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# The Athens Journal of History



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The current issue is the fourth of the sixth volume of the *Athens Journal of History (AJHIS)*, published by the [History Unit](#) of ATINER.

Gregory T. Papanikos  
President  
ATINER



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## **Students in the (Ancient) Streets, or Agent(s) Provocateur? The Liberal Arts Schools of Athens and the Hostage Crisis of 88**

*By David P. Wick \**

*One of the odd angles in the story of Athens' second greatest 'hostage crisis' moment is the student protest or 'Athenian student independence' movement, often part of how the "siege of Athens" in 88 of the old era gets its narrative. This qualifies as 'second' greatest if one interprets the greatest as the city's takeover and destruction by Xerxes in 480 of that same era. In this second crisis the city's 'liberal arts' schools – they were by the late Roman Republic's era one of the drivers of the city's economy – are often seen spurring it to resist Roman imperialism, even to the extent of taking children of town business families hostage on the Acropolis and inviting a foreign power (Mithridates) to invade and save the city from Rome. All this happens under the twin shadows of Rome's civil war against Sulla, and the Anatolian war of conquest launched by Mithridates -- and in an Athens that had become a sort of flame-keeping educational and artistic symbol for the new European/Mediterranean culture clustering itself around Italy in the west, Athens itself leaning toward Europe but forced into a disastrous bit of political theater, in which Athenian townsfolk (those unable to flee) were used, and starved, as symbols for the agents of either an Anatolian coup, or a coup by students who alone valued the ancient independence and brilliance of the city's 'Greekness.' This study looks at the Athenian part in the Crisis of 88, from the political troubles in the decades preceding which made the city vulnerable, through the various internal coups in the crisis year that left Athens a city divided between refugees and captives, to the ultimate dilemma: an armed external insurrection holding the Acropolis and attempting to bar the gates, and a Roman renegade outside the walls desperate for any sort of improvisational victory, without regard for the fragile treasures of culture trapped within its walls. Among the threads untangled to pursue the story are brief looks at the Athenian-educated 'student rebel' or Anatolian agent Athenion, and of the military adventurer Aristion of Rhodes, and the local public support they raised against Rome (some of it certainly seemed to come from 'students in the streets'). Also worth notice are careers of the Athenian financial-political families of Medeios (the Piraeen) and Sarapion of Melite, who play either as pro-Roman or independent 'power-gamers' who may have helped make the hostage crisis possible. Much of the evidence for these episodes is dependent (via Plutarch) on fragments of Poseidonius, with help from surviving inscriptions, but the study attempts to find a reasonable, respectful way of dealing with writers who, whatever their stylistic eccentricities, were quite a bit closer to the events and to the historical heritage of these events than we are.*

### **Students in the Streets, or Agents Provocateur: An Ancient 'Hostage Crisis' case study in Athenian History**

*"Poor leaders motivate those following them with false promises of promotions, success, and a great tomorrow but rarely deliver on those promises. Leaders who do this can be manipulative and often hold the goals and aspirations of their followers hostage in order to get them to comply."*

Lewis Howes

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\*Professor, Gordon College, USA.

*"...the state was like a sick body which had lately taken physic, whose humours are not yet well settled, and weakened so much by purging, that nothing was left but melancholy."*

R. Dallington, 1596, in a survey of Tuscany<sup>a1</sup>

It may seem a little odd that in our era, an era one could almost dub 'the age of the hostage crisis,' Athens -- which weathered perhaps the landmark hostage crisis of all ancient history in the terrible year 88 of the old era -- should not be better known for it. The story is dramatic enough, though possibly not dramatic in the way modern readers might wish; it is a history of the ancient city caught between independence of a sort (which is the line we most quickly find attractive) and the dilemma over whether it should be a "European" or an "Asian" city. This latter is a very modern and Greek issue, easy for politicians to make sweeping, inclusive generalizations about, but awkward to live with. This tale of one of ancient Athens' very modern moments is then less comfortable because it has a strong contemporary resonance. Might it be worth reviving for that very reason?

Epic Athenian historians like Ferguson and Ferarry seem to have desired the lines of grand tragedy for this story (Athens finding in itself some great realization of, and then defiance of, the tyranny of Rome), but if the events of the 80's before the Christian and imperial era are to carry that flavor, we ought to find the early signs of them in the decades beforehand. Athens ought, under such scenarios, to grow either more imperialistic or more nationalistic in the prosperity of its last authoritative years as a power in the southern Aegean. More imperialism might have set it against Rome (and with Mithridates of Pontus) or at least influenced it toward *using* the theme of Greek freedom at last. The usage would at least have been no more dishonest than the messages displayed in public by Athens or a dozen other authentic Greek powers in previous centuries.

The central story, whatever its spin, is that of Athens captured in Mithridates' interest in the early 80's, and then besieged by the Roman renegade Sulla before his march on Italy, Athens battered and nearly starved, its back to the walls of the Acropolis as barbarians tear up the trees of the Academy grove to make siege engines, the Athenian living, as Sulla put it, spared "for the sake of her dead."<sup>1</sup> More Greek nationalism would be the best thing for such an historian to find here. Athens could finally grow to fill, in the disaster that concludes this story, the wistful image of it painted, proclaimed, and used even by the Romans, whether scholars, tourists, or agents of republican power. That this idea is in fact

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a1. Quoted by R. Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, "Democritus to the Reader".

1. "[The Athenians] expected from Sulla neither generosity nor ordinary humanity. Finally, however, partly because of the exiles ... who threw themselves at his feet and begged him to have mercy, partly because of the Roman senators with the army who also interceded for the city, Sulla, who was by now sated with vengeance, made a few remarks in praise of the ancient Athenians and then announced, 'I forgive a few for the sake of the many, and the living for the sake of the dead.'" Plutarch, *Sulla*, 14

very nearly what the sophistic dictator Athenion and Mithridates' agent Aristion proclaimed the city *was* doing all but clinches the argument; except that both failed *hold* any following among Athenian citizens. Aristion had actually to kill as many of the Athenians as his opponent Sulla simply to keep them within the walls; hardly the leader of a "democratic" revolt.

It might also help if we could notice an undercurrent of democratic resistance against Rome. Ferguson, and a great many Athenian apologists after him, have claimed it was there. They simply seem unable to find an example of the *demos* revolting against the Roman world. The only revolt of any kind – the coup of the philosophe Athenion in 88 – revolved too thoroughly around a small, educated, and internationalist elite, and was too short-lived to be called a "movement." It has in any case come under the scrutiny of Professor Badian in recent years, and has escaped with very little of its "democratic" nature intact.<sup>2</sup>

### The (Discoverable) Setting – Athens before the Crisis

We do know (and the evidence is sparse for Athens in this period) that Athens experienced a run of fairly quiet years in the last decades of the second century B.C. It kept its ties with Delphi, settled much of the business and banking expertise learned on Delos into its own marketplaces, and allowed an increasingly internationalist crowd of young Romans (and Asians) into its schools and *ephebeia*. It had for a long time educated the serious students and the royal children of the Hellenistic east. It now instructed whole generations of young aristocracy from the east, and especially from the west. They arrived, they complained about the oddity of "*graecia capta*," they studied, they contributed to the library, they drank, they visited the old sites, and they went home – unable to explain the ways in which the city had changed them, but changed nonetheless.

Athens continued most importantly to *be* Athens in the sense useful to its Roman rulers: an "outward and visible sign" that Greekness could settle comfortably into the world of Rome. If Athens had not succeeded so well in becoming *Roman* Athens before the rise of Mithridates, the Pontic king would not have needed to abuse it so badly. Its docks were good, but hardly essential to a Black Sea king relying on the vagabond fleets of pirates. The eloquence of its existence as a definition of what it meant to be Greek was irreplaceable.

In fact Athens, after hitching its civic fortunes to the Roman Republic both as a protector and as a source of business connections, had done well by "going European. The lessons it learned operating Delos – a willingness to improvise and apply business expertise where some hot and crafty shouting in the Agora might

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2. Badian, "Rome, Athens, and Mithridates," in *American Journal of Ancient History*, vol. 1 (1976): 502, 505, 512.

have sufficed – were once mistaken by Ferguson as the arrival of oligarchy.<sup>3</sup> In the two decades that marked the end of the second and the beginning of the first centuries B.C., a loose succession of Athenian aristocrats and former Delian officials revamped the infrastructure of Athenian commerce so well that it set (almost literally) the economic standards of Greece. Details of this I have discussed elsewhere, but Athens added enough economic prestige to its political *auctoritas* in some cases to merit mention here.

So, at about the turn of the century Diodorus of Halae made a revision of the Athenian commercial weights and measures sophisticated enough to become a model for other Greeks.<sup>4</sup> Athens also set clear and reliable formulae for the conversion of various Greek measures into the systems used in Phoenicia and Rome. When the Amphictyonic league at Delphi announced about 95 B.C. that the tetradrachm in all its territory must thereafter conform to the Athenian one, it seems to have recognized that Athens had followed an irreversible shift in the business of the Mediterranean as well as its politics. It had been one of the marks of Greek independence in the old era that each small *polis* measured money, crops, or value of any kind in its own way; measurements like coinages or religious calendars or systems of dating had been part of the private language of freedom. The banks of Athens were now prepared to speak the commercial language of the wider world – especially of Rome – on a regular basis. The economic tides had shifted, for Roman reasons, in an Athenian direction.

It will not do, consequently, to explain an Athenian pull toward Mithridates in terms of nationalism, either popular or oligarchical. The impulses both of power and politics that ended the Athenian "Indian summer" ran not eastward from Attica but westward from Pontus.

### **‘Oligarchic Creep’ – The Confused Democracy of the Early 1<sup>st</sup> Century**

The attempt by Ferguson and Mossé to discover an "oligarchic" revolution behind this shift in the center of Athenian political gravity has largely evaporated in recent years, though it has left in its wake a trail of clues about domination by wealthy individuals. Ernst Badian – never gentle with the proponents of "political parties" in the ancient world – pointed out that while many of the new leaders in the Athenian government of expertise might have been *riche*, most of them were not *nouveaux*. Sarapion of Melite appears to have been a political outsider.<sup>5</sup>

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3. W.S. Ferguson, *Hellenistic Athens: an Historical Essay* (London, 1911), 421 ff. Badian, *ibid.*, 502-505. See above, note 1.

4. *Inscriptiones Graecae* (vol. II), 476. Ferguson, 427-430.

5. Badian, "Rome, Athens, and Mithridates," 503.

Medeios the Piraeian was a pedigreed member of the priestly aristocracy.<sup>6</sup> Between them, they dominated the Athenian government of the 90's by a combination of sweeping appointments and vast, competitive donations.

