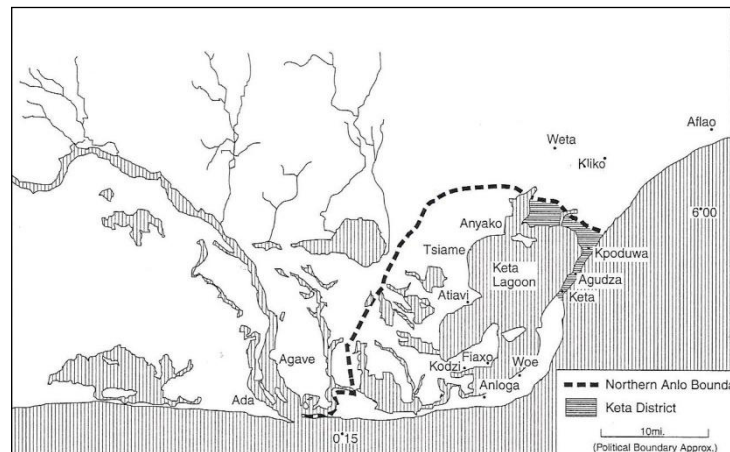
The second and more elaborate narrative about the Adzima shrines concerns the emergence of the Some community and state, formed by Keta “refugees” in 1792. This community is currently Klikor’s closest neighbour located in the Agbosome Traditional Area. Before examining the narrative, I will again outline what led up to the formation of the Some community.

Greene shows that relations between the Keta and the Anlo have historically been tense; prior to 1769, they were separate polities and Keta had close ties to and supported the Ge and the Ada, long-standing enemies of the Anlo (1996a, p. 82-83; Amenumey 1986). By 1770, the Keta shifted their alliance to the Anlo. However, during the *Sagbadre* war in 1784, the Keta failed to support the Anlo; some withdrew their support, others maintained neutrality, and others joined the attacks against the Anlo (Greene 1996a, p. 82- 83; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 47; Amenumey 1986, p. 50;

¹⁶³ Amenumey (1986) notes that the Anlo fled to Wheta, waiting for other Anlo warriors who were fighting the Ge in Glidzi (p. 49).

¹⁶⁴ Amenumey argues that because of the actions of the Danes, other states (such as Klikor, Penyi, Wheta and Dzodze) aligned themselves to the Anlo as they recognised “their freedom was threatened” (Amenumey 1986, p. 51). I would suggest that the Klikors’ and Whetas’ response in the 1792 conflict between the Anlo and the Keta indicate that this alliance was not as stable as Amenumey seems to suggest.

Reindorf 1895, p. 127; Debrunner 1965, p. 29). Following the *Sagbadre* war, relations between the Anlo and Keta continued to be tense as the Anlo, assisted by the Akwamu, attacked two towns associated with Keta, Agudza and Pottebra. The Danes, however, convinced the parties to reconcile (Amenumey 1986, p. 52).



Map 6: Map of the Anlo boundary in 1784, including Keta.
(Greene 1996a, p. 84 - with slight modification).

The Anlo defeat in 1784 allowed the Danes to build a fort in Keta to strengthen their position in the area and control over trade, which the Keta continually resisted (Greene 1996a, p. 82-83; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 47; Amenumey 1986, p. 50). Their resistance to the Danish monopoly was influenced by one important incident. In 1786, a Keta elder, Degeni, was killed; his death was understood to be the fault of the Danish Commandant Biorn.¹⁶⁵ The Keta retaliated over the next couple of years and eventually killed Biorn's assistant, Thessen, in 1790 at Aflao (Greene 1996a, p. 85; Amenumey 1986, p. 53-54; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 47).

Biorn was keen to punish the Keta for their actions and re-establish Danish authority within the area. Initially, he wanted to approach the Akyem to assist him; however, the Anlo, after hearing of his plans and wanting to keep the Akyem out of the area, requested that they be allowed to handle the situation (Amenumey 1986, p. 54-55; Akyeampong 2001, p. 47; Fynn 1971, p. 130).¹⁶⁶ Biorn agreed, paying the Anlo for their expenses. However, the Anlo intended to stage a "sham war", *nodzome*, with the

¹⁶⁵ Greene (1996a, p. 85) dates this event to 21 June 1791; 1786 recounted by Amenumey (1986) and Fynn (1971). I am choosing to use 1786 as attacks that are attributed by Greene to avenging Degeni's death occurred in 1788 and 1790 (Greene 1996a, p. 85).

¹⁶⁶ Greene's (1996a) account differs from Amenumey's (1986). She argues that the Akyem accepted money from the Danes in order to fund the attacks against Keta, but never followed through. At this time, Biorn turned to the Anlo to assist (Greene 1996a, p. 85).

Keta, for the Danes' benefit (Greene 1996a, p. 85; Amenumey 1986, p. 55-56; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 47).

Initially, the *nodzome* went according to plan, although the Anlo burnt several houses in Keta in order to make the war to appear credible to the Danes (Greene 1996a, p. 85; Amenumey 1986, p. 55-56). However, the ruse broke down, fighting ensued, and most of Keta was burnt in what is known as the *Ketava* war of 1792 (Greene 1996a, p. 85; Amenumey 1986, p. 55-57; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 47).¹⁶⁷ The Ge (Amenumey 1986 p. 57), the Klikors and Whetas came to the assistance of the Keta (Greene 1996a, p. 85; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 47). What had initially been a *nodzome* war ended with the defeat of the Anlo, partly because of the alliances made between Keta, Klikor, and Wheta (Greene 1996a, p. 85; Amenumey 1986, p. 57; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 47).

Following Anlo's defeat, many residing in Keta and its surrounding communities, having had their compounds burned to the ground during the war, were given land by the Klikors. They settled in what is now known as Agbosome and subsequently formed the Some state (Amenumey 1986, p. 57-59; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 47; Crowther 1927). In response, the Anlo requested the Danes' assistance, which the Danes gave because they believed the Ge controlled Keta and their allies (included here are the Klikors and the newly forming state of Some) and that the Keta intended to establish a trading relationship with the British.

The Danes then requested the assistance of the Asante to regain Anlo and Danish control of the area; the threat of which compelled the Ge to break off their alliance with Keta. Despite the breakdown of the Keta-Ge alliance, by 1809, the Some were rumoured to have aligned themselves with other groups that have historically been enemies of the Anlo, specifically the Akuapem and Avenor. This provoked the Anlo to

¹⁶⁷ Although historians date this war to 1792, local knowledge keeper, Massiasta, maintains that it occurred between 1843 – 1847, arguing that the Some use the earlier date to make unreasonable claims that they were established for a longer period of time. Similarly, Mamattah (and Massiasta is familiar with Mamattah's book) dates this occurrence at 1844-1847, calling the war the *Ketava* (Keta War) or the *Dukosova* (1979, p. 636). Massiasta links the death of Degeni to actions taken by the Danes against Don Jose Mora, a Spanish slave trader, in 1844. Mora passed by the Danish Fort in Keta with a group of slaves; at this point, the Danes arrested him. The Agudza are recounted as assisting Mora in retrieving the slaves. The Danish Commandant called for the Keta elder Degeni to explain these actions. In the course of the interaction, the Commandant killed Degeni; leading to the *Dukotso/ Ketava* War (Massiasta 1997). See Greene (1996a, p. 74-75) and Akyeampong (2001a, p. 55-57) for accounts of Don Jose Mora, his arrest, and the retrieval of his slaves. Greene also indicates that in 1847, the Anlo blockaded the Danish fort in Keta in retaliation for the murder of an Anlo citizen (Greene 1996a, p. 136; cf Akyeampong 2001a, p. 57; cf Debrunner 1965, p. 33 and Reindorf 1895, p. 149-154 for accounts). This is a case in which the histories of the incidents and the role of the Danes have overlapped in the oral traditions. Also see Kumassah (2005, p. 41).

attack the Some, ending in Some's defeat (Amenumey 1986, p. 60-63; cf Fynn 1971, p. 132-136).

Klikor's role in the formation of the Some state has been recounted to me in several different ways. These narratives focus on the Klikors' assistance to the Keta in 1792, subsequently allowing them to settle on Klikor land, and supporting the Some thereafter. I will first discuss two versions of Klikors' assistance to the Keta in 1792, before moving on to discuss their settlement in Klikor.

The first of these recounts:

“when the Anlowo were pursuing the Agudzawo [people of Agudza, a Keta village], the Agudzawo ran all the way passing through Netsime [the coconut plantation part of Klikor]. When the Anlowo reached Netsime, they felt thirsty and unknown to them, the spirit of the well, Mama Afu, gave them water. They drank and fell asleep. Later, they were beheaded by the Klikorwo and the Agudzawo.”

This particular version highlights the role of *Mama Afu*, a spirit associated with a natural spring in the Klikor, in giving the Anlo warriors water that led to their defeat by the Klikors. The narrator recounted the details of this incident to me many times and sometimes the narrative ends there. However, on other occasions, he links *Mama Afu* to the Adzima shrines; specifically that the Adzima priests sent the manifestation of *Mama Afu* to the Anlo warriors. This connection draws on the contemporary usage of the well by the Adzima shrines. The spring is the only natural source of water legitimate for use in shrine rituals and is frequently called the “sacred well”.

Another narrator has recounted a different version of this incident to me, although the basic elements are the same. He recounts that the Adzima priests went to the Netsime grove where the Anlo were resting and used *edza* (grinded millet and sugar, imbued with spiritual qualities and used in Adzima rituals to ensure petitioner's protection) to make the Anlo warriors fall asleep. Once the warriors had fallen asleep, the Some were able to attack them off guard. In this version, the Adzima priests are emphasised as being at the site of the occurrence and it is through their manipulation of *edza*, as a destructive rather than protective substance, that the Anlo fall asleep. Additional narratives about the settlement of the Some on Klikor land and the creation of the Some state mark the importance of the Adzima shrines in Klikor and their initiates; Klikor's role in assisting the Some is attributed as having led to the first *fiasidi* to be initiated into the Adzima shrine. This particular narrative was recorded in a 1978

memorandum by Togbui Addo VII to the Nana Agyemang Badu Committee on Chieftaincy Affairs:

“Two years after it was realised that the clouds of the war had subsided, the then Acting King of Klikor, King Adabesu and his elders, including Adzima Fetish Priest, Amegashie Gbehla, called the elders of the Ketas led by Adama I to a meeting at a place which used to be called Yegbefeme ...At the meeting of Yegbefeme, it was made known to the Ketas by the Acting King of Klikor that, in view of their promise to go back to Keta when the war was over, the war which drove them to Klikor was over and he hoped they (Ketas) should go back to their home Keta to join their kinsmen. But before they should go, they had to pay for the war expenses incurred by the Klikors in saving them from the angry Danes and Awunas [Anlos]. At this juncture, Adama I asked the Acting King of Klikor to give him and his elders three days to ponder over the question for an appropriate answer. On the third day of the same week which was Friday, the two sides met again at the same place. There, Adama I informed the acting King of Klikor and his elders that they (Ketas) feared that their lives would be in danger if they should go back to Keta, since they reliably learned that Awunas were still harassing their kinsmen at home. Moreover their properties, including buildings, had been destroyed at home as a result of the war, and that to rehabilitate themselves in Keta would create a great deal of problems to them. For the payment of the war expenses as being demanded by the Klikors, Adama I told the Klikors that he and his co-leaders estimated that if proper account was taken of the loses [sic] - both human and material - incurred by the Klikors during the Danes/Awunas-Keta War and the final sum arrived at, it would be a very colossal amount of money which he and his people could not be in position to pay through their generation to come. Therefore, in order not be ‘perpetual debtors’, and also considering their predicament at home, Keta, he and his co-leaders were pleading with the Klikors to reconsider them in the same vein as they (Klikors) did in fighting on their behalf to save them by releasing more land to them to settle on in order to live among the Klikor Community under the same conditions as Klikors or under any other conditions which the Acting King of Klikor and his elders might consider desirable. On this point, the Acting King of Klikor, on about 2 hour consultation with his elders, told the co-leaders of the Ketas that the Klikors had given much serious and sympathetic considerations to their plights and points raised...if it was their (Ketas’) wish and firm decision to live among the Klikor community and share in the Klikor traditions and customs, they were welcome. The Acting King of Klikors told them further that as a condition of their stay, Klikor traditions and customs demand that they had to pay homage to the Klikor Paramount Stool every year when stool purification ceremony was being performed... Besides the Ketas had to offer one yard of black calico (bishi), one yard of white calico, and one yard red calico (nyagadzi) to the Adzima Fetish Priest whenever he was performing the annual Adzima festival. Above all, the Ketas had to observe any other inhibitions, customs and traditions which were peculiar to the Klikors...In appreciation and gratitude of the war fought on their behalf and also to emphasise the honouring of the terms of the condition of their stay and to strengthen the bonds of future kinship which should exist between the Ketas and the Klikors, Adama I, in consultation with his co-leaders, gave out a virgin girl, traditionally dressed, namely Shiati, to Amegashi Gbehla, the then Adzima

Fetish Priest as a maidservant in the Cult of Adzima Fetish. She was the first woman ever presented to the Adzima Cult. The descendants of Shiatl are still in existence in Klikor... Togbui Akolieble, the senior right wing chief of Klikor Traditional Area, Amegashie Gblehla, the then Adzima Fetish priest and the elders of Klikor, under the directives of the King of Klikor, assembled the Ketas at a place for the performance of the final customs for their settlement.” (Togbui Addo VII 1978, p. 3-5).

The purpose of this narrative, along with the rest of the Togbui Addo VII’s presentation to the Committee on Chieftaincy Affairs, was to delineate the way in which the Klikor Paramount Chieftaincy was historically independent from the Anlo and the Some states (the point being made that the Some are in fact subjects of Klikor). The need to make these delineations have been politically important during the twentieth century as British colonial administrative boundaries and the subsequent boundaries of administrative units in independent Ghana undermined the authority of the Klikor Chieftaincy. I will return to this issue shortly. However, I will note that the narrative is not peculiar to Togbui Addo VII; others have also indicated to me that the first *fiasidi* was initiated by the Some, although most shrine members, petitioners, and initiates at other times posit that the initiation of the *fiasidiwo* is as old as the shrine itself.

The narratives that have been presented previously are those told by ritual specialists, Massiasta, and Togbui Addo, to explain how the Adzima deities, shrines, and initiates are central to the socio-political and cosmological context of Klikor contemporarily. I now turn to consider some of the themes that these narratives highlight. The first of these is the conceptualisation of the Adzima deities as “war deities”. The second is the role of the deities and the *fiasidiwo* in establishing ongoing relationships with neighbouring communities. Of particular interest here are the interpretations offered about the initiates in these encounters, which contribute to how the *fiasidiwo* are literally situated in Klikor sociality- as wives- and how they are conceptualised in the Adzima shrine ritual complex.

“The warriors will get strength”

Several weeks after I first arrived in Klikor, the ‘outdoor day’ of the Afegame Adzima shrine occurred. One element of the outdoor day is the *tagbayiyi*, literally meaning “going to the *tagba*” (“forest shrine”). The *tagbayiyi* is a highlight of

the Kli-Adzima festival, attended by lineage members and other petitioners from Klikor and other parts of the Volta Region, Ghana, and Togo. Standing in the balcony of the shrine court, I watched the courtyard fill with petitioners, specifically male petitioners, waiting for the priest and elders to emerge from the inside of the shrine. As the courtyard filled, an animal skin was placed, as a symbol of power, over the doorway of the shrine.

Some time later, Togbui Fiango and the Adzima priests emerged from the shrine. The Afegame Adzima priest was wearing a shirt, the only time that he is allowed to wear one, and carrying a shield and a broom. They then formed a procession to the *tagba*, followed by the priests of the other two shrines, the *dzikpuitsorlawo* (who carries the priests' stools), Togbui Kli (the priest of the Kli deity), and the male *fiaviwo* (lineage members and petitioners). As they moved down the footpaths and streets of Klikor to the *tagba*, members of the Klikor community parted to give them way.



Picture 5: 'Outdooring Day' at Togbui Adzima shrine. Photo by Dana Romanoff (used with permission).

The first interpretation given to me about the procession, in addition to the rather mundane description indicated in the name, was that the Adzima priests were leading the men of Klikor to “war”; an interpretation that characterised all of my discussions about this aspect of the festival. The procession itself is preceded the

evening before by the emergence of the ritual “flag”, carried around Klikor by the *aflagatsorla* after nightfall. Initially, the emergence of the ritual “flag” was presented to me as a moment in which the power of the deity is revealed, indicated by the proscription on anyone actually seeing the “flag”. As such, it appeared to be related to the ritual that occurred after the *tagbayiyi* - the *godidi*.

The *godidi* is the actual site for the outdoorings of the deity, where the deity’s ritual objects are removed from the inner shrine. It is conducted under the cover of darkness, although people are present, settled on mats in the shrine courtyard. Light is strictly banned because the deity is considered “naked” during this ceremony and light would reveal the deity’s *go*, a cloth used to cover the genitalia; tantamount to seeing the deity’s “nakedness”. The “nakedness” and genitalia of deity is understood to be the source of the deity’s power and seeing it without proper rituals and a formalised relationship to the deity would be dangerous for petitioners. However, further discussions about the emergence of the ritual flag indicated that *aflagatsorla* is a term used to describe a person who was thought to have historically searched the area surrounding Klikor for “enemies”.

Other symbolic elements associated with the procession to the *tagba* are also linked to “war”, particularly through an understanding of the deity being powerful in relation to danger. As I indicated previously, this is the only time of year that the priest is allowed to wear a shirt, which has been described to me as a shirt of “spiritual protection” (*dagbawo*). One elder explained it in these terms: “[it is] the god’s shirt...if you wear that shirt, and they fired a gun, it would not touch you. The bullets would pass another way. If they raise a cutlass at you, no. It is not an ordinary shirt, it is power”.

Finally, meanings encoded in the *tagba* further reinforce the interpretation of “war”. Today the *tagba* shrine is a relatively domesticated grove, with two circular concrete buildings that hold ritual items. The area is swept weekly throughout the year by *fiaviwo* and *fiasidiwo* of the three shrines on a rotational basis. However, this area is associated with uninhabited forests and the bush, an imagined landscape understood to be a source of danger; in the past one was vulnerable to wild animals and slave raiders in this space (cf Shaw 2002).¹⁶⁸ Contemporarily, *Klikortwo* associate forests and the

¹⁶⁸ Although these spaces were described to me most often as “forests”, drawing upon a historical imagination of the landscape, they can also be understood as the “bush”, as they are in other contexts. Other deities in Klikor, specifically of the *gorovodhun* variety, describe similar processes of outdoorings

bush with spiritual danger, filled with unknown powerful entities. It is a space in which spirits wander, without being settled in a physical place and where they may harm those crossing their path. As Shaw recounts in relation to Sierra Leone, wandering in such spaces at night, one “ran the risk of being attacked - and not only by fellow human beings” (2002, p. 48-49). The *tagbayiyi* invokes both meanings, of dangers associated with practices of slave raiding and unsettled spirits.

Although I was never allowed to go to the *tagba* during this ceremony (restricted to male petitioners), those that I spoke with indicated that while at the *tagba*, the priests and male petitioners offer drinks to the deity, and share *edza*, *liha* (maize wine), and snuff.¹⁶⁹ *Edza* in this circumstance is consumed to obtain spiritual protection.¹⁷⁰ The implication is that the men are preparing for “war”, by petitioning the deity in the site where it is most potent, at the *tagba*, while also acknowledging that this is symbolic of a dangerous space in which the protection of the Adzima deity is needed.

Interpretations of this and associated practices of the annual festival suggest that at the core of the outdoorings and *tagbayiyi*, it deals with the power of the Adzima deities and the way in which they protect people: the idiom of “war” is one way in which this relationship is expressed and legitimised. When using this as a lens to understand the narratives presented previously that emphasise the Adzima deities’ role in the wars of the Anlo and Some, it suggests that what is important is the absence of narratives of war concerning the *Klikortwo* and the presence of narratives about other polities petitioning the Adzima deities. In explaining why people in neighbouring communities came to Klikor, one elder remarked “[they came] because of these shrines [the Adzima shrines]... There is something here that they cannot flout, something that can get them into trouble, something difficult to break. They know that the warriors will get strength from Togbui Adzima and Mama Vena.” Implicit in his comment is the understanding that the Adzima deities’ ability to assist other communities is

the deity as going to the “desert”, a notion that also draws upon a cosmological imagination; *gorovodhun* are said to be from the North.

¹⁶⁹ Unlike most other aspects of the annual festival, descriptions of the activities that occur in the *tagba* are not based upon my own observations, as these are limited to male petitioners. These descriptions are provided by ritual specialists and some of the male petitioners. However, there is a sentiment that one should not recount what they see at the *tagba*.

¹⁷⁰ *Edza* is a mixture of grounded millet and sugar. Steegstra notes in relation to the Krobo that millet is regarded as “a symbol of fertility and health” (2004, p. 177). In the Adzima shrines, I found that *edza* in most cases is associated with the provision of spiritual protection to petitioners, which ensures one’s fertility and health.

contingent upon their ability to protect the Klikor community. He states that the Adzima deities are “something difficult to break”, which neighbouring communities and polities then took up.

If narratives about the Adzima deities in relation to neighbouring communities and polities are in part a display of the deities’ power in Klikor, how do the narratives and links emphasised between the deities and war relate to their contemporary position in the Klikor socio-political and cosmological hierarchies? Why are these, and understandings of the Adzima deities as “war deities” generally, invoked to explain the way in which the Adzima deities and shrines are situated in the contemporary Klikor setting?

As I indicated in the previous chapter, contemporarily, Klikor is thought to be protected by the three Adzima deities and the Kli deity - the relationship between the two is reinforced by the title of the festival itself, the Kli-Adzima festival. The Kli deity also has its own annual festival, held in April every year, in which the Adzima priests are prominent. Likewise, the Kli priest plays a role in the Kli-Adzima festival. While the Kli deity is legitimised in the socio-political and cosmological hierarchies of Klikor through its association to the settlement of Klikor and the chieftaincy, the Adzima deities’ position is only partly reinforced through settlement.

Partly the invocation of these narratives as being meaningful to the political authority of the three Adzima shrines is related to the issue that I discussed previously: narratives about the deities’ assistance to other communities are implicit commentaries about the deities’ power and protection of both ‘shrine-owning’ lineages and the Klikor community at large. However, the narrative about the settlement of the Some, also demonstrates priests’ and the shrines’ position in the political structure of Klikor. As highlighted in the narrative offered by Togbui Addo VII, the Adzima priest Gbehla is positioned as being an elder assisting the *Fiaga* of Klikor and participating in the settlement of the Some. Wrapped up within this narrative is the sense that the Adzima deities were already considered to be a “state religion”; a part of the condition for the Some’s ongoing relationship with Klikor is the annual recognition of the Klikor Paramount Chief and the Adzima deity. The invocation of these narratives at the very least suggests that the Adzima deities and shrines are important today because they were important in the past.

Relations with Neighbouring Communities and Initiates

The two narratives concerning the Adzima shrines' assistance to the Anlo during the *Sagbadre* war, the Keta, and the Some are interesting because contemporarily the boundaries between these polities and Klikor are the most blurred and often contested. As indicated in the previous chapter, Klikor is often associated with the Anlo for a number of reasons: their incorporation into the Anlo administrative unit in 1912 and the classification of the Anlo as a 'cultural grouping'. Additionally, the physical boundary between Klikor and Agbosome is difficult to distinguish and many in Klikor consider the Klikors and the Some to be "one" through successive years of intermarriage.

However, despite the blurring of group identities, these relations are also the ones most likely to be contested in some circumstances. The Anlo and Some both have historically represented strong polities that threatened the political independence of Klikor and were favoured by colonial administrations. While Crowther's report, which led to Klikor's incorporation into the Anlo administrative unit, indicates that the Klikors accepted their incorporation (1927), the Klikors have at various points in time felt the need to reinforce their political authority over the Some.

Togbui Addo VII's address about the Some featured previously was one such moment when the Klikors were arguing for recognition of their political authority over the Some. To properly understand this situation we need to first examine the history of British colonialism in the south-eastern Volta Region. The British had acquired the Anlo region in 1850, when the Danes sold their stakes in West Africa for £10,000 (Amenumey 1968, p. 101; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 48- 57). Initially, as Amenumey notes, the British did not have much interest in the region, and only put in place one official to enforce the British ban on the slave trade.

British interest continually waned, although they engaged in two military campaigns targeting the Anlo (these were initiated by groups that had historically been in opposition to the Anlo) (1968, p. 103-104). As a result of the Anlo's defeat in these attacks, they acknowledged British jurisdiction and were incorporated into the Gold Coast (1968, p. 104). Extending jurisdiction to other communities in the south-eastern Volta Region was in part influenced by economic considerations; the British wanted to institute levies on trading activities (1968, p. 105).

The Some were eventually incorporated as a protectorate after signing a treaty on 2 December 1879 (Crowther 1927; cf Amenumey 1968). Amenumey argues that their inclusion was in part meant to regulate Anlo traders who had moved inland to avoid paying taxes on trading activities. The Some were given a stipend to encourage their cooperation (1968, p. 109). The jurisdiction of the British was not extended to Klikor until 12 November 1885 (Addo 1978).

The problem for Togbui Addo VII lies in the fact that the Some signed the treaty in 1879. In signing this treaty, he argues that the British acknowledged the Some as an independent entity from Klikor, which the Klikors only found out about when they signed their own treaty in 1885. Togbui Addo VII claims that the Some treaty was invalid because the land that the Some occupied was owned by Klikor and the Some were partially subjects of the Klikor Paramount Chieftaincy.¹⁷¹

Others have also indicated to me the relationship between the Klikors and the Some has at times been tense during the last century. Togbui Addo VII emphasises the undermining of Klikor authority to be the result of the way the British incorporated polities under their jurisdiction. However, Amenumey discusses that the Some have at various points in the last century claimed that they were distinct from the Keta and have argued that the Klikors have been subsumed into the Some polity (1986, p. 57-59).¹⁷² Additionally, my own archival research, the content of which is not discussed in this thesis, indicates that on numerous occasions during the beginning of the twentieth century, the Some Chief attempted to assert authority over Klikor, legitimising his attempt based on British mandates about religious practices.

In addition to the political concerns that shape the way narratives about the Some are mobilised, both narratives about the Some presented also highlight the role of initiation or affiliation to the Adzima shrines. Briefly, let me review the first, in relation to the Anlo warriors. The Anlo warriors are understood as having been incorporated into the Adzima ritual complex as *trɔmeduklu* (“enter into the god as *klu*”). The term *klu* is used mostly in the context of shrine affiliations and denotes a hierarchical relationship of dependency between the deity and a male member of the

¹⁷¹ Crowther did not consider these treaties to be particularly valuable, as he understood the Klikor, Some, Aflao, amongst others to already be under the leadership of the Anlo polity (Crowther 1927); thereby justifying his administrative framework.

¹⁷² I have also heard references to these claims in my own research. Amenumey (1986) dismisses the claims based on his examination of historical accounts about the “sham war”.

shrine (cf Venkatachalam 2007, p. 81). However, protagonists of the Trokosi Slave debates claim that the term means slave, as the male equivalent of *kosi*.

In Klikor, *klu* or *trɔklu* is contemporarily understood to be a name or classification of initiate that was born as a result of a petitioner “buying a womb” (*dorflewiwo*). In other words, the child is born through the intervention and assistance of the deity. The term used in this manner is common throughout the region, with many historical and contemporary men in political leadership having the name *Klu* (cf Atakpa 1997).

Although *Klikortɔwo* recognise the usage of the term in reference to children born through a deity’s assistance, this is not the term that is used in the three Adzima shrines. In contrast, it derives its meaning from a shrine in neighbouring Agbosome, the Ana shrine. However, the term *klu* appears in the standardised ritual greetings during the Adzima shrines’ annual festival. .

When I asked about whom the term was referring to, there was no consensus and it was even the source of debate between members of the shrine. Many claimed they did not know, others asserted that it referred to all the male petitioners of the shrine, including male *fiavi*. Others still invoked the understanding that it referred to children born of the deity’s assistance, although other interlocutors claim that in the Adzima shrines, these children are named *dzatugbui* or *atitsogbui* (“edza grinder”/ “cutter of the tree”). This final claim is set in contrast to the usage of these terms to refer to children born of a *fiasidi*.

Finally, the term *klu*, specifically in relation to *trɔmeduklu*, also featured in some narratives about domestic slavery in the past. Specifically, these narratives detail that some slaves, referred to as *kluvi*, approached the Adzima shrines when they wanted to escape a potential sale or abuse by their ‘masters’. In approaching the Adzima shrines, they became *trɔmeduklu* or “entered into the god as *klu*”. Greene also notes, in relation to other Anlo communities, that slaves during the eighteenth century joined religious groupings of various kinds to gain benefits otherwise not granted (1996a, p. 39).

So what does it mean to ‘enter into the god as *klu*’? While many have translated this term to mean a “sanctuary seeker” who remains in a shrine as a “slave”, the nature of being in a shrine as a dependent or indebted person is what is being called into question by practitioners in Klikor (cf Westermann 1930). Given that it is difficult to determine the nature of *trɔmeduklu*; this term has multiple meanings and points of

reference and is actively being contested in the current situation where the Adzima shrines are defending themselves against accusations that they practice ‘ritual slavery’. However, the narrative is at the very least indicating that a non-formalised and individualised relationship is set up between the Adzima deities and the Anlo warriors based on their seeking protection and power, in which the Anlo warriors were in a position of dependency. The elder who told me this narrative interpreted the *trɔmeduklu* simply as “a person who took refuge in the shrine”.

In contrast to considering the Anlo warriors as *trɔmeduklu*, the second narrative about the settlement of the Some in Klikor emphasises the role of the *fiasidiwo*. The narrative is explicitly arguing that the Some are in a structurally indebted position to the Klikors, because of the Klikors’ assistance to the Some during the *nodzome* war with the Anlo and subsequently allowing them to settle. In response to this indebted position, the Some, amongst other things, initiated a *fiasidi* “in appreciation and gratitude of the war fought on their behalf and also to emphasise the bonds of future kinship which should exist between the Ketas and Klikors” (Togbui Addo VII 1978). What is implied here is that a hierarchical relationship is being reconfigured as one of kinship through the initiation of a *fiasidi* and by implication her marriage into the Klikor community.

This interpretation closely resembles that represented about the *fiasidiwo* in the contemporary Klikor setting. At one level, the *fiasidiwo* are closely linked to the kinship claims that *Klikortɔwo* make with respect to neighbouring communities, in part influenced by the number of *fiasidiwo* who marry in Klikor. The actual marriages of the *fiasidiwo* indicate a social impetus for the attribution of this kind of meaning to the *fiasidiwo*. However, as I will discuss in the following chapters, the Adzima ritual complex and the initiation of the *fiasidiwo* also highlights their role in establishing ongoing relations between groups, mediating non-kin relations of indebtedness, and acting as a symbol for kinship.

Adzima and Slavery: Protection and Wealth

Overview of the history of the slave trade

In 1698 a Dutch trader, Bosman, had this to say about Keta: “their trade is that of slaves, of which they are able to deliver a good number but yet not so many to lade a

ship” (Bosman 1705, p. 330; cited in Bailey 2005, p. 69; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 45).

During the seventeenth century, the coast east of the Volta River was not a place external traders were actively visiting for the purpose of obtaining slaves.

Akyeampong argues that during this period Keta was a provisioning stop for ships on their way to other markets further east (2001a, p. 45). Occasionally slaves were also purchased; in 1683, an English Royal African Company ship purchased slaves at Keta, although this was not their original intended destination (Akyeampong 2001a, p. 45).

Greene and Akyeampong conclude that while trade in slaves was occurring, it was limited; ships arrived irregularly and at this point European traders were not interested in establishing posts (Greene 1996a, p. 35; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 45).

This situation changed drastically during the nineteenth century. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the regional wars of the Asante with the Akyem, the embargo levied by southern Fante communities that inhibited Asante goods from reaching the coast, and Akwamu political expansion pushed trading activities to the east of the Volta River (Akyeampong 2001a, p. 45-46; Greene 1996a, p. 36-37, 121; cf Amenumey 1968, p. 101; Wilks 1957).¹⁷³ The first trading post was established by the Danes in 1716 in Keta, although the Dutch initiated trade in 1713. By 1727, both the Dutch and English had posts in Aflao (Greene 1996a, p. 36; cf Amenumey 1968, p. 101; Debrunner 1965, p. 26). Soon, other towns, such as Atorkor, Woe, Adina, and Blekusu became ports for trade with the Dutch, Danes, and English, who were at the time competing for a trade monopoly in the region (Akyeampong 2001a, p. 45).¹⁷⁴ As examined previously, the Danes partly accomplished their quest for trade monopoly in 1784, with the establishment of Fort Prindsensten in Keta.

In addition to increased European traders in the south-eastern Volta Region, Asante and Akwamu traders also shifted their activities to the east of the Volta River. This was in part due to the embargos against Asante trading along the coast west of the Volta River. Additionally, during the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Akwamu expanded their territories to control several polities east of the Volta River, including Krepi and the Anlo. They finally relocated east of the Volta River in the Krepi region

¹⁷³ The Akwamu expansion also included the political control of the Anlo from 1702 to 1730 (Greene 1996a, p. 32).

¹⁷⁴ Debrunner notes that the Danes opened a trading lodge in Woe in 1757 (1965, p. 27).

in 1730, after being defeated by the Akyem (Greene 1996a, p. 32, 121; Fynn 1971, p. 71, 108).¹⁷⁵

Slave trading drastically increased for the Anlo and their immediate neighbours during the eighteenth century, particularly because of the ensuing alliance between the Anlo, Akwamu, and Asante after 1730. The Asante established trading routes through the Akwamu controlled Krepi region down to the coastal areas of the Anlo, with the Akwamu and Anlo in part acting as middlemen. Existing trade routes were also utilized along the Volta River (Greene 1996a, 37, 121-122; Fynn 1971, p. 76-80, 109; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 45, 52; Kea 1969, p. 56-58).

While the Anlo brought salt, harvested in the Keta Lagoon, fish, and firearms to the Akwamu and the Asante, these were exchanged for slaves acquired through war and raiding and other commodities from the northern areas (Greene 1996a, 37, 121-122; Fynn 1971, p. 76-80, 109; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 45, 52; Kea 1969, p. 56-58). Trading routes also connected the Anlo ports through the northern Volta Region to Kratchi and Salaga (Gavua 2000, p. 14). However, these trading routes and relationships also created conflicts in the region during the mid-eighteenth century about the control of trade, primarily between the Ada, assisted by the Akyem, Ge (Anexo) and the polities along the Volta River, and the Anlo, assisted by the Akwamu (Greene 1996a, p. 57; Fynn 1971, p. 109)

Greene and Akyeampong argue that because of the increase in the trade of slaves during the eighteenth century and continuing into the nineteenth century, domestic slavery also became more common for the wealthy with the retention of young women and children brought to the coastal markets (Greene 1996a, p. 38, 41; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 46-47, 66-67).¹⁷⁶ These were retained to assist in the preparation of fish, an item being used in the trade between the Anlo, Akwamu, and Asante, and as carriers for travels to the interior (Greene 1996a, p. 39). Slaves were often incorporated into kinship networks as wives and children; however, the biggest difference between the 'free wife' and 'slave wife' was the amount of control the 'master' cum husband had over his wife as she was not identified with and protected by her own patrilineage in the context of domestic slavery (Greene 1996a, p. 38; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 67; cf Robertson & Klein 1983; Miers & Kopytoff 1977). As

¹⁷⁵ The Akwamu were slave traders, acquiring slaves through war and raiding, before their relocation and continued to be after (Akyeampong 2001a, p. 45, 52; Debrunner 1965, p. 27).

¹⁷⁶ Slaves that had been bought from regional markets were known as *amefleflewo*.

Greene notes, the incorporation of ‘slave wives’ allowed ‘free wives’ more time to reinforce their patrilineal ties. Greene also notes that male slaves were often married to female slaves; they and their children could be sold (1996a, p. 38-39).

During this period, “inequality was also accentuated” between members of southern Ewe communities (Greene 1996a, p. 39, 41; cf Akyeampong 2001a, p. 67). Wealth came to be associated with the sale of slaves in the trans-atlantic system and the acquisition of slaves in the domestic context. Stools, the basis for social and political authority, were specifically created in recognition of this wealth (*hozikpui*) (Akyeampong 2001a, p. 46-47, 66-67). A main component of these stools was the display of cowrie shells to represent the amount of slaves that a person owned (Greene 1996a, p. 72; Massiasta 1995, p. 11).

The Danes abolished the slave trade in 1792, although it did not become illegal for Danish citizens until 1803; likewise, the British abolished the trade in 1807. However, abolition did not necessarily stop the trade fuelling the trans-atlantic or the domestic system altogether. Spanish, Portuguese and Brazilian traders continued to operate in the area, alongside Ewe traders, circumventing the strategies of the Danes and later the English (when they bought the Danish possessions in 1850) to stop the slave trade (Greene 1996a, p. 128; Greene 1996c, p. 95, 101; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 53-58; cf Debrunner 1965, p. 33). As the Danes and then the British were headquartered in Keta, trade increasingly occurred in smaller ports that were outside the Danish/British range of sustainable surveillance (Greene 1996a, p. 128; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 53, 58).¹⁷⁷ Kea also notes that traders based in Accra started to send slaves through the Anlo ports (1969, p. 60).

Akyeampong argues that the efforts of the British after 1850, which were more efficient than that of the Danes, gradually discouraged the trade; however, German missionaries inadvertently “provided the last market” through the “ransoming” of slaves (Akyeampong 2001a, p. 58-59; cf Debrunner 1965, p. 84-87). By the mid-1860s the export of slaves had virtually ended, as traders started to shift to the production of alternative and legitimate trade items (Greene 1996a, p. 128; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 59-60; Akyeampong 2001b; cf Law 1995). In contrast, domestic slavery still remained important for the production of these alternative trade goods and slaves continued to be traded domestically (Greene 1996a, p. 128; cf Akyeampong 2001a, p. 69). Although

¹⁷⁷ Among these were Adina and Blekusu (Greene 1996a, p. 128)

Kea describes the efforts of Danish traders in establishing plantations along coastal communities associated with the Gold Coast and Slave Coast, one of which was in Keta (1995, p. 129), many Ewe traders began to rely on the production of agricultural goods, trade in fish and the export of palm oil to European trading companies established in Keta. Of particular interest was the export of palm oil, a central export coming from the Gold Coast (Akyeampong 2001a, p. 60-61). As shown by Greene, the export of palm-oil created a situation where indebtedness and pawnship, in addition to the domestic sale of slaves, became increasingly common (1996a).

For example, traders bought the palm oil for export from the Krepi districts. They often did so by buying European goods, to be exchanged for palm oil along with salt and fish, on credit (Greene 1996a, p. 102). As the price of palm oil fluctuated, partly due to the Krobo boycott of selling palm oil to the British and their subsequent suppression (Akyeampong 2001a, p. 60-61), traders faced the situation that the sale of the palm oil might not cover the debts incurred (Greene 1996a, p. 102-103). Greene argues that as a result:

“creditors would take custody of a relative of the debtor as a pawn, *woba*, and hold that person until someone repaid the loan. Families were rarely able to redeem pawned relatives, but this does not seem to have deterred others lured by the prospects of quick profits” (Greene 1996a, p. 103).

As highlighted by Greene, the issue of indebtedness affected one’s immediate family through pawnship and a collective responsibility to pay back debts even after the debtor had died; as such, a number of strategies were developed to deal with those in patrilineages who became in debt and left the lineage vulnerable. Firstly, some families “requested German missionaries pay the sum” and accept the debtor “into their service” (Greene 1996a, p. 103; cf Debrunner 1965, p. 84). Secondly, some debtors were put to death. Finally, many debtors were disowned by their families (Greene 1996a, p. 103; cf Falola & Lovejoy 1994).

Akyeampong similarly argues that during the nineteenth century, panyarring, defined as the seizure of a debtors’ relative, also started to occur. If debtors failed to “redeem” their relative, these could be sold or pawned again by the creditor (2001a, p. 70). Pawnship, panyarring, and selling people became intertwined in practice. Some families pawned their children to creditors until debts could be paid; some creditors seized a debtor’s kin to ensure payment of debts. Debtors also seized non-kin (and kin, when they presumably did not have permission by lineage elders to use a member as a

pawn) and sold them to pay debts; likewise, some families sold their children to pay debts. Sometimes, people were just seized or abducted for the purposes of being sold; debt may have played a role on the side of the abductor, although it could have just been an opportunity to make money (for all of the above, see examples from 1866 and 1885 used by Akyeampong 2001a, p. 70-71 and missionary accounts of redeemed slaves in Debrunner 1965, p. 85).

In these practices whether one was a ‘slave’ and ‘free’, based upon one’s accepted genealogical connections, offered some protection to the social person and was significant in determining who could be pawned or sold. (This issue complicated by the intentions of the debtor in actually paying back the creditor and the protection offered to members of the lineage). However, in practice, the distinctions between ‘free’ and ‘slave’ also would have been blurred, because lineage members were also being seized or captured by creditors (for the purposes of enticing a debtor to pay a creditor or for the purposes of selling).¹⁷⁸

Additionally, raiders throughout the Gold Coast continued to capture slaves from the interior; Nukunya details the history of one Krobo woman who was captured by Anlo raiders around 1885 and sold at Woe to an Anlo man (1983, p. 243). Likewise, regional wars still provided slaves for the domestic market. For example, the Peki War from 1831 to 1833 between the Peki and the Akwamu provided a number of slaves to coastal communities (Greene 1996a, p. 75; Venkatachalam 2007, p. 83). Similarly, the Asante incursion into the northern Volta Region from 1868 to 1869 contributed to the enslavement of a portion of the population and subsequent sale in Anlo markets (Brydon 2008, p. 32-33).

The Adzima shrines and the slave markets of Klikor

At some point, a slave market was located in the Ablotsivia/Abletsivia ward of Klikor (recall the ward’s name means respectively “little London or overseas”/ “deceive you to never return”. The first spelling, Ablotsivia, is currently preferred). When the slave market operated is difficult to determine for a number of reasons.

¹⁷⁸ Domestic slavery and the status of the slave were abolished in the Gold Coast by the British in 1874; however, as Robertson discusses, the British encountered problems enforcing the proclamation (1983). Despite problems of enforcing the proclamation, Brydon notes the return of many former slaves originally from the northern Volta Region. While many of these were enslaved in the southern Volta Region, Brydon also indicates that some Anlo owners killed their slaves that wanted to leave (2008, p. 34).

Those in Ablotsivia are generally reticent in talking about this history, outside a particular context or understanding. Others attempt to push the market into a more distant past to disassociate the market with the Mama Vena shrine, arguing that the market pre-dated the shrine. While typically the Ablotsivia Mama Vena shrine makes claims, like the others, to being established soon after the settlement of Klikor, it is understood as being the last of the three shrines to be established and derived from the Ablogame Mama Vena shrine.

However, local historian and knowledge keeper, Massiasta, argues that the Ablotsivia market served as an intermediary market for slaves brought from northern areas, specifically linking it to Kete Kratchi, to the coastal town of Adina. In some cases, these would then be transferred to Keta (Massiasta 1995; Massiasta 1997; Massiasta 2006, p. 41-53). Massiasta, while avoiding dating the shrines, implies that these were a part of the trans-atlantic slave trade and operated prior to the nineteenth century.

Massiasta and the Ablotsivia elders connect the market to the Ablotsivia ancestor Togbui Aheto Adzofia (Adzofia being a title given to leaders of raiding gangs). Massiasta also includes within this history Togbui Afari, the grandfather of Togbui Adzofia, as having links to Adina; he argues that Adina was originally a part of Klikor's territory, owned by Togbui Afari (Massiasta 1997), although named Ahetokope after Togbui Aheto Adzofia (Massiasta 1995). It was later named Adina because of the slave trade (Massiasta 1997).

Both Togbui Afari and Togbui Adzofia are remembered as being trading partners with Togbui Gbenyo I. Togbui Gbenyo I was the *Fiaga* of Adina, appointed after Togbui Afari "granted" the land to the Some in 1792 detailed previously; however, Massiasta argues that their trading relationship was already established and contributed to the granting of the land (Massiasta 1997). Most likely, the slave market in Ablotsivia operated from the second half of the eighteenth century into the first half of the nineteenth century, as Adina was an important trading post throughout this time.

Although attempts are made to disassociate the Ablotsivia shrine from this history, a slave market re-enactment, referred to as the *Gowu*, is held annually during Ablotsivia's portion of the Kli-Adzima festival. As one Ablotsivia elder noted, they perform the slave market re-enactment because "it is something that we do for remembrance. Because our grandfathers have done that before." The Adzima shrines have a complicated history in relation to slavery, which they negotiate through the re-

enactment of a slave market, drawing on multiple understandings of the slave trade and the imagery of slavery. I will discuss the implication of the re-enactment later in this chapter.

The annual slave market re-enactment is not the only channel through which the history of slavery is mobilised in the present in Klikor. Unlike other West African settings, where there may be a “discursive near silence” about slavery or the relationships established in slavery are expressed through other kinds of idioms and imageries, such as witchcraft and spirits (Shaw 2002, p. 9), narratives about slavery emerge in a variety of contexts in Klikor: through songs, proverbs, lineage genealogies, and ritual practices.¹⁷⁹ Significant among these are narratives about the provision of protection by the Adzima deities in light of the insecurities experienced by people during the slave trade. This is also referenced as an instigating factor as to how some lineages came to initiate their first *fiasidi* in previous generations; the understanding of which being re-mobilised in the initiation of the lineage’s subsequent *fiasidi*.

Protection, Wealth, and Initiates

Although the Ablotsivia elders connect the former shrine market with the sale of slaves from the north, Greene shows that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the south-eastern Volta Region also experienced slave-raiding and kidnappings from traders and raiders operating in the area, with people vulnerable to being sold into domestic slavery or the trans-atlantic system (2011, p. 191). The situation was exasperated by the system of pawnship and the practice of selling “problematic citizens” into slavery (Greene 2011, p. 190). *Klikortwo* also felt vulnerable to these threats.

Indications of such are found in ambiguous statements made by members of Klikor in other accounts. For example, Akyeampong references Togbui Addo VIII (the *Fiaga* of Klikor) as stating “You returned from the farm and your family had been taken away, probably even by somebody you knew so well” (Akyeampong 2001a, p. 54). Massiasta indicates another story: “a member of the royal family of Klikor was ‘retrieved’ after being enslaved for many years. Eventually he was installed as a ruler of his people” (Massiasta 1995).

¹⁷⁹ Even so, Bailey (2005) argues domestic slavery among southern Ewe communities is characterised by silence and fragmentation.

Despite indications that *Klikortwo* also felt vulnerable to kidnapping and raiding, many informants made statements about slavery in the past such as this: “The Adzima deities in Klikor became popular during the slave trade, because they protected people from being sent...If they called the deities’ name, they would disappear from the traders”. Similar to historical narratives of war, the power and the strength of the Adzima deities are asserted as a significant source of protection that *Klikortwo* could draw on.

Conversations with *fiasidiwo* about the reasons for their initiations were also a significant context in which systems of slavery in the past were detailed. One elderly *fiasidi*, originally from Togo, recounted this narrative:

“This happened far in the past. My great-grandmother had eight children. During this era, there was massive slave trading. The family never knows the time that the children might be sold into the slave trade...So when my great-grandmother came here to make the pledge, she went back and became rich. She pledged, if people do not take any of my children into slavery I will come and pay a child in the future to be under the god here. When she went back, she became very rich and bought poor people. They added to the 8 makes 12 [children]. She lived and nothing happened to any of the children. She died, and the family forgot about the pledge that she had made. So when I was born, I became very sick. Usually if we are sick, they [parents/elders] go to divination, so they know what to do. Through divination, the god said that the great-grandmother made a pledge and this is the girl that she [the great-grandmother] wants to give to me, to become mine. So I was brought here... It was a great gift helping the family...(How did your great-grandmother become rich?) It is like when you ask for one thing, two things are given. You only ask for the children’s protection, but when you have children and you are poor, what do you do? The god knows that. She needed to be rich. She became rich through working and the god helping her too so that she bought four other people. (What kind of work did she do?) In the olden days, the process of making palm oil is to make a hole in the earth and boil the palm nuts... She poured it in the hole and boiled the water, poured on it, and covered it for a night so it becomes soft and easy to grind. The next day, she went to inform the people at dawn, ‘I have prepared some palm nut so you should come and grind for me.’ She went first to see if it had boiled well. But she realised that there was no palm nut, but cowries and coins. Cowries were used in the olden days as money. She went into the room and brought out a calabash to scoop the cowries into it and got another for the coins. She realised that there was a stool between the coins and the cowries, a stool which the people sit on. She picked up those things. Usually when you have a lot of cowries and coins, you are rich. She bought two boys and two girls through that. Her coming here makes her rich and able to buy more than her own. She buys and they don’t buy hers...(She found a stool?) My grandmother usually sat on that stool to buy people and sometimes to lend money. If you are rich, they come to you for money. She sat on that stool to sell to the people. Now they are worshipping that stool in Togo. One of my sisters became a priestess of the stool. She sits

on the stool and divines using the mirror. There's a spirit in the stool and every Christmas we go there to make festival."

In this narrative, the *fiasidi* makes the explicit connection between experiencing the protection of the deity from systems of slavery, raiding, and pawnship to the acquisition of wealth. The great-grandmother petitioned the deity for the protection of her children; the consequence of this protection was success, health, and wealth, exemplified in the establishment of a *hozikpui*. Although the *fiasidi* does not locate this narrative in a specific time-period, wealth is associated directly with the acquisition of slaves and being a creditor to other people. Additionally, wealth could also be understood as a kind of protection from becoming indebted and vulnerable to pawnship and the sale of dependents: "she buys and they don't buy hers".

The narrative and the *fiasidi*'s own understanding of her role in the shrine also highlights that a *fiasidi* was pledged to the deity, if the deity was successful in protecting the great-grandmother's children. However, the pledge was not fulfilled by the great-grandmother. This created a situation in which those that benefited from the success, health, and wealth of the great-grandmother (her children and subsequent generations) were indebted to the deity and needed to fulfil the pledge.

As we have seen in this example, narratives of slavery are intertwined with those about the history of lineages and shrines; rooted in the ownership of ancestral stools of wealth (*hozikpui*) and the protection and success bestowed upon lineages through the petitioning of the Adzima deities. Other *fiasidiwo* have also been initiated based upon the revelation of the transgressions of previous generations in relation to their or other's slaves; a broken oath to the slave not to be sold, the murder of one slave at the hand of another lineage's slave. However, these are personal narratives that are known to only a select few. In contrast, the *Gowu* is a public display of slavery, open to the Klikor community regardless of their access to specialised knowledge, such as membership to specific lineages or shrines.

Performing Slavery: The Gowu

As I have noted previously, a slave market was once located in the Ablotsivia ward of Klikor, giving meaning to the area's name; Ablotsivia as "little London or overseas" or Abletsivia as "deceive you there to never return". The Ablotsivia 'shrine-owning' lineage re-enacts the slave market during their portion of the annual festival, as

a part of the ‘breaking the peace’ ceremony to end the prohibition on drumming in the ward. The rite necessarily entails communication with and honouring the lineage ancestors and deities, who act as guardians over the ward and lineage members. The *Gowu* is a specific rite in Ablotsivia’s ‘breaking the peace’ that is understood as being performed to remember or commemorate their ancestor’s involvement in the slave trade because this is linked to the wealth and status of the lineage in Klikor.

The performance of the *Gowu* is led by one member of the ‘shrine-owning’ lineage, after having inherited the role from his father 30 years ago. He narrates the performance and presents those who are for ‘sell’ to the crowd. Other members of the lineage participate by dressing as slaves or representing themselves as slave raiders. The slave market re-enactment has serious undertones and intent, but it is not a sober event. The actions of the narrator and the ‘slaves’ in the performance are playful, excessive, and mocking. Those who watch the performance, a significant proportion of the Adzima shrines’ members and initiates, comment on the performance and laugh at the excessive nature of it.¹⁸⁰

During the 2004 *Gowu*, amidst a crowd of onlookers gathered at the Ablotsivia shrine, three ‘slave’ women were led in a line to the shrine, linked to one another with a chain of toilet paper. The women were wrapped in old cloth, with corn cobs circling their upper arms and fashioned into a necklace along with the caps of coke bottles. Their hair was tousled or poorly braided and their bodies and faces painted with white chalk. One of the women wore a towel folded over her genitalia (over jeans), held up by a string lined with corn cobs; this resembled a *go*. The three women were presented as being pregnant, one carrying a walking stick to help her manoeuvre through the crowds in her advanced stage of pregnancy. After their journey through the crowd to the front of the shrine, they sat and were offered water by a female lineage member, while another man, understood to be a slave raider, snatched several children from the crowd and brought them to the front of the shrine to be sold alongside the three women.

The leader of the rite stepped up onto the platform at the entrance of the shrine and began his narrative about the three women. He recounted that these are his wives, all three pregnant, but he has to sell them because he is too poor. He emphasised this point; “even the cloth I am wearing I stole from a guard”. He presented one of the

¹⁸⁰ I observed two of these performances; both highlighted the same narrative presented here, although informants indicate that the content has changed historically. The main difference between the two I observed was that during the second performance, close to the end of my fieldwork, I was also ‘sold’ at the slave market.

women, his 'second' wife, who he explains is two months pregnant. He offered to sell her for ₦6,000, whereupon a woman in the crowd countered this by offering to buy her for ₦3,000. The man acquiesced to the price, but when the woman came to take the wife away, the wife shrieked and cowered, not wanting to go. He then presented the next wife, his 'third', to the crowd, lamenting that he does not want to sell her because he got her through "the tug of war in my travels". He continued, "But because of poverty I have to. Whoever takes her must look after her, and the baby is for you. She has a beautiful body. I will sell her for ₦5,000, but I will not bargain". The same woman who bought the first then came to buy this one.



Picture 6: *Gowu* performance. Photo by Dana Romanoff (used with permission).

Finally, the man presented his final wife, his 'first' wife. He narrated, "this is my first wife, first and foremost. She is nine months pregnant. Why do I want to sell her? Only because of poverty, necessity compels a butcher to kill a cat instead of a cow. She is very costly, but no bargaining. I am selling her for ₦8,000. When she gives birth, she always has twins. So the one to take her, when you buy her, you have to marry her and treat her well." At this, the woman started howling with labour pains and asked to be taken to the hospital. She sat and the man leaned over her, brushing her upper body and face with a small broom in his hand. The same woman again came from the crowd to buy her. Following the sale of the three wives, the man who

snatched the children from the crowd stood and presented the children. He offered to sell four of them for ₵7,000 to those in the crowd.

A variety of different comments were made to me about the slave-market re-enactments by the leader and members of the crowds. Amongst both, the re-enactment does not have one interpretation but is filled with ambiguities around the history of slavery in the south-eastern Volta Region. It invokes a number of different reactions based on the intentional narrative given by the leader and the symbolic cues of the performance. The women are understood partly as slaves transferred from the northern regions for dispatch to the coast. They are also understood as ‘wives’, sold as a result of economic depravity. The identity of the ‘wives’ is not explicit, although the narrative suggest that they ‘foreign’ (i.e. northern) slaves incorporated as ‘wives’. Some interpretations also highlighted that these might be women with a social identity not mediated by their husbands based on local lineage membership. The children are interpreted as both “naughty children” sold by lineages to the slave traders and children who have been snatched by slave raiders.

My conversations with the *Gowu* narrator (and other elders) highlighted that the re-enactment was about the transfer of slaves from northern communities for dispatch to the coast and then sold. Like other comments made to me about the history of the slave market, they almost exclusively connect the history of Ablotsivia to the export of slaves in the trans-atlantic system, rather than domestic slavery. As one Ablotsivia elder noted as to why they perform the slave market re-enactment, “it is something that we do for remembrance. Because our grandfathers have done that before, they have taken people to Adina where they sell to the whites, which are now black Americans.” The emphasis that these were northern slaves exported to the Americas is a particularly strong mechanism for people to disassociate themselves from the legacy of domestic slavery and the implication that local peoples were also sold and pawned by their lineage members, their communities, or illicitly through kidnapping (Bailey 2005; Akyeampong 2001b).

This disassociation, or rather strategic re-imagining of slavery through the lens of the trans-atlantic system, comes out the strongest during accounts of past re-enactments. In these, the slaves sold were male, bound by rope and their mouths covered - a symbology that lends itself to a commentary on the trans-atlantic slave trade. It similarly emerged in the 2004 *Gowu* presented and its narrative on ‘wives’.

These ‘wives’ entered the ‘slave market’ in a single file line and tied to one another with toilet paper; this then evoked comments from audience members about the slaves’ journey from the north to the coast in shackles, regardless of physical conditions, such as pregnancy. However, the positioning of the women as ‘wives’ in the narrative seemed to have a slightly different connotation. As I indicated previously, female slaves from the north were often kept for domestic slavery rather than sold to slave traders on the coast, and incorporated into lineage structures as wives (Greene 1996a, p. 38; Rosenthal 1998; Venkatachalam 2007).

The incorporation of such women into local lineages is a central preoccupation of some kinds of shrines found in the southern Volta Region, such as the Kratchi Dente (Fofui) and Tchamba shrines. Venkatachalam argues that Kratchi Dente (Fofui) shrines, common in Klikor and south-eastern communities, were developed in the 1930s to explicitly deal with the implications of domestic slavery and “the integration of foreign women in Anlo patrilineages and social institutions” by recognising slave-owning ancestors, their slaves and the slaves’ ancestral deities (Venkatachalam 2007, p. 83; cf Greene 1996a, p. 67; Akyeampong 2001a, p. 69; Massiasta 2006, 1995).¹⁸¹ Likewise, Rosenthal shows that Tchamba shrines carry the same purpose of recognising the ancestral ties of slaves, understood to be non-Ewe from the north, incorporated into Ewe lineages (Rosenthal 1998; Rosenthal 1997).

Venkatachalam (2007) and Rosenthal (1998) argue that practices within the Kratchi-Dente and Tchamba shrines are commentaries on ‘otherness’, as either non-Anlo (but still potentially Northern-Ewe) or non-Ewe. Rosenthal shows that the ritual displays of these shrine mimic what they conceptualise non-Ewe northerners to look like, drawing on an aesthetic of red, white, and blue calico cloth (1998, 1997). In contrast, the display of the ‘slaves’ in the *Gowu* is more reminiscent of what *Klikortɔwo* understand their ancestors to have worn or looked like, although in excess or parody fashion. The ‘slaves’ wore a ‘pad’ over the groin, understood as a *go*; the corn cobs and coke bottle caps around the arms and fashioned into necklaces parodies the

¹⁸¹ Venkatachalam is here specifying ‘non-Anloness’ as distinct from ‘Anloness’. She does so because her ethnographic work is based upon a decidedly Anlo community, both contemporarily and historically, and members of this community obtained Northern-Ewes from Peki during the Peki Wars in 1831 as slaves, which were then incorporated as wives (2007). For my purposes, it should be read as a discourse of those with genealogical connections in a community about those without genealogical connections (which could mean Northern-Ewe or members of other non-related groups). In Klikor, Massiasta argues that domestic slaves originated from various areas- although he explicitly connects most to Kete Kratchi. He lists the names of several slaves within one Klikor lineage as being indicative of their origins: Northerner, Akan, and Ewe -most likely referencing Northern-Ewe (Massiasta 2006, p. 52).

common practice of wearing beads around the arms or as necklaces. The body paint parodies the application of powder during contemporary special or ritual occasions, in excess.

If an audience member privileges cues in the performance that evoke understandings of women as from the north (but incorporated into an lineage as ‘wives’), their reading of the representation of the slaves could be understood in much the same fashion that Rosenthal pinpoints about the proverb “the slave understands language, but s/he does not understand ‘the wild crab’”. The proverb represents at one level, the foreignness and perhaps wildness of the slave, while also highlighting that some aspects of being ‘Ewe’ cannot be learned (Rosenthal 1995, p. 581). Here, the slave does not quite get how to manipulate symbols of wealth and lineage membership in the Klikor community.

The narrative itself emphasises ‘wives’ who were vulnerable to enslavement because of economic depravity. In a structural analysis of the incorporation of foreign slaves as ‘wives’, the indication is that these were vulnerable in situations of economic hardship because of the lack of kinship bonds and protection and could be resold or pawned (Greene 1996a, p. 39). More importantly, many women in the audience commented to me, that these women, while trying to appear wealthy, could not actually afford the real thing; they have to fashion jewellery out of corn-husks and coke bottle caps. Un-kept hair and torn cloth is generally also associated with poverty in contemporary Klikor. Additionally during the 2005 *Gowu*, one of the ‘slaves’ carried a lighter, which she used as if it was a mobile phone and a voice recorder during the display, mocking those who on their phones and me using my recorder in lieu of notes, but reinforcing the image that, as a slave, she could not afford either of these items. In this sense, poverty is transposed onto the image of the slave and perhaps indicative that everyone is vulnerable to economic indebtedness in the historical and contemporary context.

The *Gowu* is one site in which slavery is reconfigured in the contemporary context. Remembering and forgetting the dynamics of slavery and re-imagining it to address contemporary concerns is as Akyeampong notes, “intensely political or moral” where “memory constitutes an important site of social contestation”. This occurs not only in light of the debates about the Trokosi Slave, but also through the extension of UNESCO’s heritage sites to include Atorkor, as an international slave-history site (Akyeampong 2001, p. 2).

Conclusion

This chapter has described the ways in which meaning is attributed to the Adzima deities and the *fiasidiwo* in contemporary representations about the past. Historical narratives about war and slavery highlight the Adzima deities as providing power, strength, and protection in regional conflicts and vulnerability to enslavement through raiding and systems of pawnship. The power and strength of the Adzima deities is continuously being asserted through these narratives and claims that while war and slave raiding were concerns for neighbouring communities, they were not necessarily *Klikortwo*. This construction and assertion of power in historical narratives, set in contrast to variety sources of danger, is one way of legitimising the Adzima deities' role in relation to danger today and explaining why the deities attract petitioners from other communities around the southern Volta Region, Ghana, and Togo.

These narratives also attribute particular types of meaning to the role of the *fiasidiwo* in historical engagements between Klikor and neighbouring communities and in the context of the danger of war and slavery. Here, the initiation of a *fiasidi* is understood as mediating relations of indebtedness to the Adzima deities, where those from outside the 'shrine-owning' lineages appeal to the deities for protection. As indebted to the deities for protection, wealth, and success, the initiation of a *fiasidi* establishes an ongoing relationship between these non-kin petitioners, the Adzima deities and shrines.

While these historical narratives emphasise the role of the *fiasidi* as mediating indebtedness, through the pledge and subsequent initiation in recognition of the deities' work for petitioners, a critical disjuncture appears between accounts of the initiation of a *fiasidi* in the past to those in the contemporary context. Some *fiasidiwo* are initiated today based on interpretations of pledges made in the past, as seen in the case of the *fiasidi* narrating her lineage's appeal to the deity for protection against slave raiding and kidnapping. However, petitioners do not make these types of pledges of a *fiasidiwo* today. Rather, *fiasidiwo* have come to be associated with the transgressions committed by their lineage members against the Adzima deities or their "children". This issue will be discussed in more detail in the next two chapters; although it is my feeling, echoing others such as Nukunya & Kwafo (1998), that this represents a historical shift in the practices associated with the *fiasidiwo*. At this point, exploring

the circumstances contributing to this shift exceeds the scope of this thesis, although is an important question for future research.¹⁸²

However, as I will discuss in the next two chapters, there is a continuity between the narratives of the past that highlight the pledging an *fiasidi* or initiating one on the basis of being indebted to the deity for protection in the context of danger and the initiations set in motion today. Danger continues to be dominant way in which non-kin petitioners are drawn into relationships with the Adzima deities, although the source and circumstances of danger have shifted significantly. While danger features in the reasons given for the *fiasidiwo* today, set alongside that of transgressions, the Adzima shrines also act as powerful arbitrators and are imbued not only with power, but also as guardians of morality, specifically in relation to transgressions and punishment.

¹⁸² Greene also indicates a historical shift in the practices of the Nyigbla shrine in Anloga (1996a, p. 87-91; 1985).

Chapter 6

The Work of the Adzima Deities

The previous two chapters have highlighted two issues important to the Adzima shrines' ritual complex. Chapter 4 demonstrated the way in which relationships are formed with deities, through the process of grounding them out of the cosmological space and into human sociality. These relationships vary in degrees of formality, and are based on complex notions of 'ownership' and the links between lineage members and the incorporation of non-kin through the process of initiation.

Chapter 5 demonstrated that in narratives of the past, the Adzima deities and the role of their shrines and priests are connected to conflicts between neighbouring groups and regional slave trading and raiding. In these narratives, the deities act as a central source of protection for *Klikortwo* and other non-kin petitioners. The *fiasidiwo* are positioned as being central to the establishment of the long-term relationship between the non-kin petitioners, the Adzima deities, and the 'shrine-owning' lineages, specifically in the context of the non-kin's indebtedness to the Adzima deities. However, the narratives also indicated the ambiguity of social realities and the role of deities in them. While the narratives highlight that petitioners came to the Adzima deities for protection against the threat posed by the slave trade, raiding, and systems of indebtedness, the deities' protection is also linked to the potential of the slave trade and indebtedness as being a source of success, wealth, and prosperity.

In this chapter, I examine the Adzima shrines and the interactions between the deities, ritual specialists, and petitioners as sites where particular understandings of the deities in relation to danger are shaped and mobilised. In this context, petitioners, *fiaviwo* (children), and *fiasidiwo* relate to the Adzima deities through ideas about the protection from danger conferred onto them. However, deities can also be the source of danger for a variety of reason.¹⁸³ For those connected to a particular deity because of patrilineal or maternal affiliation, or through the action of petitioning, danger may be understood as an impetus for the acknowledgement of prior relations with deities and aspect of oneself, and acts to reaffirm relations of protection. In other circumstances, danger from deities may be experienced as the result of a transgression, *wo nuvo*

¹⁸³ At a general level, as Gilbert shows in relation to the Akuropon, the power of metaphysical entities is always dangerous (1989, p. 60).

(“doing a bad thing”).¹⁸⁴ The concept of *wo nuvo*, generally and in the context of the Adzima shrines, ranges widely and may be interpreted quite loosely: from the inadvertent or intentional breaking of a taboo of the deity to anti-social actions, such as theft and murder, towards petitioners, “children”, or “wives” of the deity. Through transgressions and petitioning deities, people may be drawn into relationships with deities that they may have had no previous relationship with or even knowledge of.¹⁸⁵

The Adzima Shrines: An Overview

Many people travel to visit the Togbui Adzima and Mama Vena shrines; some are drawn to the shrines by their reputation or because they have a connection to someone in Klikor or other frequent petitioners.¹⁸⁶ Daily, people come to the Adzima shrines to make “drink offerings” (*ahadedezeme*) regarding their well-being: physical health, wealth, fertility (although one could go to many other deities for these kinds of issues). Others also come to the Adzima shrines for specific issues that are considered to be the Adzima deities’ speciality; in particular, for protection when threatened by “enemies” and “finding the truth” when these threats are unknown.

The action of *ahadedezeme* (“drink offering”) is often translated by informants as “prayers” or “petitions”, referring to the act of supplication involved. It consists of the petitioner offering foreign gin or schnapps, or locally brewed *akpeteshie*, to the priest, along with the ritual fee (¢5,000 before the currency change to GH¢ in 2007).¹⁸⁷ The priest will then offer a portion of the alcohol to the deity, by pouring it into a carved out hole on the floor at the door of the *trɔkpome* (literally, the “trɔ shrine”, referring to the inner shrine). As the priest does this, he recites a verse designed for the deity (*adefofo* – “ringing/striking the tongue”), followed by a summary of the petitioner’s concerns. People can also have representatives do this on their behalf; I have even seen the priests take requests on their mobile phones.

¹⁸⁴ I am consciously interpreting *wo nuvo* as “committing a transgression”, rather than the conventional translations of “committing a crime” or “committing a sin”, for reasons discussed in the remainder of the thesis.

¹⁸⁵ See Lovell (1996, 2002) for a discussion of this in relation to *vodhun*.

¹⁸⁶ The most unlikely person that I found at the Togbui Adzima and Mama Vena shrines was an Australian woman and her Ghanaian husband who were opening a drinking spot in Cape Coast, as well as a woman from Benin who lives in Accra. In both of these cases, I became intrigued as to how they had come to hear about the shrines. Generally, their prayers involved the success of their business establishments.

¹⁸⁷ At the time £1 roughly equaled ¢16,000.

At the time of a drink offering, petitioners can also pledge items to the deity, on the condition that the deity is successful (referred to as *gbedodo*- with a connotation of “thanks” - or *atamkaka* - with a connotation of “oath” making). Even if a pledge is not made at the time of a drink offering, petitioners still often bring items to the shrine if the deity is successful, then called *atamfexexe* or “paying the oath debt” (*xexe* is often translated as “paying”, but in some circumstances has the connotation of offering). The most common pledge items I have seen have been money, a goat, or a chicken. In the case of a goat or a chicken, the animal will be slaughtered (or sometimes kept by the shrine for later use), prepared with *dzankple* (made from maize flour and water that was used to boil the meat), offered to the deity and shared amongst those present (with some portions taken to others not present).¹⁸⁸

Many will also bathe with ritual water (*tsi le le* or *agbametsilele*) at the shrines during visits for making drink offerings. The water used during all ritual ceremonies comes from a natural spring located on the outskirts of Klikor, which, as shown in the previous chapter, is conceptualised as the *Mama Afu* spirit and the water endowed with spiritual qualities. The priest, while reciting a verse, mixes the water with herbs (*amawo*). To bathe, petitioners are taken into the *tsilefe* (in the inner shrine) which contains a number of basins filled with the water. The petitioner stands in front of each basin, scooping up the water with their hands and pouring it over their bodies five times per basin.¹⁸⁹

Bathing in this manner is meant to both purify and protect the person from life-threatening forces. For example, one might want to bathe at the shrine when they are ill or are having problems with their general well-being. After bathing, the petitioners receive the *esi*, a necklace made of palm reeds covered with red chalk (*dekpe*), to be worn until it naturally falls off.¹⁹⁰

People also bring disputes to the shrine court (*nyadrɔdrɔ*), appealing to shrine elders to settle conflicts. The shrine court has heard cases that originate throughout the Volta Region, as well as Accra, other parts of Ghana and Togo, Benin, and Nigeria. Proceedings occur every market week at each of the shrines. Typically, they will have several cases at each session, although some of these may be continuations of previous

¹⁸⁸ As indicated in the previous chapter, the initiation of a *fiasidi* was due to the pledges made in the past. However, *fiasidi* are no longer pledged; this has been replaced with animals, money, and crops.

¹⁸⁹ Although most ritually bathe at the shrine, I have seen others collect the ritual water and take it home instead. Either way, the ritual fee that accompanies bathing is ₵5,000.

¹⁹⁰ People who prefer not to wear the necklace can opt out of it or have the reeds wrapped around their wrists.

hearings. The purpose of the court is for the parties involved in a conflict to air their grievances before the council of elders and the priest (collectively known as *vornumegawo*), in order for them to decide on a judgement.

However, court judgments (*afiatsotso*) can be challenged. These conflicts may have previously been, or will go on to be settled by courts of a different kind, including other shrines, local chiefs, lineage heads, and the government High Courts. If the disputants are not satisfied with the decision of the elders, besides taking the case to another court, they also have the option to undergo an ordeal or, locally translated, an “attestation” (*nududu* – “eating the thing/deity”), which involves both parties symbolically eating from the deities’ “plate”.

A Day in the Shrine: The Case of Yaa and Adzo

One afternoon while I was greeting one of the priests, a group of people, led by a *fiasidi*, entered the shrine carrying a woman swollen throughout her upper body and having difficulty breathing. Part of the group knelt before the priest and explained in Twi, translated by the *fiasidi*, that they had travelled from Accra to see the priest because when the woman, Yaa, became ill, her mother had taken her to a diviner. The diviner revealed to them that her illness was the result of a quarrel with a woman named Adzo who had invoked the name of the Mama Vena deity.¹⁹¹ After listening to their problem, the priest sent the group to consultation performed by an *amegashie*, a type of diviner that facilitates communication with metaphysical entities, to find out from Mama Vena what could be done to heal Yaa.

At the consultation, the deity interrogated those involved to reveal the context of the quarrel and subsequent calling for the deity’s assistance. Allegedly, Yaa’s son had tried to kidnap Adzo’s son. A girl saw the kidnapping and went to tell Adzo, so she could rescue her son. When Adzo found her son, Yaa’s son threatened her and she slapped him in return. Later in the day, Yaa came to see Adzo at her house and they began to quarrel. During the quarrel, Adzo called Mama Vena’s name and swore, “if my blood shall fall” that Mama Vena should protect her; a threat that partly resulted in Yaa becoming ill.

¹⁹¹ I have changed the names of those involved.

Here is a portion of the consultation:

“Mama Vena/amegashie [*to Adzo*] - When you called my name what did the other say?

Adzo - Yaa said she does not care.