Medeios was, for instance, archon in 101, hoplite general in 99, and probably in 98 found himself commissioner of the civic bank on Delos, Athenian overseer of Delos itself, and sponsor of both the Panathenaea and the Delian Games.<sup>7</sup> All Athenian offices of any consequence involved a financial assessment (the equivalent of an additional liturgy, which one might recoup from the economic "opportunities" of the office itself). Every one of these offices ranked in the most expensive class: those political at 200 drachmas each, and the two "festival" offices at 250.

In that same or following year Sarapion held the hoplite generalship for at least the second time, and gave 950 drachmas-worth of games (two on Delos, two in Athens).<sup>8</sup> He will have also paid for the generalship. His successor Pyrrhus of Lamptrae had been Herald of the Areopagus in 98, and installed his brother Byttacus as head of the civic bank.

Badian rightly sees some kind of war of individual largesse here, rather than Ferguson's coup by an "oligarchic party", but there are perhaps more kinds of oligarchy in the world than Badian's critique allows. The Roman *optimates* and *populares* leaders in the later Republic may nearly all have been patrician, but they attempted coups against one another (and the rest of the Roman constitution) nevertheless. Whatever Badian may argue about the details of Athenian government in the years before the Mithridatic war, the evidence he has brought to bear does indeed suggest some kind of "creeping coup," albeit one in which different members of the same class (all claiming to exercise a new kind of business expertise) were competing with one another for lasting power. The mechanism seems to have been one of holding political and fiscal appointments as much as possible at the same time, and then using some of the proceeds of this synergy to indulge in civic patronage on a grand scale.

We do not have evidence for the whole of the decade before the war (Medeios may have been eponymous archon four times, and Sarapion hoplite general as many as three – each in connection with other offices),<sup>9</sup> but the crisis began to show itself in about the year 91. Medeios held his second archonship in that year, and kept the post for the two following years. His two moneyers held

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6. P. MacKendrick, "The Athenian Aristocracy 399-31 B.C.," *Martin Lectures*, vol. xiii (1969), 58 f.

7. Badian, "Rome, Athens, and Mithridates," 503, n. 9.

8. S. V. Tracy, *Inscriptiones Graecae II<sup>2</sup> 2336 : Contributors of First Fruits for the Pythais*, (Meisenheim am Glan : A. Hain, 1982), 134-135, 173.

9. Ferguson, 436; Badian, "Rome, Athens, and Mithridates," 504.

on to their place in charge of the mint.<sup>10</sup> He seems to have found some means of seizing the government and keeping it. Poseidonius (or an extract preserved in Athenaeus)<sup>11</sup> suggests that money or transferrable debts were changing hands somewhere in the Athenian upper classes – whether used by Medeios to keep power, or whether Medeios kept power to avoid paying such debts is no longer clear. Public opposition arose; festivals were suspended; and the matter referred to the Roman Senate.<sup>12</sup> When the Senate, embroiled now by the Social War in Italy and worried about military rumblings in Mithridates' Pontus asked Medeios to preserve the status quo a while (its typical manner when playing for time), he continued rule Athens after his last archonship expired.<sup>13</sup>

Athens was now in a state of *anarchy*, according to the strictest Greek definition of that word. No legitimate archon headed the city. At some point in late 89 or early 88 Medeios appears either to have died or been driven from office. During the opening holocaust and "blitzkrieg" stages of Mithridates' war in Asia Minor (in which he took all of Asia Minor, captured several provincial governors, and killed some 80,000 private Roman citizens, most of them likely Hellenistic Asian or Greek) Athens appears to have sent, or allowed, a diplomatic mission to "feel out" the intentions of Mithridates himself. This was led by Athenion, a young student of the Peripatetics – if Ferrary has disentangled him correctly from the web of the first century Lyceum – whose father had studied with distinction under Diodorus of Tyre.<sup>14</sup>

### Protégé of the Lyceum – or Pontic 'Provocateur?'

Poseidonius describes him as "elected by the Athenians," and describes letters "to the Athenians" sent by him from Pontus during 88.<sup>15</sup> It would be helpful if we had some account other than Poseidonius' (who though an extremely intelligent source betrays a Rhodian prejudice against Athens and a Stoic prejudice against Peripatetics). In any case his mission was thus either an

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10. Three series of coinages were issued in these years by Harmoxenus (and Xenocles), one issue showing a statue of *Roma*; Harmoxenus would re-appear as mint magistrate in 86. Cf. Ferguson, 440, and n. 2.

11. Athenaeus v, 212a.

12. *Inscriptiones Graecae* (vol. II), 5.477d probably shows public activity continuing at least to the archonship of Demochares (94/93 B.C.).

13. Athenaeus v, 213c f., is the only evidence (if the reconstructed speech of Athenion is evidence) that this was popularly believed to be the result of Roman interference.

14. Ferrary, Jean-Louie, *Philhellénisme et Impérialisme: Aspects Idéologiques de la Conquête Romaine du Monde Hellénistique, de la Seconde Guerre de Macédoine à la Guerre Contre Mithridate* (Rome, 1988), 467, 468.

15. Athenaeus v, 212a (where the phrasing is exceedingly general, and connects Athenion to no "party").

Athenian enterprise or one prompted by his school; Ferguson's embassy from "the democratic party" in town is an alternative guess unsupported by evidence.

His return to Athens is even harder to date, or to explain thoroughly. Badian argues that Mithridates' "Asian Vespers" had not occurred yet, since they are not mentioned, but on rather slim grounds.<sup>16</sup> Since Athenion returned arguing a very sharp case for Athens to declare itself either neutral or to "Mithridatize" (it is difficult to tell which), and fired with an urge to take over the government himself, he would very likely have suppressed, denied or propagandized the slaughter of the Roman civilians. Athens was now full of Romans, and of Greeks whose livelihoods – even whose identity and image of themselves – were intimately bound to Rome and the Roman elements in the city. All that we are certain of is that somewhere in mid-88 he returned richly dressed, well supplied with money, and his head filled with distinct, new ideas. It would be nice to know what the ideas really were. Poseidonius notes with delighted disdain the details of his new wardrobe (adding that he was put up in the house of a Delian tycoon named Dies)<sup>17</sup> but compresses or invents all Athenion's notions into a set speech.

The young student, addressing an assembly apparently near his house in the Kerameikos rather than at the assembly site on the Pnyx, spun as Poseidonius tells it a golden fantasy of speech in which Mithridates strutted like an opulent and invincible monarch of all the ancient Persian domains. Roman governors cowered in chains behind his immense Scythian guards. The world, including the Carthaginians,<sup>18</sup> begged to join him in destroying Rome. He then accused the Athenians of stalling the onrush of history without ever, precisely, telling them to oppose Rome themselves. Instead, he attacked the *anarchia* caused by the regime of Medeios:

*Let us not stand by inactive while the temples are shut, the gymnasia foul through disuse, the theater without the ecclesia, the jury-courts silent, and the Pnyx taken away from the people ... Let us not stand by inactive, men of Athens, whilst the sacred cry Iacchos is silenced, and the hallowed sanctuary of Castor and Pollux is closed, and the conference halls of the philosophers are voiceless.*"<sup>19</sup>

Athenion had in fact attacked an Athens deprived of its traditional public activity, perhaps because of pressure from Rome (as Badian suggests but does not argue), or because various rival factions competitive with Medeios had the city in a gridlock after that politician's disappearance. The outcome is more important.

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16. Badian, "Rome, Athens, and Mithridates," 509 f. Cf. Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* xxiv-xxvii, especially the timing of the capture of Oppius (xx, 79) and Aquillius (xxi, 80) compared to that of the "Asian Vespers" themselves.

17. Athenaeus v, 212b.

18. Idem.

19. Idem. The translation is Ferguson's, 443.

Athenion was immediately voted hoplite general and named a "cabinet" of friends who were also elected. At *no* point in the story does Poseidonius suggest he was *prominent* among the city's Peripatetic scholars, or that he had ever had political experience; we have instead merely the intellectual tastes and speaking style of a successful demagogue.<sup>20</sup> His colleagues in the new government are known from an inscription;<sup>21</sup> all from well-placed families, some priestly, and several distinguished by important appointments during the previous decade of extravagant political competition.<sup>22</sup> They cannot have arrived at this suddenly exalted status by accident: Badian notes quite reasonably that this is not an anti-Roman popular mob; he might also have asked if this clique might not be identical to the putative "Athenians" who elected Athenion, and to whom he wrote. The only Athenion we can reconstruct from our sources is a fiery young second-generation Peripatetic *student* (perhaps describable by comparison with the skeptics of the Academy and the social philosophers of the Stoa as a "political scientist") with strong connections to one faction among the Athenion elite, and a fiery gift for rhetoric. The connection to Dies may suggest that the faction had its own echo (and perhaps an echo of its enemies) on Delos as well.

### **The Momentum of Disaster – Insider 'Revolt' to Outsider 'Hostage Crisis'**

Events now made Athenion's decision for him. A rapidly increasing trickle of Athenians began to flee the city, asking for Roman protection. By the time Athenion managed to guard the gates this had become a general exodus, which he could punish only by confiscating the property of those now absent.<sup>23</sup> Poseidonius does not, interestingly, identify these refugees as Romans, but their direction of flight shaded the diplomatic stance of the Athenian regime by implication.

Delos also revolted in favor of Rome (Mithridates had nearby pressed an unsuccessful siege of Rhodes).<sup>24</sup> By doing so it forced Athenion, whose new regime needed the island's profits, to act as the apparent lieutenant of Pontus. The faction chose as its admiral to recover Delos the adventurer, bookdealer, and sometime forger Apellicon of Teos who took what skeleton fleet Athens could

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20. Athenaeus v, 212, 3e

21. *Inscriptiones Graecae* (vol. II2), 1714. Cf. S. Dow, "The Lists of Athenian Archontes." *Hesperia*, vol. iii, no. 2, (1934), 444 ff. Badian, "Rome, Athens, and Mithridates," 510.

22. Badian, "Rome, Athens, and Mithridates," 511, n. 29.

23. This account that of Poseidonius, via Athenaeus, and so the emphasis on Athenian resistance Athenion and Mithridates ought to appear more remarkable than it has – especially to those who use the previous passages as evidence that Athens was spoiling for a chance to rise against Rome. Cf. Ferguson, 445-446.

24. Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* v, 24-27.



launch with him into the Aegean, but failed to defeat the rebels.<sup>25</sup> On his return Athenion vanishes from power, and from our sources.