Mama Vena - I knew that because even if her daughter is healed, she will send an evil spirit [*speaking of Yaa's mother*]... [*to Yaa's mother*] Give Adzo 5 million cedis, half to Togbui [the priest]. For Togbui, six crates of drinks and foreign drinks. [*To everyone else, with the exclusion of Yaa's mother and family, who do not speak Ewe*] And if I announce they should get a blue cloth and add to it a young girl; if they do not I will kill the sick woman and kill others. She [*the mother*] does not know about this and you should not tell her. I do not want one [*a fiasidi*]. You should not tell her that her daughter will die. Her spirit has already gone out of her. [*Mama Vena seems to be threatening that he can ask for a fiasidi, but then decides that he doesn't want one. Yaa's mother is begging, on her knees, hands together and repeating mepawekyew – the Twi term for 'I beg you'.*]

Mama Vena - [*shouting*] I will not allow my grandchild to be kidnapped. They always do kidnapping. They want to kidnap Adzo's son. [*to Adzo*] Do you know that they were kidnapping your son?

Adzo - Yes

Mama Vena - Do you know the girl that told you about the incident? Have you seen her again?

Adzo - Yes

Mama Vena - I sent her to come and rescue your son. So you must thank the girl... This woman [*speaking of Yaa and her mother*] has been hearing of me but does not want to respect me so now they have met me, they will see who is stronger. Before Adzo went to Accra, she prayed for me to take care of her, so I cannot let anything happen to her. [*to Adzo*] Are you still in the house?

Adzo - Yes.

Mama Vena - Leave. If not, they will poison you or your son. [*to Yaa's mother*] If you do not know after this and go to any other place to do evil, before you kneel down, I will strike [or beat] you. [*They begin bargaining the amount.*]

Mama Vena - They are all in trouble because Adzo's blood fell to the ground. Even if the ill one is no more [dead], there still will be calamity. She has prayed for me. Even if the sick one dies and they have not paid, still there will be more problems... [*to Adzo*] If you are still living where she is you should leave or you will be poisoned by food.”

The situation demonstrated in this example is not typical of those I encountered in the Adzima shrines. It was memorable in part because it was unusual. I chose it as a platform to discuss the regular occurrences, which can also be seen in this example, and to begin to indicate a complex, interconnected, but yet shifting moral register at play in the shrines. Before I explore the example more thoroughly, let me first examine conceptions of well-being and personhood, particularly in relation to deities.

Danger and Protection: Personhood, Well-Being, and Divinations

Generally, West African constructions of personhood challenge those that consider the person as individuals independent of social relations, which has characterised Euro-American social theory (cf Piot 1999; Beattie 1980; Riesman 1986; Fardon 1996). In the West-African context, scholars have argued that persons are “constantly involved in, and defined through relations...constituted by relations, not situated within them” (Piot 1999, p. 18; cf Riesman 1986). The idea of persons “defined through relations” (Piot 1999, p. 18) is underpinned by the “porosity” or “openness” of the self to other beings (Mbembe cited in Geurts 2002, p. 170), where one is fully penetrable by the external world, composed of other persons and metaphysical entities, including deities and ancestors (Piot 1999, p. 18).

Rosenthal describes the complexity of personhood in southern Ewe communities as one in which persons (*ame*) are:

“composed of mother parts and father parts, ancestor souls (*dzoto*) and signs of non-kin determinations (*kpoli*), death souls (*luvo*) and the breath that continues to live on with personality after death (*gbɔgbɔ*), *as well as other ingredients that vary with different experts’ inventories*. These components live in easy or uneasy proximity, not necessarily compatible at all times, each having its own agenda and demands...” (Rosenthal 1998, p. 175; cf Meyer 1999a, p. 63; Geurts 2002, 174-176; emphasis added).¹⁹²

The composition here highlights the connection between patrilineal kin members to maternal kin. Included also is the relation that one has with deities and other types of metaphysical entities. In some cases, these are conceptualised as being with the person before their birth, because of an ancestral connection to the deity (based on patrilineal membership or maternal affiliation) or the deity’s assistance in the birth of the child (Rosenthal 1998, p. 176-178). However, the “porosity” of the self and its embeddedness in social relations also leaves one open throughout the life-course to metaphysical entities with which one may have had no prior relationship.

Aspects of one’s self and its “embeddedness in diverse other beings and systems” (Rosenthal 1998, p. 174) are often revealed through the experience of danger and protection, manifested in relation to one’s well-being. As indicated by Geurts about the Anlo, but equally applicable here, “a cultural model of well-being among Anlo-speaking people necessarily draws together the personal, social, and cosmic (or

¹⁹² In the Klikor context, I also found the same components of personhood described by Rosenthal.

spiritual) fields” (2002, p. 223) and is understood as “transactions that occur between self and other” (2002, p. 170). These “transactions” are often ascribed onto the body, whereby one’s health, fertility, and longevity are affected, in addition to one’s social and economic success.

Whereas one may know the source of one’s protection, the source of danger to one’s well-being only comes to be known by interrogating the situation through processes of divination. However, not every aspect of well-being will be interrogated as such, and the distinction between what kinds of illness or manifestation of danger will compel a person to seek out explanations through practices of divination is not easily discerned. I agree with Geurts that this is situational, where a variety of factors are considered, and can change (or “mutate”) throughout the course of an illness (Geurts 2002, p. 203).¹⁹³

In relation to my informants, most would not go to a diviner for every illness, death, or aspect associated with their well-being. They explained that they would only do so if an illness was persistent, despite medical treatment, suspecting that it may be related to metaphysical entities. However, some aspects of one’s well-being are automatically associated with the metaphysical, such as infertility. Additionally, not every death is interrogated, although those that are considered mysterious or untimely, or set in a series of deaths, most likely will be.

The most common form of divination in Klikor is *Afa*, practiced by *Afa Bokɔ*, a male *Afavi* (initiate) who has gone on to become a diviner. *Bokɔwo* (pl.) cast divining beads (*kpele*), the pattern of which indicates a particular code (*kpoli*). There are 256 *kpoliwo* (pl.) in the system, and each are associated with a variety of stories and types of deities. The diviner then interprets the *kpoli*, which reveals the basis for the problem and, in some cases, the diviner indicates how it can be solved (cf Rosenthal 1998, ch 6; Abotchie 1997, p. 71; Nukunya 1969b for extended discussion). While *Bokɔwo* (pl.) are in part thought of as having access to what is otherwise unknown knowledge, revealing connections between people and the metaphysical and the cause of a variety of problems, their knowledge is rooted in experience and ability to interpret the codes in a meaningful way to their clients. People often question the diviners’ interpretation

¹⁹³ This is in contrast to efforts to classify different types of illness. In relation to the Anlo, Fiawoo, for example, distinguished illnesses as those of “natural causation” (*dotsoafe* - *dɔ*: sickness, *tso*: from, *afe*: home) and those of “supernatural” causation (*gbɔgbɔmedɔ* - *gbɔgbɔ*: spirit, *me*: in, *dɔ*: sickness) (1959, p. 285; Geurts 2002, p. 203). Geurts argues that such models represent biomedical and Western understandings of non-western medical practices, rather than people’s actual understandings, especially given that within this context the metaphysical exists alongside the physical (2002, p. 203).

outside the context of divination, in light of their own understandings of specific events and their relationship to others and the metaphysical.¹⁹⁴

Amegashiewo (pl.; *amegashie*, sing.) are also utilised within many ritual contexts, as having access to otherwise unknown knowledge.¹⁹⁵ *Amegashie* have been described to me as women who have “messenger” spirits that allow them to communicate with deities, ancestors and other deceased relations, although Rosenthal describes them as “seers” (Rosenthal 1998, p. 177).¹⁹⁶ Individuals or groups consult the *amegashie* in order to speak directly to deities and ancestors. Communication is mediated through the *amegashie*, who, hidden in another room, calls the deities by ringing a bell and reciting a verse (and explained to me as the point in which their “messenger” spirit goes to fetch the requested deity from their metaphysical or cosmological homestead). When the deity comes, the voice of the *amegashie* distinctly changes; an indication to the group that it is the deity with which they are speaking.¹⁹⁷

Dangers and Ambivalences in Social Relations

The case of Yaa and Adzo highlights that Adzo had at one point petitioned, or made a “drink offering”, to the Adzima deities for protection against various types of danger that she might encounter while living in Accra. Such an action is typical of the way in which people relate to the Adzima deities, because in this context people seem to be in constant threat from a variety of dangers in the world. Peoples’ understandings of these dangers were brought home through discussions with my research assistant and those in my household around incidents that presented themselves: why did members of the household shriek when they heard an owl call at night; what explanations did they offer about one member’s miscarriage, the illness and subsequent death of one wife’s niece, the illness of one of the children; why was I, like Shaw (2002), warned about leaving my windows open at night? These, like other accounts offered to me,

¹⁹⁴ Wyllie indicates that in the consultation, diviners do not “expect the client to ignore, reject, or challenge the validity of the information he gives” (1970, p 54). However, this is commonly done outside the context of the consultation and people will routinely visit more than one diviner if they have the resources.

¹⁹⁵ Whereas *bokɔwo* are male ritual specialists, *amegashiewo* are female ritual specialists. Women can be initiates of *Afa*, but tend not to become *Afa* diviners.

¹⁹⁶ This is somewhat comparable to Lovell’s discussion of Hetronsi among the Watchi-Ewe, particularly the ritual aspects of the communication and initiation (1993, p. 373-378). See also Abotchie’s discussion on *amegashiwo* among the Anlo, in which he describes them as “vocal oracles” (1997, p. 72).

¹⁹⁷ Informants have told me that Mami Watta gives some of her initiates the power to divine through water, although I never encountered this form of divination in practice.

stressed that almost everything has the potential for being a source of danger, but particularly one's relations with others.

At its core, people are always vulnerable in relation to one another because of the act of speaking (*nufofa*). Geurts provides an extensive examination of speaking (*nufofa*), arguing that speaking is conceptualised as a “striking action” in relation to the speaker, and a “striking sensation” to both the speaker and object. This understanding is based on the derivative *fo*, which is a term that means “to strike or beat”, although used to express both the action and feeling of striking (Geurts 2002, p. 58-59). In this sense, words “have a physical force” with “dynamic power”, and are “projected...with the intention of hitting a mark”, for both positive and negative ends (Geurts 2002, p. 59).

In addition to the underlying danger in interaction with people, it is through one's relations with others that people become vulnerable to other types of danger, such as *adzeto* (witches), the illegitimate use of *dzoka*, and kidnappings for the production of *dzoka*. While this is not an exhaustive list of the types of danger that people encounter, these are generally the subjects of rumours that circulate widely and the way in which people often framed their experiences.¹⁹⁸ The circulation of rumours - through everyday gossip, the retelling of incidents that occurred at the shrines, newspapers, and Ghanaian and Nigerian films [which are routinely believed to represent forces regarded “as parts of everyday life, even if they appear to be invisible to the naked eye” (Meyer 2003a, p. 26-27; cf 2004a)] are sites through which people come to know about dangers in the world.¹⁹⁹ However, these are also sites in which people comment on the relationship between danger, social relations, wealth, and economic insecurity. In the following two sections, I will discuss each briefly. Like White, I am not concerned here with veracity of such accounts, but rather the “world that rumour and gossip

¹⁹⁸ While people were continuously talking about these, they were reluctant to give too many details outside the context of rumours or their own experiences; for fear of others thinking that they are involved with illicit forces and/or as a way not to draw their attention, especially in the case of *adzeto* (witches). One household member figuratively drove me to tears during many of these conversations, shrugging her shoulders and stating ‘how would I know?’ when I began to ask too many specific questions about *adzeto* and the use of *dzoka*.

¹⁹⁹ Masquelier discusses the complexity of the circulation in rumours noting that, “where they originate is usually not known, but that is no hindrance to their production or reproduction. Several versions may thus coexist simultaneously and spin off each other like many-headed hydras to simultaneously inform and confound listeners and to become more entangled as they spread and multiply. Often the telling of one story inspires some listeners to share what they have heard, thereby leading to a lively exchange of scenarios or details out of which yet new versions take shape... But auditors might interpret the message conveyed differently than what the narrator intended, prompting them to refashion the story to suit their own rhetorical purposes. The content and contours of the rumor thus keep shifting as successive narrators apply their personal stamps to the version they hear and recirculate” (Masquelier 2001, p. 90).

reveals”, to myself and the consumers and narrators of these stories (White 2000, p. 5), in addition to showing the social complexity in which people are situated.

Adzetɔ, kinship, and wealth

Adzetɔwo (witches; pl.) and owls, which are typically associated with them, hold particular spiritual power in Klikor imagery, as most people are fearful of their ability to create havoc in the lives of others. *Adzetɔwo* are partly conceptualised as an abstract force within the cosmological landscape, a danger to anyone’s well-being and described as an evil spirit (*gbɔgbɔvɔ*). In this sense, they are commonly referred to in daily conversations as “our friends” or *gbɔgbɔ* (spirit), alongside other unknown *gbɔgbɔvɔ*, as a way to discuss *adzetɔ* covertly and without attracting their attention. However, *adzetɔwo* are also described as being a quality of a person, the spirit of *adze* located in a person, often unknowingly. *Adzetɔwo* are understood as being able to leave their bodies at night, their spirit entering their victims’ dreams at which point they do their most harm.

While *adzetɔwo* are often spoken about abstractly and as wandering the landscape in search of victims, peoples’ experiences with *adzetɔwo* are embedded in their social relations and the conflicts that may occur within these relations. Studies of witchcraft in Africa generally have demonstrated it to be the “dark side of kinship” (Geschiere & Fisiy 1994, p. 325; Geschiere 1997), intimately connected to kin relations and partly a consequence of the tension between members in relation to wealth. For example, Meyer notes about the Peki-Ewe that, “the Ewe understood witchcraft as a life-destroying activity undertaken by a jealous person envying richer family members; traditionally, the best remedy against the threat of witchcraft was to share one’s riches with one’s (poorer) relatives” (Meyer 1996, p. 216; cf Meyer 1995, p. 238; Meyer 1992). In addition to poor relatives, the paternal aunt and the elderly are often suspected of being witches, particularly in situations where children are ill or die (Meyer 2001, p. 108; Meyer 1992, p.118).

Meyer’s informants, associated with Ewe Pentecostal movements in Peki, posit a distinction between witchcraft in kinship structures, understood to be a symptom of jealousy in relation to wealth inequalities, and the commercialisation of *adzetɔ*, where people seek out the ability to use witchcraft in order to accumulate wealth (1992, p. 118; cf Geschiere 1997). In contrast, *Klikortɔwo* do not make this distinction or

reference people seeking out the ability to use or become *adzeto* (unlike their discussions about *dzoka*). However, they do connect *adzeto* to inequality in wealth. For example, informants in Klikor frequently explained *adzeto* in terms of jealousy, while it was also described as stealing the productive capacities or wealth of others in order to enrich themselves (cf Piot 1999; Shaw 1997). In this sense, the wealthy often feel vulnerable to *adzeto* because of jealous kin, whereas those who are poor, or experience a decline in well-being, may understand themselves as being the victims of the *adzeto* of their wealthier counterparts.

The above represents the general way that *adzeto* are spoken about; however, incidents where the experience of danger was attributed to *adzeto* and accusations were mobilised did not exclusively follow this logic. I witnessed quite a few situations where various informants were accused of being *adzeto* by other informants. These were set in the context of conflicts between household members, who may or may not be kin to one another through patrilineality or marriage affiliation. Whereas informants might seem to be in good relations with one another, when conflict arose, suspicions that so and so was an *adzeto* were voiced. Similarly, one's illness or lack of success could be retroactively seen as a result of *adzeto* within such close ties and conflicts.

Accusations of this sort are considered to be a serious insult and the insult itself can be a mechanism through which harm can be inflicted upon another person (cf Rosenthal 1998, p. 174; Geurts 2002). This occurs in relation to one's overall well-being, but can also be seen in social interactions between persons. For example, three of my informants were suspected of being *adzeto*. For one of these, the suspicion was one factor out of several in the disintegration of her social network, with disastrous implications for her livelihood and well-being. Piot argues that for the Kabre in Togo, witches represent a "prototype of the nonrelational person, the individual who has turned his or her back on others" (1999, p. 68). While this concept can be applied to Klikor understandings of *adzeto* as well, from the perspective of those accused of witchcraft, they too believe others have turned their backs on them. This is particularly important because the accusation or suspicion that someone is an *adzeto* can be used to deny one's claims in their social and economic relations.

Dzoka, kidnappings, and wealth

In addition to *adzeto*, danger is also associated with the possession and use of *dzoka*. *Dzoka* has been defined by other scholars of the region as an “Ewe term for juju or sorcery”, a “transformative art”, or a “charm” (Geurts 2002, p. 282). *Dzoka* is made up of a mixture of roots, herbs, and powders, and either worn on the person’s body or kept in close proximity. Like all aspects of life, *dzoka* has “ambiguous power” (Meyer 1999a, p. 70) used “for both destructive and protective ends” (Fiawoo 1959, p. 76). *Dzoka* is for the most part unproblematic when used as a means of protection for the owner, typically understood as male²⁰⁰, or allowing him to perform extraordinary feats. For example, the use of protective *dzoka* was hailed by informants as the reason that many Ewe soldiers in the Ghanaian army were able to go into conflict and emerge unscathed.²⁰¹ However, the use of *dzoka* can be deemed illegitimate and it is within this context that most people position *dzoka*; as being used to manipulate others, to compel them to do one’s will, to harm other’s overall well-being, or to illicitly acquire wealth.

The use of *dzoka* as a destructive force, and specifically as an illicit means of acquiring wealth, is locally connected to popular discourses of “juju”, kidnapping, and ritual murders. These are widely discussed in networks of local gossip, newspapers, and Nigerian and Ghanaian films (cf Meyer 2004a; Wendl 2007; Bastian 1993, 2003; Smith 2001). In this context, kidnappings and murder are explained as occurring in order to manufacture powerful *dzoka*.

Traders in the region routinely go back and forth to Togo, smuggling goods to be sold in local markets or stores but their journeys are accompanied by local rumours of kidnappings, ritual murder, and the trade in human body parts. Despite routine travels back and forth from Togo, these dangers are most often connected to the “Nigerian Other”, in a similar way to Masquelier’s study of Niger (Masquelier 2001, p.

²⁰⁰ One of the Adzima priests and elders were particularly amused with me when I jokingly inquired if I could obtain *dzoka* to enable me to understand and speak Ewe better. While they agreed one could find such *dzoka* to do so, their amusement pertained to me being a female, who are not typically associated with the ownership of *dzoka*.

²⁰¹ Conversations about soldiers’ use of *dzoka* to evade bullets were often connected to notions that the ‘rest of the world’ would benefit from *dzoka*, particularly in relation to the Iraq war and popular perceptions of rampant gun crime in the United States. Shaw also indicates similar expressions in Sierra Leone about witchcraft and its usefulness as an African “technology” (1997). These types of sentiments, in my context, were counter-balanced by fears of Euro-Americans (*Yevuwo* - or “tricky dogs”) stealing ritual knowledge.

87).²⁰² For example, it is widely feared that strangers, invariably described as Nigerians, will come to Klikor and try to kidnap children for the purpose of manufacturing *dzoka*. Others have recounted that people they know have met men on smuggling paths in and out of Togo carrying baskets loaded with human heads on their way to Nigeria.

While rumours often connect Nigerians to kidnapping, ritual murders, and the trade in human body parts for the manufacture of *dzoka*, in some cases members of the Klikor community are also implicated. The murder of a young woman in March 2004 was one such case. News articles reported that she was killed by several young *kente* weavers from Klikor, who “took the body parts with them for sale in Nigeria”.²⁰³ To commentators in Klikor, this seemed to give credence to the speculation that kidnappings are for the purposes of ritual murders, to smuggle body parts into Nigeria, rather than to obtain persons for sexual or domestic servitude.

These anxieties also surfaced with the murder in the Klikor area of a seven-year-old girl in September 2005, close to the end of my fieldwork. The widely accepted explanation for the young girl’s murder in the media and Klikor gossip was that her father and his friends had murdered her and drained her blood in order to make *dzoka* to obtain wealth (and sell the remaining blood in Nigeria).²⁰⁴ The horror of the murder was for many the fact that it was her father that murdered her: a close (and supposedly protective) relationship had turned dangerous because of the lure of wealth.

“Togbui, save me”

It is in the context of these types of danger that people currently petition the Adzima deities (and other deities in general). The case of Adzo and Yaa presented previously highlights a number of these dangers: the kidnapping of Adzo’s son, with the aggressor and his mother living in the same household. However, when Adzo made “drink offerings” to Mama Vena, it was understood as conferring upon her physical and spiritual protection: as Mama Vena indicated, “I cannot let anything happen to her”,

²⁰² Some do connect these occurrences with another major site for migration: Accra. For example, one informant showed me a picture of a man holding a decapitated head of a young boy. My informant claimed that this occurred in Accra, an illustration to him that some would go to great lengths in order to gain money. However, I have later come to believe that this is the infamous image that was widely circulated in Nigeria and sparked off the Otwerri Riots (Bastian 2003; Smith 2001).

²⁰³ See GNA 2005a.

²⁰⁴ See GNA 2005b; GNA 2005c; GNA 2005d; GNA 2005e.

because she made drink offerings. The protection of Mama Vena in this case, as in other similar types of situations recounted to me, was manifested in the deity directing the actions of a young woman to go and inform Adzo about what was happening.²⁰⁵ Without that interference, the implication was that the aggressor would have been successful in kidnapping Adzo's son.

This example highlights the way people experience protection after a "drink offering". Many also understand that the protection of the deity can be initiated by calling its name in the midst of dramatic situations. For instance, one *fiasidi* commented:

"If you are travelling alone by foot and you go to a strange place and people there want to kidnap you and kill you, when you call upon the name of the god, 'Togbui save me, Togbui save me', you will realise that you are not among the people, you will not know where you are, you will not see them any more. He is going to take you away from that fight, it is a physical thing. And again, when you are taking a lorry in the mountainous areas, cars are toppling over into the valley and you keep calling the name of the god here, 'Togbui save me,' you realise that though some people are dead, some injured, nothing happened to you."

This *fiasidi*'s, like others, understanding of calling the name of the deity is shaped by her experiences in the shrines, particularly when people come to inform the priest that this type of situation has occurred.

By calling the deity in this manner, the petitioner is positioning themselves as a dependant of the deity. This positioning can be based on an already formalised relationship with the deity through membership in the 'shrine-owning' lineage or through initiation, or conferred through the act of making a "drink offering", where petitioners also adopt idioms of kinship. However, experiencing the protection of the deity signifies a relation of indebtedness; actions of the deity need to be compensated or acknowledged.

When the name of the deity is used in an impromptu fashion, acknowledgement is even more important. These incidents need to be reported to the shrine and ritually acknowledged through offering of drinks or other items. In circumstances where they are not, the deity can then become a source of danger to petitioners in order to remind them of the incident.

²⁰⁵ The deity is often conceptualised as 'sending' or directing the actions of other people or as manifesting in bodily form in order to 'save' petitioners.

As shown in the previous chapter, the origin of the *fiasidi* and the way they were initiated in the past are often understood within a framework that emphasises the need to acknowledge the actions of the deity. Past incidents may still be acknowledged in the present through the continual initiation of a new *fiasidi*. In many of these cases, the deity can be understood as having become dangerous to lineages that have forgotten the relationship of dependency and indebtedness established in prior generations.

Deities as Dangerous

‘Beating the enemies’ and ‘being on the straight path’

In the case of Yaa and Adzo, the deity was not only mobilised because of the previous actions of Adzo making a “drink offering” and calling the name of the deity when in trouble. Additionally, Adzo called the deity, followed by the words “if my blood shall fall”, during her quarrel with Yaa, the alleged kidnapper's mother. Mama Vena directly connects the invocation of her name in this manner to the illness (and likely death) of Yaa.²⁰⁶ I want now to explore the dynamic of the experience of illness in conjunction to calling the deity's name in the context of a quarrel, as opposed to other types of dangerous situations. However, before we do so, we need to examine the connection drawn by petitioners between protection and the deities' “beating/striking the enemies” (*futɔwofofo*).

Let me return to the annual festival briefly. Immediately following the procession to and from the *tagba*, described in the last chapter, the Adzima ritual specialists symbolically enact the deities' action of “beating the enemies”. With petitioners, initiates and ‘shrine-owning’ lineage members jostling one another for a better look, the three priests and Togbui Fiango take turns reciting words over and then throwing a goat bound by rope into the shrine courtyard (*gbɔdada* - goat throwing). After each has thrown the goat, the shrine's *kpoda* (the club/stick thrower) addresses the crowd, letting the intentions of the rite be known: “*Ne dze futɔwo dzi*” – “let it fall on the enemies”.

The *kpoda* proceeds to kill the goat by striking it three times on its throat (*gbɔfofo* – “goat beating”), during which the crowd collectively vocalises. This

²⁰⁶ I was unable to follow this case through to see the outcome on Yaa's well-being.

vocalisation is interpreted as calling the deity, although it is unlike how one would do so outside this context. Immediately after the final strike, the onlookers extend their arms over their heads in alternating fashion, yelling “long life, health, and prosperity”.



Picture 7: 'Beating the enemies'. Photo by Dana Romanoff (used with permission).

In this ritual, petitioners understand the goat as symbolising the petitioners’ immediate concerns about “enemies”, or those that pose a danger to their well-being, who are “beaten” or “stricken” by the deities. In doing so, the petitioner’s own well-being is ensured because the “enemy” no longer poses a threat. In the context of the petitioning of the Adzima deities, one Adzima elder remarked, “in this condition, he [the petitioner] is untouchable. The supplicant is dangerous now. Do not touch. If you do, you will see red”.

In some ways, we can understand the illness of Yaa through the lens of Adzo being protected by the Adzima deities through her prior petitions. Because Yaa (and her son) threatened the well-being of Adzo and her family, committing a *nuvɔ* (“bad thing”), they are “enemies” and her illness can be understood as the manifestation of the “striking” action of the deity against “enemies”. Additionally, in the consultation, Mama Vena threatens Yaa’s mother: “If you do not know after this [the illness of Yaa] and go to any other place to do evil [*wo nuvɔ* - “doing a bad thing”], before you kneel down, I will strike [or beat] you.”

However, the illness of Yaa can be understood in a different way, because Adzo invoked the deity in the context of a quarrel. Mama Vena notes that her “striking” action against Yaa was also motivated by that invocation, in addition to Adzo’s prior petition for protection at the shrine. The problem here is that ritual specialists and other shrine members have ambiguous feelings about the invocation of the deity in the context of quarrels and outside the control of the shrine. This is in contrast to their calling the name of the deity in other dangerous contexts. In similar cases, sentiments were expressed that calling the name of the deity in a quarrel was an illegitimate use of the deity and could be understood as a type of curse.

If speaking is conceptualised as a “striking” action, the invocation of the deity in a quarrel constitutes a powerful way of “hitting the mark” (Geurts 2002, p. 59). The words are aimed at the other person, while also directing the deity towards that person. However, ritual specialists of the Adzima shrines stress that invoking the deity in this manner is dangerous because the deity cannot be manipulated and will “find the truth” of the situation. In this sense, they are arguing that the person invoking the name of the deity can also be subsequently “stricken” by the deity, if the deity judges them to be wrong.

The implication is that there are two sets of knowledge that inform the way in which these types of situations occur and their subsequent interpretation. Those without ritual knowledge pertaining to the deity will in some cases invoke the deity in this manner during conflicts, whereby it can be seen as a curse (particularly by those it was aimed towards). However, the Adzima ritual specialists stress that to do so is dangerous and that the deities are “on a straight path”, indicating that they are moral and just.

Deities are overwhelmingly considered to be moral in this way, and compel people to be “on straight paths” as well (cf Geurts 2002). The idea embedded in describing deities as “straight” (*dzɔdzɔe*) is that deities cannot be manipulated in the context of disputes and wielded as a negative life-destroying force. The distinction is emphasised partly in light of the conflation of deities with *dzoka* or “juju” in popular discourses and negative representations of ‘traditional religion’ throughout West Africa, which I will return to in Chapter 8.

The encounter between Adzo and Yaa is an extreme example, which other kinds of activities of the shrines tend to prevent, particularly the shrines’ arbitrational capacities. In some cases, the priests of the Adzima shrines act as informal conflict

mediators. People come and talk about various problems with others to the priest and he will attempt to resolve these problems without spontaneous or ritual invocation of the deities. In other cases, conflicts will be formally resolved in the shrines' arbitral courts (*nyadrɔdrɔwo* – “settling the word”), based on the authority of the Adzima deities and the shrine elders.

As the arbitral court is one activity of the shrines that prevents the escalation of conflicts, it is an important site in which the Adzima shrine ritual specialists position the deities being “on a straight path” as moral gatekeepers. In cases brought to the arbitral court, the council of elders and the priest (*vornumegawo*) determine if “the word is in its place”, i.e. determine the truth (*nyatefe*), based upon the statements of the plaintiff and defendant (*nyatɔwo*) and witnesses.²⁰⁷ However, ritual specialists assert that by bringing a case to the Adzima shrines, “the god will give the final verdict.” While one could understand this as being a strategy to legitimise the judgements of the *vornumegawo*, it is also embedded in the rites associated with the arbitral courts.

For example, at the beginning of a case, the priest will make a drink offering to the deity, instructing the deity to come and “speak the truth”. Additionally, the plaintiff, defendant, and witnesses take an oath (*atamkaka*) to the Adzima deities to provide an accurate description, based on their knowledge. Specialists indicate that by taking an oath, “if they turn it around then the god will punish them for that...If you lie, the god will kill you”.

There are some cases where the *vornumegawo* do not feel they can make a judgement based upon the information given, recommending “attestation” (*nududu* – “eating the god/thing”). Attestation can also be performed if one disagrees with the judgement of the *vornumegawo* - possibly contesting the claims of the witnesses or the varying registers of cultural and moral sensibility. It is at this point when the case is “handed over to the gods for judgement.” The following agreement exhibits what the deities are conceptualised as doing in the case of attestations:

²⁰⁷ *Nyatefe* is the most common Ewe word designating truth, which, as Dzobo translates, means a “...‘statement/word that is at its place’, i.e., a correct statement” (Dzobo 1992). He goes on to elaborate that “a statement is said to be correct when it describes accurately the state of affairs as it is” (Dzobo 1992). Truth in this context is dependent the root word *nya*, meaning to “know” and, as Westermann translates, “to observe”; witnessing events is the basis for credible judgments as to whether the “word” is indeed “in its place” (Dzobo 1992). Dzobo stresses “eye-witnessing” in his explanation of truth, based upon the translation of *nya* as “to observe”; however, Geurts argues that witnessing also involves “bodily presence and sound...which was a kind of somatic and aural ‘witnessing’ (or knowing)” (2002, p. 137).

“This case was adjudicated by this honourable court already and it has become necessary that both parties must undergo attestation to substantiate the truth according to native custom.

1. Defendant kneels down to undergo attestation on the following points:

a. That it is true that ---

2. That if the above statement is true Mama Vena must spare the Defendant’s life and bless him with long life, but if the above statement is not true Mama Vena must destroy Defendant and nobody must be blamed or held responsible for or on behalf of Defendant, because Defendant did so at his own risk.”

- Extract from Mama Vena arbitrational court attestation release (original in English)

Because attestation is an invitation to the deity to make a judgement, it is entered into with caution. Many will concede that they are wrong, even when they possibly are not, because they may be unwilling to enter into this mode of judgment. Additionally, it is taken seriously by each party’s patrilineal and maternal kin, as they too may be subjects of the deities’ “beatings”. Both patrilineal and maternal lineage heads must grant permission for attestation (formalized in the signing of papers). As shown, the *nyatɔwo* swear (in writing and verbally during the rite) that if they are found to be telling the “truth”, “may Mama Vena bless me with long life and prosperity”, while if they are lying, “may Mama Vena kill” or “Togbui must destroy” the person.

Fiasidiwo & “Closing the Door”: “get a blue cloth and add to it a young girl”

At the core of the Yaa and Adzo case is the need to stop the danger posed by the deity, to resolve the situation. When the Adzima deities are identified as being dangerous and the affected lineage comes to the shrine, the Adzima priests then sends the representatives to an *amegashie* to speak with the respective deity to learn what is needed for resolution, or to “close the door” (*ewɔ tutu*). In this example, Mama Vena, through the *amegashie*, acknowledges that Yaa will die, as “her spirit has already gone out of her”. However, the “door” still needs to be “closed” or other lineage members will be affected.

Various ritual mechanisms exist to close the door to the deity, generally referred to as *nuxe* (“paying for the thing”) and translated as “sacrifices”, with the aim to “remove an overhanging or stop a threatening danger” (Gaba 1965, p. 290). For instance, Mama Vena indicates that Yaa’s family should pay both Adzo and the shrine

money and drinks. In relation to the priest, the drinks will be used in a rite to indicate to the deity that the door should be closed and the danger that the deity poses stopped.

Mama Vena also indicates that a *fiasidi* could be initiated as a part of “closing the door”, but she chooses not to require one. At the time, I was interested in why the deity dismissed requiring the initiation of a *fiasidi* and why it was brought up in the first place. Other shrine members who were present at the time certainly understood that a situation such as this might call for the initiation of a *fiasidi*.

At a general level, while *fiasidiwo* are understood to have been initiated in the past in recognition of the protection of the deities (and initiated in the present to reflect the past incident), during the period of my fieldwork, *fiasidiwo* were also closely associated with a lineage’s experience of danger because of committing a transgression (*wo nuvo* – “doing a bad thing”). In the context of Yaa and Adzo, if the attempted kidnapping of Adzo’s son precipitated the danger posed by the deity, it certainly falls into the category of *wo nuvo*. Similar to this situation, the Adzima ritual specialists also emphasise that *fiasidiwo* can be initiated because of a lineage member’s *wo nuvo* in terms of theft and other types of crimes, employing a modernist definition of the term, although the initiation of a *fiasidi* is not the exclusive channel through which these can be mitigated.

Other reasons leading up to the initiation of a *fiasidi* involve committing other types of transgressions. Most of the *fiasidiwo* I spent time with were initiated specifically because of a male lineage member having a sexual relationship with a *fiasidi* before her second initiation, a situation known as *adofo* (vagina debt). Additionally, many *fiasidiwo* were initiated because of the pledges made in the past to the deity to secure the deity’s protection and contribution to a lineage’s success, health, and wealth. In these cases, as I have noted previously, the failure to acknowledge the action of the deity or forgetting the relations set up between the petitioners and the deity at the time can result in the deity becoming dangerous to the lineage as well.

Going back to the case of Adzo and Yaa, Mama Vena noted that it could ask for a *fiasidi* in addition to the other types of payments that would be used to “close the door”. To those present, the deity’s dismissal of the idea was an indication that no one can predict the desires of deities and why they do a particular thing is always partly unknown. To me, the question remains unanswered, although perhaps owes itself to the ambiguous nature of the case and the alternative interpretation that Adzo cursed Yaa when she called the deity’s name.

Conclusion:

In this chapter, I have demonstrated some of the Adzima shrines' practices and how petitioners, *fiaviwo* ("children") and the *fiasidiwo* relate to the deities through understandings that the deities offer protection in the context of danger. It has also begun to sketch out some of the moral complexity of the deities and their role in providing protection, whereby they can become dangerous to those that threaten the well-being of petitioners, *fiaviwo*, and *fiasidiwo*. These are conceptualised as "enemies" who have committed "bad things" (*wo nuvw*). However, the concept of *wo nuvw* also includes transgressions against the deity itself. When the deity becomes dangerous to those committing a transgression, a variety of ritual mechanisms can be employed to stop the threat that the deity poses, or "close the door". These can include the initiation of a *fiasidi*.

The themes highlighted here will be taken up in Chapter 8 once again as they are central to a moral discourse that is used to interpret the actions of the Adzima deities and the role of the *fiasidiwo* to a wider audience and central to the way the Adzima ritual specialists and shrine members are engaged in national debates about the *fiasidiwo*. In this discourse, the Adzima deities are emphasised as punishing those who commit "crimes", specifically theft, murder, and false accusations, and is explicitly set in contrast to Christianity. Their representation of the *fiasidiwo* as Queen-Mothers is interwoven into this discourse, whereby the *fiasidiwo* act as "role-models" for lineages that have committed crimes. This is set in contrast to understandings of the *fiasidiwo* and the *trokosiwo* as 'sacrifices' and 'slaves' in their role as "closing the door".