Mithridates, having failed at Rhodes and needing some sort of diversion to facilitate his planned northward sweep into the Aegean world, now decided to play a card of his own at Athens as much like the near-success of Athenion as he could improvise. This we can deduce from two clues. Athenion, first of all, could mention a planned northward campaign to his audience during his speech in 88 (without any mention of Mithridatic interest in Athens).<sup>26</sup> Secondly, a creature named Aristion appeared in Athens shortly after the Delian expedition, carrying assurances and some armed force from the king himself, and rapidly seizing the government by force.<sup>27</sup>

Appian identifies Aristion as an "Epicurean" of some sort, indicating presumably that he so identified himself in Athens. He does not imply that the man was a philosopher or teacher, or that he belonged to the Athenian "Garden", and though attesting his Athenian citizenship makes it quite clear he was a Mithridatic export.<sup>28</sup> The main strength of Pontus was now about to move overland into Macedonia, but Mithridates' only naval strength in the Aegean came from the pirate fleets he had sheltered from the Romans. An advance naval base of Athens' quality would be a nice thing to have, unbalancing the Roman supply-lines through Achaëa, and interfering with the ability of a Roman fleet to harass his shoreward flank as he moved west. Even if it served only as a diversion he would not have lost much on the gamble.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, as Aristion flashed his "Epicurean" credentials in Athens and put the city on a siege footing, a small force of Pontic regulars under the command of

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25. Athenaeus v, 215b. Ferguson, 446, n. 1.

26. Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* v, 28, 29. Athenaeus, v 212 (which Sherwin-White gives as Poseidonius, frag. 36J.50, according to the Kidd edtn.). Sherwin-White's analysis of these diplomatic aspects of Mithridates' strategy is quite good, though he far over-estimates the chances of the land campaign into central Greece (which cannot have been aimed at more than the creation of a buffer for the real Pontic gains in Asia). See *Roman Foreign Policy in the East: 168 B.C. to A.D. 1*, (London, 1984), 137 f.

27. On the question of Aristion vs. Athenion see Ferguson, 447, n. 1. Badian, "Rome, Athens, and Mithridates," 514, 515. Sherwin-White, op. cit., 135, n. 13. Though Appian confuses the two, the names are not textually similar, and the accounts elsewhere are distinct. Strabo ix, 398 recollects the tradition of more than one tyrant during this period. Plutarch (*Sulla*, 12, 13, 14.11) is only concerned with events after the arrival of his subject. Cf. also Eutropius v, 6. Orosius vi, 2. Pausanias I, xx, 5; and III, xxiii, 3.

28. Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* v, 28. All Appian does clearly is attach Aristion's "philosophic sympathies" to the Epicurean style; it is possible consequently that the Garden enjoyed a run of unusual social clout during his early regime. The charge against the Epicurean Zeno for arranging a rival's murder may belong to this year. (Athenaeus xiii, 611b. Diogenes Laertius x, 3.)

29. Cf. the analysis of Sherwin-White, *Foreign Policy*, 137.

Archelaus appeared and began to dig itself into the Piraeus.<sup>30</sup> No attempt was made to repair the Long Walls, or to use any additional of Mithridates' troops (no more, that is, than the guard that had arrived with Aristion) in defense of Athens itself.

Aristion instead placed the city under martial law, and attempted again to stem the flow of refugees toward the Roman centers of Greece, executing some and sending others captive to Pontus.<sup>31</sup> Though it cannot have helped the image of his regime, he also allowed some Athenians with connections in Pontus to sail there for the duration of the emergency.<sup>32</sup>

### The Other Side of Catastrophe – The Western Contribution

Now came the twist which gave a flavor of perverse legend to this story. The Roman commander first in Greece with an intent to do something about the Athenian crisis turned out to be Sulla, an official outlaw with a renegade army faced by resistance to an attempted coup behind his back in Italy, and anxious to effect a *visible* victory, preferably without crossing the Aegean, and then to return westward as quickly as possible. Sulla consequently moved directly on Athens and set siege to it, though his rather unsupplied force concentrated on the Piraeus and its docks.<sup>33</sup> With the supporters of Marius now controlling Rome, he could not call on a fleet from Italy, and sent his lieutenant Lucullus to forage for ships in Egypt.<sup>34</sup>

Archelaus and his regulars were able to prevent Sulla gaining any access to the port either rapid or inexpensive in blood. Sulla (fuming) encamped himself at Eleusis and began to wear Athens itself down by strangulation. What remained of the Long Walls he improvised into a ramp against the Piraeus walls, while by a series of around the upper city he actually aided Aristion in his effort to end the flow of refugees.<sup>35</sup>

Famine now began to tighten in Athens, and though neither Appian nor Plutarch mention mass starvation, they do speak of an unprecedented inflation in

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30. Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* v, 28.

31. Idem.

32. Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 19.

33. Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* v, 30.

34. Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* v, 33.

35. Pausanias I, xx, 7. On the connection with Delphi during this crisis, see Ferguson, 449, n. 1 (which perhaps misses the point). Ferguson does not notice that the refugees who fled to Delphi seem to have been those most alarmed by the Mithridatic tyranny at Athens, and least antagonistic to Rome. The son of Medeios who appears later pleading for mercy during the Sullan sack was probably among their number. Sulla's sack of Delphi was not a punishment for collaboration but an "immediate gratification" of his financial and trophy needs for the coming campaign in Italy.

grain prices. Gold "Mithridatic" siege coins, followed by heavy bronze issues struck in apparent extreme haste, remain from this year.<sup>36</sup> A well in the Agora, closed after the end of the siege, was discovered upon excavation to be full of the remains of exposed infants and dogs.<sup>37</sup> Athenians ate the sedge that grew on the acropolis, and when that failed began to stew leather. Appian records Roman soldiers after the fall of Athens discovering homes where human flesh had been prepared for consumption.<sup>38</sup>

Plutarch records the price of grain running as high as 1,000 drachmas per *medimnos*, which Peter Garnsey finds incredible. Prices during the Hellenistic siege of Athens by Demetrius Poliorcetes ran at some twentieth of that level.<sup>39</sup> He may, however, have missed the point. Plutarch in the same passage<sup>40</sup> is explaining that Aristion's primary difficulty lay in keeping up the appearance as long as possible that Athens was resolute in opposing Sulla, and would never surrender. In the midst of the city's dearth his loyal supporters (there were apparently very few of them) were rewarded with wild parties and tables well-supplied with food. Embassies from the Areopagus begging for a truce with Rome were driven away by his archers. The 1,000 drachma per *medimnos* price that so bothers Garnsey was very likely an attempt to suppress his opposition.

The key to understanding this is to keep firmly in mind that by this point Athens was, strange as it may sound, victim of two simultaneous "hostage crises," a dilemma not perhaps unique in ancient history, but one with many modern parallels. One faction held it by force to make a propagandist point; another besieged it to create a base from which to attempt conquests it considered, ultimately, far more important than what happened on the shores of the Aegean. Athenian heritage, the city's value as a symbol, made it a victim, and the suffering within the walls, real as well as that exaggerated for other eyes ("for the press" as we might say today) was pain spent to further goals unconnected with the city's own.

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36. Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* v, 30-32, 34, 36-37, 40. Plutarch, *Sulla*, passes over the destruction of the Piraeus, and concentrates on the fate of Athens. Cf. Ferguson, 448, n. 3. Garland, 191, n. 56. Sherwin-White, *Foreign Policy*, 138, n. 22.

37. See J.L. Angel, "Skeletal Material from Attica," *Hesperia*, vol. 14 (1945), 279-363, and esp. inventory no. 116 on p. 311, Fig. 12 on p. 312. Plutarch, *Sulla*, 13. Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* v, 38. Cf. Peter Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Greco-Roman World*, (Cambridge, 1989), 36, n. 31.

38. Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* v, 38. Plutarch's *Sulla* makes no reference to cannibalism though he reports an exceedingly high price charged for grain. Frankness about such matters as cannibalism might not have fit comfortably with Plutarch's narrative style in any case. Cf. Garnsey, pp. 28, 29, n.16.

39. Plutarch, *Sulla*, 13. Cf. Cicero, *Second Verrine*, II, iii, 214; compare with II, iii, 84 and 90, 173-175, 189, 194, giving or stressing ordinary "panic prices" for (Sicilian) grain.

40. Plutarch, *Sulla*, 13.

### Athenian Ashes

In the end, in the Athens of 88 B.C., Aristion failed in both his missions. Sulla, driven by his need to end the crisis and march on Italy (as well as by his own characteristic wildness when kept too long at any one challenge), improvised siege engines at last by gutting the trees out of the old grove of Academe where Socrates had once taught.<sup>41</sup> Athens' old rival Thebes was cajoled into providing catapults and scaling irons. In the end Sulla found a stretch of wall along the western circuit unguarded one night and rushed into Athens through the streets of the Kerameikos, allowing his troops indiscriminate slaughter until Plutarch says the gutters ran with blood.<sup>42</sup> Pleas from Athenian refugees (including the son of Medeios), and from Roman Senators in his own entourage finally ended the killing. Aristion fled to the acropolis, burning the Odeion of Pericles as he went to make a last pseudo-Athenian "statement" of defiance, or to deny Sulla timber to use against his associates in the Piraeus, but he held out only a short time, and posed no realistic delaying threat. Sulla was free to depart and face the army of Pontus. Later Athenian legend noted that Athens fell in the month (Anthesterion) sacred to the memory of Deucalion's flood, to "ruin and destruction."

"On the same day and at the very hour when Curio brought [Aristion] down as a prisoner, clouds gathered in a clear sky, and so much rain fell that the acropolis was filled with water."<sup>43</sup>

The Piraeus fell shortly thereafter, when Archelaus (judging the strategic value of this southern "diversion" had run out) left to join the main Mithridatic forces entering Greece. Sulla moved to follow, but only after having burned the Piraeus thoroughly. He intended now to deal with Mithridates as quickly as he could; the cosmetic appearance of victory would suffice so long as he could negotiate an Aegean stable enough to last while he returned westward. He had not succeeded in scavenging a fleet for himself in Greece, and so did not need a naval base, nor did he intend to leave any opportunity for a fresh Pontic adventure in his absence. Of the famous shipyards, *emporiae*, and merchant-houses Sulla left standing only the temple of his favorite goddess.

About more lasting strategic needs in the Aegean Sulla showed his usual lack of long-term interest. Mithridates, not he, was the player of the "long game" in the chess of power. Mithridates would return.

Athens regained control of Delos as Sulla departed; it may have helped ease the loss of a devastated Piraeus, but its trade was never the same again, and after the re-founding of Corinth in the 40's went into irreparable decline. The

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41. Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* v, 30.

42. Plutarch, *Sulla*, 14.

43. *Ibid.*

government slowly appeared to return to its old form, but the Areopagus (now resembling a sort of Senate of 600) was charged with many matters the citizen *ecclesia* had once decided.<sup>44</sup> The Herald of the Areopagus and the hoplite general (the shadow "consuls" or "praetors" of its new baldly Roman lease on life) became the chief authorities in the city.<sup>45</sup>

Athens had nothing left of the glory-dreams of a favored independence or leadership (through its schools, or because it would somehow be indispensable as an eastern business agent) that had grown up under the early favor of Rome. Taken without the symbols of its past, it was only the shell of a ruined city – a city which even the forced attentions of a cynical and ruthless Asian monarch could not enlist in the cause of "Greek freedom." Its survival lay in what it could make of the few shreds of local resource and Roman, or "European," favor it had left.