The centrality of the *fiasidi* in this discourse obscures other ways in which *fiasidiwo* are initiated – especially through having a sexual relationship with her before her second initiation and forgetting the pledge of a *fiasidi* in recognition of the deity's role in providing protection to a lineage in the past. While these too are considered to be a *wo nuvwwo*, they are not emphasised by the Adzima ritual specialists, the ARM, or protagonists of the abolition campaign in the same way as theft, murder, and false accusations. However, in practice, most of the *fiasidiwo* I knew were initiated for these other reasons. Issues such as theft and false accusations were themes that emerged

more frequently in the shrines' arbitrational courts, rather than the narratives of the *fiasidiwo*.²⁰⁸

Before I discuss the discourses about crime, morality, and the *fiasidiwo* in relation to different kinds of 'communities of interpretation' in Chapter 8, I will look at the *fiasidiwo* in more detail in the Klikor setting. The next chapter explores the meaning ascribed to the *fiasidiwo* by ritual specialists in her role as an initiated and as mediating the dangers of the deity. I do so by examining the initiation process for *fiasidiwo* and their ongoing role in the shrines during the Kli-Adzima annual festival.

²⁰⁸ Murder is not an issue that I encountered in the shrines. Generally, accusations are often made that someone has caused the death of another through *dzoka* or witchcraft; however, I have likewise not encountered any such cases in the Adzima shrines.

Chapter 7

Initiations: Wives of the Deity, Grandmothers of the Family

Danye²⁰⁹, a *fiasidi*, comments to me on the relationship between the *fiasidiwo* and the lineages that bring them to the shrine:

“If you do not understand then your house will be ruined. (*Understand what?*) If you do not understand Togbui [the deity], and you leave your *fiasidi*, your house will break. If you take care of the *fiasidi*, your house will be fine... Some people they do not understand and their house is broken. Their work is not successful...”

In chapter 6, I indicated that *fiasidiwo* are initiated to “close the door” (*ewo tutu*) to the deity for those vulnerable to the dangers of the deity because of *wo nuvo* (“doing a bad thing”). In this chapter, I focus on the initiations of the *fiasidiwo* and explore the meanings ascribed to them by ritual specialists during these rites and their role in closing the door. Many symbolic aspects of the initiation ceremonies indicate the relationship between the *fiasidiwo* and the Adzima deities is that of a “marriage”, but there are several additional aspects of the initiation process which ascribe meaning to the *fiasidiwo*. The ritual specialists involved in the initiation process, which includes an *amegashie* (diviner) and the Adzima priests and elders, actively interpret the contextual circumstances that lead to an initiation and prescribe how the *fiasidiwo*’s lineage members should relate to the *fiasidiwo* in the future.

The focus of the lineage presenting a *fiasidi* for initiation is on “closing the door” to the danger posed by the deity; in contrast, during the initiation ceremonies the Adzima ritual specialists and the unaffiliated *amegashie* emphasise that securing the long term cessation of the danger requires more than the initiation of the *fiasidi*. Rather, it requires the continual support of the *fiasidi* by her lineage members and the establishment of a long-term ongoing relationship between the initiates’ lineage and the deity. In this process, it is conveyed that the offending lineage’s well-being is contingent on the continual care of the *fiasidi* and that she has the ability to bring danger to the lineage, if they fail to provide for her.

²⁰⁹ Danye is a pseudonym- the term *danye* generally means “my mother”.

Initiations: An Overview

Two initiation ceremonies are associated with the *fiasidiwo*. The first of these is called the *godedegorme*. Although I describe the *godedegorme* as an initiation, it represents a series of small rituals in which the identity of a *fiasidi* is confirmed and formally marks the beginning of her affiliation to the Adzima deities and shrines. When a lineage has learned that they need to initiate a *fiasidi*, they will go through a process of identifying a lineage member or affinal relation that will take on the role. Partly, this is through ongoing family discussions and negotiations.²¹⁰

On the other hand, the identity of this person may be indicated in discussions with the deity, through an *amegashie*, that occurred when the need for an initiate was first established. This occurs outside of the shrines' sphere of influence and often outside Klikor as well, so once the offending lineage has identified the *fiasidi*, they will bring her to the shrine. At the shrine, the *fiasidi* and those accompanying her will be sent by the priest once again to an *amegashie*, where the lineage members confirm with the deity that they have identified the right person to become the *fiasidi* and to find out any proscriptions on behaviour that accompany the role.

Following the consultation with the deity/*amegashie*, the *fiasidi* and her lineage members will return to the shrine and inform the priest about the content of the consultation. They will then make a "drink offering" to the deity and the priest will tie the *bisi*, the blue cloth, around her waist. The cloth is understood as being "like a loin cloth" as reflected in the title of the rite - the *godedegorme*. *Go* refers to a loincloth, or in this context the *bisi*; *dede* refers to the "act of wearing"; *gorme* means "the bottom of something", referring to the genitalia. In this sense, the *godedegorme* marks the beginning of the *fiasidi*'s affiliation to the deity through the wearing of the *bisi*. It also marks the beginning of the period that the *fiasidi* is sexually unavailable to men, until her second initiation. However, as I noted previously, *fiasidiwo* routinely have sexual relationships with men during this time, for a variety of reasons, and it is one of the primary reasons for the deity to become dangerous to these men (*adofe*, or "vagina

²¹⁰ Some *fiasidiwo* are initiated through their maternal affiliations (*no-fome*), although this is currently rare. As discussed in Chapter 4, while the Ewe communities in the south-eastern Volta Region are patrilineal, they do have bilateral tendencies. Greene argues that historically, this meant a man's sister's children could be responsible for his debts (1996a, p. 33). However, this has drastically diminished in the present context and increasing the transgressions of men are leading to the initiation of their own daughters.

debt”). The man’s lineage takes the responsibility for breaking this taboo of the deity and will eventually need to initiate a *fiasidi* themselves to “close the door”.²¹¹

One of the main reasons for the high occurrence of *adofe* is the delay of the second initiation. If it is delayed past the age where a *fiasidi* would normally marry, she frequently will enter into an informal marriage and have children.²¹² The length of time between the first and the second initiation depends on the resources of the offending lineage and delays occur because the rite is expensive. If the resources are available, the second initiation can be performed at the same time as the *godedegorme*; however, for most it can be several years.

The second initiation is known as the *gatete*, which *fiasidiwo* and ritual specialists interpret as meaning “marriage”, although it literally means the “big approaching”. The *gatete* will be described more thoroughly in the next section, but in brief, it consists of the presentation of gifts to the shrine and the *fiasidi*, consultation with an *amegashie*, and a private rite conducted in the evening at the forest shrine (*tagba*). It also signifies the ending of the prohibition on the *fiasidi*’s sexual relationships and the beginning of the *fiasidi*’s role in the Adzima shrines’ annual festival.

The *Gatete*

The *gatete* of a *fiasidi* is cause for excitement, spectators often coming to the shrine to watch the proceedings and see who and what has been brought. In some cases, a few days before the second initiation, I would be told that a “*fiasidi* is coming”, although the arrival of one is unknown to most in Klikor until the ritual procession.

²¹¹ Protagonists of the abolitionist campaign indicate that a *fiasidi* or *trokosi* needs to be “replaced” when a man has sexual relations with her during this time. However, in the context of the *fiasidiwo* in Klikor, the *fiasidi* is not being “replaced” in this situation. Rather, the man who had sexual relations with her committed a “bad thing” (*nuvo*), which resulted in experiencing the deity as dangerous. Protagonists of the abolition campaign also indicate that the restriction on having sexual relations with a *fiasidi* or *trokosi* is one reason that the initiates are socially stigmatized. However, this does not seem to hold true in the Klikor context. A significant proportion of the *fiasidiwo* I knew had sexual relationships before their second initiation. One could argue that their partners were unaware of their affiliation and the taboo, which might be partially true; however, a series of conversations added another insight to this dynamic. These indicated that for some men, *adofe* was not problematic because they wanted to have an initiate in the Adzima shrines as the deities are considered to be powerful.

²¹² The *Fiaga* of Klikor has repeatedly recommended that the Adzima priests encourage those who initiate a *fiasidi* not to delay the second initiation for this reason, although in practice, the priests have no control over this. While the Paramount Chief defends the shrines in relation to NGO representations, his recommendation implicitly expresses how he thinks the number of initiates can be reduced (by reducing the “vagina debts”) in light of national concerns.

Out of the five *gatetewo* I observed, two of the *fiasidiwo* were already residents in Klikor. Despite being residents, such an initiate was referred to as a “*fiasidi* coming”, rather than by name. This ‘coming’ represents that she is something new to the community, despite her already established networks of sociality prior to the second initiation. She will return to her natal home prior to the formal ‘coming’ enacted in the second initiation.

When the *fiasidi* and members of her lineage arrive at the drop off point for cars passing Klikor, the Agbosome market, the spectacle of the *fiasidi* begins. A procession is formed by the group heading for the shrine, led by a female lineage member, and followed by the *fiasidi*, the male elders, and finally the rest of the women and children. The *fiasidi* wears a loincloth made of *kente*, bare-chested if she is a virgin/ cloth wrapped around her breasts if she has borne children; beads adorn her neck, wrists, arms, elbows, knees and ankles. She is powdered, her hair is done, her face made up. The *fiasidi* carries a white *dzikpui* (stool), with colourful scarves wrapped around the base of the stool, while the rest of the family carries bowls of items that make up the *gatetenuwo* (the *gatete* ritual items). Crowds gather around the procession - welcoming, commenting on the beauty of the *fiasidi*, and offering money to the *fiasidi*.

Their first stop is at a household in Klikor - most likely of someone they know, although they can go to anyone’s house. Most choose a house in which a *fiasidi* or another woman from their hometown has been married, in that these serve as their connection to the Klikor community. The household that they stop at will most often become the place where the *fiasidi* resides when she is in Klikor. If she settles outside of Klikor, visiting intermittently, this is a place where she can claim residence.

The procession will then continue on to the respective shrine, led by the household head. When they arrive at the shrine, the elders are summoned to witness the initiation. The *fiasidi* sits on a stool next to the priest, who makes a “drink offering” to inform the deity that the lineage members have come, while the representatives of the lineage are on their hands and knees. The *gatetenuwo* (consisting of both household and personal items for the *fiasidi*, as well as ritual items that she will use during the Kli-Adzima festival) are laid out to ensure that all the required items have been brought, with meticulous inspection of each item. If items are missing, the lineage representatives are instructed to buy them at the market before the initiation has ended.

Following the presentation and inspection of the *gatetenuwo*, the lineage representatives are led by a member of the shrine to an *amegashie* without a formal affiliation to the shrine to speak to the deity. Here, I will examine specifically portions of two consultations, although in them generally, the deity makes demands on behalf of the *fiasidi*, such as providing land for the *fiasidi* for her personal use, resources for her education, skills training, or business. Additionally, the deity counsels the offending lineage on their behaviour. The lineage representatives take this opportunity to beseech the deity for help and to negotiate with the deity about its demands. Following the consultation, the group returns to the shrine and the shrine's representative will inform the priest of the deity's demands and counsel.

Once this is completed, the *fiasidi* is prepared for the evening rite at the *tagba*. This involves the removal of her beads by a member of her family. At one initiation, an elder instructed the *fiasidi*'s family that they should feed her and bathe her during this period, impressing upon them their "need to do everything for her".²¹³ Finally, the *fiasidi*, the male lineage heads, and a few women will leave for the forest shrine for the last rite with the priest.

The rite in the *tagba* was the only aspect of the *gatete* that I was not allowed to witness. It is a private ritual and only the priest, the *fiasidi*, and the *fiasidi*'s lineage representatives attend. I was continually refused permission to witness this part of the *gatete*; I got the sense that the ritual specialists of the shrines refused because they felt that I might have been taken by the deity to be a part of the offending lineage and prone to the possible misfortunes and obligations that accompany this position. Some *fiasidiwo* spoke openly about the rites in the *tagba*, although ritual specialists and some of the men were cautious of giving out too many details. Their caution reflects the common notion that people should not speak about what they have heard in these settings; this sentiment also featured in conversations about other rites in the forest shrine, such as when the men congregate there during the annual festival. In both cases, however, the secrecy of these rites is also a display of power - the rites involve the display of hidden knowledge to which only a few have direct access.²¹⁴

²¹³ In the case of Mama's initiation, the family cut off all the beads from her ankles, knees, arms, and neck. One of the elders told the family, that she could take off her own beads at her wrists, but the priest refused this saying "you need to do everything for her". They were then instructed to go into a room for privacy to remove her waist beads and give her a cloth to wear.

²¹⁴ I highlight this as an issue because the abolitionist campaign often argues that the initiate is raped by the priest during this portion of the initiation. This is a situation where the secrecy generally associated with shrines and deities is interpreted negatively. I can understand why abolitionists' representations

One *fiasidi* that I spoke to about the rite described it as a “confession”, explicitly comparing it to Catholicism. All *fiasidiwo* highlighted that, from their position in the rite, it involves a series of questions about any destructive behaviours that they may have engaged in previously, particularly abortion. If a *fiasidi* indicates that she has transgressed in some fashion, appropriate rituals are performed. The emphasis is that transgressions and destructive behaviours make one impure and interaction with the deity in this situation can be dangerous. On the other hand, the priests and elders of the shrines describe the *tagba* rite as a site in which the *fiasidi* is confirmed to be the “wife of the deity”, through the making of “drink offerings” to the deity, and indicates “closing the door”.

The next morning the *fiasidi* leads her lineage members to the *Mama Afu* spring to fetch the ritual water so they can bathe at the shrine to ensure their “health, wealth, and prosperity”. This marks one of the *fiasidi*’s main responsibilities to her lineage thereafter. She is responsible for leading members of her lineage to the shrine whenever they want to make “drink offerings” and to the ritual spring. Lineage members are generally not allowed to petition or bathe at the shrine without their *fiasidi* unless she is unavailable or has refused her position as a *fiasidi*.²¹⁵ In some cases where lineage members try to come to the shrine without their *fiasidi*, the priest will have someone send for her before petitions are made.

might include a sexual component - the *tagba* and secret rites are generally associated with the hidden power of the deity. The hidden power of deities, generally among communities in the southern Volta Region and in Klikor specifically, is euphemistically referred to as the deity’s genitals. While I cannot address the rite in other shrines, nothing in my conversations or observations of the *fiasidiwo* afterwards indicate that this rite in the Adzima shrines involves a sexual encounter between two humans. However, if this does occur in other shrines, to me it would indicate the degree to which the priest is understood as a representative of the deity (an issue that is embedded in the debates, although at this time goes beyond the scope of the thesis). In the Trokosi Slave debates, protagonists of the abolition campaign understand the priest to be an embodiment of the deity, an understanding that is reinforced by the practice in which priests at some shrines “speak” for the deity. In contrast, the Adzima priests conceptualize themselves as the “servants” or “wives” of the deity, rather than “speakers” of the deity. Whereas in some other shrines, priests are often also diviners and incorporate this into their functions as priest, the Adzima priests are not diviners and ‘outsource’, if you will, this aspect to area diviners and *amegashiewo*. Like others, they too ‘consult’ with an *amegashie* to find out the intentions of the deity.

²¹⁵ This has occurred on occasion and represents to the offending lineage that the “door” of the deity will become open once again; i.e. that they will experience the danger of the deity again. The Adzima ritual specialists counter this understanding, stating that the offending lineage is not responsible if the *fiasidi* disassociates herself.

Symbols of Marriage

The idiom of marriage strongly frames local interpretations of the initiations of the *fiasidi* (in addition to her role and relationship to the shrine and deity). Marriage is not an unusual idiom for initiates in religious affiliations among Ewe communities. Most initiates of deities generally, including priests, are considered to be “wives”. Being a wife of a deity indicates one type of formalised relationship with it, regardless of the gender of the initiate or the gender ascribed to the deity. At the very least, the positionality of initiates is signified in their names, by the suffix *si*.

For example, *Yewe* initiates are known as *yewesi*, *vodhun* initiates as *vodhunsi*, others may use a generic terminology of *trɔsi*. Here the suffix *si* is related to the word *asi*, meaning “wife” (cf Nukunya 1969a, p. 89). The experience of being a “wife” to a deity varies between different shrines and the characteristics of the deity. With some deities, the relationship is experienced through possession (cf Lovell 1996, 2002; Rosenthal 1998). In the case of the *fiasidiwo*, who do not experience possession, being the “wife of the deity” requires her to perform a number of ritual acts, particularly during the Kli-Adzima annual festival.

Additionally, the meaning attributed to initiates as wives of deities and the rituals that legitimise this relationship vary between different shrines and localities. For example, Lovell argues in relation to the Watchi-Ewe that the marriage between an initiate and a deity, when expressed through possession, is legitimised through conceptions of the “wife”/initiate as a womb or container, which the deity fills; a notion that draws upon gender symbolism in domestic and reproduction spheres. Furthermore, many expressions linguistically associated with possession reflect marriage and sexual relationships. The first time one is possessed, the deity is characterised as taking or abducting the person, language that discursively and conceptually refers to practices of marriage. When possession occurs after initiation, the deity is conceptualised as “entering the body” of the initiated, paralleling intercourse (Lovell 1996, p. 7).

In the case of the Adzima shrines and the *fiasidiwo*, the initiations are codified with symbols that onlookers interpret as signifying marriage. From the beginning of the initiation process, in the *godedegorme*, the conflation of the *bisi* as a piece of *go*, or loincloth, sets up this framework of interpretation. People understand the *go* as being given by a betrothed partner to cover a woman’s genitalia in the past to indicate her sexual unavailability to other suitors.

Interpretations associated with marriage come out more strongly in the *gatete*, particularly at the procession to the shrine and the content of the ritual items, the *gatetenuwo*. The procession to the shrine and the appearance of the *fiasidi* at this point is conceptually linked to the way people understand the presentation of women ready for marriage in the past. As Nukunya describes about the Anlo, after reaching puberty, women were “paraded through the village dressed in rich beads and clothes” (1969a, p. 79).

Even at the time of Nukunya’s writing in 1969, the practice no longer took place, but it strongly featured in people’s representations of the process of marriage in the past. In terms of the *fiasidiwo*, this procession is distinguished from other types of ritualised processions that occur regularly in Klikor by the presentation of the *fiasidi* and the display of the *gatetenuwo*. This is understood as being the same as the way women reaching puberty dressed to attract the attention of suitors and show off the wealth of lineages.

The stool (*zi or dzikpui*) that the *fiasidi* carries to the shrine is one of the most significant items of the initiation, around which further meanings of marriage are symbolically associated. The husband in a human marriage gives his wife a stool which is conceptualised as “settling” the woman into her husband’s household. Even if she does not reside in the same household as her husband, which is frequently the case, her stool remains there and its removal from the house indicates divorce.

The stools also symbolise the sociality between affinal relations. Members of a woman’s lineage can make limited claims in her husband’s household in certain situations; for example, temporary residence. In the household that I lived in, one wife’s lineage members periodically resided there on a short-term basis: during the Kli-Adzima annual festival, when the political atmosphere of Togo worsened, and when the wife’s sister’s daughter became ill. Their ability to temporarily reside there was linked to the stool, understood figuratively to be a seat on which they could legitimately sit. Additionally, the stool symbolises the authority that the woman’s patrilineage can exercise in relation to her and to a more limited degree her children.²¹⁶

In the context of the *fiasidiwo* and the Adzima shrines, the stool will remain in the shrine and legitimises the presence and claims of the *fiasidi*’s lineage in the shrine. This situation was made clear to me when, during the annual festival, a *fiasidi*’s lineage

²¹⁶ Nukunya also notes that a stool is given by the man during marriage ceremonies, although he does not indicate the significance of the stool (1969a, p. 87).

member entered the shrine and called for her “grandmother’s stool”, meaning her *fiasidi*’s stool. The invocation of “grandmother” here does not refer to the actual kin relationship of the woman to the *fiasidi*, but to the *fiasidi*’s position in relation to her lineage, which I will discuss shortly. However, the call for the stool was an attempt to legitimate her presence in a (very crowded) ritual setting.

The remaining items of the *gatetenuwo* are an assortment of both household (in terms of food production and processing) and personal items (such as personal necessities and a collection of cloth and jewellery), in addition to items that will be used in the ritual performances of the *fiasidi* during the annual festival. The majority of *fiasidiwo* describe these items as those that a man would give his wife, because she is expected to have these things to take care of herself, her husband, and her children.²¹⁷ Additionally, the items to be used in the ritual performances of the *fiasidiwo* are only available to the *fiasidiwo* who have gone through this initiation, because the initiates do not perform as a “wife of the deity” until the *gatete* has been completed.²¹⁸

The interpretive framework of the *fiasidi*/deity relationship in terms of marriage is not fully congruent with human marriages, with several key differences, because of the hierarchical relations set in play between the deity and the offending lineage initiating a *fiasidi*. In human marriage ceremonies, the man and his lineage is responsible for providing a bridewealth or the “marriage payments” (*srɔnuwo*, pl.), although these items are similar to those found in the *gatetenuwo*. However, in the initiation of a *fiasidi*, the *gatetenuwo* is provided by her lineage, more like a dowry. Additionally, in human marriages, the items are bestowed by the male’s patrilineage to assist her in providing children and care for the benefit of the man’s patrilineage; in the context of the initiation, the *gatetenuwo* assists the *fiasidi* in fulfilling her role as a “wife of the deity”, which is aimed towards mediating the relationship of danger or indebtedness between her lineage and the deity. This point will be returned to later in the chapter.

While elements of the initiations are interpreted by ritual specialists and *fiasidiwo* as signifying the *fiasidi*’s “marriage” to the deity, it is also at this point that the *fiasidi* can legitimately enter into sexual relationships without the potential of

²¹⁷ However, I have never heard of any man giving his wife quite so much unless he is of high standing.

²¹⁸ Going back to the rite held at the *tagba*, the interpretation of initiations as a “marriage” may also contribute to the understanding that the initiates are raped during this ceremony. If one believes that the initiations mimic marriage, the rite at the *tagba* could be understood as similar to the consummation ceremony, as Nukunya refers to it (1969a, p. 89). However, in the Adzima shrines there is no indication that this occurs.

“opening the door” for her partner. Although another rite will be performed by the shrine when she enters into a formal marriage, one that is centred on enhancing her economic and procreative potential, informal marriages are not problematic at this point either.

In some ways, there is an implicit expectation that the *fiasidi* will marry soon after the *gatete* initiation. If she stays in Klikor or returns to her natal home, she has little use for the items presented during the initiation that are required for household food processing and production until she enters into a human marriage relationship (unless she is already engaged in an informal marriage, in which case, she would already have many of these items). With her own family, she would still most likely be “eating from the same pot” as her mother; in Klikor, *fiasidiwo* who are not formally or informally married can and do claim money and food from the Adzima priests, in addition to her lineage members.

However, many *fiasidiwo* delay marriage because their ability to make claims towards their lineage and the shrine are at this point the strongest and allow her to accumulate money for future economic ventures. Once she is formally or informally married, she is expected to engage in her own economic activities and make claims towards her husband. She can still rely on her lineage members or the shrine as a resource, but in a more limited way. In contrast, while unmarried, *fiasidiwo* are conceptualised as dependents of both their lineages and the shrines. The Adzima shrines specifically are prohibited by the deities from refusing the requests of *fiasidiwo*.

For example, two *fiasidiwo* that I spent a lot of time with delayed a human marriage for the purpose of building capital. Both used the resources of the shrine to meet their daily needs, while saving or selling the resources that they claimed from members of their lineages. One of these even claimed foodstuffs from her lineage members and then sold these to the shrine. She then claimed a portion of this back from the shrine because of the expectation that *fiasidiwo* can (and do) take food from the shrine.²¹⁹

Additionally, the initiation, in some cases, can also be an indication that a *fiasidi* is a woman socially. In describing the Nyigbla shrine in Anloga, Abotchie regarded the *fiasidiwo* initiation in the past to be a type of “puberty ritual” specifically

²¹⁹ Although this research project initially aimed to address how *fiasidiwo* make claims in their social and economic relations, for reasons described in the introduction, I will not fully elaborate on this material in this thesis.

for *fiasidiwo*, performed after menstruation and indicating a woman's readiness for marriage (Abotchie 1997, p. 27- 29). While I do not consider this interpretation to be applicable to the Klikor Adzima shrines in the contemporary context because of the variability of when during one's life-course the initiation may be performed, one of the initiations that I will explore further in the next section did have an impact on the way in which the *fiasidi* regarded herself and was regarded by others.²²⁰

She was around twenty years old, and prior to her *gatete*, she was regarded by others and acted as a child. I was surprised by the transformation of this *fiasidi* after her initiation; she started to present herself as a woman looking for a husband. In particular, she began to dress nicely, started taking on larger responsibilities in her household, and began to do petty trading. She even set up a kiosk to sell provisions next to the drinking spot of an *egato* (rich man) who had started courting her soon after her initiation.²²¹

Interactions with the Deity

While the ritualised aspects of the *gatete* that I described in the previous section seem to many onlookers to be the primary emphasis of the initiation, I consider the consultation with the deity, through an *amegashie*, to be a critical site in which meaning is attributed. The consultation, like the one I explored in the previous chapter, consists of an interaction between the *fiasidi*, representatives of the offending lineage and the deity/*amegashie*. In it, the deity, through the *amegashie*, tells the offending lineage members what their roles are in relation to the *fiasidi* and to the deity. In this section, I explore portions of two such consultations.

Mercy: "They will make this thing thinking that they have finished"

Mercy's²²² *gatete* was performed when she was around twenty years old, after I had been in Klikor for ten months. Mercy, originally from Togo, did not reside in

²²⁰ However, the age in which one marries also is dependent on one's educational and work aspirations in the contemporary context.

²²¹ The implication of becoming sexually available after the *gatete* does not over-ride general norms regarding sex when the *fiasidi* is initiated at a young age. She still receives the same ritual items; however, these are stored until she will need them.

²²² I have changed the name of this *fiasidi*.

Klikor when I first arrived, but eventually came a couple of months before her initiation and lived in one shrine elder's households. Her grandfather followed her and stayed in Klikor for a short period of time because he was sick and sought the assistance of the shrine and other ritual specialists in Klikor.

The consultation started with the *amegashie*, located in an adjoining room from the one where the *fiasidi* and her lineage members were seated and concealed by a curtain over the doorway, calling the "messenger" spirit that allows her to communicate. At the beginning of this consultation, the group briefly conversed with the "messenger" spirit, before Mama Vena was called.

"Amegashie - What do you want?

Shrine Guide - Togbui Adzima's wife has come and she wants to talk to him.

Amegashie [*to her "messenger" spirit*] - Go to Togo and look at these peoples' house [referring to the lineage members] and come back to Klikor and call Togbui and Mama.

Messenger Spirit - Their house is not good at all. Some people do not have good intentions. Most of the people did not want to come, but because they know this is going to stop the misfortunes they have all come and this has puzzled the *fiasidi*. She does not know some of the people that have come because they do not usually come. This is paining the *fiasidi*, but she does not want to say it. Her husband [the deity] is saying there is something she wants to tell him but she does not want to say it. They will make this thing thinking that they've finished and she will do this but she will be sick... There is an old man among them who is a sick and brought to Togbui to be healed. He is doing well. He should continue being good to the *fiasidi* and it is going to be well with him. There are some people in his hometown who are making the sickness worse for him when they have tried to heal him. The *dzoka* that they are using is not finished from his body. Togbui is going to heal you...

The Grandfather - If we do this thing [the initiation] for your wife [the *fiasidi*] am I going to feel better?

Messenger - Yes, you are going to feel better. Togbui is going to heal you because you do not let your *fiasidi* lack anything. Whatever she asks, you have been doing it for her. I have just come to hint you. If you do not have anything, then I am going. Togbui Adzima and Mama Vena are coming..."

In this portion of the consultation, the "messenger" spirit of the *amegashie* was instrumental in framing to the offending lineage members how the rest of the consultation should be understood and served to strengthen the forthcoming sentiments

of the Adzima deities. The spirit indicated that their “house is not good” because the affected lineage was not committed to initiating the *fiasidi* and were only motivated to do so because they believed that it would stop the deaths occurring in their lineage. However, the short-term vision of the lineage members (also demonstrated by the grandfather in his question about whether he will be healed by doing the initiation for the *fiasidi*) was counteracted. The spirit indicated that it is through the commitment to the relationships constructed between themselves, the *fiasidi*, and the deity that the “door is closed”, not just the performance of the initiation itself. In this sense, the *fiasidi* cannot be understood as an object only used to “close the door”; rather she is symbolic of a hierarchical and potentially dangerous relationship and by supporting her, their “door is closed”. Likewise, the spirit indicated that the health of the grandfather is contingent on his care of the *fiasidi*.

“Messenger Spirit - [*To Togbui Adzima and Mama Vena*] Your wife [*the fiasidi*] is here to talk to you. Today they have come to do their last ritual and ask you if what they have done will stop everything.

Togbui Adzima - Tell my wife that she should tell me what is worrying her...She wants to say something but she is feeling shy and thinking that the family will be annoyed with her...

Shrine Guide - [*to the fiasidi*] Have you something? Tell him that you do not know anything so he should tell them [*the family*].

Fiasidi - I do not know what to say, so I want you to tell them.

Togbui Adzima - Aren't you annoyed that they have brought you but they have not done the *gatete* for you early. Aren't you?

Fiasidi - yes.

Togbui Adzima - Before, they have not come in large numbers like this, so you were thinking have you a lot of people like this before.

Fiasidi - Yes.

Togbui Adzima - They have brought you and refuse to come to see you and even do not [come] during the festival.

Shrine Guide - Togbui is saying your people are not coming to the festival.

Fiasidi – Yes.

Togbui Adzima- But you should not use your priority to be stubborn to you family.

Fiasidi - Please yes.

Togbui Adzima - [*to the family*] Have you given something to my wife? Land?

Family - No.

Togbui Adzima - Do you know the festival is coming?

Family – Yes.

Togbui Adzima - So what have you given to my wife to dress and look beautiful among others? You refuse to give things to my

wife. The old man alone is incapable of giving things to her.
 Why have you been doing that?
 Family - This is all of us, the others refuse to come.
 Togbui Adzima - This is not for one person so that you give all the responsibility to one person.
 Family - We beg Togbui.
 Togbui Adzima - Do you have something to tell me?
 Old man - Yes. [*touches the ground with his forehead*] Togbui, if we have done this will my sickness go away?
 Togbui Adzima - Yes. The sickness was not brought to you because you have not done this [the initiation], it is some people who have put it on you. They are in your hometown. The dzoka they are using is not finished when the sickness seems to stop. Tell the person that is giving the treatment that I said the people that are putting the spell on you are changing the sickness whenever he seems to be successful so he should not be treating the sickness in only one way.
 Old man - Togbui, remove these people.
 Togbui Adzima - You come and take my bath and give your whole self to me and everything will be fine....
 Togbui Adzima - How much have they given my wife?
 Family - Nothing.
 Togbui Adzima - Give my wife CFA 200,000, one sack of maize, two pieces of red cloth, two pieces again of white cloth, kente, and three yards of Bisi. Have you heard it?
 Family - Yes....
 Togbui Adzima - [*to the grandfather*] You are not going to pay or help them pay. You have done a lot for my wife, you keep doing it...
 Family - Togbui, we are not many, these are all of us here, so we beg you to reduce the money.
 Togbui Adzima - I want to collect CFA 500,000 but I have reduced that... If you do not have anything to say, then, we are going away because we are on our way to Aflao before you called us.
 Family - We do not have anything. But we want you to take care of us so that we find the things for your wife.

...After the consultation was over...

Amegashie - what Togbui said, you should not think you have done this so you sit away from her... [*to the fiasidi*] you should not also use this to be stubborn to your people. You should behave yourself..."

In this case, the deity and *amegashie* were explicit that the “door” is not completely “closed” by the initiation, but contingent on their treatment of the *fiasidi* and “being with her”. The deity addressed this by revealing that the *fiasidi* is annoyed

with the lineage members, although she “should not be stubborn”. What is the significance of this revelation and proscription?

One of the prohibitions related to the *fiasidiwo*, which the family would have learned during the *godedegorme*, is that *fiasidiwo* should not be made to “cry” or “call” out to the deity. The connotation of “crying” is that she is thereby informing the deity about something that has affected her negatively. When a *fiasidi* “cries”, it mobilises the deity into action against those making her “cry”; the deity then becomes dangerous to them once again. This is an aspect of the *fiasidiwo* that I will explore later in this chapter, but here the deity is warning the family that the *fiasidi* is annoyed. However, the *fiasidi* is told not to be “stubborn”, in that she should not use her annoyance to “cry” out to the deity against others without good reason.

The themes highlighted here were equally emphasised in the other consultations that I witnessed. I will explore one more of these that illuminates the issues raised more thoroughly. However, while the basic elements are highlighted in all the initiations that I witnessed, the degree to which they are emphasised and the degree to which the family understands them can vary; as we will see later, this can have disastrous consequences for the lineage.

Patience: “their children might be Christians and will not help”

Patience²²³ was about fifteen when her *gatete* was completed. Patience is also originally from Togo and was not present in Klikor when I began my fieldwork. She came to Klikor a month prior to her second initiation and stayed at a shrine elder’s house. She was enrolled in school; her school fees were paid by the shrine priest. As in Mercy’s *gatete*, Patience’s lineage members also were sent to an *amegashie* after they had presented the *gatetenuwo*. This is a portion of the consultation:

“Mama Vena - Do you have property for the girl, because she is here for your crimes [nuvɔ]? Haven’t you given her property?

Family - No, but we have been discussing this.

Mama Vena - Are you going to employ her in trade? Since you have given her no property?

Zeklor [*shrine member*] - They will do this after school.

Mama Vena - I want her to go to secondary school. The reason is if they are no more, their children might be Christians and will not help. She should

²²³ This is a pseudonym.

have property too so she will be taken care of. If you do not have family land to give her to farm, then you need to buy some.

Zeklor - Togbui Humali said this about the property. The family agreed to contribute and provide land for her.

Mama Vena - If they have done it, the deaths in their family will stop.

Family - Look at us. The family is reducing. Help us get the money to buy it.

Mama Vena - When they are coming, they said, look the white is following them [*referring to me*] and there are many, but when they go back, the prominent is only three. Only three are true. The others have faint hearts.

Family - These are the family that have come, so Mama Vena should help convince the others.

Mama Vena - Are you sure what you are saying is true because there are rich people in the family. If they refuse to come and help the girl, there will be more deaths...you cannot bring a *fiasidi* and refuse to be with her.

Zeklor - [*on her knees, hands clasped together*] There should be no more deaths. Those who refuse, Mama Vena should come [*convince them*].

Mama Vena - Those that say they are Christians and will not come, when they go back and those go to church and if they open the bible to teach them they will be shown the truth [*I questioned, interpreted to mean they will be shown their evil deeds*]...Make sure to help the *fiasidi* go to secondary school. They brought her to be a *fiasidi*. [*Mama Vena switches her focus from the family and address the fiasidi*] You should not use it to be proud. If they have been calling you Mama, you should not think they will not call your real name. If you ask for something and they refuse, you should not cry, but rather ask your father [the deity] to help them give you the items. If you do [*cry*], I will punish you for crying unjustly.

Here, the deity has emphasised the need for land and education to be given to the *fiasidi*; indeed her first question to the lineage representatives after greetings was about this. Other initiations that I witnessed have similar elements: the lineage may be instructed to give the *fiasidi* different amounts of education, land, or money. At one level, Mama Vena imparted a sense that the offending lineage has an obligation to the *fiasidi*. While women regularly receive assistance with education, trade, and have rights to use a portion of lineage land from their lineage members, their ability to secure these varies. For Patience, as a *fiasidi*, these are not just elements to which she can make claims, but the lineage is obliged to provide for her and this the deity reinforced.

However in this particular case, a further theme in the conversation was that the lineage may be inclined to deny her support, or refuse “to be with her” since they have

become Christians. Although the deity used the blanket term “Christian”, those who “make a break with the past” – who discursively refute traditions and lineage obligations because they are considered to be avenues through which the devil, manifested in metaphysical entities, such as deities, interferes in their lives – is a central concern for the Adzima shrines (cf Meyer 1999a). I will discuss this more in Chapter 8, however the point should be stressed that the issue is a concern for some *fiasidiwo* as well.

Some *fiasidiwo* felt that when prominent lineage members became Christian and shun aspects associated with what they perceive to be the devil, they necessarily limited a *fiasidi*’s ability to make claims in her lineage. From the *fiasidiwo*’s perspective, her status of being a lineage member is over-ridden by Christian kin who only see her as an initiate of a deity. This was specifically stressed by one *fiasidi* for the deteriorating relationship that she had with some of her lineage members; that the prominent lineage member who had become a Christian minister refused to acknowledge her claims as a lineage member and as a *fiasidi* because of her association to the shrines. Mama Vena, in the consultation addressed this issue by arguing that the *fiasidi* at this point of her initiation should be given land, education, and money for trade; the deity was ritually prescribing her economic independence.