So, the double hostage crisis – Athens held at the mercy of Mithridates' agents to keep Rome from looking too closely at the east, Athens ruined at the mercy of Sulla so a politically opportunistic thug uninterested in the legacy of governance by dialogue (which Mithridates' agents had *used*) could attack and undo his own ailing republic in the west – destroyed the image Athens had had of itself since Pericles, however out of date it was, and left it really only one way to play its last card of value, the last real resource it had for survival.

The heart of this resource, as well as the underlying vulnerability which had involved it in the disaster just played out, lay in the Athenian decision to "be" a European city, to cast its future in the same direction it has today – to shift the focus of its dialogue about the 'humanities' (including governance) from internalist, from Hellenistic, to Mediterranean/European. To a Europe which had learned so much, already, often unwillingly, from Athens, the potential (if one can talk about such a concept as "cultural capital") was considerable; Roman Europe expressed its aspirations and justified its civilization in Greek, and particularly in "Athenian" terms. But a symbol always faces the danger of moments when it seems "just" a symbol; politicians in a wider Euro-Mediterranean world might, when they had more pressing concerns, leave it disastrously on its own.

In the age of Sulla and Mithridates, Athens survived in spite of this neglect, and in doing so added to its legend for later Romans like Cicero and Augustus. Again, in the last two hundred years Athens and modern Greece have done the same, but once more the result in our day has been for the Greeks a cultural dilemma, constant challenges of balancing heritage and influence with location. The ancient resilience in facing these seems unchanged.

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44. Ferguson, 454-455. James H. Oliver, *The Civic Tradition and Roman Athens*, (Baltimore, 1983), 57 f.

45. Strabo IX, xx, 398. Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* v, 39. *Inscriptiones Graecae* (vol. XII), 8.26. Cf. Ferguson, 455-457.

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## Appendix - A Note on Methodology

*I have in general argued over the years that the business of the historian is the synthesis of the story from examined evidence, that intrusive emphasis on methodology is one of the flaws in, certainly not one of the gems of, contemporary historical writing. Too often it is an easy substitute for it.*

*It might be worth noting that this study of the hostage crisis of 88 began from a series of projects presented at ATINER in recent years on the evolution of the Athenian schools for survival in the Hellenistic-Roman market, the first of these published in The Athens Journal of History in 2017.<sup>46</sup> This in particular came of a study – presented but yet to be published in this series, on the Peripatetic school, which late 19<sup>th</sup> and late 20<sup>th</sup> century European scholars credited as a first Athenian 'students in the streets' moment.*

*My point of examination for evidence was the scholarly identification of scholars and teachers in the changing schools, and their impact on the city of Athens as it changed, though the connection of scholars with Asian politics in this story paralleled a survival tactic in some of the schools I had noticed when curious simply about their academic changes. This tragic episode in Athenian history (certainly as devastating as the destruction of the city by Xerxes) has in recent generations been seen as tragic triumph of student protest, or nationalist revolt. I have offered some gathered strands of clues (in a short piece) to suggest a perspective in the evolution of the town makes more sense.*

*My hope in this very short piece is to shed light on the components of a narrative thread that makes more sense of the experience on the city itself.*

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46. Stoics and Epicureans for the 'Modern Market': How Athenian Educators Re-Tooled the Old City's 'Modernist Schools' for Republican Rome, **The Athens Journal of History**, (Vol 4, issue 4 October 2017).

## **Peninsular Lessons for Atoll Warfare: The U.S. Marine Corps and the Development of Naval Gunfire Doctrine**

*By Paul J. Cook\**

*This paper utilizes the 1943 Battle of Tarawa as a lens to examine and evaluate the influence of the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign of 1915 upon U.S. Marine Corps inter-war development of naval gunfire support doctrine within amphibious warfare planning and the effectiveness of those plans in combat operations during Operation GALVANIC. The lessons of Gallipoli, specifically those that relate to the employment of naval gunfire, were key pieces of American pre-war planning, and yet, they underwent considerable revision once the war began. Tarawa served as a platform upon which inter-war ideas of amphibious operations were tested and their results adapted or modified in preparation for subsequent amphibious operations against Japanese holdings in the Pacific. American victory at Tarawa validated American amphibious warfare doctrine. Inter-war planning and critical evaluation of past amphibious assaults, laid the ground work for a coherent approach to offensive amphibious warfare, capable of adaptation and criticism. Significant attention will be paid to the Tentative Manual for Landing Operations, published by the U.S. Marine Corps in 1934. Although failing to reference Gallipoli specifically, the Tentative Manual's comprehensive definition of naval gunfire support builds upon numerous lessons extracted from the 1915 campaign.*

### **Introduction**

The increasing industrialization of warfare during the twentieth century witnessed a significant uptick in the complexities of amphibious operations. Modern amphibious warfare traces its origin to an ill-conceived and poorly implemented amphibious assault on the rocky boundary between the European and Asian continents, less than one year after the start of the Great War. Following the disaster at Gallipoli in 1915, the British, despite their long tradition of naval dominance, dismissed amphibious operations as a viable form of warfare in the modern conflict. British “tactical pundits” during the remainder of World War I, and throughout the inter-war years that followed, firmly believed “that amphibious assaults could not prevail against prepared defenses armed with machine guns and artillery.”<sup>47</sup> At the crux of this belief sat the issue of naval gunfire support; an integral facet of amphibious operations that remained a

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1. Allan R. Millett, “Assault from the Sea: The Development of Amphibious Warfare between the Wars: The American, British, and Japanese Experiences,” in *In the Interwar Period*, ed. Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 52-53.

dominant focus during the inter-war years, the amphibious campaigns of the next World War, and a haunting reminder of the horrors on the Hellespont.

Across the Atlantic and on the other side of the world, American and Japanese military leaders were not as dismissive of amphibious warfare as their British counterparts. Separated by the vast Pacific Ocean, dotted with seemingly innumerable atolls and archipelagos, planning for amphibious operations took center stage as both sides realized this form of warfare was to dominate any future conflict between their nations. Although caught by surprise in December of 1941, the United States had spent considerable time, energy, and resources during the inter-war period developing and refining strategies for offensive and defensive operations in a hypothetical war in the Pacific. The U.S. Marine Corps in particular focused on preparations for carrying out opposed landings, publishing the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* in 1934, outlining the use of U.S. Marine Corps units to seize islands in the Pacific to be used as stepping-stones as the U.S. military took the conflict all the way to Japan.<sup>48</sup> The lessons of Gallipoli, especially those related to the use of naval gunfire support, were key pieces of American pre-war planning. Yet they did undergo considerable revision once the war began. This study will utilize the 1943 Battle of Tarawa as a lens to examine and evaluate the influence of the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign of 1915 upon U.S. Marine Corps inter-war development of naval gunfire support doctrine within amphibious warfare planning and the effectiveness of those plans in combat operations during Operation GALVANIC.

Significant secondary source material utilized in this study is drawn from a variety of works authored by the late Colonel Joseph H. Alexander, USMC (Ret.). Alexander's magnum opus, *Utmost Savagery: The Three Days of Tarawa*, originally published in 1995, solidified his position as the "preeminent living authority" on the subject.<sup>49</sup> Marine Corps History and Museums director, Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, USMC (Ret.), described Alexander's study as "quite probably the most significant book...on Tarawa since Robert Sherrod wrote *Tarawa: The Story of a Battle*."<sup>50</sup> Research and writing concerning Tarawa benefited in the 1990s from never-before available information. Translated volumes of the Japanese history of the conflict, declassified U.S. military documents, and verified accounts of veterans sharing their experiences for the first time, offered opportunities to re-evaluate established opinions of the engagement. More broadly, re-evaluation deepens our understanding of the Tarawa landings in the larger context of the war in the Pacific, opening doors for doctrinal lessons applicable for today, as far-flung island strongholds and littoral threat

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2. David J. Ulbrich, "The U.S. Marine Corps, Amphibious Capabilities, and Preparations for War with Japan," *Marine Corps University Journal* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2015), 81, 82.

3. Joseph H. Alexander, *Utmost Savagery: The Three Days of Tarawa* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995), xiv.

4. *Ibid.*, xiii.



environments begin to demand attention in the foreign policy arena. This study applies this methodology a step further by cross-examining more recent examples from this topic's historiography against the primary source evidence, in order to provide a fresh and accurate understanding of the Marine Corps' development of naval gunfire doctrine from the inter-war years to the opening salvo against a fortified island stronghold such as Tarawa.

During my own examination of the more recent works on Tarawa, the theme of naval gunfire support within pre-war Marine Corps planning and its implementation at Tarawa began to take shape. Older sources addressing Tarawa, such as Jeter Isely and Philip Crowl's comprehensive study of Marine Corps amphibious warfare in the Pacific, downplayed the shortcomings of naval gunfire support at Tarawa; a view this author does not believe is sufficiently supported by primary source evidence, nor pre- and contemporary-World War II understanding of the Gallipoli campaign.

This study begins with a brief overview of the amphibious assault on Gallipoli, followed by an assessment of the effectiveness of British naval gunfire support during the landing. Contextual understanding for this study begins with a discussion of the atmosphere surrounding U.S. military and Marine Corps planning for, and anticipation of, a future conflict with Japan dispersed across the expanse of the Pacific Ocean. Focus transitions to the conception of the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* and in-depth study of the *Tentative Manual's* tenets concerning proper naval gunfire doctrine. Primary source material provides a detailed description of Tarawa, specifically Betio island, in addition to the Marine Corps' preparation for assault, difficulties imposed by the environment, and the planned employment and tasks of naval gunfire support. Discussion of the shortcomings of naval gunfire during the assault on Betio is wound throughout a broader discussion seeking clarity between the theoretical plans for naval gunfire support versus implementation and effectiveness in reality. This body of the study transitions to an overall understanding of the lessons naval gunfire use at Tarawa provided for subsequent Pacific campaigns and the validity of American amphibious warfare doctrine.