However, the deity also implied that conversion to Christianity is problematic and that the family should not “bring a *fiasidi*” and then “refuse to be with her”. It was at this point in the conversation that I clarified with informants and they interpreted conversion to Christianity to be an “evil deed” because the lineage members were refusing “to be with her”. “To be with her” indicates that the offending lineage members should continually acknowledge the relationship between them and the *fiasidi*, to the point that the deity argued that not doing so will result in more deaths. The well-being of the lineage and the mediation of danger posed by the deity were thus pointed out as embedded in the relationship of the *fiasidi* to her lineage.

I started this chapter with a quote from a *fiasidi* that I spent a lot of time with, Danye, who stated, “if you do not understand, your house will break”. There are two ideas in her statement which are critical to my interpretation of the *fiasidiwo*. The first, as just described, invokes an understanding of the embeddedness of a *fiasidi* in her lineage, which is in part the idea that the deity tries to disseminate during the consultation process. The deity aims to address the potential understandings of the *fiasidi* as disconnected from the lineage structure and as being a ‘sacrifice’ to the deity

– a momentary act that mediates danger. While the lineage of the *fiasidi* is concerned about “closing the door”, the emphasis of the interactions with the deity is that this is an ongoing relationship, beyond the initiation of the *fiasidi*. In the next section, I want to explore what happens if the lineages do not “understand” this principle.

A *Fiasidi* Crying

One day during my daily visits to the shrine, an older *fiasidi* and a group of her lineage members came from Penyi. This *fiasidi* was in her mid to late fifties, married, had children, and her own economic ventures. The lineage members present told the priest that a series of deaths had recently occurred in the lineage and they went to an *Afa* diviner to reveal the cause of the deaths. The diviner told them the deaths were the result of not “taking care of” their *fiasidi* in Klikor. Because of this, once again the “door” to the deity was opened. After they told the priest of the problem, he sent them to the *amegashie* to consult the deity.

“Fiasidi [*to Togbui Adzima*] - They [the lineage] brought me to the shrine, and since then I was here [in Klikor] and the family has been serving me. Then one day they called me to say they had visited an *Afa* diviner that day. The diviner told them what type of *fiasidi* I am. So [they said] they are not going to take care of me anymore. That day, I was sad and started crying. I stopped going to the family for about 7 years. One of the family members came to me and told me that I must forgive and forget so that I will come to the family. To come and ask for anything I need. So then I went a couple of days. About three days ago, they came to me to say what has happened.

Togbui Adzima - [*asking the fiasidi*] Is the diviner who talked that day still alive?

Fiasidi - No, he died.

Togbui Adzima - How many years has it been since you have taken my ritual water or performed a rite in the festival?

Fiasidi - 16 years.

Togbui Adzima [*to the family*] - Do you know you have a *fiasidi*?

Family member - Yes.

Togbui Adzima - [*to the fiasidi*] Are you the one calling me?

Fiasidi - Yes. So far as the family says I am not a *fiasidi* to them, everything is by you. You must find out what has brought me to Klikor as a *fiasidi*.

Subsequently, the deity demanded that the lineage pay the *fiasidi* ₵11 million (at the time around £700). The lineage was clearly unhappy with this pronouncement, but negotiations were halted because the deity was too angry at them and they returned

several days later. While I was not present for the final negotiations, this consultation highlights several issues: the “crying” of the *fiasidi*, “taking care of” the *fiasidi*, and the knowledge of ritual specialists, which I will discuss in turn.

In this example, the deaths in the lineage are attributed to both the families’ failure to “take care of” the *fiasidi* and her “cries” - an issue fundamentally connected to one another. Throughout the consultations that I have examined, the “crying” of the *fiasidi* was linked to the lineage not “taking care of” her. In the ritual complex of the Adzima shrines generally, the “cries” of the *fiasidi* are understood to be a particularly powerful way to activate the deity and are used in the context of attestations. When a *fiasidi* “cries” or calls out to the deity, as Danye expresses: “Togbui will think that you are in trouble. If you cry then there might be something happening”. This instils enormous power in the *fiasidi* in her social relations and insinuates that others too are “in the hand” of the *fiasidi*: that she also has the power to be a source of danger to others.

There is enormous pressure on the *fiasidiwo* not to “cry unjustly”, as seen in the admonishments of the deity towards the *fiasidi* during the initiation ceremonies. In this way, “crying unjustly” can be understood in the same light as invoking the name of the deity in quarrels, discussed in the previous chapter, because it can be wielded towards someone negatively. The deity warns the *fiasidi* that if she “cries unjustly”, she will be prone to the dangerous powers of the deity herself. But, in situations where the family of the *fiasidi* is unwilling to “take care of” her, her “cries” are understood to be justified. In contrast when lineage members are unable to “take care of” her, because of a lack of resources, her “cries” are understood as being unjust.

According to other informants, the warning is apt, particularly in relation to younger *fiasidiwo*. Older *fiasidiwo* frequently claim that the younger ones are “spoilt”, indicating that they abuse their power in relation to their lineages. In my own observations, the threat of the “cry” of the *fiasidiwo* is powerful in compelling lineage members or others to provide for the *fiasidi*. In one circumstance, where a *fiasidi* was engaged in a conflict related to her business (owing to the failure of the supplier to deliver goods that she had already paid for), she invoked her position as a *fiasidi* in order to compel the other party to resolve the situation.

However, many *fiasidiwo* do not utilise their status directly. Instead, they understand that the deity will know the situation and act accordingly, without their impetus. In consultations with the deity, in the context of the initiations, this

understanding was partly reinforced. When the deity indicated that the lineage cannot “bring the *fiasidi*” and “refuse to be with her” or that their well-being is contingent on the care of the *fiasidi*, the deity was only partly suggesting that the outcome of the deity becoming dangerous once again will occur through the “cries” of the *fiasidi*. Many *fiasidiwo* state that this can also occur because the deities may see the situation themselves.

Another key theme in this consultation was the difference in communities of interpretation and knowledge. According to the *fiasidi*, the problem started when the representatives of the lineage consulted an *Afa* diviner in Penyi, who told the family “what kind of *fiasidi* she is”. Prior to this point, even though she was married, she was “taken care of” by members of the lineage, particularly by one member who had recently died. The reference to the diviner telling the representatives what kind of “*fiasidi* she is” is vague, although the lineage affected later stated that it included telling them that they should not “take care of her”. This interpretation of the *Afa* diviner was in part understood by the lineage as a type of legitimate knowledge of the cosmological landscape; they did not necessarily question the interpretation but acted upon it. However, the deity was clearly telling the lineage members that in this case, the *Afa* diviner from Penyi was wrong. The deity’s question about whether or not the diviner was still alive insinuated and was understood by the lineage members to be indicating that the deity killed the diviner because of this misinformation.

The issue highlighted here is fundamental to this thesis. It shows that ritual and cosmological knowledge is situational and fragmented, based on people’s experiences with deities grounded in particular locations and influenced by their ‘owners’ and authorised in a variety of ways. Meanings associated with the *fiasidiwo* are not coherent throughout the region, but rather engaged in a battle with other types of meanings, set in motion by practices in other shrines and the debate about the nature of *trokosi* and *fiasidi*. By positing that the deity killed the diviner, however, the deity was legitimising the meanings associated with the *fiasidiwo* in the Klikor context, authorised in the narratives of the past, the Adzima shrines’ emphasis on the morality of the Adzima deities, and in the ritual contexts of the *fiasidiwo* initiations.

Finally, in the consultation above, the deity highlighted that the *fiasidi* stopped performing during the annual festival. To the *fiasidi*, her participation was no longer needed and that “so far as the family says I am not a *fiasidi* to them, everything is by

you.” In the final section, I will explore the way in which the *fiasidiwo* are understood as mediating the relationship of their lineage and the deity during the festival.

Being a ‘Wife’, Being a ‘Grandmother’

The relationship between the deity and the *fiasidiwo*, understood as “marriage”, is publicly expressed through the *fiasidiwo*’s ritual roles in the Kli-Adzima annual festival. The *fiasidiwo*’s roles, carried out in collaboration with the *fiaviwo* (female “children” of the deity), involve preparing the *liha* (wine made of *bli*, maize, that is brewed and shared among participants), the *edza* (spiritual powder made of millet to be shared among participants and given to petitioners), and plastering the walls of the shrine.

Not every *fiasidiwo* or *fiaviwo* will participate during every aspect of this process; particularly preparing the maize to be made into *liha* is a lengthy process. Additionally, a *fiasidi* is not able to perform most of rituals during the festival unless she has firstly, gone through the *gatete* and secondly, for two of the shrines, has entered into a human marriage (and her performances will cease if she becomes a widow). The latter sanction is understood by *fiasidiwo* as being an indication that only through a human marriage can the *fiasidi* know “the likes and dislikes” of her “husband”, the deity. One who is ignorant of marital relations and practices has the potential to break the taboos of the deity (particularly in relation to sex and menstruation), threatening to undermine the efforts of the festival.

Restricting participation based upon one’s human marriage seems to have a recent origin and is set in contrast to the overwhelming sense that sexual activity and menstruation are dangerous to the deity, potentially limiting its effectiveness.²²⁴ However, the restriction to those involved in a human marriage is based on the idea that women in marriages know that they cannot cook for nor have sex with their husbands when they are menstruating. On the other hand, *fiasidiwo* argue, younger women do not have the experience or discipline to be trusted in the context of the shrine rituals. One *fiasidiwo* recounted that a previous festival had to be re-performed after the deity

²²⁴ The danger of menstrual blood and sexual activity in religious practices and deities is common throughout West Africa generally, although with different implications on who can perform and who cannot. See Brydon (1981) and Gottlieb (1988).

revealed through an *amegashie* that someone participated after having sexual relations; it was this incident that informed the recent restriction.

The preparation of the *liha* begins with the *fiasidiwo* and *fiaviwo* ceremoniously carrying the *bli* from the “farm” (referred to by the *fiasidiwo* as “going to farm” despite the fact that the *fiasidiwo* and *fiaviwo* collect the maize from an outlying house). The *fiasidiwo* and *fiaviwo* congregate at the shrine and ask for protection from the deity before setting off to carry the maize. A procession is then formed, led by *Zeklor* or *Xanuplor*, followed by the *fiaviwo*, the leader of the *fiasidiwo* and then the *fiasidiwo* in that order.²²⁵ The group then silently walks in a single file line to the house where the maize is being stored. Once there, the women will rest, sharing maize mixed with sugar. Then they proceed in original order to collect the maize from their respective leaders, after which the procession will return to the shrine to deposit the maize in a large sack.

Before leaving, all *fiasidiwo* and *fiaviwo* who are present are given a small portion of the maize that has been “blessed” to take home and drinks to share. During the following two weeks, the maize is dried, allowed to germinate, and soaked. Finally, the (maize) wine is brewed in large pots placed over a fire in trenches that have been dug. A portion of the maize is saved and later ground by the *fiasidiwo* and *fiaviwo* to be used in the offerings to the deity. Portions of these activities are ritually enacted, particularly when the *bli* is moved from one location to another: from the “farm”, to and from the bag in which it is stored after each period of drying and germination, to and from the pots in which the germinated corn is soaked, and to the containers in which it is brewed into *liha*.

Similarly, the preparation of the *edza* also constitutes an important activity, although not a lengthy one. The *fiasidiwo* and *fiaviwo* convene to grind the millet on the “ritual stones” (these are any grinding stones that remain in the area, thought to have sacred power).²²⁶ The *edza* is then used in the rituals that take place while the priests, elders, and junior men are in the *tagba* or at “war”, distributed among the *fiasidiwo* and *fiaviwo*, and during the outdooing of the deity’s relics under the cover of darkness. Again, these activities involve ritualised elements when carrying the *edza* to and from the grinding stones.

²²⁵ Recall from Chapter 4, that the *Zeklor* is a non-*fiasidi* initiate who is responsible for, as her name indicates, washing the ritual pots. *Xanuplor*, like *Zeklor*, is also a non-*fiasidi* initiate responsible for sweeping the shrine compound.

²²⁶ Maize and millet in the household are not currently ground by hand, but with a mill.



Picture 8: Ritual procession of *fiasidiwo*. Photo by Dana Romanoff (used with permission).

The significance of the rituals revolves around the symbolic power instilled in the *bli* and *edza*. The Kli-Adzima festival takes place during one of the two harvests of *bli* that occur each year; maize being the primary food-staple.²²⁷ The *bli* of the deity is distributed and consumed during the festival to feed and enhance the power of the deity, but also to “take care of” the deity’s dependants spiritually: these being petitioners, ‘shrine-owning’ lineage members, *fiasidiwo*, and their kin.²²⁸

The *fiasidiwo* and *fiaviwo* are central to the process of transforming the *bli* into maize flour and *liha* for ritual consumption. They also handle the *bli* when it is most vulnerable to unknown and dangerous forces: between the “farm” and the shrine, and between its storage place and production area. Likewise, they are involved in the transformation of millet into *edza*, which is consumed to give protection against “enemies” during the festival and foremost in the enactment of “going to the *tagba*/war”. It is also kept in the shrines and given to petitioners throughout the year.

²²⁷ Although festivals associated with the harvest, Klikor also celebrates the harvest in a separate festival, the *Bliza*.

²²⁸ The farming and harvesting of the deities’ *bli* is carried out mostly by junior men and sons in the lineage and those hired to help; although women play a significant role in weeding and cooking for the workers throughout the farming and harvesting seasons. Additionally, women are primarily responsible for processing the maize, i.e. husking and removing the kernels. The women that are involved in this process do so as wives, sisters, and daughters, but not of the deity. Rather they are wives and daughters of the priest and other lineage male members. Additionally, sisters, or female lineage members, also contribute to this process.

Despite the fact that both *fiasidiwo* and *fiaviwo* participate in the preparation of the *liha* and *edza*, they do so for very different reasons, occupying different places in relation to the deity. In human relations, female children take on the tasks of their mother, either instead of or under their tutelage. Female children often take the responsibility of fetching water, washing clothing, processing foodstuffs, and cooking for the family - even for their father. In these food rituals, the *fiaviwo*, are conceptually considered to be the “children” of the deity, whose roles are to help the *fiasidiwo* as the “wives” of the deity. Within this schematic, the *fiaviwo* consider the *fiasidiwo* to be their “mothers” and perform under their guidance, in addition to the guidance of the lineage leaders.

The use of kinship idioms for the *fiasidiwo* and *fiaviwo* (“wives” and “children”) situate these members of the shrine in a direct relationship to the deity, within which they can best elicit the deity’s actions to their benefit. When the *fiasidiwo* and *fiaviwo* participate in the festival, they do so to promote their own “health, wealth, and prosperity”, without the mediation of the priest through formalised prayer. Generally, the *fiasidiwo* refer to the deity as *miasrɔ* (our husband) and liken their position to the deity as one that is more important than that of their human husbands. The initiates believe that by being a *fiasidi*, the protection of the deity always accompanies them, even without having to directly approach the deity through the priest. They understand the deity as responding to their “call” and “cries” because of their “marriage” and that their “call” cannot be refused.

While a *fiasidi*’s performance during the annual festival understood as being a part of her duties as a “wife”, where she enacts that role, it is also conceptualised as being on behalf of her “children” to promote their “health, wealth, and prosperity”. In human-marriage relations, mothers are important in directing the resources of their husband to their own children, as opposed to the children of co-wives. When a child is left by their mother with their father because of divorce, the child in some ways can be disadvantaged because their mother is not there to advocate on their behalf.

Similarly, the *fiasidiwo* are conceptualised as currying favour for their “children” when performing their roles in relation to the deity. Many *fiasidiwo* have expressed that during the festival they are continuously petitioning the deity on behalf of themselves, their children from their human marriages, and their lineage members. By performing, they are directing the power and resources of the deity towards their kin to ensure their success.

In addition to a *fiasidi*'s actual children, the terminology of "children" also refers to her lineage members that are responsible for her becoming a *fiasidi*. Their inclusion in the shrine as *fiaviwo*, despite non-kin affiliation to the 'shrine-owning' lineage and their structural relationship of indebtedness to the deity, is contingent on her "marriage" to the deity and she is regarded by them as their *Mama*, or "grandmother". Being a *Mama* reflects her role in ensuring and being a source for the lineages' ongoing protection and well-being. As we have seen in Chapter 5, the protection of the deity also involves the success of the lineage. Since she takes on this role of ensuring the lineage's ongoing protection and well-being by being a "wife of the deity" and performing in the Kli-Adzima annual festival, she is conferred with the name *Mama* and has a special status among the lineage outside her actual kinship position.

This particular understanding of the complex relationship held between a *fiasidi*, the deity, and her lineage members came out strongly when during the 2005 Kli-Adzima festival, the deity (through an *amegashie*) and elders of the shrines declared that *fiasidiwo* who were not members of the Klikor ARM could not participate. The *fiasidiwo* who were not able to perform were deeply upset and annoyed by this restriction, as they felt that it jeopardised their position in relation to the deity and their lineages, since they would not be able to "bless" their lineage members. *Fiasidiwo* also complained to each other when their lineages were not present at the festival, wondering why they should perform for them if they had not shown up. Their absence often represents a breakdown in the lineage's relationship to the deity, one that might compel a *fiasidi* to stop performing all together, as we saw in the previous case. When this occurs, the lineage is not only prone to danger because of their mistreatment of their *fiasidi*; it also signifies that they are no longer considered as "children" of the deity, leaving them vulnerable to other kinds of danger in the world. If they "take care" of her, she will act as a *Mama* towards them and direct the protection of the deity towards them.

Conclusion: "If you do not understand, your house will be ruined"

The quote from Danye that I started this chapter with highlights a fundamental issue that is brought forth in the initiation ceremonies. While elements of the initiation are interpreted as being symbolic of marriage, the emphasis of those moments in which

the *fiasidiwo*'s lineage are in dialogue with deity, through an *amegashie*, is that they need to "understand" the type of relationship being established and their obligations to their *fiasidi* in order for their protection and well-being to be secured. Their relationship to the deity, now as *fiaviwo*, is dependent on their recognition that the *fiasidi* is embedded in the lineage. If that relationship is not maintained, the deity can once again be a source of danger to lineage members, in order to re-align the lineage as dependents of the *fiasidi* and the deity.

The emphasis that the offending lineage needs to "understand" counters the short-term goal of the lineage initiating a *fiasidi*: to "close the door" to the dangers of the deity. However, it also speaks to the variety of interpretations that those who come into contact with the Adzima deities may have about the role of the *fiasidiwo* and her lineage's obligations towards her. It is stressed that she should be regarded by them as their *Mama*, or "grandmother", for her to perform at the annual Kli-Adzima festival as a "wife" and ensure that the Adzima deities regard them as *fiaviwo*.

The transformation of the offending lineage to *fiaviwo* through the mediation of the *fiasidiwo*, who act as *Mamawo* ensuring their well-being and success, is central to how the *fiasidiwo* are then represented by the Adzima shrines' ritual specialists and the ARM in their public contestation of the Trokosi Slave. The next chapter moves onto discuss the Adzima shrines' and the ARM's engagement with the abolitionist campaign, refuting the construction of the Trokosi Slave and what it means to be a figure that "closes the door" to the danger posed by the deity to offending lineages.

Chapter 8

‘Communities of Interpretation’:

Slaves, Queens, Christianity and ‘Traditional Religion’

“Some have been saying lies about us. People say we send the deity to kill or hurt people, that people ask us to do this [through petitions]. But it’s not true. The people who do wrong bring the bad things [nuvɔwo] onto themselves. They call the deity because of their doings. The priest doesn’t know what happens until someone comes to tell him, this is what is happening in our family... If there is no wrongdoing in the world, then the deities will stop working. Mawu put them on the ground to judge and to deal with everyone after he left...The deities see the wrongdoing. People doing bad [wo nuvɔ] against another, using black powder, thieving and the deities send punishment to reveal the wrongdoing. Which is better to reveal the wrongdoing or to hide, as the Christians do? The god reveals the wrongdoer to everyone so he will change his behaviour. This is why the family is affected. So they can know the crimes of their members. The priests and everyone here is on the straight path...No one can tell the god the punishment. Rather he decides what he does. No one can see it. Not even the priest...” (interview with an Adzima shrine elder).

In this chapter, I want to move from considering the meaning and practices associated with the shrines and the *fiasidiwo* to consider the wider religious and moral landscape in Klikor that underpins their engagement with national debates about the *fiasidiwo*. Some of this landscape is apparent in the above quote, which is taken from an early conversation that I had with an Adzima shrine elder. My understanding of the content of this quote has changed a good deal in the course of my research. Initially I noted the close resemblance to the discourse of the Afrikania Renaissance Mission, particularly through the positioning of ‘traditional religion’ in opposition to ‘Christianity’, but thought that these were discourses directed primarily towards the Trokosi Slave debate and that they masked a more grounded understanding of the *fiasidiwo* in the Adzima ritual complex and relationships.

My then perspective was also shaped by how interlocutors initially interpreted aspects of the Kli-Adzima annual festival. The rite of “beating the goat/enemies” was at first explained to me through a Judeo-Christian framework, where the goat represented petitioners’ “sin” that was purged through the sacrifice of the goat. This interpretation was followed by the comment, “They should be forgiven. Jesus did it for Europe but here they do it every year. It reminds them to be good.” I suspected that

my position as an American researcher might have prompted this particular framing by the interlocutor.

Over the duration of my fieldwork at the Klikor Adzima shrines it became increasingly apparent that ‘crime’ and ‘punishment’ and the contrast between ‘traditional religion’ and Christianity were recurring themes of the Adzima ritual specialists, particularly when speaking about the Adzima deities. Instead of seeing these themes as somehow add-ons, these discourses are also central to the meaning ascribed to the *fiasidiwo*, in relation to both local relationships and practices and as key figures in the national debates about *trokosi* and *fiasidi*. While protagonists of the abolition campaign argue that the ARM and the Adzima shrines’ positioning of the campaign as an “attempt to destroy ‘traditional religion’” is illegitimate, the ARM and the Adzima shrines commentaries are not only aimed at the abolition campaign. To the ARM and the Adzima shrines, the abolition campaign is one aspect of a larger conflict over morality and the embeddedness of persons in lineage structures and with deities and reflects ongoing negative constructions of ‘traditional religion’. They explicitly connect these issues with the increasingly powerful position of Christianity, particularly Neo-Pentecostalism, in the Ghanaian public sphere.

Many forms of Christianity can be seen in Ghana today, reflecting a complex history of encounters and debates about its role in Ghana. In southern Ghana, the initial encounter with Christianity occurred through the establishment of a variety of missions. Protestant missions, such as the Methodists and the (Presbyterian) Basel and Bremen Missions, were established in the nineteenth century (Gifford 2004, p. 20; 1998, p. 57; Meyer 1999a). These were followed by Catholic missions in the late nineteenth century (Fiawoo 1959) and Pentecostal missions in the early twentieth century (van Dijk 2002, 1997). Since their establishment, the mission churches went through a series of reformulations during the twentieth century (Meyer 1999a; Steegstra 2004). The twentieth century also saw the formation of churches that were characterised as African Independent Churches; these were in part considered to be a syncretic form of Christianity (Meyer 2004b). Finally, from 1979 onwards Neo-Pentecostal churches have flourished, alongside a general “Pentecostalisation” of previously established churches (Gifford 2004, 1998; van Dijk 2002).

The influence of Christianity is an issue that the Adzima shrine ritual specialists deal with on a regular basis as different types of people are drawn into hierarchical relationships with the Adzima deities through the *fiasidiwo*. As seen in the previous

chapter, the perspectives of Christians in these relationships are understood by ritual specialists and the *fiasidiwo* as potentially threatening the livelihood of and meanings ascribed to the *fiasidiwo*. The ARM, on the other hand, is a product of an earlier attempt at unifying “Afrikan Traditional Religion” in a Judeo-Christian model and explicitly challenges missionary Christianity and Neo-Pentecostalist’s negative imagery of ‘traditional religion’. Both the Adzima shrine ritual specialists and the ARM distinguish their deities from Christianity, utilising a discourse on crime and punishment. The representation of the *fiasidiwo* as the Fiasidi-Queen is central to this discourse, where *fiasidiwo* act as “role-models” for lineages that have committed “crimes”.

Chapter 8 examines the ARM and the Adzima shrines as two overlapping “communities of interpretation” (Fardon 1990), in which crime and punishment are central to their engagements with other types of interpretative communities, like the various forms of Christianity. The first section explores the complex and dialectical relationship between Christianity and ‘traditional religion’ embedded in the history of Ghana by briefly discussing the influence of German Bremen Missionaries in the southern Volta Region. It was through this engagement that, as Steegstra notes, Christianity and ‘traditional religion’ were set in a strict opposition to one another (2004, p. 18; Shaw 1990).

In the second section I explore the context in which the ARM was formed and how, though their understanding of ‘traditional religion’ as mediated by Christianity, it sets itself in contrast to Christianity, more specifically Neo-Pentecostalism. In this context (and contest), the ARM’s concern is the Neo-Pentecostalists’ negative representations of ‘traditional religion’ and the association made between ‘traditional religion’ and the ‘devil’. In the third section, I examine the ARM’s and the Adzima shrines’ ritual specialists’ discourse about “crime” and how this is aimed to challenge what they perceive to be the central characteristic of Christianity.

Finally, I examine how this wider context informed the engagement between the ARM and the Klikor Adzima shrines with the Trokosi Slave abolitionist campaign. Central to this engagement has been the construction of the *fiasidiwo* as Queen-Mothers and “role-models”. I argue that while this has a basis in the Klikor shrine practices and meaning attributed to the *fiasidiwo* discussed previously, this is also in reaction to abolitionists’ representation of the Trokosi Slave. In reaction, the ARM and Klikor shrines take up the issue of *fiasidiwo* as ‘slaves’ and as ‘sacrifices’. ‘Slaves’

and ‘sacrifices’ are core elements that the ARM and the Adzima shrine ritual specialists also contest in the negative imagery of ‘traditional religion’.

Missions and ‘Traditional Religion’

As explored by Meyer (1999a; 2002) and Greene (2002a), the first missionaries in much of the south-eastern section of what is now Ghana were associated with the German Pietist movement, specifically the Norddeutsche Missiongesellschaft (The North German Mission Society, otherwise known as NMG or Bremen Mission). I focus here on the Bremen Mission and its activities in communities located in the southern Volta Region, although similar processes and ideas can be seen in southern communities outside the Volta Region through the activities of the Basel Mission (cf Steegstra 2004, 2002). The Bremen Mission established its first headquarter in 1847 in the northern *Ewe-dome* community of Peki, although in 1853 relocated to the coastal area of Keta. They then later established more stations and outposts throughout the region (Fiawoo 1959, p. 174; Greene 2002a, p. 19; cf Meyer 1999a). Of particular relevance here is the close outpost to Klikor, established in Agbosome in 1893 (Fiawoo 1959, p. 175).

The Bremen Mission was influential in the study of ‘Ewe religion’ and the creation of an Ewe Christian discourse, which drew primarily its concepts from religious practices in Anlo communities in the south and Ho in the northern *Ewe-dome* (Meyer 1999a, p. 80-82; 2002, p. 177-178). One of the main missionary-ethnographers was Jakob Spieth. Meyer argues that Spieth understood religion to be a stable “system of representations” of God which would be more or less consistent throughout most Ewe communities. In contrast to Spieth’s understanding, his informants spoke about religion not in terms of belief or representations but as “service (*subɔsubɔ*) to particular gods” set in particular locations (Meyer 1999a, p. 62).

A prominent preoccupation for the Bremen missionaries was to find appropriate terms and concepts to transpose Pietist Christian meanings and content. The most important of these was the concept of a Christian God, which the Bremen Missionaries chose the term *Mawu* to represent. However, as Meyer (1999a) and Greene (1996b, 2001) show, local communities throughout the region varied greatly in their understanding of *Mawu*, as a powerful deity or as the Supreme Deity. This understanding also shifted significantly in local communities throughout history.

During the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, *Mawu* held a prominent position in Notsie, even having a shrine dedicated to the deity (unusual for other communities). Other communities throughout the region categorised other deities as being “Supreme”, although this too shifted significantly throughout history. As Greene notes, “a deity perceived at one point in time as the most powerful was defined as supreme, but it could lose that designation if its power appeared to diminish in relation to other gods” (2001, p. 16; cf 1996b). In the Anlo context, during the time the missionaries were in area, *Mawu* shared the designation as Supreme Deity with *Se*, a deity associated with *Afa* divination (Greene 1996b).

Beyond adopting the term *Mawu* to represent the Christian God, Meyer and Greene also argue that the German missionaries in the area brought with them Pietist ideas about the relationship between Christianity and ‘traditional religion’:

“Most came from working-class (farming and artisan) backgrounds in southern Germany and were deeply influenced by the Awakened Pietist tradition that was embraced by the Bremen Mission. This tradition defined itself in strict opposition to those forms of popular religion that were still quite common in rural Germany: belief in the power of certain spiritual forces to influence one’s life and consultation with these who are said to have the ability to bring wealth, health, or harm. Pietists opposed these beliefs and practices but, significantly, they did not deny their power. Instead they argued that these forces were either the “agents of Satan” or Satan himself, evils that prevented one from knowing the true God. This approach defined the work of the missionaries who operated in Anlo. They saw themselves as freeing the Anlo from the clutches of the *Devil by opening their eyes to the satanic character of the Anlo religion and encouraging them to fight the devil by embracing Christianity*” (Greene 2002a, p. 41; cf Meyer 1999a; emphasis added).

The Bremen Mission, like other missions in Ghana, was also connected to the establishment of educational facilities in the areas that it operated (cf Greene 2001). Meyer argues that the role of the Bremen Mission in establishing schools, while emphasising the demonic character of Ewe religion, contributed to a specific type of temporal framework about the relationship between Christianity and ‘traditional religion’: ‘Ewe religion’ was of the ‘past’, whereas Christianity was constructed as moving towards the future and “improving one’s living conditions” (1999a, p. 213, ch. 4). To Steegstra, this kind of temporal framework was characteristic of missionary Christianity in all its forms and established a “discursive space that subsequent social,

religious, and political debates in Ghana have to be reasoned within” (Steegstra 2004, p. 303; Meyer 1999a).²²⁹

The Afrikania Mission and the Afrikania Renaissance Mission

As indicated in Chapter 3, the Afrikania Renaissance Mission (ARM) is an organisation that developed out of a series of leadership conflicts in the Afrikania Mission during the 1990s. Despite the split, the ARM shares some of the core features established by its predecessor, particularly that both are involved in a complex and ongoing conversation about the relationship between Christianity and ‘traditional religion’. In this section, I will explore how both the Afrikania Mission and the ARM take their character and shift over time in response to, among other influences, their engagements with the Christian ‘other’.

The Afrikania Mission and the People’s Revolution

On the 22nd December 1982, the Afrikania Mission was formally established by Rev. Vincent Kwabena Damuah. This was also the date that he resigned from his position as a priest in the Catholic Church (Gyanfosu 1995, p. 276-277; Bediako 1995).²³⁰ Damuah’s aim for Afrikania was to reform and universalise Afrikan Traditional Religion (ATR), so it could be recognised as a world religion. Gyanfosu shows that commentators at the time of this radical move were initially uncertain about whether Afrikania aimed to ‘Africanise’ Christianity or Christianise ‘traditional religion’. At first, Damuah agreed with some commentators that Afrikania was an attempt at ‘Africanise’ Christianity. However, by 1984, his assistant left Afrikania because he believed Damuah was erroneously removing Christ from Afrikania doctrine. Following the incident, Damuah clarified that Afrikania was neither Christianising ‘traditional religion’ nor ‘Africanising’ Christianity. In contrast, he argued that Afrikania was not a new religion, it was a reformulation of the old, making it relevant in the present (1995, p. 296-299).

²²⁹ This kind of discursive framework, where ‘modernity’ is set in opposition to ‘tradition’, is, as others point out, a part of the project of ‘modernity’ and inhibits an understanding that the ‘traditional’ is also shaped by ‘modernity’ (Piot 1999; Comaroff & Comaroff 1993).

²³⁰ See also Gyanfosu (2002).

Damuah's shift from Catholicism was partly due to his encounters with Liberation and Black Theology during his stints in the United States, where he completed his PhD at Howard University in 1971 and later taught at several universities (Gyanfosu 1995, p. 279, 306). However, Damuah and the Afrikania Mission represent one of several ongoing attempts at theologising the proper relationship between Christianity and 'traditional religion', Ghana and Euro-America that characterised concerns of academics and others in Ghana during the Independence and post-Independence era. As Meyer expresses, a central concern was "How to be both Christians and Africans at the same time?", and how to achieve an appropriate synthesis between the posited dualism of Christianity and 'traditional religion' that had been established in missionary Christianity during colonialism (Meyer 1992, p. 98; cf Steegstra 2004, p. 289, 311).

A central part of the movement towards Independence and thereafter concerned the critique of colonialism and missionary Christianity, particularly in relation to earlier negative representations of 'culture' and 'traditional religion'. These conversations occurred in the national sphere, mobilised in part by Kwame Nkrumah, who became Ghana's first president after Independence in 1957. Nkrumah responded to the legacy of colonialism by initiating "ideological education" to produce a sense of nationalism, critical to the process of Independence (Steegstra 2004, p. 305). Although he drew on the language and idioms associated with Christianity (Gifford 2004, p. 20-21), he argued that Ghana's "cultural heritage" should be viewed as a source of pride, rather than a sign of "backwardness" (Steegstra 2004, p. 305).

While Nkrumah was not necessarily concerned with 'traditional religion' as such, focusing more on aspects of 'cultural heritage' that would unify and give Ghana direction post-Independence, academics and Christian churches were concerned with reconciling what they understood to be the 'foreign-ness' of Christianity with positive understandings of 'traditional religion' (Meyer 1992; Adadevoh 2005). As Shaw notes, the work of African scholars were significant in challenging eurocentric studies of 'traditional religion', as a part of "cultural decolonization" (1990, p. 344; cf Greene 1996b). These studies, like eurocentric ones that they were critiquing, particularly those written by missionary-ethnographers, used Christian derived models for points of similarities; this has the problem that "concepts and phrases often take on assumed meanings which are quite misleading and very different from the phenomena they are intended to describe" (Grinker & Steiner 1997, p. 362; cf Peel 1994, 2003).

As a result, Ghanaian and other African academics represented ‘traditional religion’ as a system of beliefs, which were abstracted out of the diverse set of practices located in relatively autonomous shrines. While Ghanaian academics during this era, such as Gaba, Dovlo, and Danquah, did not strictly match that of the well-known contributions of Parrinder (1961), Idowu (1962), or Mbiti (1969, 1970), they were a part of the movement to find points of comparability and engaged in the debate that seemed to have central importance: the origin of African conceptualisations of a Supreme Being (or Deity), or High God, and how it related to other deities and spirits (Gaba 1969; cf Greene 1996b). Ghanaian theologians and academics often were also “religious reformers”, assisting the former missionary churches to “Africanise” their services, through strategies of “inculturation”, as they were losing members to ‘African Independent Churches’ (Meyer 1992; Adadevoh 2005; Steegstra 2004, p. 289).

Damuah was also an important figure in the Independence and post-Independence movement of determining the underlying characteristics of ‘traditional religion’ and how it relates to Christianity. His 1971 thesis, entitled *The Changing Perspective of Wasi Amanfi Traditional Religion in Contemporary Africa*, explicitly challenged the ethnographic work of Westermann, a well-known and academically influential missionary-ethnographer associated with the Bremen Mission (Bediako 1995, p. 23).²³¹ Damuah also conceptualised Christianity as being problematic in a number of ways:

“...many Christian churches have been rapidly Africanising their clergy and hierarchy and also in incorporating traditional African musical and artistic forms into their services and religious edifices – overall, Christianity’s image in Africa is still that of a de-Africanising institution, whose educational and proselytising practices lead to the adoption of an alien culture and a turning away from African roots” (Damuah 1971, p. 102 cited in Bediako 1995, p. 26).

With the problems that Damuah identified in Christianity, he proposed a “New Synthesis”, in which a reformulated ‘Afrikan Traditional Religion’ which could be “considered a likely answer to Africa’s search for freedom and self-determination” (Damuah 1971, p. 140 cited in Bediako 1995, p. 24).

Like others before him, Damuah emphasised the pre-colonial existence of a High God and argued that “Afrikans” serve God through their own “culture” (Bediako 1995, p. 29; Gyanfosu 1995, p. 289). Bediako notes that Damuah’s ideas about God were similar to those that Danquah posited in 1944 in *The Akan Doctrine of God*, in

²³¹ Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate a copy of Damuah’s thesis.

which God was conceptualised as the “first ancestor” (1995, p. 28; Gyanfosu 1995, p. 307). Damuah also recognised the existence of “intermediary agents”, such as deities, spirits, and ancestors, although in Damuah’s synthesis, these entities were conceptualised as having an “honorific” role, rather than being the focus of ‘traditional religion’ in practice (Bediako 1995, p. 28). Similar to previous explanations of ‘traditional religion’, “intermediary agents” were understood as working on God’s behalf (Bediako 1995, p. 28). Damuah emphasised that ‘intermediators’ were “allies not enemies”, in response to mission constructions of deities as agents of the devil (Gyanfosu 1995, p. 308).