### **The British Assault at Gallipoli**

British, French, and ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) forces were at as much the mercy of poor leadership as they were to the multitude of difficulties imposed on them by the rugged geography of the Gallipoli peninsula and the dogged Turkish defenses. The amphibious assault on Gallipoli began on 25 April 1915 with simultaneous landings at seven individual locations. ANZAC troops stormed "Z" beach, north of Gaba Tepe, the furthest

north of the Allied landings zones, with Hill 971 as their objective.<sup>51</sup> To the south at Cape Helles, troops of the British 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division assaulted “Y,” “X,” “W,” “V,” and “S” beaches, while a small contingent of French troops launched a diversionary assault on the Asian coast of the Dardanelles Strait at Kum Kale.<sup>52</sup> Aside from a few reconnaissance trips along the peninsula, Sir Ian Hamilton, commander of the ground forces for the campaign, had only “a 1908 sheet taken from a general survey of Turkey” with which to base his knowledge of the terrain.<sup>53</sup> Other important landing details were equally vague. The operational order for crews transporting troops toward “Y” beach instructed them that they were “to convoy the troops almost directly ashore ‘till they felt the bottom’” at which time debarkation could take place.<sup>54</sup> Incredibly, the British had failed to conceive contingency plans for localized success, let alone failures. Momentary successes, such as the British rapid penetration of Turkish defenses near “X” Beach, slowly smoldered away and extinguished hopes of tactical opportunity.<sup>55</sup>

Most appalling was the inability, and at times unwillingness, of the British to properly employ naval gunfire support. The lack of which proved singularly detrimental to the outcome of the assault, indeed the campaign as a whole. An ironic issue considering the Royal Navy had an ample number of ships present mounting large-caliber guns capable of supporting the assault forces. Apart from “Y” beach, British and French warships provided thirty minutes of gunfire support, after which time, fire was to be lifted inland toward the Turkish artillery batteries, “the first objective of naval fire.”<sup>56</sup> The result was that the amphibious forces assaulting the shallow beaches and steep cliffs did so without the benefit of supporting fire.<sup>57</sup> Royal Navy command suffered from a case of strategic paralysis. Historian Theodore Gatchel explains, “the ultimate purpose of military operations on the Peninsula was to get the fleet through to overawe Constantinople,” thereby threatening the Ottoman capital with sea-borne destruction and force the aged member of the Central Powers to capitulate.<sup>58</sup> Over-emphasis on the end goal resulted in tactical and operational decisions concerning the means that bordered on absurdity. Having “no desire to reach their destination with depleted magazines,” capital ships were limited to “only 20 rounds per gun *as a maximum*” for fire missions in support of the landing forces.<sup>59</sup>

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5. Robin Prior, *Gallipoli: The End of the Myth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 90.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., 78.

8. Ibid., 91.

9. Ibid., 99.

10. Ibid., 91.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 91; Theodore L. Gatchel, *At the Water's Edge: Defending against the Modern Amphibious Assault* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 11.

13. Prior, *Gallipoli*, 91-92 (author's emphasis).

Perhaps more astonishing was one British prediction that the *Queen Elizabeth*, at the time the world's most powerful battleship, "could demolish all 24 Dardanelles forts with about 10 shells for each fort – a total of just 240 x 15-inch shells."<sup>60</sup> This naively optimistic assumption ignores that fact that the first high explosive shell to reach its target disrupted so much dust that target evaluation, as well as subsequent range finding and adjustment, were nearly impossible.<sup>61</sup>

Further compounding the issue of naval gunfire support was a lack of basic gunnery understanding one assumed the world's most powerful navy had mastered. Despite instructions for the bombarding ships to use their fore and aft anchors to stabilize their main armament during firing, British commanders failed to consider the rocking that ensued as the anchors and the swift current in the Dardanelles Strait played a continuous tug-of-war.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, the Royal Navy mistakenly believed warships could inflict on Turkish forts the kind of destruction wrought by German howitzers on the Belgian forts in 1914. The naval rifles of the Royal Navy fired at a flat trajectory, not at all the ideal angle for engaging a fort.<sup>63</sup> The failure to use capital ships at Gallipoli was two-fold. Earlier attempts in February and March to rush the Dardanelles Strait using warships alone met with failure, leaving planners in London convinced of the need for a ground force to be landed and assault the Turkish fortifications directly. Yet, once the ground component was landed in April, the navy performed a minimal role; an embarrassing lack of inter-service coordination and cooperation in a so called "combined" operation. The Gallipoli debacle cast a long shadow for years thereafter, sowing doubt about the viability of amphibious warfare in an era when advances in military technology did not diminish the propensity of the defender to stymie assaults at the water's edge.

### The Genesis of U.S. Marine Corps Amphibious Doctrine

A decade and a half later, the increasing possibility of Japanese expansion in the Pacific boiling over into general war, led the "staff and war colleges of the American armed forces" to give much "greater attention to instruction on

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14. Ibid., 38.

15. Ibid., 101.

16. Ibid., 37.

17. Ibid., 39-40. Prior discusses the work of the Mitchell Committee which at the time of the Gallipoli campaign, had developed a scientific method for determining the number of shells required to destroy any given number of fortifications at varying ranges. Based on their calculations, Prior explains that a minimum of 20,000 shells were required to defeat the Turkish fortifications along the Dardanelles. None of the gun barrels on the warships available to the Royal Navy, including those on the new *Queen Elizabeth*, were capable of firing their share of those 20,000 rounds before bursting or needing to be re-bored.

amphibious operations.”<sup>64</sup> As a department of the Navy, the U.S. Marine Corps was saddled with the responsibility of protecting and seizing American holdings in the Pacific in peace and as well as in war. As a consequent of their status as a component of the Navy, the Marine Corps was left square in the sights of politicians seeking to curb unnecessary defense spending as economic constraints became more acute in the 1930s. Certain Army leaders “doubted the need for an independent marine corps” and it was only Congressional action that prevented the Corps from being absorbed into the Army.<sup>65</sup> The Marine Corps began writing doctrine for amphibious operations in an attempt to stay the imminent possibility that their existence could be eliminated during government budget cuts, as well as address the looming potentiality of a trans-Pacific armed struggle against Imperial Japan.<sup>66</sup> Within the Marine Corps hierarchy, there existed a cadre of officers who refused to believe the industrialization of warfare relegated amphibious operations to the past. They “remained confident that such beaches as those at Gallipoli could be seized and secured.”<sup>67</sup> Through extensive examination of the failures at Gallipoli, the Marine Corps gained increasing confidence for the prospect of future amphibious operations, including the importance of naval gunfire support, identified as one of six “functional areas” integral to the successful landing of forces against a defended shore.<sup>68</sup> Much of their research and planning rested upon the prophetic teachings of Lieutenant Colonel Earl H. “Pete” Ellis who foretold the scenario to beset the U.S. military in the Pacific during the first half of the 1940s. According to Ellis, the Marine Corps was naturally endowed with the skills necessary to prosecute this emerging form of modern warfare. In “Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia,” Ellis claimed that,

to effect a landing under the sea and shore conditions obtaining and in the face of enemy resistance requires careful training and preparation, to say the least; and this along Marine Corps lines. It is not enough that the troops be skilled infantry men or artillery men of high morale: they must be skilled water men and jungle men who know it can be done – Marines with Marine training.<sup>69</sup>

In the years following the Great War, Ellis declared that in a future conflict in the Pacific, Japanese island strongholds not only needed to be “seized forcibly,”

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18. Millett, “The Development of Amphibious Warfare between the Wars,” 74.

19. *Ibid.*, 72.

20. *Ibid.*, 75.

21. Jeter A. Isely and Philip A. Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War: Its Theory, and Its Practice in the Pacific* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), 5.

22. Joseph H. Alexander, *Storm Landings: Epic Amphibious Battles in the Central Pacific* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 13.

23. Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication (FMFRP) 12-46, *Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia* (Quantico: Marine Corps Combat Development Command, 1992), 41.

but also the grand strategy of the conflict necessitated “island hopping.”<sup>70</sup> A task, Ellis affirmed, especially suited for the Marine Corps, but one, he warned, the Corps was dangerously unprepared for.<sup>71</sup>

### A Coherent Doctrine for Naval Gunfire Support

The *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*, the most important piece of doctrine to emerge during this time, was published in June 1934, following a suspension of classes at the Marine Corps Schools to provide faculty and students the time to compile their views and lessons drawn from earlier amphibious operations.<sup>72</sup> Although the horrors of Gallipoli remained present even in the minds of American military planners, “American Marines postulated that careful planning, adequate training, and proper equipment could overcome the tactical advantages enjoyed by an enemy defending a shoreline.”<sup>73</sup> The *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* identified and individually addressed the multitude of complex components within amphibious operations, all the while conveying the understanding of the importance each moving part has within the broader issue at hand. Even a cursory examination of the *Tentative Manual*’s table of contents, reveals a fundamental understanding of the “combined” nature of amphibious operations in addition to the uniqueness and necessity of individual factors, from “Protection Against Chemical Agents” to “Troop Antiaircraft Defense.”<sup>74</sup>

Naval gunfire support is addressed in the *Tentative Manual*’s second chapter in which its every aspect is discussed, from fleet organization to proper gun elevation.<sup>75</sup> Without specifically mentioning Gallipoli, the *Tentative Manual* extracted numerous lessons from that ill-fated campaign. Naval fire support is divided into four categories: beach fire, support fire, interdiction fire, and counterbattery fire.<sup>76</sup> Contrary to the definition-lacking approach employed by the Royal Navy in 1915, the *Tentative Manual* acknowledges the fluidity of amphibious operations and need for supporting arms, in this case warships, to keep pace with the changing threat environment.<sup>77</sup> Fire support from warships “must be prepared in advance in order to coordinate this fire with the movement of the attacking troops.”<sup>78</sup> It was required that this coordination be maintained

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24. Alexander, *Storm Landings*, 9.

25. *Ibid.*, 10.

26. Ulbrich, “Amphibious Capabilities,” 83.

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* (Quantico: Marine Corps Schools, 1934), 3.

29. *Ibid.*, 42, 56.

30. *Ibid.*, 43.

31. *Ibid.*, 56.

32. *Ibid.*

throughout the totality of the operation.<sup>79</sup> The *Tentative Manual* does not cut any corners reinforcing the relationship between naval gunfire support and the delivery of assault troops to their proper landing locations. "The effectiveness of artillery preparation in an attack," explains the *Tentative Manual*, "decreases in direct proportion to the increases in time required for the assaulting troops to gain their positions after the fire lifts."<sup>80</sup> In other words, the delay between the lifting of naval gunfire, in order to prevent friendly fire casualties, and the moment the landing forces make their assault, must be as short as safety will allow. Safety is ensured with a fire schedule synchronized between all participating forces, ideally guaranteeing coordination and communication.<sup>81</sup>

British failure at Gallipoli was due in part because British commanders expected the situation to conform to the naval preparations they already decided in their minds was going to carry the day. Differentiation between types of supporting fires did not exist, leaving the British and Commonwealth troops "at the mercy of obstacles, machine guns, and other rapid fire weapons."<sup>82</sup> Precisely the situation the *Tentative Manual* warns will take place on the landing beaches if "the ship's guns have not properly done their part."<sup>83</sup> Seeking to avoid a repeat of Gallipoli on a Pacific atoll and allowing the facts on the ground to dictate the type of response required, the *Tentative Manual* asserts that the "kind and amount of beach fire required for a particular landing [varies] according to the circumstances [of] the particular operation."<sup>84</sup>

Additionally, the *Tentative Manual*, does not impose limitations on the amount of ammunition required for fire missions. Fire support commanders are to ensure that "a careful estimate [is] made of [the] ammunition that will be required, and ample provision [is] made for supply."<sup>85</sup> Tables illustrating the trajectory of fired ordnances of various calibers, crater sizes corresponding to ordnance type, shell burst diameter in regards to troop proximity, and beach topography not only enhance the doctrine put forth in the *Tentative Manual*, but also provide leaders at all levels of command invaluable information, should the United States find itself engaged in hostilities in the Pacific.<sup>86</sup>

Revisions to the *Tentative Manual* continued throughout the 1930s when in 1938, the U.S. Navy published *Landing Operations Doctrine* (Fleet Training Publication (FTP) 167), a merger adding "broad strategic and naval perspectives to the Marines' tactical and operational focuses."<sup>87</sup> Under the guidance of Marine

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33. Ibid.

34. Ibid., 46.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., 45.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., 50.

39. Ibid., 53.

40. Ibid., 51, 52, 53.

41. Ulbrich, "Amphibious Capabilities," 88.

Corps Schools commandant General Thomas Holcomb, the *Tentative Manual* underwent modifications in order to become compliant with the U.S. Navy's requirements.<sup>88</sup> Following official adoption, FTP-167 remained at the core of American amphibious operations throughout the Pacific War.<sup>89</sup> Chapter five of FTP-167 begins with the affirmation that "effective naval gunfire may be the critical factor which determines success or failure."<sup>90</sup> The "requirements of the infantry in an amphibious operation are essentially the same as the requirements in normal land warfare."<sup>91</sup> In verbiage transcending military and naval schools of thought, FTP-167 equates the role of naval gunfire support with the responsibility of artillery in a land-based battle or campaign, adding the warning "...it will be rare in landings against opposition that [land-based] artillery will be able entirely to relieve naval fire support groups during D-day."<sup>92</sup> The growing understanding of amphibious warfare's ever-evolving character is exemplified through the division of D-day into three separate phases, pairing required fires and targets with the activity of the landing force at each phase of the assault.<sup>93</sup> Together, these tentative guidelines and instructions for the incorporation and coordination of naval gunfire support received their baptism by fire in the late fall of 1943, as U.S. forces sought to wrest the Gilbert Islands from Japanese control and begin the long-awaited offensive across the central Pacific.

## The U.S. Marine Assault at Tarawa Atoll

### Surmounting Betio's Challenges

The focal point of the Battle of Tarawa (Operation GALVANIC) was the tiny island of Betio located on the southwestern tip of the triangular-shaped Tarawa atoll. Only four thousand yards long by six hundred yards wide, "Betio is smaller than New York City's Central Park." Nevertheless, the island presented numerous challenges to the American forces preparing to assault this heavily fortified piece of coral.<sup>94</sup> Any brief inspection of Betio reveals that its terrain, or rather the lack there of, favored its Japanese defenders. After examining preliminary intelligence, Colonel Merrill A. Edson, chief of staff for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine

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42. Ibid.

43. Ibid., 83, 84.

44. *Landing Operations Doctrine F.T.P. 167* (Washington D.C.: Office of Naval Operations Division of Fleet Training, 1938), 111, <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/l/landing-operations-doctrine-usn-ftp-167.html>.

45. Ibid., 114.

46. Ibid., 115.

47. Ibid., 134, 135-136, 141-142.

48. Gatchel, *At the Water's Edge*, 121-122.

Division commented that, “every place on the island can be covered by direct rifle and machine gun fire.”<sup>95</sup> Betio’s limited size precluded a mobile defense.<sup>96</sup> Therefore the Japanese defenders sought to defeat the Americans at the water’s edge with a lethal assortment of large caliber, turret-mounted naval guns, mortars, and “an abundance of 7.7mm light machine guns,” spread throughout nearly five hundred individual bunkers, forcing the assaulting U.S. Marines to attack each one individually.<sup>97</sup> Despite the difficulties of the terrain, Rear Admiral Keiji Shibasaki, tasked with the Japanese defense of Betio, intended to launch a counter-attack should American forces secure a foothold. During the afternoon of D-Day, Shibasaki and his entire staff died while attempting to relocate their command post to a location along the atoll’s south coast. Victim of a large-caliber shell, Shibasaki’s death eliminated any chance of a coherent Japanese counter-attack against the burgeoning American onslaught.<sup>98</sup>

According to a December 1943 memorandum written by Lieutenant General A. A. Vandegrift, who commanded the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division on Guadalcanal, Betio’s size harbored two additional and particularly lethal consequences, each influencing the high casualties sustained by the U.S. Marine Corps during the assault. The Japanese, Vandegrift explains, could

readily diagnose the point of attack, and due to the small distances involved, [could] readily concentrate [their] forces against any landing attempt, and concentrate practically all the fire of [their] artillery against the attack without being forced to the time consuming effort of displacing [their] artillery forward.<sup>99</sup>

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49. Joseph H. Alexander, “Across the Reef: The Marine Assault of Tarawa, Part I” in *Marines in World War II Commemorative Series*, (United States Government, 1993), 3.

50. For further discussion on the relationship between geography and history, readers should examine Samuel Kinser’s “*Annaliste* Paradigm? The Geohistorical Structuralism of Fernand Braudel,” *American Historical Review* 86, no. 1 (February 1981): 63-105. Kinser delves into Braudel’s argument, outlined in *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II*, for geographical determinism and Braudel’s understanding that geography is not simply a painted canvas hung behind the stage of human history providing a general setting. Braudel understood, explains Kinser, geography and human action as two forces simultaneously shaping, and being shaped by, one another. Geography is by no means the only lens through which to study past events, however terrain is not merely something to be overcome; its inherent advantages and disadvantages fundamentally affect decisions, particularly military operations.

51. Alexander, “Across the Reef: The Marine Assault of Tarawa, Part I,” 3; Gatchel, *At the Water’s Edge*, 124.

52. Alexander, *Utmost Savagery*, 147-148, 151.

53. A. A. Vandegrift to David I. Walsh, 15 December 1943, Box 2, Alexander A. Vandegrift Papers, World War II Collection, Gilberts and Tarawa, Marine Corps University Archives, Quantico, VA.



Complicating the situation was Betio's extensive reef, eight hundred yards wide in some locations. This required the attacking Marines "to disembark from landing craft some distance off shore and wade in against the hostile fire."<sup>100</sup> Unable to seek protection in foxholes or behind obstacles and transported in lightly armed and armored LVTs (Landing Vehicle Tracked), it was imperative that naval fire support find its mark during preliminary bombardment. Then as the Marines' onshore operations started, the guns needed to exercise flexibility in fire missions.

As stated in an October 1943 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division situation report, outlining potential amphibious offensive action in the Gilberts, the U.S. Navy had at its disposal three battleships, five cruisers, and ten destroyers for providing supporting fires for the Tarawa landings scheduled for November.<sup>101</sup> Intelligence gathered regarding Japanese defenses, as well as the island itself, bluntly concluded that "the topography and hydrography of the area definitely favor the enemy." However, overly optimistic Marines also "expected that naval gunfire will neutralize or destroy the majority of" Japanese weapons and defensive positions "prior to H-hour."<sup>102</sup> The report estimates "that the average superiority of our [American] armament over that of the enemy, after naval gunfire lifts, is approximately...2.0:1.0."<sup>103</sup> This was a peculiar conclusion considering that the previous page of the report cautions those in the initial assault waves that the 75mm, 105mm, and anti-aircraft battalions attached to the division will not be landed until a perimeter around the beachhead has been secured beyond the range of enemy machine guns and small arms.<sup>104</sup> Seeking to maintain surprise, especially at the tactical level, planning called for the majority of naval gunfire to "be delivered primarily on D-day," with some naval commanders believing the Marines to be hard pressed to find defenders once they arrived ashore.<sup>105</sup>

### Naval Bombardment at Betio and Lessons Learned

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54. Patrick L. McKiernan, "Tarawa: The Tide that Failed," in *Assault from the Sea: Essays on the History of Amphibious Warfare*, ed. Merrill L. Bartlett (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2014), 212; A. A. Vandegrift to David I. Walsh, 15 December 1943, Alexander A. Vandegrift Papers.

55. Rpt, HQ, 2nd Mar Div, 5 Oct 1943, sub: Estimate of the Situation – Gilberts, Marine Corps Schools, Record Section, Box 2, World War II Collection, Gilberts and Tarawa, Marine Corps University Archives, Quantico, VA, 14.

56. *Ibid.*, 7, 14.

57. *Ibid.*, 14.

58. *Ibid.*, 13.

59. McKiernan, "Tarawa: The Tide that Failed," 214.

Preliminary naval bombardment of Betio was impressive, “however, it did not materially destroy bunkers along beaches.”<sup>106</sup> Consistent with after action reports following the amphibious landings by elements of the 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division at Makin atoll further north, Navy and Marine commanders recommended that during future assaults, “precision shooting and bombing [should be conducted] over a longer period prior to D-day, [with] all firing vessels moving in closer and closer (with the first wave) on D-day – firing precision point blank until H-hour – then continuing fire on each flank.”<sup>107</sup> A January 1944 report from the Planning Division, Pacific Sector, CINCUS (Commander-in-Chief U.S. Fleet) advised that “naval gunfire preparations for two or three hours is not adequate. This preparation should begin several days prior to D day and should be designed both for destruction and for unrelenting harassing effect.”<sup>108</sup> Additionally, preliminary naval gunfire support should utilize “all possible supporting weapons with a view toward maximum destruction of enemy installations.”<sup>109</sup> The report delves into exhaustive detail concerning proper naval gunfire support for future amphibious assaults, affirming “that preparation fires in GALVANIC should be taken as a minimum standard.”<sup>110</sup>

Attention must be given to the choice and definition of the word “destruction” to describe the type of naval gunfire required as outlined within the reports. Historians Jeter Isely and Philip Crowl explain that ‘destructive fire’ and ‘neutralization fire’ refer to two different types of naval fire support, yet naval bombardment plans for the assault on Betio requested both simultaneously. Neutralizing fire support “is obtained through a huge volume of explosives” and achieved through indiscriminate saturation of a particular area.<sup>111</sup> Through directing fire into seemingly random locations at varying intervals, an attempt is made to prevent the enemy from correctly discerning the next target.<sup>112</sup>

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60. Brief on Tarawa Operation, CINCUS Plans Division, Pacific Section, Records WWII Amphibious Operations 1941-1946, Box 8, RG 38, NACP, 1.

61. Brief of Report of Amphibious Operations for the Capture of the Gilbert Islands, CINCUS Plans Division, Pacific Section, Records WWII Amphibious Operations 1941-46, Box 8, RG 38, NACP, 9,10.; Brief on Tarawa Operation, NACP, 1.