The proposed synthesis found in Damuah’s 1971 thesis shaped the ideological and practical foundation of the Afrikania Mission. The clear aim, as Bediako notes, “was a deliberate universalizing of traditional religion into an alternative to Christianity and Islam...” (1992 cited in Gyanfosu 1995, p. 291). In the attempt to create an alternative to Christianity and Islam, Damuah ‘reformulated’ traditional religion in Christianity’s likeness, as an “intellectualist, Christian-modelled doctrine”, that emphasised beliefs over practices (de Witte 2005, p. 281). Although commentators at the time of Damuah’s resignation from the Catholic Church understood this ‘reformulation’ as if it was a new attempt, it drew upon previous conversation and understandings of ‘traditional religion’ by other religious reformers and academics, which were already mediated by Christian concepts and in part advocating for the recognition of African Traditional Religion on par with Christianity.

As a result of Damuah’s ideas about ‘traditional religion’, the Afrikania Mission started a project of opening local branches of the organisation throughout the country, which would serve as the site for Afrikania “worship services”, held every Sunday. The services were officiated by Afrikania ordained priests, known as *Osofo* (Gyanfosu 1995, p. 276-277).²³² Since God was conceptualised as an “ancestor”, Damuah argued that communication with God occurred through libations, a practice which is most often associated with the recognition of ancestors. Accordingly, the pouring of libation then served as a central ritual focus in the Afrikania services. Other practices typically aimed towards deities, spirits, and ancestors, like sacrifices, were not officially recognised in Afrikania services. Rather, the act of libation, Damuah argued,

²³² The extent to which these branches were successful in drawing in members is unknown (Gyanfosu 1995, p. 277).

represented both “prayers” and “sacrifices”, through which Afrikans obtained “salvation” (Bediako 1995, p. 31; Gyanfosu 1995, p. 308, 322).

The Afrikania services also relayed teachings from the *Afrikania Handbook*, a text developed by Damuah, and other books that Damuah believed imparted the “proper” understanding of the “Afrikans” relationship to the world. Finally, people are called to “repent” for their “offences” (Gyanfosu 1995, p. 267-277). In the Afrikania teachings, Damuah argues that “Afrikans” must also lead a “life of correction”, signifying their “redemption” (Gyanfosu 1995, p. 308).

Although the Afrikania Mission can be seen as one of many attempts negotiating the dualism of Christianity and ‘traditional religion’ and the negative representation of the latter established in Missionary Christianity, Afrikania also had a substantial public presence in Ghana during the early 1980s because of Damuah’s close association with Flt. Lt. J. J. Rawlings. A year prior to the founding of the Afrikania Mission, on the 31st December 1981, Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings led his second military coup and took over the Ghanaian government, under the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). The ‘Revolution’s’ purpose was “the restoration of power to the people and the waging of a ‘holy war’ against corruption”, in response to the mismanagements of previous governments (Gyimah-Boadi & Rothchild 1982, p. 64). Afrikania was initially conceptualised by many, although not necessarily Damuah himself, as being the “religio-cultural corollary” component to Rawlings’ Revolution (Gyanfosu 1995, p. 338).

Prior to Damuah’s resignation from the Catholic Church, Rawlings selected Damuah, along with two other civilians and four military leaders, to be a member of the PNDC (Nugent 1995, p. 42-43). Bing argues that Damuah was selected because he consistently criticised living conditions in the country during previous administrations and was “considered a champion of human rights and an influence for moderation” (Bing 1984, p. 96; cf Gyanfosu 1995, 2002 for a thorough discussion of Damuah’s background in addressing social issues in his Catholic appointments).²³³ He had also supported Rawlings after his first coup in 1979 and defended Rawlings’ actions in executing senior military officers (Nugent 1995, p. 43). Damuah subsequently

²³³ Nugent notes that Damuah might have been chosen to appeal to Christians (Nugent 1995, p. 43). However, Gyanfosu notes that while he was appointed as President of the National Union of the Ghanaian Catholic Diocesan Priests Association in 1980, he had several conflicts with his bishop over issues of inculturation, resulting in his departure to Nigeria in 1981 to take a lecturer position (Gyanfosu 1995, p. 280). Furthermore, Damuah’s colleagues were opposed to him taking the position with the PNDC; his Bishop subsequently suspended him (Gyanfosu 1995, p. 280).

described Rawlings as “a prophet he is Ghana’s John the Baptist, as a leader he is brave Moses” (Damuah 1980 quoted in Bediako 1995, p. 19 and Gyanfosu 2002, p. 290). Damuah resigned from the PNDC in August 1982 (Gyanfosu 1995, p. 281).²³⁴

Even though Damuah resigned from the PNDC in 1982, the Afrikania Mission was initially closely associated by commentators with the ‘Revolution’, a core part of which “...included a ‘cultural revolution’, a return to the nation’s cultural roots” (de Witte 2004, p. 4). The Afrikania Mission and the PNDC both took on the Adinkra Sankofa symbol, understood to represent the Akan proverb “return and take it”. Rawlings was heavily influenced by the critique of colonialism and missionary Christianity formed during the Independence movement and invoked the Sankofa symbol as a call to overcome “cultural imperialism” and the perceived threat of being “swallowed up by Western values in the name of progress” (Meyer 1999b, p. 102). The action of ‘retrieving’ and ‘restoring’ cultural traditions implied in the Sankofa symbol were understood as being essential for Ghana’s development and national identity (Meyer 1999b, p. 103; Heath 1997; Steegstra 2004, p. 306; van Dijk 2001, p. 46).²³⁵

For the Afrikania Mission, however, the invocation of the Sankofa symbol and the ‘retrieval’ of ‘cultural traditions’ had a slightly different connotation because it explicitly involved the “retrieval” and “reformulation” of ‘traditional religion’. Despite the different emphasis and Damuah’s resignation from the PNDC, the PNDC supported Afrikania by allocating airtime on the state radio, providing a building for their headquarters (Gyanfosu 1995, p. 281, 338), and a car. Afrikania was then the only religious group granted airtime on the state radio (de Witte 2004; 2005, p. 281).

Although state run institutions supported Afrikania in the 1980s, making their message accessible in the public sphere through their radio program, the organisation was not altogether successful in drawing membership. As Gyanfosu notes, the main

²³⁴ Nugent believes that he resigned after being “pressured...following a series of statements that were regarded as incompatible with the central tenets of the revolution” (Nugent 1995, p. 93). Gyanfosu writes, “the reasons for Damuah’s leaving the PNDC are unclear, and his own statements on the matter are ambiguous, though he did declare that he still supported the revolution wholeheartedly” (2002, p. 290; cf Gyanfosu 1995, p. 339). However, both Gyanfosu (1995, p. 339) and Nugent (1995) hint that his resignation might be related to differing opinions on the roles of the Workers Defence Committees (WDC) and People’s Defence Committees (PDC) and the criticism of the PNDC when three High Court judges were murdered in June 1982 (cf Gyimha-Boadi et al 1982, p. 64).

²³⁵ For example, Heath quotes from the National Commission on Culture, “the concept of Sankofa in our culture does not imply a blind return to customs and traditions of the past. Sankofa affirms the co-existence of the past and the future in the present and embodies, therefore, the attitude of our people to the confrontation between traditional values and the modern technology which is an essential factor of development and progress” (Heath 1997, p. 267).

obstacle to the organisation's growth was that the core leadership were well educated and had “no real traditional background or experience”. Consequently, they were unable to adequately engage practitioners of ‘traditional religion’ throughout the country (1995, p. 344; 2002, p. 291).²³⁶

Additionally, their influence significantly dropped in the early 1990s, when Damuah’s death in 1992 led to a series of power struggles in the organisation over the direction that it should take and who should lead it (Gyanfosu 1995, p. 346; 2002, p. 292; de Witte 2008). The leadership struggle lasted several years and subsequently ended in a split in the organisation. One body continues to claim the title Afrikania Mission. The other adopted the name Afrikania Renaissance Mission and was led by Osofo Kofi Ameve, one of the first priests ordained by Damuah (Gyanfosu 2002, p. 292; de Witte 2008, p. 235).²³⁷

Afrikania Renaissance Mission and Neo-Pentecostalism

The Afrikania Renaissance Mission, under the leadership of Osofo Kofi Ameve, emerged in the public sphere in 1997. While the ARM’s understanding of ‘traditional religion’ is, like that of its precursor, mediated by understandings of Christianity, it has to be understood in relation to the rise of Neo-Pentecostalism in Ghana during the 1980s and continuing to the present.²³⁸ The current incarnation of the Afrikania Mission does not seem to have a significant political or public presence in Ghana, whereas the ARM found a niche in renewing previous critiques of colonialism and missionary Christianity and directing them towards Neo-Pentecostalism (cf Gifford 2004, p. 41; de Witte 2008).

The ARM was also able to establish and reinforce their presence in certain communities, through the establishment of local branches. The most success that they have had in doing so has been in the southern Volta Region, as Osofo Kofi Ameve is an Ewe and appeals to these local connections. de Witte highlights that 80% of the ARM membership is derived from this region (2008, p. 235).

²³⁶ See Parish (2001) for a discussion of one Afrikania branch among the Asante.

²³⁷ Osofo Kofi Ameve died in 2003 and was succeeded by Osofo Atsu Kofi, who is originally from Togo. See de Witte (2008) for an extended discussion on his background.

²³⁸ The format of the ARM services remained the same as those of the Afrikania Mission; however, the ARM developed its own set of books for teaching, specifically the *Divine Acts*.

Beginning in the 1990s, while the leadership struggles associated with Afrikania were going on, Neo-Pentecostalism became a major social and political force in Ghana. While Pentecostal Churches (such as the Apostolic Church, Church of Pentecost, Christ Apostolic Church, and Assemblies of God) had been around since the early twentieth century and Neo-Pentecostalism since 1979 (Gifford 2004), the 1990s was characterised by a subtle “Pentecostalisation” of the former mission churches and the state (Meyer 1995a; de Witte 2003, 2004; Gifford 1994, 1998, 2004).²³⁹ While Neo-Pentecostalism is not necessarily one thing and has been taken up in varying degrees by other types of Christian churches, it is generally characterised by a discursive emphasis on the devil and the need to “make a break complete break with the past” (Meyer 1998c).²⁴⁰

In what Engelke calls a “discourse of discontinuity” (2010, p. 182; cf Daswani 2011), Neo-Pentecostalism defines practices associated with deities and ancestors as being problematic because they could be avenues through which the devil can be experienced, by impeding one’s health, wealth, and success. As noted by Daswani, “Many Ghanaian Pentecostals continue to believe that while you may be born-again, and washed of all your sins, others, such as family members, business partners, or friends, still connect you to family spirits and witchcraft” (2011, p. 264). It is from the experience of the devil, manifested in terms of one’s health, wealth, and success, that one needs to be “delivered”; “healing” and “deliverance” are central practices conducted in Neo-Pentecostal churches during prayer meetings and through prayer camps (Daswani 2011; van Dijk 2001; Gifford 1998, 2004; de Witte 2003; Meyer 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 1995a). As van Dijk underscores:

“The aim of deliverance is that people should be freed from the powers of Satan which hold people in bondage through demonic forces. These demonic forces are proclaimed to reside...within the individual’s immediate circle of family relationships and descent” (2001, p. 42).

Daswani shows that while the “language of break is utopian and ambivalent” (Engelke 2010, p. 177), many Neo-Pentecostals in practice experience a tension

²³⁹ Since there is an extensive amount of recent literature on Neo-Pentecostal Christianity in Ghana, I am focusing on here on this literature. However, Neo-Pentecostalism, as a global phenomenon, has increasingly been studied in various different locations and as extending beyond localities. For other perspectives, see Marshall (1991) and van Dijk (1997, 2002).

²⁴⁰ Meyer’s research in Neo-Pentecostalism is in part from her extensive historical examination of the Bremen Mission in Peki, in the northern parts of the Volta Region. However, this body of research has been supplemented with further research on Neo-Pentecostalism and its messages found in churches and the media in Accra (cf Meyer 1998c).

between this discourse and its implications in terms of lineage and ancestral obligations (2011). However, it is the emphasis on discontinuity, at least discursively, that drives a whole set of negative imagery of ‘traditional religion’ that can be found in Ghanaian popular culture and media. As Meyer and de Witte have examined extensively, the increasing presence and influence of Neo-Pentecostalism in Ghana was aided by the deregulation of the media as a result of the 1992 democratic transition. Private media flourished and Christian groups, particularly those associated with the Neo-Pentecostalism, began to broadcast their services to larger audiences on television and radio (de Witte 2004, 2003, 2008; Meyer 1999b, 2003a, 2003b, 2004a; Hackett 1998). Neo-Pentecostal representations of ‘traditional religion’ have come also to dominate the Ghanaian and Nigerian film industries (Meyer 1999b, 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2005; Wendl 2007).

Within Neo-Pentecostalist influenced media, specifically those associated with the Ghanaian and Nigerian film industries, Meyer argues there is an emphasis on the “visualisation of evil” and elaborating on what forms the devil may take (Meyer 2005, p. 282). Here, the devil is transposed onto figures associated with “African power”, such as chiefs and traditional religious priests, and are “presented as operating ‘in the dark’, and have much to conceal” (Meyer 2005, p. 277). In contrast, in these forms of media, the Christian God invests Christians with the ability to “see”; “those associated with traditional religion...ultimately become objects of this vision and are scrutinized through the Power of the Holy Spirit” (Meyer 2005, p. 287).

This is a significant context for the emergence of the ARM in the late 1990s. Gyanfosu notes that the Afrikania Mission had a difficult relationship with Christianity during the 1980s, which often took on the tone of conflict (2002); however, the ARM has positioned themselves in opposition to Christianity, particular Neo-Pentecostalism, in a much more explicit manner. The then head of the ARM, Osofo Kofi Ameve, understands Christianity’s role in Africa as a vehicle for oppression by demonising traditional practices and constructing a “false and negative history” (Ameve 2003). His perception is in part influenced by his childhood, where he spent time living with Catholic missionaries (de Witte 2008, p. 238). The self-conscious aim of the ARM is to rectify these negative constructions, which are seen as the source of many social problems in Ghana, particularly crime and sexual promiscuity. As such, for the ARM, Christianity, and particularly Neo-Pentecostalism, is associated with criminality and immorality.

The complex character of the contemporary inter-penetration of ideas and practices of both ‘traditional religion’ and Christianity in Ghana is kept in play by several different ‘communities of interpretation’ that actively interpret and represent moralities, cosmologies and religious beliefs. However these ‘communities of interpretation’ take their character and shift over time in response, among other influences, to their engagements with each other. Ideas and motifs of interpretation thus occur in different sites, but as the sites and ‘communities of interpretation’ shift so, subtly, do the registers of expression and meaning. One particularly important shifting complex lies around the interpretations of crime and sin.

Crime, Sin, and Deities

In this section, I want to examine the ARM and the Adzima shrines as two overlapping ‘communities of interpretation’, both of which focus on “crime” in their understandings of the influence of Christianity in Ghana generally, particularly in light on the increasing presence of Neo-Pentecostal Christianity in the public sphere. As I have noted in Chapter 3, the ARM and the Klikor Adzima ritual specialists were drawn together because of the abolition campaign against *trokosi* and *fiasidi*, in which both understood the campaign in relation to the wider religious context of Ghana. Additionally, as highlighted previously, some of the elders of the Adzima shrines have become ARM *osofos* (priests or officiates) and established a Klikor-branch of the ARM that holds services every Sunday.

The ARM strongly associates crime with Christianity, although they argue that they are not against Christianity per se. At one level, crime is one idiom through which they express their critique of the way in which ‘traditional religion’ was positioned negatively against Christianity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by Bremen missionaries and later by Neo-Pentecostals. To discredit this construction and offer an alternative one, the former leader of the ARM, Osofo Kofi Ameve, wrote *The Origins of the Bible and Pertinent Issues* (2003). In the book, Ameve offers a critical evaluation of the Bible, in which he argues that those who follow it cannot be moral because the book itself is filled with immorality and criminality (2003). Additionally, he insinuates that a “crime” was committed in the very action of writing the Bible, because the writers “stole” ideas and passages from one another. By questioning the morality of the writers and followers of the Bible, he is arguing that

Christianity is itself an immoral religion. Christianity as an immoral religion, to Ameve, underpins the negative constructions of a moral 'traditional religion'.

Professor Asazu, one leader of the ARM and a lecturer at Winneba University,²⁴¹ has taken the argument another way by explicitly taking on the missionary and Neo-Pentecostal emphasis on the devil. In his book, *Afrikania African Traditional Religion: A Brief Exposition*, he argues that this construction was employed to set Christianity apart from 'traditional religion' and advocate for its superiority. However, in his view, "murderers, robbers, thieves, adulterers and adulteresses and rapists" manipulate this imagery to abscond from personal responsibility:

"[the emphasis on the devil] encourages evil-doing. Our witnesses are the too many instances of murderers, robbers, thieves, adulterers and adulteresses and rapists, who blame their crimes and sins on this supposed instigator of evil. This doctrine gives the godless the excuse to perpetrate their crimes and sins with relish but as soon as they are caught...they have Satan readily to blame...Above all, there are too many instances of some alien religious clergymen blaming their own sinful or criminal acts on this 'one all powerful' mythical 'rival of god'! There are too many instances of alien religious clergymen blaming their own sexual lust on this one Satan when they are caught seducing the wives of the members of their own congregations." (Azasu 2003, p. 16).

To contrast the sentiment, he states, "Satan does not exist. Those who commit crimes and sins are to blame for the evil deeds. God has no hand, either directly or indirectly, in their misdemeanors!" (2003, p. 17).

In making this argument, Professor Azasu reaffirms the central tenets of the ARM and the Afrikania Mission before it: that Afrikans have historically had a conception of a High God. Likewise, he recognises the existence of deities and ancestors, although they are conceptualised as not being the source or aim of Afrikan religious practices. Rather, Professor Azasu compares deities to "angels", as figures who act on the High God's behalf in the world. As I discussed previously, deities within this type of reformulation of 'traditional religion' are given meaning only in relation to a cosmology centred upon a High God. To the ARM, deities are taught, not experienced. Despite the strong association between the ARM and the Klikor Adzima shrines, the role of deities, particularly in relation to 'crime', is one aspect that they differ on.

²⁴¹ Professor Azasu was also considered for the leadership position of the Afrikania Mission during the early 1990s (de Witte 2008).

While the ARM defines itself in opposition to Christianity and centres this conversation on a discourse of crime in the ways outlined above, the Adzima priests, elders, and practitioners understand deities to be moral agents, working on behalf of the High God or Supreme Deity, *Mawu*, in order to punish “crimes”. This is set in contrast to what they understand to be a central characteristic of Christianity: the reconfiguration of relationships with lineage members, ancestors, and deities as a result of the “discourse of discontinuity” (Engelke 2010, p. 182) found in the Bremen Missions and Neo-Pentecostalism.

This is particularly salient in the Klikor context, as even though Klikor is not the home to a substantial amount of churches like one would find in other communities around the southern Volta Region, the Adzima shrines have been involved in a number of local dispute with churches. For example, in 1991, churches aligned with the Klikor Area Union of Churches protested the imposed ban during the Kli-Adzima festival. Several members of the Adzima shrines retaliated; the outcome of which was the looting and destruction of several churches in the area.²⁴² A similar situation almost occurred during the 2005 Kli-Adzima festival, when several churches in the area defied the ban on drumming. However, the situation was mediated by Togbui Addo, the Klikor Paramount Chief, before it escalated.²⁴³

Let me return to the quote from the Adzima shrine ritual specialist indicated at the beginning of this chapter:

“Some have been saying lies about us. People say we send the deity to kill or hurt people, that people ask us to do this [through petitions]. But it’s not true. The people who do wrong bring the bad things [nuvowo] onto themselves. They call the deity because of their doings. The priest doesn’t know what happens until someone comes to tell him, this is what is happening in our family... If there is no wrongdoing in the world, then the deities will stop working. Mawu put them on the ground to judge and to deal with everyone after he left...The deities see the wrongdoing. People doing bad [wo nuvo] against another, using black powder, thieving and the deities send punishment to reveal the wrongdoing. Which is better to reveal the wrongdoing or to hide, as the Christians do? The god reveals the wrongdoer to everyone so he will change his behaviour. This is why the family is affected. So they can know the crimes of their members. The priests and everyone here is on the *straight*

²⁴² See Report of the Fiti Arbitration Committee on the Breach of Customary Ban on Drumming and Causing Unlawful Harm in the Klikor Traditional Area of the Volta Region. 25 October 1991.

²⁴³ Members of the ‘shrine-owning’ lineages that have become Christian are also the source of contestation when new priests are to be chosen. In sum, when lineage segments make claims to having the right to choose the new priest, their claims are often countered through examinations of lineage members converting to Christianity.

path...No one can tell the god the punishment. Rather he decides what he does. No one can see it. Not even the priest...” (emphasis added).

In this conversation, the elder explicitly contrasted his understanding of deities to those of “some people”, which to him are Christians. He argued that Christians are lying about the nature of deities and that they “bring the bad things [*nuvɔwo*] onto themselves”. *Nuvɔ* (sing; *nuvɔwo*, pl), although typically translated as “sin” or “crime” in the Ewe Christian discourse developed by the Bremen missionaries (Meyer 1999a, 1996), in this context refers to the experience of danger from deities, although is positioned as being a type of punishment from deities.²⁴⁴ He went on, “They call the deity because of their doings”. Here the elder is indicating that by “doing bad things” (*wo nuvɔwo*), the person experiences “bad things” (*nuvɔwo*). However, the contrast that he began with indicates that he was reasserting this particular understanding of deities in response to perceptions of ‘traditional religion’ in that the ritual specialists and petitioners are involved in manipulating the deity against other people. This was a central concern for ritual specialists, as seen in the previous discussion of Adzo and Yaa in Chapter 6, because of the idea that ‘calling’ a deity could be understood as a “curse”. This idea is reinforced through Ghanaian and Nigerian films.

He continued, “Mawu [God] put them on the ground to judge...the deities see the wrongdoing”. The elder was invoking an understanding of the deities as a mechanism for social control, but one that is related to their current role as arbitrators; the deities “judge” because they “witness”.²⁴⁵ As I indicated in Chapter 6, knowing the “truth” (*nyatefe*) involves “witnessing” things as they occur.

Additionally, the elder indicated, “the god reveals the wrongdoer to everyone so he will change his behaviour. This is why the family is affected. So they can know the crimes of their members”. He is explaining the powerful connection between lineage members based on principles of personhood, where lineage members and their affinal relations are connected to one another and defined by these relations, components of the person, ancestors, and deities (cf Rosenthal 1998; Piot 1999). Here these connections are linked to crime through an idiom of morality and danger, where the

²⁴⁴ Meyer explains that the Bremen missionaries chose the term *nuvɔ* (literally meaning a “bad thing”) to express the idea of “sin”. However, the idea of *nuvɔ* (in contrast to *wo nuvɔ* – as “committing bad things”) was the experience of “bad things” that threatened one’s well-being, which included the effect of “bad actions” and the result of a “inappropriate behaviour in a relationship” (Meyer 1999a, p. 86, 102).

²⁴⁵ Deities have often been explained in relation to social control by Ewe academics (cf Abotchie 1997; Fiawoo 1959).

connection between lineage members is one where each member has a vested interest in the actions of others.

The next section of this conversation highlighted in more detail the elder's perspective on Christianity.

"I used to be a Christian. I was called to come back to Klikor [and take the position of elder in the Adzima shrine] because there was no senior member of my family here. I was called to come so the family would not fall apart. I became seriously ill. If I did not come, I would be in a coffin. But I will never go back to the Christians. I will greet them, but never go, unless they return to their roots. I do not know Jesus. Jesus was a man born like me. But I don't know him. He is a man from Israel and even they do not follow him, because his way is not true. In Britain they should teach their children about Stonehenge and why their ancestors put it there. My ancestors knew this god so I'll continue on their path."

From one perspective, a Christian's experience of danger from deities and ancestors can be understood as a way in which the person's relationship to these is being re-established, because they may have forgotten aspects of their personhood. The elder was arguing that by continuing with the traditions of the ancestors, one will be sure to lead a life in which they are not subjected to the experience of danger from deities; another element of being on the "straight path", i.e. moral path, for the elder (cf Geurts 2002).

Although exposition of crime and Christianity by the Adzima shrine elder significantly differs from that of the ARM, there are some key overlaps in the context of the Klikor-ARM service. As noted previously, the Adzima shrines have a close relationship to the Klikor-ARM, particularly in organising the weekly services. This also is one avenue through which the Adzima shrine ritual specialists convey their conceptualisation of deities as moral agents working on behalf of *Mawu*.

For example, one ARM-Klikor service featured a "confession of a Christian". This particular service was well-attended, as it marked the closure of the 2004 Kli-Adzima annual festival. It also drew many on-lookers as it was held at the Togbui Kli shrine, in the centre of Klikor, rather than its normal location and the *Fiaga* of Klikor, Togbui Addo, featured as a guest speaker.

"I was staying with a woman and I was a Christian then. We only had one key to the outer door. One day I went to an interview and when I came back, they [someone] had stolen the things in the house. I said a little Christian prayer. Another day I went to the interview again and they stole the food I had at home to cook. Then I said this time I will not give up. Mama Vena is the one who

brought my grandmother to Klikor and everyone has been going there to sort a rescue. So I brought a drink. By then one of the sons of the person I was staying with came from Abidjan. I told him to stay while I made the prayers. ‘Whoever has been stealing my things, Mama Vena should reveal the person.’ I went to sleep, dreamt and saw Togbui Adzima with the walking stick, standing and singing a song. Then I didn’t know the song he was singing. I started singing that song and the person who has stolen the things said ‘I didn’t know, I didn’t know why I have stolen the things.’ I said ‘I’ve been telling you, you shouldn’t be stealing. See where you’ve landed yourself.’ And I walked into the room and took one or two things and walked away. Then I knew the gods of Klikor had really been working. They are my freedom. One asked me, ‘take me to Klikor that you have been talking about and that your parents are from.’” (*He then quoted the bible from Luke.*) “When everyone becomes silent the trees and the stones give praises to God. So now I want to tell you that though Togbui Adzima is a spirit, he has become a stone and giving praises to God.”

This “confession” emphasized that the deities are servants of God (*Mawu*), whereby they are linked to “stones” praising God, while also demonstrating a sense that Christian prayers do not adequately address the issue of theft. Within this narrative, it was Mama Vena and Togbui Adzima who revealed the culprit and, within the eyes of the confessor, proved their effectiveness. Although the “confession” did not directly challenge the morality of Christianity, it was understood by those in attendance as indicating as much. Christianity failed to punish the crimes experienced by the confessor; Mama Vena on the other hand did so.

The opposition between Christianity and ‘traditional religion’ through the idiom crime is expressed in both the ARM and the Klikor Adzima shrines, although both have very different understandings about the role of deities in this construction. For the ARM, this is a discourse about the negative representations associated with ‘traditional religion’, that they have to counter to legitimise their “reformulation”, while asserting that Christianity fails to deal with crime because converts blame the ‘devil’ instead.

On the other hand, for the Klikor ritual specialists, the discourse on crime indicates a shifting moral register, which is also addressing Christianity and its negative representations. However, this is in the context of the Adzima shrine practices and the engagements that they may have with others from outside the Klikor community drawn into dangerous relationships with the deities, as seen in the cases of Yaa and Adzo from Chapter 6 and the initiation of Patience in Chapter 7. Particularly, the latter case highlights the shrine elder’s point: that being on a “straight path”, i.e. moral path, involves acknowledging one’s lineage connections, through ancestors and deities. When these are forgotten or dismissed as being unimportant, perhaps by rejecting a

fiasidi, those people are not on the “straight path”. To informants, Mama Vena’s admonishment to the lineage members indicated that the lineage was not on the “straight path” because of Christianity, which they connected to an “evil deeds”.

It is in this context of varying and shifting understandings of Christianity and its relationship negative representations of ‘traditional religion’, crime, and morality that the ARM and the Klikor Adzima shrines situate the abolitionist campaign about the Trokosi Slave, in their argument that the campaign is connected to the oppressive role of Christianity, the further “demonisation” of traditional religious practices, and headed by protagonists who are “criminals”, “defrauding” the public in order to obtain funding. In the next section, I want to explore what points in the abolitionist campaign have led to this type of understanding.

The Trokosi Slave, a Christian Campaign?

The Trokosi Slave abolition campaign fiercely denies allegations made by anti-abolitionists, particularly the ARM, that the abolition campaign represents a strategic Christian driven attack against ‘traditional religion’. The abolition movement does so by arguing that the campaign is a legitimate effort at dealing with human rights violations embedded in what they perceive to be an ‘outmoded custom’ and highlighting the abuses suffered by the Trokosi Slave: forced labour, sexual and physical abuse, and being denied educational and health care opportunities. Even in shrines where those abuses are not apparent, as in the case of the Klikor Adzima shrines, the abolitionist campaign argues that the practice still represents a type of institutional ritual slavery.

As indicated previously, they do so by partly drawing on a particular etymology of the term *trokosi*, as literally meaning “slave to the god”. The argument based purely on etymology is difficult to make in the case of the *fiasidi*, in light of the significant linguistic differences between communities in the southern Volta Region. Their second argument around this issue is much more important; they object to the idea that initiates are affiliated to the shrines and deities because of the “crimes” of a kin member.

At the very least, this argument calls into question the issue of the initiates’ volition, although the campaign and subsequent legislation does not allow for the initiates’ voluntary affiliation on behalf of kin members. However, when examining the abolitionist arguments and the ARM’s responses, it becomes clear that the objection

to the affiliation of initiates to shrines through the “crimes” of a kin member and the defining of *trokosi* and its variants as a type of institutionalised ritual slavery are points that the ARM and the Klikor Adzima shrines use to indicate that the abolitionist campaign has at the very least misunderstand the practice as it relates to the *fiasidi* and at the most that it is implicitly a Christian campaign against ‘traditional religion’. While the abolitionist campaign is composed collectively of a number of different individuals and organisations and cannot be thoroughly examined as one entity, I want to examine some of the points made by the abolitionist campaign that has shaped the kinds of refutations offered by the ARM and the Adzima shrines. This is not an exhaustive examination of the abolitionists’ varied motivations; such an examination exceeds the scope of this thesis.

“I am his slave”

As discussed in Chapter 2, the campaign against the *trokosi* practice was initiated by Mark Wisdom, a resident of North Tongu. While Wisdom had a prominent role in the abolition movement, he is often dismissed as being unimportant to the campaign by others, particularly by the time the ARM started to pose a public challenge, because of his explicit Christian agenda. However, Wisdom’s role unfortunately cannot be dismissed so easily.

Wisdom initially was one of the only people who offered explanations about the practice, which he referred to as “research” and argued that *trokosi* had variants outside the North and South Tongu districts. He made claims having intimate knowledge about the practice because of his membership in a shrine owning lineage (the reliance on Wisdom’s explanations was later taken up by the abolition campaign as a potential problem and the catalyst for commissioning Dovlo, and later Nukunya, to conduct research). He also was one of the first public figures associated with the campaign, particularly in the interface between the abolitionist campaign and shrine owners, priests, and initiates in the southern Volta Region and Dangbe districts. This was the case too with the Adzima shrines in Klikor.

After several visits to interview Wisdom, he made the startling statement to me:

“Jesus told me I belong to him and he belongs to me. His is my master and I am his servant or his slave [*klu*]. We can say I am his slave because I have to

do his will. In another context, I am his servant. As a servant, I have to obey him, humble myself to him, dance to the tune of his command”.

After further questioning, he goes on to explain,

“There are two masters; we have our Lord Jesus Christ and the devil. But you can’t side with both at the same time. You have to choose. Either you are a Christian, siding with our Lord Jesus Christ, or you are a traditionalist, siding with the devil...All are slaves to the gods. All are slaves to satan, the devil. All have to dance to the tune of the devil. Whatever the devil says they have to keep it.”

Wisdom saw himself as being spiritually instructed and invested with power to lead the campaign against the *trokosi* practice. He continually spoke, both in interviews and in written statements on *trokosi*, of a dream that he had in 1977 while a teacher in Lome, where a giant is terrorising and imprisoning a community. According to Wisdom, during the dream, he was stopped by a man offering him a key to rescue the imprisoned community. At seeing the key, Wisdom argued that it should be given to the police, but was told instead that “the police have not got the spiritual power that you have. If you don’t lead this crusade, no one can”. Sometime after having the initial dream and his subsequent return to the North Tongu district, Wisdom recalled that he had a vision of Jesus pointing to a couple of *trokosiwo*, at which point he knew that the spiritual battle that he was meant to engage in was to ‘liberate’ the Trokosi Slave.

At this point in my research, I had been struggling with the different interpretations various informants had given me of what it means to be a ‘slave’, both in historical structures of internal slavery in the region and in the context of ‘modern forms of slavery’. *Trokosi* is spoken about in relation to both, although inconsistently and depending on the particular argument being made, with the preference made for an interpretation of “ritual slavery”. Additionally, the terms *kosi* and *klu* are fiercely debated over between protagonists of the abolition campaign and the ARM and Klikor Adzima shrines.

The ARM and Klikor Adzima shrines agree that the terms denote some sense of indebtedness, in the context of religious practice, but how they are used and in what contexts are up for debate and seem to vary significantly between the Tongu and Anlo areas. Whereas in the former context, it is asserted that *kosi/klu* means “slave” and used in reference to female initiates of the shrines, in the latter, *kosi/klu* are names given to children born as result of a woman petitioning a deity for children; in other

words, a child born through “buying a womb” (*dorfleviwo*).²⁴⁶ Venkatachalam, in her research among one Anlo community, suggests that *kosi* and *klu* refer to children born through the assistance of a deity, denoting “slave” in a ritual context. Domestic servitude, particularly through historical practices of pawnship, is separated from the ritual context through the usage of the term *kluvi* (2007, p. 81-82).

Despite these disagreements on the meaning and usage of terms that imply indebtedness, it should be recalled at this point that relationships between people and deities have long been expressed through idioms and practices of hierarchy and service (*subɔsubɔ*). *Subɔsubɔ* represents actions which are used within a wide range of hierarchical relations, from fathers to son, husbands to wives, masters to slaves, and deities to petitioners. However, Wisdom’s usage of the term “slave” (*klu*, which to Wisdom is the male form of *kosi*) here highlights the complex nature in which these terms are being employed in the contemporary context. While Wisdom highlighted the conditions in which the *trokosiwo* that he has encountered live as an indication of their slavery, he was also indicating in this interview that ‘slavery’ is a spiritual state and one that is not necessarily problematic. Rather, it becomes problematic when one is a slave to the traditional gods, seen by Wisdom to be agents of the devil. The idea that deities are agents of the devil is not unique to Wisdom, but significantly parallels the complex historical engagement between Christianity and ‘traditional religion’ in the southern Volta Region.

Atonement Slavery & Sacrificial Lambs

“...a common feature in all parts of the Volta Region is that the vestal virgins are accepted as reparation for crimes committed by a member of their family...It is difficult for me to find anything morally redeeming about that aspect of the Trokosi system which requires vestal virgins to live a life of servitude for an alleged crime committed by someone else. The idea of offering human being as reparation for crimes committed by others is morally unacceptable” Emile Short, Director of the CHRAJ (Short 1995, p. 24 – 27)

“In its most common and humiliating form, a virgin who is yet to experience menarche is given to a deity to atone for the sin or offense committed by a

²⁴⁶ Similarly, Rosenthal suggests that children born of the assistance of *gorovodu* deities (understood to be from the north) are often named Donkor, indicating their connection to the North but also understood in relation to the application of *odonkor* as one term also associated with slaves. The idea invoked here is that the child born of these circumstances performs a type of service to the deity in a variety of ritual settings (1995, p. 105-106).

relative. She thus becomes a slave of the deity, although euphemistically she is called the deity's wife" Wisdom Mensah, former Program Director of ING (Mensah & Godwyll 2010, p. 31)

As highlighted in the above quotes, proponents of the abolition campaign overwhelmingly characterise *trokosiwo* and *fiasidiwo* as figures of "atonement" or "reparation" for "crimes" or "sins" committed by a kin member. This is a central contestation of the abolitionist campaign in their argument that the *fiasidiwo* should also be considered problematic; one leader of a NGO addressing *trokosi* argues, this is a type of "atonement slavery" (Gadri 2010, p. 49). However, those involved in the abolitionist campaign rarely elaborate on the issue beyond making a strong connection between the initiates' roles as a figure of "atonement" and the abuses reported; here, they are likening the initiates' abuse as a type of punishment for crimes that they were not involved. Similarly, the initiates are also spoken about as a type of "sacrifice", particularly as a "sacrificial lamb" (Mensah & Godwyll 2010, p. 81). This idea underpinned the abolitionists' suggestions for modification at the beginning of the campaign – through the acceptance and sacrifice of animals.