62. Brief of Report of Amphibious Operations for the Capture of the Gilbert Islands, NACP, 8.

63. *Ibid.*, 8.

64. *Ibid.*, 9. A detail this report addresses that is particularly interesting is the admonition that warships armed with 5"/25 guns should not be paired with warships employing 5"/38 guns. The differences in barrel length would affect velocity and the fall of shot, both vitally important for effective gunfire support.

65. Isely and Crowl, *U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 232.

66. Philip A. Crowl and Edmund G. Love, *Seizure of the Gilberts and Marshalls, United States Army in World War II* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1993), 160.

Destructive fire on the other hand is deliberate; pinpointed at specific targets and areas of enemy resistance. The lack of clearly defined terms resulted in haphazard fire support during the bombardment phase at Betio; obtaining neither neutralization nor destruction of Japanese installations. In an ironic twist from British efforts at Gallipoli to conserve ammunition during bombardment, naval gunners sighting-in Betio fired shells too quickly, generating considerable “dust and smoke and [converting] what should have been direct pinpointed fire into radar-controlled indirect area coverage.”<sup>113</sup> Little could have been done in the moment to improve the results of naval gunfire support on D-Day at Betio. Insufficient time allotted for bombardment precluded gun crews from delivering effective, destructive fire.<sup>114</sup> Ideally, precision, point blank fire during initial bombardment, together with transitioning that fire to the flanks as the Marines disembarked from assault craft, not only promised improved destruction of enemy resistance on shore, but further destroyed beach obstacles and detonated mines just ahead of the assault troops.<sup>115</sup> The necessity in future amphibious operations of employing naval gunfire in a destructive manner, rather than to merely neutralize enemy positions, remained at the top of operational lessons learned from the fighting on Betio.<sup>116</sup>

Naval bombardment at Tarawa brought renewed focus upon the *Tentative Manual*'s exhortation concerning sufficient supplies and types of ammunition. Rear Admiral Howard F. Kingman, the naval gunfire support commander for the Betio landings, advocated for larger inventories of armor-piercing shells. Fired from the proper trajectory, armor-piercing shells stood a higher chance of penetrating reinforced-concrete bunkers.<sup>117</sup> The January 1944 CINCUS report discussed above, lists increasing the angle of shell trajectory and employing “direct points of aim in a target vicinity” as two of its top three recommendations derived from study of naval gunfire support at Tarawa.<sup>118</sup>

Recognized during the Tarawa landing was the inter-war understanding that as an amphibious assault progressed, the threat environment naval gunfire had to contend with evolved proportionally. However, at Tarawa, this doctrine was applied poorly with regard to the lifting of naval gunfire. As the Marines arrived at the reef and began disembarkation, the most vulnerable point of their assault, they did not have the benefit of sustained naval gunfire support.

This proved especially costly due to a rare astronomical and environmental phenomenon, not entirely understood until forty-four years after the assault. In

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67. Isely and Crowl, *U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 232-233.

68. Crowl and Love, *Seizure of the Gilberts and Marshalls*, 160.

69. Isely and Crowl, *U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 233.

70. Allan R. Millett, In *Many a Strife: General Gerald C. Thomas and the U.S. Marine Corps 1917-1956* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1993), 227.

71. Isely and Crowl, *U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 233.

72. Brief of Report of Amphibious Operations for the Capture of the Gilbert Islands, NACP, 9.

1987, Donald W. Olsen, professor of physics at Southwest Texas State University, published his findings of a study examining the relationship between the tides at Tarawa and the moon's monthly orbit. Olsen discovered that the day on which the assault on Betio occurred, 20 November, was one of only two days in 1943 "when the moon's apogee" – the farthest distance of the moon from earth during its monthly orbit – "coincided with a neap tide" – which occurs during the moon's first or last quarter where there is the least change between high and low tide.<sup>119</sup> In other words, the tidal range at Betio on D-Day was a matter of inches not feet; the lowest and least changing tide during the entire year.<sup>120</sup> One after action report noted specifically that a forty-five minute delay in H-hour, "caused some lightening of the bombardment which should have reached its greatest intensity while the reef was being crossed."<sup>121</sup> In fact, the last twenty-five minutes of the assault run, witnessed a "near-total curtailment of naval gunfire," allowing the Japanese, dazed but undaunted, to shift reinforcements to the beaches on the north side of the island that they now understood to be the primary landing zones.<sup>122</sup> Without the suppression of Japanese defenses, the first wave of Marines arrived bloodied and disorganized. The second and third waves arrived to find the beaches littered with the dead, dying, and dumfounded who were prevented from maneuvering off the beach due to a sea wall and an increasing storm of lead from small and large caliber weapons. Indeed, most of the casualties sustained by the Marines occurred as they attempted to wade across the reef.<sup>123</sup> With emphasis, the report mentioned above affirms the truth revealed on the cliffs of Gallipoli; troops alone cannot destroy bunkers, let alone close with them, without sustained and accurate fire from supporting warships.<sup>124</sup>

Following the assault, a deeper understanding emerged of the inextricable relationship between naval gunfire support and the necessity of maintaining momentum during an amphibious assault. The lack of destruction wrought by initial bombardment, compounded by curtailment at the most vital moment of landing, greatly impeded the effort of the first wave of Marines to gain a substantial foothold. Historians Jeter Isely and Philip Crowl assigned blame for the loss of momentum during the landing upon the "lack of amphibian tractors...or on the absence of sufficient water over the reef to float landing craft."<sup>125</sup> Unfortunately, Isely and Crowl failed to extended sufficient blame over

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73. Alexander, *Storm Landings*, 53; Alexander, *Utmost Savagery*, 76.

74. Alexander, *Storm Landings*, 53.

75. Brief on Tarawa Operation, NACP, 1.

76. Alexander, "Across the Reef: The Marine Assault of Tarawa, Part I," 11.

77. Brief on Tarawa Operation, NACP, 1. In the run up to the reef, Marine gunners aboard the assaulting LVTs fired 10,000 rounds from their forward facing .50 caliber machine guns. Many died at their positions as the gun mounts lacked protective shield armor.

78. Brief on Tarawa Operation, NACP, 1-2.

79. Isely and Crowl, *U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 235.

the role inconsistent naval gunfire support exercised upon the momentum of the assault. The Tarawa landings demonstrated the imperative need for naval gunfire, both before and during an assault against a defended island, to be lengthy, thorough, and deliberate.<sup>126</sup>

## Conclusion

The carnage at Tarawa came as a terrible shock to the American public. The U.S. Marine Corps had suffered nearly as many casualties during seventy-six hours of fighting on Betio as they had absorbed during six months of fighting on Guadalcanal.<sup>127</sup> In addition to the need for "revision[s] of naval gunfire...support doctrine," Marine commanders petitioned for the "accelerated production of amphibious tractors," as well as numerous other changes to pre-planning intelligence gathering and logistical oversight once amphibious assaults were underway.<sup>128</sup> Close range naval gunfire support, such as what was provided by U.S. destroyers that entered Tarawa's shallow lagoon, was generally hailed as effective, but the timeframe and inaccuracy of preliminary bombardment left much to be desired.<sup>129</sup>

Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill, commander of the Southern Attack Force tasked with capture of Tarawa atoll, remarked following the battle that the landings on Betio, "provided the essential watershed between Gallipoli and the great amphibious landings of 1944-45."<sup>130</sup> Tarawa served as a platform upon which inter-war ideas of amphibious operations were tested and their results adapted or modified in preparation for the amphibious assaults that were still to come, as the United States began the arduous advance toward Japan. American victory at Tarawa validated American amphibious warfare doctrine.<sup>131</sup> Albeit in its infancy, inter-war planning and critical evaluation of past amphibious assaults, laid the ground work for a coherent approach to offensive amphibious warfare, capable of adaptation and criticism, upon which the United States crafted victory in the Pacific.

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80. Alexander, *Utmost Savagery*, 236.

81. Alexander, "Across the Reef: The Marine Assault of Tarawa, Part III," 50. Total U.S. casualties at Tarawa numbered 3,407. Among the Marines who participated in the assault, approximately 19% became casualties, however higher percentages existed among certain units. Of the estimated 4,836 Japanese troops defending Betio, 97% were killed.

82. Millett, "The Development of Amphibious Warfare between the Wars," 172.; Alexander, "Across the Reef: The Marine Assault of Tarawa, Part III," 52.

83. *Ibid.*, 51.

84. Alexander, *Utmost Savagery*, 236.

85. Millett, "The Development of Amphibious Warfare between the Wars," 52.

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## A Comparison of the Exchange of Populations in Greek and Turkish Novels

By Asli Emine Comu\*

*The Exchange of Populations was of great importance for both Greece and Turkey and viewed as a key means of nation-building, especially of homogenizing ethnic diversity in the two states. Over the years historians, researchers, journalists and novelists from both sides of the Aegean have shown interest in the subject and broadened the horizon of the readers on the topic. Despite common features, there are significant differences in literary reception and interpretation of the compulsory population transfer. The views and interpretations of the authors cannot be considered independently of their backgrounds and biases. In connection with this statement, the paper will focus on four novels and their similar and contrasting approaches towards the Exchange of Populations and attempt to present a comparison between Greek and Turkish authors' perceptions of the phenomenon. The paper will also examine the impact of historical circumstances on the forced migration literature.*

### Introduction

The Lausanne Peace Conference opened on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 1922 with the participation of envoys from Great Britain, France, Italy, Greece and Turkey, after the cessation of hostilities between the Greek and Turkish forces in Asia Minor to discuss the fate of the last remnants of the once glorious Ottoman Empire.<sup>1</sup> The victorious commander of the Turkish army in the Greco-Turkish War, İsmet İnönü, was chosen to represent the Turkish delegation, while Eleftherios Venizelos, the most prominent politician of modern Greece, was charged with leading the negotiations on their behalf.

At the conference, İnönü spoke for a country which had risen from being the underdog to victory and he actually endeavored to secure an “honorable peace” based on the National Pact that emphasized complete territorial, political, and economic independence.<sup>2</sup> In other words, with a clean slate, he helped to shape the future of the new Turkish state and release it from the bonds that confined its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire. The large number of questions waiting to be settled in the conference were delegated to three commissions which focused respectively on territorial and military issues, minority regime, and financial and economic problems. The Greek refugee

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1. Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co, 2003), 160-161.