While these are not necessarily elaborated on by the abolitionist campaign, two fundamental issues that the ARM and the Klikor Adzima shrines refute are embedded in the representation of the initiates as atonement: the idea that it is "immoral" or illegitimate for persons in lineage structures to be collectively responsible for the actions of another member and an understanding of 'traditional religion' in which "sacrifices" serve as the medium for "atonement".

***Fiasidiwo* – Slaves and Sacrifices or Queen-Mothers and Role-Models**

"Some people claim that people who are admitted into the Troxovi Institution are there to atone for the crimes of their relations. This notion is false (or at best a misconception) because admission...is a privilege extended to a family which fails to properly bring up its members to be of good behaviour....[the Fiasidi] is meant to be educated to become a role model in his/her family in particular and society in general" (Ameve 2003, p. 55).

In the debate about the Trokosi Slave, the ARM and the Klikor Adzima shrines contest the representation of *trokosiwo* and *fiasidiwo* as 'slaves', although this contestation is fundamentally connected to the construction of initiates as a type of sacrifice as well. In contrast, the ARM and the Klikor Adzima assert the counter-

representation of *fiasidiwo* (and partly *trokosiwo*) as “Queen-Mothers” and “role-models” to a lineage that has members who have committed some type of crime. The Fiasidi-Queen representation was in part fashioned in response to the overwhelming sense that the ARM and the Klikor Adzima shrines had that the abolitionist campaign represented a continuation of the negative image of ‘traditional religion’ associated with missionary and Neo-Pentecostal Christianity.

As discussed previously, sacrifice is a problematic issue for the ARM and its predecessor, the Afrikania Mission. Rather than reaffirm the centrality of sacrifice in religious practices, Damuah argued that libation, the action of pouring drinks, would symbolically convey the intent of sacrifice, which, in his view, was to obtain “salvation” (Bediako 1995, p. 31; Gyanfosu 1995, p. 308, 322). Despite the variety of different types of sacrifices in traditional religious practices, each employed for different purposes, Damuah’s view that sacrifice was a practice that reflected Afrikans attempt to receive “salvation” was not unique in itself. This type of construction of the different types of sacrificial practices was also asserted in other post-Independence studies of ‘traditional religion’ that sought to find elements of comparability between ‘traditional religion’ and Christianity.

For example, this can be seen in the work of Gaba, who wrote extensively about ‘Ewe religion’ during this time period, while drawing heavily on the Ewe Christian discourse established by the Bremen Mission. Gaba became a Christian while staying with an Evangelical Presbyterian Church minister during his childhood, who mentored him in the Bible. He went on to do his graduate work on ‘Anlo traditional religion’, focusing primarily on their “prayers” and the stylised verses of priests; in part his interest was spurred by the post-Independence atmosphere and the ideological message of Nkrumah (Adadevoh 2005, p. 96-97).²⁴⁷ His PhD thesis, entitled *Anlo Tradition Religion: A study of the Anlo traditional believers’ conception of and communion with the Holy*, argues that certain parallels exist between ‘traditional religion’ and Christianity to illustrate that ‘traditional religion’, while being a “lower religion”, has the potential to develop into a “higher religion” - when certain understandings are modified (Gaba 1965, p. 351-352).²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ Prof. Gaba completed his PhD at Kings College, University of London, in 1965, going on to become a lecturer in the University of Ghana’s Religion Department, and then the Head of the Religion Department at the University of Cape Coast (Adadevoh 2005, p. 96).

²⁴⁸ A point of view that was developed more strongly in his later works, whereby he questions the necessity of a ‘conversion’ experience (Adadevoh 2005, p. 140-145).

Gaba argued that the ‘Ewe’ had a notion of a Supreme Being (*Mawu*) before the Christianity was introduced and argued that “prayers” and “sacrifices” are aimed at a High God, through intermediary deities (Gaba 1965; Gaba 1968). He goes on to argue that there are various types of sacrifice that mediate the experience of “sin” (*nuvɔ*). One of these is *nuxe*, meaning “paying for a thing” [*nu* – thing; *xe* – pay] - making a recompense - or preventing a thing from happening” (1965, p. 290). In a later work, Gaba argues:

“sacrifice completely takes the place of the sacrificer. It also takes away with itself any evil that may be suffered as a result of a dangerous manifestation of the holy in human affairs...the plain truth is that in Anlo thought the sacrificer has used the sacrifice to exchange his life which the holy will have claimed. Though a ‘nuxe’ sacrifice aims at removing any danger that comes from the holy, in character, however, it may be considered basically substitutionary and is offered to the holy at a ransom to appease a stirred anger and buy back the life of the sacrificer” (Gaba 1968, p. 15).

Here Gaba’s exposition closely resembles that of the ARM and the ideas embedded in abolitionist campaign – that sacrifice “completely takes the place of the sacrificer” (Gaba 1968, p. 15), despite the idea that *nuxe* as religious practice only implies as Gaba states elsewhere “the removal of an over-hanging or the stopping of a threatening danger” (Gaba 1997, p. 91). The problems of the over-mediation of religious practices through Christian frameworks and attempts at finding points of comparability is pertinent in this context, as Gaba considers *trokosiwo* and *fiasidiwo* as a type of *nuxe*:

“The deities *Mε* at Vola, *Axava* at Vume, *Nyigbla* at Afife and *Tɔmi* at Anloga for instance are...deities who receive, as *nuxe* sacrifice, human sacrifice of young girls who become vestal virgins, *trokosiwo*, the deity’s slaves, or *fiasidiwo*, wives of the deity” (Gaba 1997, p. 91).

The implications based on the different understandings of sacrifice, as a religious practice, for the *fiasidiwo* and *trokosiwo* are drastic. In the proper context in which *nuxe* is practiced, *fiasidiwo* and *trokosiwo* are mediums through which the threat of danger is removed. In the Christian mediated usage of the concept *nuxe*, *fiasidiwo* and *trokosiwo* are mediums that are “exchanged” for the life of the sacrificer.

Even though the practice of *nuxe* does not represent the Christian derived ideas of Gaba, the ARM is susceptible to this type of understanding of sacrifice as well. Likewise, as de Witte shows, the ARM is conscious of the negative representation of sacrifice in the public sphere – a bloody practice and spectacle, in the slaughter of animals, which most Ghanaian Christians find to be indicative of traditional religion’s

“backwardness” and “cruelty” (2004, 2005). This type of imagery of “cruelty” is also embedded in the abolitionists’ construction of the Trokosi Slave. As “sacrifices”, they take on the punishment of their lineage members and are alienated from the wider social community. As slaves, they experience the “cruelty” of sacrifice perpetually.

The counter-construction of *fiasidiwo* as “role-models” and “Queen-Mothers” is one that consciously attempts to address this imagery of slavery and sacrifice. However, the idea that *fiasidiwo* are role-models did not originate with the ARM, but rather taken up by them later. Rather it reflects a local intellectualists’ understanding of the *fiasidiwo* in Klikor in response to interactions with protagonists of the abolition campaign. As I have examined in Chapter 3, this type of representation was already being mobilised by Dale Massiasta, a local ritual specialist and knowledge keeper. As highlighted by Massiasta:

“To prevent further incidents of crime especially murder, arson and robbery, the offending person offers one of his relatives, a female, for initiation into the reformatory mysteries of God, the gods. This member becomes the signpost always reminding the reformed family of past perversions and to avoid crime....The Fiasidi, the sign-post, is not a slave nor a prisoner.”²⁴⁹

In this statement and others like it, the *fiasidiwo* are positioned in relation to crimes as “murder, arson, and robbery”, although as I have noted in Chapter 5, the reasons leading up to an initiation of a *fiasidi* involves a wider understanding of what constitutes a crime (*wo nuwɔ*) to include transgressions against the Adzima deities and their petitioners. The most significant of these transgressions is the *adofe* (“vagina debt”). Here, as in other in other circumstances, the modernist perspective of crimes is constructing a moralising discourse related to the understanding of the *fiasidi* as a “role-model” or “signpost” for offending lineages; this argument can only be understood in relation to that discourse.

Likewise, the image of the *fiasidiwo* as Queen-Mother is based on a particular reference to the *fiasidiwo* in Klikor as *Mamawo*. *Mama* is a kinship terminology meaning “grandmother”, but can also be used as a term of address for women who have obtained some kind of wealth or status and in relation to deities. However, Klikor historically did not have an institution of female chieftaincy that the term Queen-Mother usually refers to and like one would find in other communities in Ghana.

²⁴⁹ Massiasta wrote this letter on behalf of the Adzima Priests, although it is not acknowledged as such on the document. As such, I will reference the letter as it appears on the document: Adzima Priests 1996c.

Nonetheless, the ARM took up this image of *fiasidiwo* as Queen-Mothers in its public contestations, drawing upon popular Ghanaian concepts of Queen-Mothers as female traditional rulers among the matrilineal Asante.²⁵⁰ As Brydon notes, Asante Queen-Mothers, particularly the *Asantehemaa*, are popularly represented as being powerful female traditional rulers (1996). For both the ARM and the Adzima ritual specialists' public contestation of the Trokosi Slave, this image of the wealthy, powerful traditional ruler is contrasted to ideas about what a disempowered 'slave' might look like.

Some of these contestations came from Dale Massiasta in his publications sent to the protagonists of the abolition campaign highlighted in Chapter 3. In these, Massiasta argued that *fiasidiwo* are socially regarded as Queen-Mothers (highlighting the concept of *Mamawo*). Massiasta also cited evidence that more *fiasidiwo* in Klikor personally own land, a sign of wealth for many, than non-*fiasidiwo* to indicate that the initiates cannot be slaves.

Despite popular representations of Asante Queen-Mothers, Brydon argues that women, including Asante Queen-Mothers "have authority and power only in closely circumscribed areas: within the household and family, within some areas of local markets and with respect to certain aspects of family and lineage life" (Brydon 1996, p. 229). Similar to this assessment of the Asante Queen-Mother, the *fiasidiwo* do have power and authority as initiates, specifically in relation to her embeddedness in her lineage structure and being a figure fundamental to the offending lineage's protection and well-being. It is partly this embeddedness that informs the characterisation of *fiasidiwo* as *Mamawo*.²⁵¹ This is an issue that the Adzima priests and deities explicitly address in the ritual context, to reassert that the *fiasidiwo* can only mediate the dangerous relationship the lineage has with the deity or, as Gaba describes, "stopping of a threatening danger" (1997, p. 91) when the lineage is continually acknowledging her role. She is not, in contrast, a momentary sacrifice or one that takes the place of the

²⁵⁰ Although the term Queen-Mother is problematic in this context as well, referring to a woman with a traditional title from the same lineage as a chief, but not necessarily the chief's mother (Steegstra 2009, p. 105-106).

²⁵¹ The occurrence of *fiasidiwo* marrying in Klikor and having a significant role as actual mothers and grandmothers to a significant proportion of the population also contributes to this characterisation. However, this is not always the case. While I pointed out in Chapter 4 that this was an issue to take into account when assessing the ascribed meanings to the *fiasidiwo*, this in itself cannot fully explain the Adzima shrines' stress on the role of the *fiasidiwo* in the ritual complex.

“sacrificer”, as suggested in the Christian derived understanding of *nuxe*, or the short-term goals of the offending lineage.

However, as I argued in Chapter 7, from the perspective of the Adzima priests and the *fiasidiwo* in Klikor, the understanding of the *fiasidi* as being embedded in the lineage structure is the one that is the most vulnerable because of the competing meanings attributed to the *fiasidiwo* and *trokosiwo* in the southern Volta Region and the perception that *fiasidiwo* will be forgotten by lineage members once they become Christians. Their fear is in reaction to those Christians that might refuse the *fiasidi* because of the Neo-Pentecostal assertion that deities are representatives of the devil and it is through these lineage and ancestral connections that one might experience the influence of the devil.

Since this is such a precarious position, reliant in part on the ritually ascribed meanings of the *fiasidiwo* as embedded in the lineage structure, the ritual specialists attempt to ensure the *fiasidiwo*’s economic stability and independence by insisting that the *fiasidiwo* be given land and money and assistance in education or skills training, as we saw in the case of Patience in Chapter 7. Because of this insistence, along with ritual ascription that the offending lineage is obligated to provide for the *fiasidi* continuously, some *fiasidiwo* do become *Mamawo* in relation to having a prominent in the community: as wealthy women or holding political positions in relation to community development. This is not the case for all *fiasidiwo*; ritual specialists and the *fiasidiwo* partly indicate that when the *fiasidiwo* do not become prominent wealthy and powerful women in the community, it is the result of the offending lineage’s failure to understand what their role is in relation to their *fiasidi*.

Conclusion:

This chapter aimed to uncover some of the complexities of the ARM’s and Adzima shrines’ moralising discourse that makes a contrast between Christianity and ‘traditional religion’ and showed how this discourse is related to the types of objections that they had to the Trokosi Slave abolition campaign. As such, the ARM and the Adzima shrines are understood to be two overlapping “communities of interpretation” (Fardon 1990), that see their interpretations of ‘traditional religion’ and the *fiasidiwo* as fundamentally different than the public representations of each made by Christianity generally, and specifically Neo-Pentecostalism.

The first two sections of this chapter showed how two ‘communities of interpretation’, the ARM and some forms of Christianity, developed in Ghana. These include a complex and dialectical relationship established between Christianity and ‘traditional religion’ in Ghana. While ‘traditional religion’ and Christianity were set in opposition to one another during the late nineteenth to early twentieth century by German Bremen Missionaries, later discussions about ‘traditional religion’ and Christianity attempted to address that dualism. One of these attempts was made by Rev. Damuah, in his establishment of the Afrikania Mission, and his ideas continued to be present in the subsequently formed ARM.

However, the character of the ARM also includes a strong refutation to Neo-Pentecostal Christianity, which has increasing popularity in the Ghana. To the ARM, Neo-Pentecostalism revives the negative imagery of ‘traditional religion’ established by the German Missionaries. I then showed how a discourse on “crime” is mobilised by the ARM and the Adzima shrines’ ritual specialists to challenge what they perceive to be the fundamental weakness of Christianity and Neo-Pentecostalism.

This discourse on crime and the opposition set between Christianity and ‘traditional’ religion in the development of the ARM and the Adzima shrines’ experiences with Christian churches in the Klikor context informed how they engaged with the Trokosi Slave abolitionist campaign. Central to this engagement was the challenge of the representation of *trokosiwo* and *fiasidiwo* as slaves; a representation that the ARM and the Adzima shrines perceived to be motivated by the Christian mediated ideas of the abolition campaign. In refutation to the construction of initiates as slaves who are sacrificed by their lineages, the ARM and the Adzima shrines asserted the image of the *fiasidiwo* as Queen-Mothers which act as “role-models” to an offending, criminal lineage.

The representation of Queen-Mothers as “role-models” is informed by the positionality of the *fiasidiwo* in the Adzima shrines, the Klikor community, and in relation to their lineages. However, as a public contestation it addresses the claims made by the abolitionist campaign, rather than fully describes the role of the *fiasidiwo* in the Adzima shrines and in relation to their lineage members. Their role, stressed through the ritual contexts of the Adzima shrines, is one of mediation, transforming the offending lineage into children of the deities.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

The exploration of the *fiasidiwo* and the Adzima shrines in Klikor was a result of my initial interest in the topic after learning about the Trokosi Slave while in Ghana in 2001. Initially my research project aimed to consider the type of dependency relationships in which the *fiasidiwo* were situated to the Adzima deities, their priests, and the Klikor community and how these were mobilised and negotiated by the *fiasidiwo* in their social and economic relations with others. During my initial analysis and writing up period and as my understanding grew, I re-evaluated those aims for this thesis. While the *fiasidiwo*'s economic and social relations are important and will be the subject of future publications, they are at the centre of what had been an escalating battle over meanings (and still are today) about what the *fiasidiwo* and the *trokosiwo* represent: Slave or Queen-Mother.

Prior to a serious examination of the *fiasidiwo*'s social and economic relations, I had to address this battle over meaning. This is particularly important because this is the first anthropological research about the practices associated with the *fiasidiwo* and the debates that surround their affiliation. In contrast, other academic literature highlighting *fiasidiwo* and *trokosiwo* in the context of human rights and modern forms of slavery (referenced in the introduction) has relied on research commissioned by the abolitionist campaign to make their arguments.

In this battle, the protagonists of the Trokosi Slave abolition campaign present evidence from some shrines in the Tongu districts of the Volta Region about the initiates' socio-economic position as indicating their 'slave' status. Those that oppose the idea that the initiates are 'slaves', particularly the ARM and the three Adzima shrines in Klikor, offer evidence from these shrines that supports their Queen-Mother counter-assertion. Nonetheless, no matter what 'evidence' is presented, the abolitionist campaign continues to represent all initiates identified as being variants of *trokosi* as Trokosi Slaves, arguing that the practice associated with the *trokosiwo* and *fiasidiwo* is a type of ritual slavery because of the belief systems common to all Ewe communities.

The controversy about the nature of the practice and whether initiates are indeed Trokosi Slaves or Fiasidi-Queens is complex and multifaceted. At the core of the controversy is a problematic image of 'traditional religion' and the 'Ewe' as being

homogeneous throughout the southern Volta Region; this has been partly reified in the criminalisation of the practice. Granted, the abolitionist campaign makes a distinction between the Tongu-Ewe and the Anlo-Ewe, but these too are problematic, especially in terms of ‘traditional religion’. Religious practices and understandings about the variety of different deities, spirits, and other metaphysical entities are not held uniformly throughout these populations; the practices at one shrine may resemble those of another, but with grounded and long term examination, it becomes clear that these are set in specific histories and localities which produce meaning. Likewise, as Lovell argues, knowledge about deities are formed primarily through the relationships that they are drawn into with specific deities in specific locales and at specific shrines (2002, p. p. 58-59; Lovell 1993, p. 163-164). As such, not everyone has access to the same kinds of specialised knowledge (cf Fardon 1990; Brenner 1989).

To unsettle the politicised idea that the ‘Ewe’ are a homogeneous group of people and have a coherent understanding of the cosmological and how people should relate to it, I invoked an understanding of the three Adzima shrines and the Klikor community as a “community of interpretation” (Fardon 1990) that engages with other types of “communities of interpretation”. These can include neighbouring communities, lineages that are drawn into a hierarchical relationship with the Adzima deities, shrines to other deities, the ARM, the abolitionist campaign, and the various forms of Christianity that can be found in Ghana today.

The first section of the thesis, including Chapters 2 and 3, has provided a detailed examination of the Trokosi Slave debates and counter-debates. In laying out the debates in a historical manner, I have shown how the abolitionist campaign was inspired by Mark Wisdom and developed first over concerns about some *trokosiwo* in the North Tongu districts. After eliciting the support of a group of NGOs to work with various shrine communities in the North Tongu district and encourage these to modify their practices, the NGOs expanded their activities to other districts in the southern Volta Region to include practices and initiates that were identified as variants of *trokosi*. These included the *woryokwe* in the Dangbe districts and the *fiasidiwo* in the Ketu, Keta, and Akatsi districts.

Alongside the expansion of activities, the abolition campaign grew in size and incorporated Ghanaian governmental officials and international funders to provide services to *trokosiwo* and districts seminars to educate the public, traditional rulers, and most importantly shrine priests and elders. These activities culminated in the

enactment of a criminal code specifically designed to address the practice in all its variant forms. At the same time, the NGOs started a new strategy of negotiating with priests and shrine elders for the “liberation” of the initiates.

The representation of the Trokosi Slave highlighted that she was sexually and physically abused, forced to work without compensations, and stigmatised in her lineage and community. This representation and the inclusion of the *fiasidiwo* within the scope of the NGOs’ activities inspired a significant set of contestations from practitioners and other interested individuals. These most often focused on the meanings, experiences, and socio-economic status of the *fiasidiwo* in the Klikor Adzima shrines.

The Klikor Adzima shrines were central to this contestation partly because of their own engagements with the abolitionist campaign during various investigations and district seminars and the intervention of Dale Massiasta in the form of letters and memorandums to the abolitionist campaign and the Ghanaian government. The image produced about the *fiasidiwo* in the Klikor context as Queen-Mothers and “role-models” to criminal lineages were set in a discursive framework that highlighted the religious affiliation of most abolitionists, Christianity, and were then taken up by the neo-traditionalist organisation, the Afrikania Renaissance Mission (ARM).

The second section of this thesis, including Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, is an ethnography of the Klikor Adzima shrines, their ritual specialists, and *fiasidiwo* as one significant ‘community of interpretation’. In these chapters, I have examined different sites in which meaning is ascribed to the *fiasidiwo* and legitimated by ritual specialists: through historical narratives about the role of the Adzima shrines and deities in regional wars and slave trading and in the ritual complex of initiating a *fiasidi*. In doing so, I have been conscious of handling the material in this manner because the Klikor Adzima shrines’ practices and meanings associated with the *fiasidiwo* are not innocent and static ‘authentic’ practices that can be contrasted to the understandings of the abolition campaign, even though the Adzima shrines make claims to authenticity through the Trɔxovi Institutional Council. These practices are occurring in the context of a battle over meaning and have to be analysed and understood in that context.

These chapters demonstrated the way in which “there is a ‘management of meaning’” (Hannerz 1987, p. 550), particularly at the interface between petitioners and lineages from different locales who are drawn into dangerous and hierarchical relationships with the Adzima deities. Historical narratives shape and legitimise an

understanding of the Adzima deities as powerful “war deities” and the initiates’ role in creating long-term relationships between the Adzima deities and ‘shrine-owning’ lineages with non-kin lineages. These occur through petitions to the deities for protection in the context of a variety of dangers, where the non-kin petitioner becomes structurally indebted to the Adzima deities. The *fiasidiwo* then allow for these non-kin to be incorporated through idioms, practices, and symbols of marriage, underscored by the interpretation that she is “married” to the deity.

Interactions between the Adzima deities, ritual specialists, and non-kin petitioners in the contemporary shrine complex produce and legitimise certain understandings of the Adzima deities as “moral” and also highlight the role of the *fiasidiwo* in establishing a long-term relationship between the Adzima deities and non-kin lineages. However, in this context, the relationship is established between the Adzima deities and those that have committed some kind of transgression against the deity or its “children”. That transgression leads to the Adzima deities becoming dangerous to the non-kin lineages, which then has to be mediated through a ritual mechanism; one of these can be the initiation of a *fiasidi*.

As Chapter 7 has shown, offending lineages are focused on the short-term problem of “closing the door” to the deity. In contrast, through an *amegashie*, the deity emphasises that the *fiasidiwo* are central to the offending lineage’s on-going protection and well-being. Conversations with the deities through an *amegashie* during the initiation ceremonies can also be understood a moment in which meaning is ritually ascribed to the *fiasidiwo*. In this context, the *amegashie* is understood as having access to the cosmological landscape and it is through her that certain understandings associated with the *fiasidiwo* are legitimised.

Here, the Adzima deities argue that the role of a *fiasidi* in “closing the door” is contingent on the lineage continuously acknowledging her and providing for her needs. It is through the *fiasidi* and the offending lineage’s acknowledgement of her that they can then be considered “children” of the deity and can rely on it for their success, health, and wealth. This is set in contrast to the offending lineage’s short-term vision and the perception of the Adzima ritual specialists and the *fiasidiwo* that the offending lineage may refuse their *fiasidi* if members of her lineage become Christians. To them, this could jeopardize the *fiasidi*’s livelihood and can draw the lineage into a dangerous relationship with the deity once again.

The third section of this thesis, Chapter 8, examined the complex engagement between the Klikor Adzima shrines, the ARM, and the Trokosi Slave abolitionist campaign, as ‘communities of interpretation’ that have competing understandings about the *fiasidiwo*. For the Klikor Adzima shrines and the ARM, the Trokosi Slave abolitionist campaign is a part of a wider contest over morality and the image of ‘traditional religion’ and is linked to Christianity, specifically Neo-Pentecostalism. Central to the way the Adzima shrines and the ARM position themselves as different from Christianity is through a discourse on crime and morality, although with slightly different interpretations based on their understanding of deities.

At the core of their representation of the *fiasidiwo* as Queen-Mothers and “role-models” is the perception that Christians misunderstand the role of the *fiasidi* in mediating dangerous relationships established between offending lineages and the Adzima deities; in contrast the abolitionist campaign highlight that the initiates are “sacrificed” and become ‘slaves’ for a lineage member’s “sin”. Because of this misunderstanding, the ARM and the Klikor Adzima priests contrast the *fiasidiwo* to the Trokosi Slave and assert a powerful image of the Queen-Mother and “role-model” that instructs a criminal lineage on morality. However, while this image has some resonance in the Klikor Adzima context, it has to be understood in relation to its role as a public contestation to the Trokosi Slave.

Despite the fact that the Fiasidi-Queen representation is mobilised specifically to address the Trokosi Slave representation, this is not to say that the *fiasidiwo* in Klikor are socially and economically disadvantaged. In the introduction of this thesis, I cited this statement by Akyeampong:

“those who have risen to the defence of Fiasidi in Anlo are powerful chiefs, indigenous priests, and educated ‘traditionalists’ pledged to uphold African ‘culture’ in the face of Western/Christian encroachment. Their definition of Fiasidi appears to be at variance with the popular perception, but again the influential position of these power brokers seems to have eliminated or weakened any internal movement for the abolition of Fiasidi. The defence of Fiasidi is history according to the powerful, and we are yet to hear the version of the disempowered Fiasidi” (Akyeampong 2001b, p. 20).

The idea of the “the disempowered Fiasidi” is problematic in this context, because the ritual specialists’ production of meaning about the *fiasidiwo* are attempts to empower them in their socio-economic relations.

However, Akyeampong's perspective is informed by his interpretation of an incident that occurred in Klikor in 1997:

“An incident at Klikor in early 1997 underscored the complex dynamics that underpin *fiasidi*. The shared culture of the Ewe and Fon people of Ghana, Togo, and the Republic of Benin (old Dahomey) gives *fiasidi* a cross-national context. A Beninois family was involved in a *fiasidi* or *trokosi* cycle and converted to Christianity years ago in an endeavour to terminate the arrangement. The cycle of misfortune and deaths resumed and the now Christian family eventually approached a diviner to ascertain the cause of their ill luck. They were informed that they needed to send a young virgin girl to one of the shrines at Klikor. Accordingly, a male member of the family, who is a pastor of a Christian church, brought a young female relative as *fiasidi* to Klikor. He was told at Klikor that all that was required for now was the initiation ceremony, and he could take his female relative back to Benin. This apparently did not mesh with the pastor's understanding of the position of a *fiasidi*. Essentially, it seems that the chief and the priests at Klikor presented the pastor from Benin with the practice of *vodu-vi*, which contradicted the pastor's perception of *fiasidi* or *trokosi* and his clear understanding that he was to leave the girl in Klikor. The shared culture of the Ewe and Fon peoples reduces the possibility that this was a case of cultural misunderstanding. The Beninois pastor claimed that he had some errands to perform in Accra, and that he would pick up his female relative on his way back to Benin. The pastor disappeared, and the girl remains at Klikor...” (Akyeampong 2001b, p. 17).

Central to Akyeampong's interpretation of this incident is his understanding that all Ewe communities share the same “culture” and therefore the Christian pastor's understanding of the *fiasidi* indicates that the Klikor Adzima shrines are in some way misrepresenting the *fiasidiwo* as *vodu-vi*, another type of initiate in other shrines. It is precisely this type of interpretation, common to the abolitionist campaign, that this thesis addresses. If Ewe dialect and social structure vary widely between the Tongu-Ewe, Anlo-Ewe, and Northern-Ewe in Ghana, then these too will vary with Ewe communities in Benin.

For the Adzima shrines' ritual specialists and the *fiasidiwo*, the problem in this incident was that someone from another ‘community of interpretation’, in this case the man being from a Benin community and a Christian pastor, brought his own interpretations of the *fiasidiwo* into play in the Adzima ritual context. ‘Communities of interpretation’, particularly around religious practices, take their shape in relation to the grounding of specific deities into human relations in specific locations and are embedded in the social and political structures of a wider community.

Bibliography

Academic Sources:

- Abotchie, Chris. 1997. *Social Control in Traditional Southern Eweland of Ghana: Relevance for Modern Crime Prevention*. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.
- Abu-Lughod, L. 1991. Writing Against Culture. In Fox, R. G. (ed). *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*. Sante Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
- Adadevoh, D. T. B. 2005. *Approaches to Christianization Among the Ewe People of Ghana*. Thesis (PhD). University of Leeds.
- Adjakpey, Rev. Ted Nelson. 1982. *Penance and Expiatory Sacrifice among the Ghanaian-Ewe and their Relevance to the Christian Religion*. (PhD). Rome.
- Akyeampong, E. 2001a. *Between the Sea and the Lagoon: An Eco-Social History of the Anlo of Southeastern Ghana c. 1850 to Recent Times*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Akyeampong, E. 2001b. History, Memory, Slave-Trade and Slavery in Anlo (Ghana). *Slavery and Abolition*. 22(3):1-24.
- Amenumey, D. E. K. 1968. The Extension of British Rule to Anlo (South-East Ghana), 1850-1890. *The Journal of African History*. 9 (1): 99-117.
- Amenumey, D. E. K. 1986. *The Ewe in Pre-Colonial Times*. Accra: Sedco Publishing Limited.
- Amenumey, D. E. K. 1997. A Brief History. In Agbodeka, F. (ed). *A Handbook of Eweland, Volume 1: The Ewes of Southeastern Ghana*. Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.
- Appadurai, A. 1981. The Past as a Scarce Resource. *Man*. 16 (2): 201-219.
- Asad, T. 1993. *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. London: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Atakpa, F. K. 1997. Naming Practices of Ewes. In Agbodeka, F. (ed). *A Handbook of Eweland, Volume 1: The Ewes of Southeastern Ghana*. Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.
- Bailey, A. C. 2005. *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Bastian, M. L. 1993. "Bloodhounds who have no friends": Witchcraft and Locality in the Nigerian Popular Press. In Comaroff, J & Comaroff, J. (eds). *Modernity*

and its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Bastian, M. L. 2003. "Diabolic Realities": Narratives of Conspiracy, Transparency, and "Ritual Murder" in the Nigerian Popular Print and Electronic Media. In West, H. G. & T. Sanders (eds). *Transparency and Conspiracy: Ethnographies of Suspicion in the New World Order.* London: Duke University Press.
- Baum, R. M. 1999. *Shrines of the Slave Trade: Diola Religion and Society in Precolonial Senegambia.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Beattie, J. 1980. The Self in Traditional Africa. *Africa.* 50 (3): 313-320.
- Bediako, Kwame. 1995. *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Bing, A. 1984. Popular Participation versus People's Power: Notes on Politics and Power Struggles in Ghana. *Review of African Political Economy.* 31 (Dec): 91-104.
- Brenner, L. 1989. "Religious" Discourses in and about Africa. In Barber, K. & de Moraes Farias, P. F. (eds). *Discourses and Its Disguises: The Interpretation of African Oral Texts.* Birmingham: University of Birmingham.
- Brydon, L. 1981. Rice, Yams and Chiefs in Avatime: Speculations on the Development of a Social Order. *Africa.* 51(2): p. 659-677.
- Brydon, L. 1996. Women Chiefs and Power in the Volta Region of Ghana. *Journal of Legal Pluralism.* nr. 37-38.
- Brydon, L. 2008. Constructing Avatime: Questions of History and Identity in a West African Polity, c. 1690s to the Twentieth Century. *Journal of African History.* 49: p. 23-42.
- Cohen, A, P. 1984. Talking to Informants. In Ellen, R. F. (ed). *Ethnographic Research: A Guide to General Conduct.* ASA Research Methods in Social Anthropology. London: Academic Press Limited.
- Crowther, F. G. 1927. The Epwe Speaking People. *Gold Coast Review.* 3(1). Report originally dated 1912.
- Curley, R. 1983. Dreams of Power: Social Process in a West African Religious Movement. *Africa.* 53(3).
- Comaroff, J. & J. Comaroff (eds). 1993. *Modernity and its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Daswani, G. 2011. (In-)Dividual Pentecostals in Ghana. *Journal of Religion in Africa.* 41(3): p. 256-279.

- Debrunner, H.W. 1965. *A Church Between Colonial Powers: A Study of the Church in Togo*. London: Lutterworth Press.
- de Witte, M. 2003. Altar Media's Living Word: Televised Charismatic Christianity in Ghana. *Journal of Religion in Africa*. 33(2): 172-202.
- de Witte, M. 2004. Afrikania's Dilemma: Reframing African Authenticity in a Christian Public Sphere. *Etnofoor*. 17(1/2): 133-155
- de Witte, M. 2005. Insight, Secrecy, Beasts, and Beauty: Struggles over the Making of a Ghanaian Documentary on "African Traditional Religion". *Postscripts*. 1.2/1.3: 277-300.
- de Witte, M. 2008. Spirit Media: Charismatics, Traditionalists, and Mediation Practices in Ghana. Thesis (PhD). University of Amsterdam.
- Dzobo, N. K. 1992. 'Knowledge and Truth: Ewe and Akan Conceptions'. In Wiredu, K & K. Gyekye (eds). *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies*, Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change Series II: Africa, Vol. 1.
- Ellis, A. B. 1890 [1965]. *The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa: Their Religion, Manners, Customs, Laws, Languages*. Chicago: Benin Press.
- Ellis, S. 1999. Rumour and Power in Togo. *Africa*. 63(4): 462-476.
- Engelke, M. 2010. Past Pentecostalism: Notes on Rupture, Realignment, and Everyday Life in Pentecostalism and African Independent Churches. *Africa*. 80(2): p. 177-199.
- Falola, T. & P. Lovejoy (eds). 1994. *Pawnship in Africa: Debt Bondage in Historical Perspective*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Fardon, R. 1990. *Between God, the Dead and the Wild: Chamba Interpretations of Ritual and Religion*. International African Library 8. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Fardon, R. 1996. The Person, Ethnicity and the Problem of 'Identity' in West Africa. In Fowler, I. & Zeitlyn (eds). *African Crossroads: Intersections between history and Anthropology in Cameroon*. Providence: Berghahn.
- Fiawoo, D. K. 1959. *The Influences of Contemporary Social Changes on the Magico-Religious Concepts and Organisation of the Southern Ewe-Speaking Peoples of Ghana*. Thesis (PhD). University of Edinburgh.
- Fiawoo, D. K. 1974a. Ewe lineage and kinship: sub-ethnic group variations. In C. Oppong (ed) *Legon Family Research Papers, No. 1: Domestic Rights and Duties in Southern Ghana*. Legon: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.

- Fiawoo, D. K. 1974b. Clan Endogamy and Patrilineal Parallel Cousin Marriage in Tongu, Ghana. In C. Oppong (ed) *Legon Family Research Papers, No. 1: Domestic Rights and Duties in Southern Ghana*. Legon: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.
- Fynn, J. K. 1971. *Asante and Its Neighbors, 1700-1807*. London: Longman Group Ltd.
- Gaba, C. R. 1965. *Anlo Traditional Religion: A Study of the Anlo Traditional Believer's Conception of and Communion with the 'Holy'*. Thesis (PhD). University of London.
- Gaba, C. R. 1968. Sacrifice in Anlo Religion: Part 1. *The Ghana Bulletin of Theology*. 3(5): 13-19.
- Gaba, C. R. 1969. The Idea of a Supreme Being among the Anlo People of Ghana. *Journal of Religion in Africa*. 2(1): 64-69.
- Gaba, C. R. 1997. The Religious Life of the People. In Agbodeka, F. (ed). *A Handbook of Eweland, Volume 1: The Ewes of Southeastern Ghana*. Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.
- Gavua, K. 2000. A Brief History. In Gavua, K. (ed). *A Handbook of Eweland, Volume II: The Northern Ewes in Ghana*. Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.
- Geurts, K. L. 2002. *Culture and the Senses: Bodily Ways of Knowing in an African Community*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Geschiere, P. & C. Fisiy. 1994. Domesticating Personal Violence: Witchcraft, Courts and Confessions in Cameroon. *Africa*. 64 (30): 323-341.
- Geschiere, P. 1997. *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Ghana Statistical Service. 2005. *2000 Population & Housing Census, Volta Region: Analysis of District Data and Implications for Planning*. UNFPA Funded Project.
- Gifford, Paul. 1994. Ghana's Charismatic Churches. *Journal of Religion in Africa*. 24 (3): 241-265.
- Gifford, Paul. 1998. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*. London: C. Hurst & Co.
- Gifford, Paul. 2004. *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy*. London: C. Hurst & Co.
- Gilbert, M. 1989. 'Sources of Power in Akuropon-Akuapem' in Arens, W. and I. Karp (eds). *The Creativity of Power: Cosmology and Action in African Societies*. Washington: Smithsonian Press.

- Gottlieb, A. 1988. Menstrual Cosmology Among the Beng of Ivory Coast. In T. Buckley & A. Gottlieb. 1988. *Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Greene, S. E. 1981. Land, Lineage and Clan in Early Anlo. *Africa*. 51 (1): 451-464.
- Greene, S. E. 1985. The Past and Present of an Anlo-Ewe Oral Tradition. *History in Africa*. 12: 73-87.
- Greene, S. E. 1988. Social Change in Eighteenth-Century Anlo: The Role of Technology, Markets and Military Conflict. *Africa*. 58(1): 70-86.
- Greene, S. E. 1996a. *Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Change on the Upper Slave Coast: A History of the Anlo-Ewe*. London: James Currey Ltd.
- Greene, S. E. 1996b. Religion, History and the Supreme Gods of Africa: A Contribution to the Debate. *Journal of Religion in Africa*. 26 (2): 122-138.
- Greene, S. E. 1996c. The Individual as Stranger in Nineteenth-Century Anlo: The Politics of Identity in Precolonial West Africa. In Hunwick, J. & Lawler, N. (eds). *The Cloth of Many Colored Silks: Papers on History and Society Ghanaian and Islamic in Honor of Ivor Wilks*. Illinois: Northwestern University Press.
- Greene, S. E. 1997. Sacred Terrain: Religion, Politics and Place in the History of Anloga (Ghana). *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*. 30 (1): 1-22.
- Greene, S. E. 2002a. *Sacred Sites and the Colonial Encounter: A History of Meaning and Memory in Ghana*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Greene, S. E. 2002b. Notsie Narratives: History, Memory, and Meaning in West Africa. *The South Atlantic Quarterly*. 101(4).
- Greene, S. E. 2011. *West African Narratives of Slavery: Texts from Late Nineteenth And Early Twentieth Century Ghana*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Grinker, R. R. & Steiner, C. B. (eds). 1997. *Perspectives on Africa: A Reader in Culture, History & Representation*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Gyanfosu, S. 1995. *The Development of Christian-Related Independent Religious Movements in Ghana, with Special Reference to the Afrikania Movement*. Thesis (PhD). University of Leeds.
- Gyanfosu, S. 2002. "A Traditional Religion Reformed: Vincent Kwabena Damuah and the Afrikania Movement, 1982–2000," in Maxwell, D. & Lawrie, I. (eds). *Christianity and the African Imagination: Essays in Honour of Adrian Hastings*. Leiden: Brill. p. 271–94.

- Gymah-Boadi, E. & Rothchild, D. 1982. Rawlings, Populism, and the Civil Liberties Tradition in Ghana. *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*. 12 (¾): 64-69.
- Hannerz, U. 1987. The World in Creolisation. *Africa*. 57(4): p. 546-559.
- Hackett, R. 1998. Charismatic/Pentecostal Appropriation of Media Technologies in Nigeria and Ghana. *Journal of Religion in Africa*. 28 (3).
- Heath, C. W. 1997. Children's Television in Ghana: A Discourse about Modernity. *African Affairs*. 96 (383): 261-275.
- Horton, R. 1984. Judo-Christian Spectacles: Boon or Ban to the Study of African Religions?. *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*. 96: 391-436.
- Idowu, E. B. 1962. *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*. London: Longmans.
- Kea, R. 1969. Akwamu-Anlo Relations, c. 1750-1813. *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*. 10: p. 29-69.
- Kea, R. 1995. Plantations and labour in the south-east Gold Coast from the late eighteenth to the mid nineteenth century. In R. Law (ed). 1995. *From slave trade to 'legitimate' commerce: The commercial transition in nineteenth century West Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kumassah, A. 2005. *The Migration Saga of the Anlo-Ewes of Ghana*. Keta: Photo City Press.
- Kumepkor, T. 1970. Land Tenure and Inheritance in Anlo. *Ghana Journal of Sociology*.
- Law, R. (ed). 1995. *From slave trade to 'legitimate' commerce: The commercial transition in nineteenth century West Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lentz, C. 2001. Local Culture in the National Arena: The Politics of Cultural Festivals in Ghana. *African Studies Review*. 44(3): p. 47-72.
- Lovell, N. 1993. *Cord of Blood: Initiation, Gender and Social Dynamics among the Ouatchi-Ewe of Southern Togo*. (PhD). School of Oriental and African Studies: University of London.
- Lovell, N. 1996. Vodhun, Heads and Hands: How Women Speak their Gods in Watchi-Ewe Spirit Possession. *Studies in Anthropology: The Centre for Sociology and Computing*. 11.
- Lovell, N. 1998. Wild gods, Containing Wombs and Moving Pots. In Lovell N. (ed). *Locality and Belonging*. New York: Routledge.
- Lovell, N. 2002. *Cord of Blood: Possession and the Making of Voodoo*. London: Pluto Press.

- Mamattah, C. M. K. 1979. *The Eves of West Africa: Oral Traditions Volume 1, The Anlo-Eves and their Immediate Neighbours*. Accra: Advent Press.
- Manoukian, M. 1952. *The Ewe-Speaking People of Togoland and the Gold Coast. Ethnographic Survey of Africa*. London: International African Institute.
- Marshall, R. 1991. Power in the name of Jesus. *Review of African Political Economy*. 52.
- Masquelier, A. 2001. Of Headhunters and Cannibals: Migrancy, Labor, and Consumption in the Mawri Imagination. *Cultural Anthropology*. 15(1): 84-126.
- Mbiti, J. S. 1969. *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann.
- Mbiti, J. S. 1970. *Concepts of God in Africa*. London: SPCK.
- McLagan, M. 2003. Principles, Publicity, and Politics: Notes on Human Rights Media. *American Anthropologist*. 105(3): 605-612.
- Meyer, B. 1992. 'If you are a devil, you are a witch and, if you are a witch, you are a devil': The integration of 'Pagan' ideas into the conceptual universe of Ewe Christians in Southeastern Ghana. *Journal of Religion in Africa*. 22: 98-132.
- Meyer, B. 1995a. 'Delivered from the Powers of Darkness' Confessions of Satanic Riches in Christian Ghana. *Africa*. 65 (2): 236-255.
- Meyer, B. 1995b. Magic, Mermaids and Modernity: The Attraction of Pentecostalism in Africa. *Etnofoor*. VIII (2): 46-67.
- Meyer, B. 1996. Modernity and Enchantment: The Image of the Devil in Popular African Christianity. In Peter van der Veer (ed). *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalisation of Christianity*. New York: Routledge.
- Meyer, B. 1998a. Commodities and the Power of Prayer: Pentecostalist Attitudes towards Consumption in Contemporary Ghana. *Development and Change*. 29: 751-776.
- Meyer, B. 1998b. The Power of Money: Politics, Occult Forces, and Pentecostalism in Ghana. *African Studies Review*. 41(3): 15-37.
- Meyer, B. 1998c. 'Make a Complete Break with the Past': Memory and Post-colonial in Ghanaian Pentecostal Discourse. *Journal of Religion in Africa*. 28 (3): 316-349.
- Meyer, B. 1999a. *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana*. International African Library 21. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

- Meyer, B. 1999b. Popular Ghanaian Cinema and "African Heritage". *Africa Today*. 46 (2): 93-114.
- Meyer, B. 2001. 'You Devil, go away from me!': Pentecostalist African Christianity and the Powers of Good and Evil. In Cough, P. & Jon P. Mitchell (eds). *Powers of Good and Evil: Social Transformation and Popular Belief*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Meyer, B. 2002. Christianity and the Ewe Nation: German Pietist Missionaries, Ewe Converts and the Politics of Culture. *Journal of Religion in Africa*. 32(2).
- Meyer, B. 2003a. Visions of Blood, Sex and Money: Fantasy Spaces in Popular Ghanaian Cinema. *Visual Anthropology*. 16(1): 15-41.
- Meyer, B. 2003b. Ghanaian Popular Cinema and the Magic in and of Film. In Meyer, B & Pels, P. (eds). *Magic and Modernity: Interfaces of Revelation and Concealment*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Meyer, B. 2004a. "Praise the Lord": Popular Cinema and Pentecostalite Style in Ghana's New Public Sphere. *American Ethnologist*. 31(1): 92-110.
- Meyer, B. 2004b. Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 33: 447-474.
- Meyer, B. 2005. Mediating Tradition: Pentecostal Pastors, African Priests, and Chiefs in Ghanaian Popular Films. In Falola, T. (ed). *Christianity and Social Change in Africa: Essays in Honor of J.D.Y. Peel*. Durham: Carolina Academic Press.
- Middleton, J. 1983. One Hundred and Fifty Years of Christianity in a Ghanaian Town. *Africa*. 53(3): 2-19.
- Miers, S. & I. Kopytoff (eds). 1977. *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Nugent, Paul. 1995. *Big Men, Small Boys and Politics in Ghana: Power, Ideology and the Burden of History, 1982-1994*. London: Pinter.
- Nukunya, G. K. 1969a. *Kinship and Marriage among the Anlo-Ewe*. LSE Monographs on Social Anthropology no. 37. London: Athlone Press.
- Nukunya, G. K. 1969b. Afa Divination in Anlo: A Preliminary Report. *Research Review*. 5(2). Institute of African Studies: University of Ghana.
- Nukunya, G. K. 1969c. The Yewe Cult Among Southern Ewe-Speaking People of Ghana. *Ghana Journal of Sociology*. 5(1): 1-7.
- Nukunya, G. K. 1974. Some Bilateral Elements in Anlo Kinship. In C. Oppong (ed) *Legon Family Research Papers, No. 1: Domestic Rights and Duties in Southern Ghana*. Legon: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.

- Nukunya, G. K. 1983. A Note on Anlo (Ewe) Slavery and the History of a Slave. In Roberston, C. & M. A. Klein (eds). *Women and Slavery in Africa*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Nukunya, G. K. 1997a. The Land and the People. In Agbodeka, F. (ed). *A Handbook of Eweland, Volume 1: The Ewes of Southeastern Ghana*. Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.
- Nukunya, G. K. 1997b. Social and Political Organisation. In Agbodeka, F. (ed). *A Handbook of Eweland, Volume 1: The Ewes of Southeastern Ghana*. Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.
- Parish, J. 2001. Black Market, Free Market: Anti-Witchcraft Shrines and Fetishes Among the Akan. In H. L. Moore & T. Sanders (eds). 2001. *Magical Interpretations, Material Realities: Modernity, Witchcraft, and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa*. London: Routledge.
- Parrinder, G. 1961. West African Religion: Illustrated from the Beliefs and Practices of the Yoruba, Ewe, Akan and Kindred Peoples. 2nd Edition. London: Epworth Press.
- Peel, J.D.Y. 1984. Making History: The past in the Ilesha present. *Man*. 19 (1): 111-132.
- Peel, J. D. Y. 1994. Review: Historicity and Pluralism in Some Recent Studies of Yoruba Religion. *Africa*. 64 (1): 150-167.
- Peel, J. D. Y. 2003 [2000]. *Religious Encounters and the Making of the Yoruba*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Piot, C. 1999. *Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ranger, T. O. & Kimambo, I. N. 1972. *The Historical Study of African Religion*. California: University of California Press.
- Reindorf, C. C. 2007 [1895]. *History of the Gold Coast and Asante*. Third Edition. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.
- Riesman, P. 1986. The Person and the Life Cycle in African Social Life and Thought. *African Studies Review*. 29 (2): 71-198
- Roberston, C. & Klein, M. A. (eds). 1983. *Women and Slavery in Africa*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Rosenthal, J. 1997. Foreign Tongues and Domestic Bodies: Gendered Cultural Regions and Regionalized Sacred Flows. In Grosz-Ngate, M. & Kokole, O. H. (eds). *Gendered Encounters: Challenging Cultural Boundaries and Social Hierarchies in Africa*. London: Routledge.

- Rosenthal, J. 1998. *Possession, Ecstasy, and Law in Ewe Voodoo*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Shaw, R. 1990. The Invention of 'African Traditional Religion'. *Religion*. 20: 339-353.
- Shaw, R. 1997. The Production of Witchcraft/Witchcraft as Production: Memory, Modernity, and the Slave Trade in Sierra Leone. *American Ethnologist*. 24(4): 856-876.
- Shaw, R. 2002. *Memories of the Slave Trade: Ritual and the historical imagination in Sierra Leone*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, D. J. 2001. Ritual Killing, 419, and Fast Wealth: Inequality and the Popular Imagination in Southeastern Nigeria. *American Ethnologist*. 28 (4): 803-826.
- Spieth, J. 1906. *Die Ewe Stamme: Material zur Kunde des Ewe-volkes in Deutsch-Togo*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.
- Spieth, J. 1911. *Die Religion der Eweer in Sud-Togo*. Leipzig: Dietersche Verlagsbuchhandlung;
- Steegstra, M. 2002. 'A Mighty Obstacle to the Gospel': Basel Missionaries, Krobo Women, and Conflicting Ideas of Gender and Sexuality. *Journal of Religion in Africa*. 332(2): p. 200-230.
- Steegstra, M. 2004. *Resilient Rituals: Krobo Initiation and the Politics of Culture in Ghana*. Munster: Lit Verlag.
- Steegstra, M. 2009. Krobo Queen Mothers: Gender, Power, and Contemporary Female Traditional Authority in Ghana. *Africa Today*. 55(3).
- Walley, C. J. 1997. Searching for "Voices": Feminism, Anthropology, and the Global Debate over Female Genital Operations. *Cultural Anthropology*. 12(3): 405 – 438.
- Ward, B. E. 1955. An Example of a 'Mixed' System of Descent and Inheritance. *Man*. 55(January): 3-5.
- Wendl, T. 2007. Wicked Villagers and the Mysteries of Reproduction: An Exploration of Horror Movies from Ghana and Nigeria. *Postcolonial Text*. 3(2).
- Westermann, D. H. 1930. *Evefiala or Ewe-English Dictionary*. Periodical Services Co.
- Westermann, D. H. 1935. *Die Glidyi-Ewe in Togo*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- White, L. 2000. *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa*. CA: University of California Press.

- Wilks, I. 1957. The Rise of the Akwamu Empire, 1650-1710. *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*. 3(2): p. 99-136.
- Wyllie, R. W. 1970. Divination and Face-Work. *The British Journal of Sociology*. 21(1): 52-62.
- Van den Anker, C. 2004. Contemporary Slavery, Global Justice and Globalization. In van den Anker, C. (ed). 2004. *The Political Economy of New Slavery*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- van Dijk, R. 1997. From Camp to Encompassment: Discourses of Trans-subjectivity in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora. *Journal of Religion in Africa*. 27(2): 135-159.
- van Dijk, R. 2001. Contesting Silence: The Ban on Drumming and the Musical Politics of Pentecostalism in Ghana. *Ghana Studies*. 4.
- van Dijk, R. 2002. Religion, Reciprocity and Restructuring Family Responsibility in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora. In Bryceson, D. & Vuorela, U. (eds). *The Transnational Family: New European Frontiers and Global Networks*. Oxford: Berg.
- Venkatachalam, M. 2007. *Slavery in Memory: A Study of the Religious Cults of the Anglo-Ewe of Southeastern Ghana, c. 1850-present*. Thesis (PhD) University of London.

Materials on Trokosi

Published Academic Materials and Theses:

- Ababio, A. 2000. *Trokosi, Woryokwe, Cultural and Individual Rights: A Case Study of Women's Empowerment and Community Rights in Ghana*. Thesis (MA) Saint Mary's University.
- Ameh, R. K. 1998. Trokosi (Child Slavery) in Ghana: A Policy Approach. *Ghana Studies* (1): 35-62.
- Ameh, R. K. 2001. *Child Bondage in Ghana: A Contextual Policy Analysis of Trokosi*. Thesis (PhD) Simon Fraser University.
- Ameh, R. K. 2004a. Reconciling Human Rights and Traditional Practices: The Anti-Trokosi Campaign in Ghana. *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*. 1(2): 51-72.
- Ameh, R. K. 2004b. Human Rights, Gender and Traditional Practices: The Trokosi System in West Africa. In Kalunta-Crompton, A. & Agozino, B. (eds). *Pan African Issues in Crime and Justice*. Hants: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

- Amoah, J. 2007. The World on Her Shoulders: The Rights of the Girl-Child in the Context of Culture & Identity. *Essex Human Rights Review*. 4(2).
- Bales, K. 2005. *New Slavery: A Reference Handbook*. Second Edition. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc.
- Bhabha, J. & Young, W. 1999. Not Adults in Miniature: Unaccompanied Child Asylum Seekers and the New U.S. Guidelines. *International Journal of Refugee Law*. 11: 84-125.
- Bilyeu, A. S. 1998. Trokosi – The Practice of Sexual Slavery in Ghana: Religious and Cultural Freedom vs. Human Rights. *Indiana International & Comparative Law Review*. 9: 457.
- Boaten, A. B. 2001. The Trokosi System in Ghana: Discrimination against Women and Children. in Rwomire, A. (ed). *African women and children: crisis and response*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Dovlo, E. 2005. Religion in the Public Sphere: Challenges and Opportunities in Ghanaian Lawmaking, 1989-2004. *Brigham Young University Law Review* (3): 629-658.
- Eckardt, R. 2004. *A Social Assessment of the Troxovi Institution*. Thesis (MSW) Saint Louis University.
- Goltzman, J. C. 1998. Cultural Relativism or Cultural Intrusion? Female Ritual Slavery in Western Africa and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: Ghana as a Case Study. *New England International and Comparative Law Annual*. 4: 53-72.
- Hertzfeld, B. 2002. Slavery and Gender: Women's Double Exploitation. *Gender and Development*. 10(1): 50-55.
- Miers, S. 2000. Contemporary Forms of Slavery. *Canadian Journal of African Studies*. 34(3): 714-747.
- Miers, S. 2003. *Slavery in the Twentieth Century: The Evolution of a Global Problem*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Nukunya, G. K. 2003. *Tradition and Change in Ghana: An Introduction to Sociology*. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.
- Owusu-Ansah, A. 2002. *Trokosi in Ghana: Cultural Relativism or Slavery?* Paper presented at the Middle States African Association Third Annual Conference. 20 June 2002, West Virginia State College.
- Preston, V. & Wong, M. 2004. Geographies of Violence: Women and Conflict in Ghana. In Giles, W. & Hyndman, J. (eds). *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*. London: University of California Press, Ltd.

- Quashigah, E. K. 1998. Religious Freedom and Vestal Virgins: The 'Trokosi' practice in Ghana. *African Journal of International and Comparative Law*. 10(2): 193-215.
- Quashigah, E. K. 1999. Legislating Religious Liberty: The Ghanaian Experience. *Brigham Young University Law Review*. (2): 589-607.
- Quist, B. K. 2005. The Trokosi System and Its Impact on Women in Ghana. Thesis (MSc) Minnesota State University.
- Rinuado, B. 2003. *Trokosi Slavery: Injustice in the name of Religion*. African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific 2003 Conference Proceedings – African on a Global Stage.
- Romanoff, D. 1999. 'Trokosi': Slave of the Shrine or Queen of the Town. School for International Training. Study Abroad Program.
- Woods, B. 2001. The Slave Girls of Ghana. *New York Law School Journal of Human Rights*. XVII (3): 875-889.

Other Materials: (including conference reports, NGO reports, letters, booklets)

- Ababio, A. 1995. The Legal Basis for Abolishing the Trokosi System. in International Needs Ghana. *Report of First National Workshop on Trokosi System in Ghana*. (Accra): 37-43
- Addo, Togbui VIII. 1994. *Memorandum on Inquiries into the Trokosi System of Klikor*. Presented to National Commission on Culture. 17 August.
- Adzima Priests. 1996a. Letter to CHRAJ: *Consensus Reached by the (3) Adzima Priests and Elders on Practices in Fiasidi system in Klikor Traditional Area*. 25 March
- Adzima Priests. 1996b. Letter to CHRAJ: *Fiasidi or Trokosi System with Particular Reference to Klikor Shrines by (3) Three Adzima Priest and Elders of Klikor*. 9 October.
- Adzima Priests. 1996c. *Explanation of the Fiasidi System of Klikor*. 15 November.
- Adzima Priests. 1999. *Welcome Address by the Priest of the Togbui Adzima and Mama Vena Shrines on the Occasion of the Troxovi Conference at Klikor on 10th April 1999*.
- Afrikania Renaissance Mission. 1998. *Fact-Finding Mission to Genuine Troxovi Shrines Report*. Accra, Ghana: Afrikania Renaissance Mission.
- Afrikania Renaissance Mission. 1999. Letter to the President of the Republic of Ghana: *Appeal for probe into the Trokosi System*. 14 September.

- Ameve, O. K. 1999a. *Address Delivered by His Divine Holiness Osofo Kofi Ameve, Spiritual Head of Afrikania Religion at the Meeting of Troxovi Shrines held at Klikor Unity Park on 10th April, 1999*. Accra, Ghana: Afrikania Renaissance Mission.
- Ameve, O. K. 1999b. *Welcome Address Delivered by His Holiness Osofo Komfo Kofi Ameve on the Occasion of the News Conference Held on Troxovi (Trokosi) at the Art Centre on 20th January 1999*. Accra, Ghana: Afrikania Renaissance Mission.
- Ameve, O. K. 2002. *The Origin of the Bible and Pertinent Issues*. 4th edition. Accra, Ghana: Afrikania Renaissance Mission.
- Ameve, O. K. n.d. *The Divine Acts: Holy Scriptures for Sankofa Faith*. Accra, Ghana: Afrikania Renaissance Mission.
- Amuzu (Colonel). 1999. *Address to the Rotary Club, Tema on the Trokosi System*. 9 February.
- Anlo Traditional Council. 1996. *Letter to Parliament House: Projected Bill on Fiasidi (Trokosi)*. 28 August 1996.
- Asazu, K. 2003. *Afrikania: African Traditional Religion – A Brief Exposition*. Accra: Yamens Press Ltd.
- Anti-Slavery International. 1995. *Fetish Slaves*. Report to the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, United Nations Economic and Social Council Commission on Human Rights, Sub Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. Twentieth Session 19-28 April.
- Anti-Slavery Society. n.d. *The Forgotten Slaves: Report on a Mission to Investigate the Girl-Child Slaves of West Africa*. (brochure).
- Aryeetey, E., Dovlo, E., Pupulampu, B., Sefah-Dedeh, A. Ababio, A. 2000. *Impact Assessment of Psychosocial Interventions Involving the Emancipated Trokosi and Woryokwe Women/Girls in South Eastern Ghana: Attitudinal Survey Report*. Prepared for International Needs, Ghana.
- Benyiwa-Doe, A. 1998. *The Role of Government and Parliament in Emancipating Trokosi Victims*. In International Needs Ghana. 1998. Report of the 2nd National Workshop on Trokosi System in Ghana: Securing the Inalienable Rights of Women and Children in Trokosi Bondage.
- Dovlo, E. & Adzoyi, A.K. 1995. *Report on Trokosi Institution*. Legon – Accra: Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana. Report Commissioned by International Needs Ghana.
- Dovlo, E. and Kufogbe, S. K. 1998. The Geographical Spread of “Trokosi” in Ghana. in International Needs Ghana. 2nd National Workshop on Trokosi System in

- Ghana Report: Securing the Inalienable Rights of Women and Children in Trokosi Bondage.* April. Accra, Ghana: International Needs Ghana.
- Gadri, S. A. 2010. *The Revealed Myths about Trokosi Slavery: Human Rights Violations.* Milton Keynes: Author House.
- Ghana Law Reform Commission. 1995. *The Impact of the Constitutional Provisions of the Customary Disabilities of Women in Ghana: Report on the Abolition of Ritual Slavery, Forced Labour and Other Related Practices.* April. Accra, Ghana: Ghana Law Reform Commission.
- International Needs Australia. n.d. *Trokosi Slaves to the Gods* (brochure).
- International Needs Ghana. 1995. 1st National Workshop on Trokosi System in Ghana Report: *Trokosi System: Anathema to Women and Children's Rights.* July. Accra, Ghana: International Needs Ghana.
- International Needs Ghana. 1996. *Report on Workshop: Workshop for a No. of Chiefs, Representatives From District Assemblies and District Cultural Officers.* 18 January.
- International Needs Ghana. 1998. 2nd National Workshop on Trokosi System in Ghana Report: *Securing the Inalienable Rights of Women and Children in Trokosi Bondage.* April. Accra, Ghana: International Needs Ghana.
- International Needs Ghana. n.d.a. *Workshop for Paramount Chiefs and Queen Mothers in North and South Tongu, Akatsi, Dangbe East and Ketu Districts.* Accra, Ghana: International Needs Ghana.
- Kakaw, M. 1997. *Social Investigation Report on Fetish Slaves Liberation Movement (FESLIM)-A Local NGO.* District Social Welfare Office.
- Massiasta, D. 1996. *Religion and Human Rights: The Question of the Fiasidi System in Klikor.* Klikor: Ghana: Blakhud Research Centre.
- Mensah, W. & F. E. Godwyll. 2010. *Female Ritual Servitude: The Trokosis in Ghana.* Bloomington: Author House.
- Ministry of Culture and Tourism. 1982. Letter to Mark Wisdom: *Abolition of Outmoded Customs.* 22 November.
- National Commission on Culture. 1994. *Investigation Report on 'Trokosi Culture' in Klikor and Mafi Traditional Areas.* Accra, Ghana: National Commission on Culture.
- Nukunya, G. K., Kwafo, S. K. 1998. *Report on De-Criminalising Trokosi: A Research Into the Nature and Operations of Ritual Enslavement in South Eastern Ghana.* Accra: National Population Council.

- Pimpong, W. 1995. Welcome Address. In International Needs Ghana. *1st National Workshop on Trokosi System in Ghana Report: "Trokosi System: Anathema to Women and Children's Rights."* July. Accra, Ghana: International Needs Ghana.
- Pimpong, W. 1998. Welcome Address. in International Needs Ghana. *2nd National Workshop on Trokosi System in Ghana Report: "Securing the Inalienable Rights of Women and Children in Trokosi Bondage."* April. Accra, Ghana: International Needs Ghana.
- Puplampu, Dr. B. B. 1996. *Emotional and Vocational Rehabilitation of Woryokwes released by Dada Shrine, Ada (Phase 1)*. Report to International Needs Ghana. October. Accra: Ghana.
- Quartey, K. 2009. *Wife of the Gods*. New York: Random House.
- Short, E. 1995. Trokosi: Legal or Illegal. In International Needs Ghana. *1st National Workshop on Trokosi System in Ghana Report: "Trokosi System: Anathema to Women and Children's Rights."* July. Accra, Ghana: International Needs Ghana.
- Titian, S. 1990. *Letter to PNDC Regional Secretary (Regarding Activities)*. Mission International. December.
- Titian, S. 1992. *Annual Progress Report (1991)*. Mission International.
- Troxovi Institution Council. n.d. *Constitution for the Shrines of the Troxovi Institution*. Klikor, Ghana.
- Wisdom, M. 1982. Letter to J.J. Rawling: *Abolition of Outmoded Customs*. 13 November.
- Wisdom, M. 1994. Letter to Royal Danish Embassy: *Resolution of International Needs Ghana and Fetish Slaves Liberation Movement to Cooperate*.
- Wisdom, M. 1995. The Legal and the Historical Aspect of Trokosi System. *Seminar on Trokosi System at Ada*. Organised by Fetish Slaves Liberation Movement. 14 December 1995.
- Wisdom, M. 2001. *The Trokosi System*. Accra: Mercury Press Ltd.

Media: (newspapers, videos)

- Adda-Dontoh, R. 1994. "Tell Rawlings to let me stay – Trokosi Girl Pleads". *The Mirror*. Saturday, June 4.
- Agbomado, S. J. 2004. "Ban Traditional Practices that Impede Development". *Daily Graphic*. 6 August.

- Allotey, D. 1999. "Anti-Trokosi drive is big fraud—ARM." *Ghanaian Times*. 21 January.
- Ameve, O.K. 2000. "List of Genuine Troxovi Shrines in Ghana." *Daily Graphic*. 29 June.
- Amoah. 1993. "1000 Girls kept as slave wives...under Trokosi System." *The Mirror*. 6 March.
- Arnet, P. 1997. "Slavery in Adidome." *CNN*. 12 March.
- BBC Radio 4. 2007. "Trokosi Women of Ghana." 19 June.
- Brooker, E. 1996. "Slaves of the Fetish." *The Independent*. 16 June.
- Daily Graphic. 1999. "Trokosi at Klikor." *Daily Graphic*. 28 August.
- Daily Graphic. 1995. "Seminar on 'Trokosi' system ends at Denu." *Daily Graphic*. 1 November.
- Delson, Jane. n.d. "Punctured Hope reveals the agony of Trokosi through the eyes of a irrepressible survivor". *Daria Magazine*. Available from: http://www.dariamagazine.com/features_specials/features3.asp [Accessed 7 February 2008]
- Duah, N. 1982. "Lead Crusade to Modernise Customs- J.J." *Daily Graphic*. September 13.
- Duff-Brown, B. 1997. "Slavery Still Practiced in Ghana." *The Washington Post*. 9 February.
- French, H. W. 1997. "Ritual Slave of the Fetish Priest." *The New York Times*. 20 January.
- Fynn, D. & Okyere, J. 1994. "Abolish 'Trokosi System- Kedem." *Daily Graphic*. 25 May.
- Gakpleazi, A. 1998a. "Trokosi is not a slave." *Ghanaian Times*. 18 November.
- Gakpleazi, A. 1998b. "Trokosi is not a slave (2)." *Ghanaian Times*. 17 November.
- Gakpleazi, A. 1998c. "Trokosi is not a slave (3)." *Ghanaian Times*. 16 November.
- Gakpleazi, A. 2002. "Rejoinder- Enforce Law making Trokosi a Crime." *Daily Graphic*. 4 March.
- Ghanaian Times. 1999. "Trokovi Priests Hold Forum." *Ghanaian Times*. April 14.
- Gobah, T. 2001. "Probe Trokosi Liberation Campaign." *Daily Graphic*. 15 February.

- Hawksley, H. 2001. "Ghana's Trapped Slaves." *BBC News*. 30 August. Available from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/1158115.stn. [Accessed 3 June 2008]
- Hesse & Badu. 1999. "NGO not against Custom." *Daily Graphic*. 28 January.
- Humali, N. 2000. "Troxovi Institutional Council Reacts." *Daily Graphic*. 13 July.
- Humali, N. 2002. "Enforce Law Making Trokosi a crime- Rejoinder." *Daily Graphic*. 18 March.
- Innocents Lost. 1997. Produced by Brian Woods & Kate Blewett. United Kingdom: A True Vision Production for Channel 4 Television Corporation & HBO.
- Kiley, S. 1996. "Child Slaves used by West Africans to appease spirits." *The Times*. 17 September.
- Kokutse, F. 1983. "Yirenkyi debunks outmoded customs." *Ghanaian Times*. January 25.
- Korstanje, C. 1995. "Hamilton woman struggles to free young females forced into slavery." *Hamilton Spectator*. 18 February
- Lokko, M. E. 2004. "Ban Traditional Practices". *Daily Graphic*. 4 August.
- Mensah, G. E. & Arsene, J. 1994. "Modify Customs to Meet Changing Times—President." *Ghanaian Times*. 27 May.
- Midgley, C. 1999. "Sold into slavery-Interview-Mercy Senahe." *The Times*. 14 December.
- Mirror, The. 1998. "Life outside the Shrine." *The Mirror*. 12 December.
- Modey, E. 2004. "Ban Traditional Practices that Impede Development." *Daily Graphic*. 21 July.
- Newsweek . 1999. "After a life of slavery: Julie Dogbadzie Escaped, Now She's Freeing Others." *Newsweek*. 5 April.
- Normanyo, O. T. D. 2004. "Ban Traditional Practices." *Daily Graphic*. 8 September.
- Ogbamey, A. 1999. "Rawlings aid endorses slavery." *The Chronicle*. 5 May.
- Pflanz, Mike. 2007. "After 200 years, fight to end slavery goes on." *The Telegraph*. 2 February.
- Progressive Utilization Magazine. 1994. "Trokosi – Virgins of the Gods or Concubines of Fetish Priests?" *Progressive Utilization Magazine*. 1(1): 2-6.

- Progressive Utilization Magazine. 1995. "Trokosi – Part 2" . *Progressive Utilization Magazine*. 2(1): 1-5
- Robson, Angela. 2006. "The chosen ones: Slavery in the name of god." *The Independent*, 26 October.
- Ryenolds, H. & Gasu F. 1994. "...They call for law banning Trokosi." *Ghanaian Times*. 25 May.
- Sakyi-Addo, Kwaku. 2000. "Ghana girls' Bondage. *BBC News*. 30 August.
Available from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/903578.stn>. [Accessed 3 June 2008]
- Sevcik, Kimberly. 2005. "Child Slaves: Paying for Crimes they didn't commit." *Marie Claire*. May.
- Simmons, Ann. 2000. "Wife of the gods' stirs up Ghana". *The Los Angeles Times*. 24 June.
- Slaves to the Gods*. n.d. United States of America: International Needs US. Available from: <http://www.innetworkusa.org>.
- Trokosi: Treasure in Earthen Vessels*. 1999. Video. Australia: International Needs Australia.
- Wisdom, M. 1984a. "Abolition of Outmoded Customs". *Daily Graphic*. 28 August.
- Wisdom, M. 1984b. "Abolition of Outmoded Customs". *Daily Graphic*. 27 August.
- Wisdom, M. 1999. The anti-Trokosi campaign. *Daily Graphic*. 25 March.

Websites:

- Equality Now*. 1998. Women's Action 14.1. Available from:
http://www.equalitynow.org/english/actions/action_1401_en.html [Accessed 6 March 2008]
- Every Child Ministries*. n.d. Liberating the Sovigbenor Shrine at Aflao – 2005.
Available from: www.ecmafrica.org/165357.ihtml [Accessed 1 October 2009]
- Every Child Ministries* – Ghana. n.d. Available from: www.geocities.com/ecmafrica [Accessed 26 June 2008]
- International Needs Ghana*. n.d.b. Available from: <http://www.intneedsgh.org/> [Accessed 16 January 2009]
- International Needs Network*. n.d. Available from: www.innetwork.org [Accessed 20 May 1998]

International Needs Network – USA. n.d. Available from:
<http://www.innetworkusa.org> [Accessed 20 June 2008]

Missions International. n.d. Available from: <http://titianministries.com/> [Accessed 16/1/09]

TOYACE. n.d. Available from: <http://www.gracecanada.ca/> [Accessed 1 October 2009].

Other Primary Sources:

Addo, Togbui VII. 1978. *Final Address Submitted by Togbui Addo VII Fiaga of Klikor Traditional Area to the Nana Agyemang Badu Committee on Chieftaincy Affairs of the Volta Region*.

Addo, Togbui VIII. 1988. *Recommendations: Adzima Cult Priesthood*. 5 May.

BLAKHUD n.d. Available from: <http://www.hypertextile.net/blakhud/intro.htm>
[Accessed 24/10/08]

GNA. 2005a. Court remands Kente weaver for ritual murder. 26 July 2005. Available from: <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=86682> [Accessed 30/6/2006]

GNA. 2005b. Scores throng Aflao court to catch glimpse of murders. 26 September 2005. Available from:
<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=90916> [Accessed 30/6/2006]

GNA. 2005c. Farmer Before Court for Murdering Only Daughter. 13 September 2005. Available from:
<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=90032> [Accessed 30/6/2006]

GNA. 2005d. Girl 7, allegedly murdered by her father and others for rituals. 7 September 2005. Available from:
<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=89621> [Accessed 30/6/2006]

GNA. 2005e. Court remands five ritual murder suspects. 10 September 2005. Available from:
<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArhive/artikel.php?ID=89849> [Accessed 30/6/2006]

Massiasta, D. n.d. *The Klikors*. Klikor: Lissavi Print.

- Massiasta, D. 1995. *Slavery in Klikor: A Brief Background to the Monuments of Slavery in Klikor*. Klikor: Lissavi Print.
- Massiasta, D. 1997. *The Origin of Adina: A Historical Review*. BLAKHUD Research Center.
- Massiasta, D. 1998. *Tourism in Ketu: A General Survey of Attractions*. Available from: www.hypertextile.net/BLAKHUD/tourism.htm [Accessed 17/2/2004]
- Massiasta, D. 2006. *Slavery and Spiritual Reparation: The Case of the Kratchi Dente Worship*. Klikor: Lissavi Print.
- Report of the Fiti Arbitration Committee on the Breach of Customary Ban on Drumming and Causing Unlawful Harm in the Klikor Traditional Area of the Volta Region. 25 October 1991.