2. Roderic Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923 The Impact of the West* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1990), 211-212.

crisis which was one of the most compelling and urgent problems facing the conference was discussed in the Territorial and Military Commission under the chairmanship of the British representative Lord Curzon between the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1922 and the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 1923, and the compulsory separation of two populations emerged as the best solution to relieve this human catastrophe.<sup>3</sup>

The Exchange of Populations Convention was signed on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 1923. The first article of the convention declared a forced population transfer between Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory, and of Greek nationals of the Muslim religion established in Greek territory. The people subjected to the exchange were not allowed to return to live in Turkey or Greece without the authorization of both contracting states. The migrants were to lose the nationality of the country which they were leaving and were to acquire the nationality of the country of their destination upon their arrival. Only the Greek inhabitants of İstanbul and Muslim inhabitants of Western Thrace were exempted from the scope of the population exchange.<sup>4</sup>

The Convention both had a retrospective and prospective impact by binding the population who had already left and the ones that still remained in Turkey and Greece. Over one million Greeks fled from Turkey and the estimated 800,000 Muslims in Greece had been reduced by half due to prior migrations. "In 1923, it was estimated that 189,916 Greeks in Turkey were subject to exchange and the Turkish population in Greece whose number was estimated at 355,635 was designated for removal under the terms of the Convention."<sup>5</sup> The Exchange of Populations affected the lives of almost 1,6 million people living in both sides of the Aegean, eventually altered the cultural, human and political geography of Macedonia, Thrace and Asia Minor, the former multinational and multireligious provinces of the Ottoman Empire and attained ethnic and social homogeneity by the efforts of the nationalist leaders of the modern age.<sup>6</sup>

The Exchange of Populations is accepted as unique but not without precedent in history. Bulgaria, Greece and the then Ottoman Empire reached consensus on population transfers between their states a decade before 1923. The first agreement related to the population exchange was signed between

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3. Aslı Emine Çomu, *Turks at the Transition from Empire to Republic* (İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2016), 10.

4 The full text of the Convention can be found in *Crossing the Aegean An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange Between Greece and Turkey*, ed. Renée Hirschon (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003), 3-12.

5. Çomu, 13. As mentioned above, these recorded numbers reflect the remaining population subjected to the Exchange of Populations in both countries. The majority of them had already left their places of origins which unofficially initiated the trend of events that led to the Exchange of Populations.

6. Ibid, 14.



Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire in September 1913, which envisaged a population transfer within 15 kilometers of the entire common frontier.<sup>7</sup> A Mixed Commission which was composed both of Bulgarian and Turkish delegates confirmed the status of already migrated population and oversaw the transfer of the remaining inhabitants of Bulgarian and Muslim villages in the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria respectively. As a result, approximately 100,000 people were exchanged between the two states but the appraisal and liquidation of their properties were never carried out.<sup>8</sup>

Another exchange of populations' agreement was planned to be effectuated between Greece and the Ottoman Empire in 1914 after the displacement of almost a quarter of a million Greeks from Eastern Thrace and the Western Anatolian littoral by the Ottoman government which resented the Greek annexation of the Aegean islands along the Anatolian coast. The negotiations discontinued due to the outbreak of the First World War but a partial exchange of populations occurred since 150,000 Muslims left Greece and 250,000 Greeks quitted the Ottoman Empire.<sup>9</sup> Finally, at the end of the Great War, a convention was signed between Bulgaria and Greece at Neuilly-sur-Seine providing for the reciprocal voluntary migration of the racial, religious and linguistic minorities between the two states.<sup>10</sup> Due to its voluntary nature, not that many people applied for migration. However, after the collapse of the Greek forces in Asia Minor in 1922, the life of the Bulgarians living in Greek Macedonia became more precarious and they decided to leave Greece under the terms of the convention.<sup>11</sup>

The exchange of Greek and Turkish populations departs from its precedents by its compulsory and systematic nature. It appeared as the most practical and effective solution to end hostilities between the two contracting states and "to secure the true pacification of the Near East" at the Lausanne Peace Conference.<sup>12</sup> In fact, both sides, Turkey and Greece, were inclined to the idea of compulsory population transfer for their own reasons. Venizelos was in support of the exchange of populations due to the massive Greek refugee influx<sup>13</sup> and the Turkish side approached it as a way to expel of all the

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7. Stephen P. Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1932), 19.

8. Ibid, 19-20.

9. Charles P. Howland, "Greece and Her Refugees" *Foreign Affairs*, 4(1926): 616.

10. J. R. "The Exchange of Minorities and Transfers of Population in Europe since 1919: I," *Bulletin of International News*, 21(1944):579.

11. Ibid, 582-584.

12. Christa Meindersma, "Population Exchanges: International Law and State Practice-Part 1," *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 9(1997) : 340.

13. Onur Yıldırım, *Diplomacy and Displacement Reconsidering the Turco-Greek Exchange of Populations, 1922-1934* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 50.

non-Muslim population in retaliation for "their past mistakes."<sup>14</sup> The Great Powers were also in favor of the population transfer; even Lord Curzon, the head of the British delegation, declined a voluntary exchange on the grounds of the undesired prolongation of the refugee settlement process.<sup>15</sup>

However, the target populations within the scope of the convention were opposed to the fact that they had to leave and were not allowed to return to their hometowns.<sup>16</sup> A group of Turks living in Greece appealed to the Greek government for permission to stay.<sup>17</sup> Some of the would-be refugees in Turkey converted to Islam and a considerable number of non-Muslim women married Muslims in order to avoid the population exchange.<sup>18</sup> As a matter of fact, conversion was not only attractive to Christians but also a group of Cretan Muslims informed the Greek officials about their desire for baptism. Thus they could be registered as Greeks and did not have to depart for Turkey.<sup>19</sup>

Public opinion was so aroused that the Greek and Turkish governments did not want to take the blame and held the other responsible for the human suffering.<sup>20</sup> Finally, delegates at the conference created an air of inevitability about the compulsory nature of the population transfer as Lord Curzon stated "that the solution now being worked out should be the compulsory exchange of populations- a thoroughly bad and vicious solution, for which the world would pay a heavy penalty for a hundred years to come."<sup>21</sup> By ignoring basic human rights, delegates gave priority to state interests and set a dangerous precedent for future ethnic conflicts.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, people subjected to the exchange were given no right to choose and were compelled to submit to the convention, which deepened their trauma of forced migration.

The paper will concentrate on this anguish of forced displacement along with its background which varies widely from Greek to Turkish authors and its emergence as a significant theme on the national literary scene of both Greece and Turkey. The paper will aim to make a comparison on the reception of the subject in the literary community by taking into consideration of four popular novels written by Greek and Turkish authors from the 1960s through the 2010s. The comparison will focus on the expression of grief, migrants'

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14. Ibid, 64.

15. Meindersma, 340-341.

16. Ibid, 341.

17. Yıldırım, 79.

18. Ibid, 107.

19. Bruce Clark, *Twice A Stranger How Mass Expulsion Forged Modern Greece and Turkey* (London: Granta Books, 2006), 158.

20. Meindersma, 341-342.

21. Ibid, 342.

22. Renée Hirschon, " 'Unmixing Peoples' in the Aegean Region" in *Crossing the Aegean An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange Between Greece and Turkey*, ed. by Renée Hirschon (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003), 10.

approach to the compulsory population transfer and the primary adaptive methods that they chose to adapt to their new environments. As a preliminary to the discussion of the subject, it could be stated that the chosen Greek novels appear and are more in nature of personal accounts and memoirs of the authors whereas the Turkish novels blend historical facts with fiction and contain a long narrative full of minute details, which affected the length of the analysis of two sections.

### **The Perception of the Exchange of Populations in Greek Novels**

The Exchange of Populations was one the most traumatic experiences in Greek history. Greece, a small country of less than six million, had to absorb a population of up to 1.3 million people deprived of even the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing and shelter. In addition, Greece had not gone through such an intensive migration flow before 1922. Even though the country had received a high number of refugees from Asia Minor and Thrace after the Balkan Wars, a certain portion of them were repatriated after the Mudros Armistice in 1918.<sup>23</sup> Due to its magnitude, Greece had no chance to renounce this tragedy and no other choice but to face it long before Turkey did.

The first academic works on the Exchange of Populations were mainly written by Greek authors. One of them, Stephen Pericles Ladas, a Greek trademark and copyright lawyer, outlines a bare bones of the compulsory population transfer, carefully observes the diplomatic negotiations at the Lausanne Peace Conference and gives the details of the refugee settlement schemes in his book, *The Exchange of Minorities Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey*, which was published in 1932.<sup>24</sup> In addition, C. G. Tenekides, a Greek lawyer, and Stelio Seferiades, a Greek refugee and later a professor at the University of Athens, wrote on the subject and criticized the compulsory nature of the Exchange of Populations respectively in 1924 and 1928.<sup>25</sup>

Not only the official handling of the population transfer but also the memories of refugees were heeded and a center was established to preserve their cultural heritage in the 1920s. The Centre for Asia Minor Studies holds a valuable oral archive based on the testimonies of 5.000 refugees from all parts

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23. Yıldırım, 88.

24. More information about the book is available in the 'Bibliography' section.

25. Stelio Séfériades, "L'échange des populations," *Académie de Droit International* 24 (1928):307-439; C. G. Ténekides, "Le statut des minorités et l'échange obligatoire des populations gréco-turques," *Revue Générale de Droit International Public*, 31(1924): 72-88.

of Asia Minor.<sup>26</sup> Refugees' reaction to their situation and their state of mind including their psychological and emotional distress can also be observed in the novels, which were initially written by those who personally experienced the agony of displacement. Two of them, *Benden Selam Söyle Anadolu'ya* (Farewell to Anatolia) by Dido Sotiriou<sup>27</sup> and *Yitik Kentin Kırk Yılı* (A Forty Year Commemoration of a Lost Town) by Kosmas Politis<sup>28</sup> which were published in Greece in the 1960s, serve as models for this genre of popular literature.

Dido Sotiriou was a native of Asia Minor who was born in 1909 in the Aegean town of Aydın. She came from a wealthy family who migrated to İzmir after the First World War. But she had to leave for Greece as a result of the defeat of the Greek army in Asia Minor and led a middle class life in Greece due to the loss of family wealth.<sup>29</sup> Her novel, *Benden Selam Söyle Anadolu'ya*, chronicles the life story of the protagonist, a Greek boy called Manolis Anxiotis, from before the Balkan Wars, through the Greek occupation of İzmir, to the Asia Minor Catastrophe in 1922.

Manolis lived in a small Greek village called Kırkica<sup>30</sup> near the ruins of Ephesus in Western Anatolia with his family. Kırkica was a purely Greek village which was founded on a fertile plain endowed with abundant springs and rich flora and fauna.<sup>31</sup> It was surrounded by Turkish villages whose inhabitants had established commercial ties and built strong relations based on mutual trust and respect with the Greeks of Kırkica.<sup>32</sup> Their relationships were described as firm and friendly but they lacked the feeling of brotherhood and affection. The two communities were aware of their differences. In the novel, Turkish landlords lived the life of idleness and debauchery,<sup>33</sup> while those in the Turkish lower classes were described as ignorant and naïve.<sup>34</sup> On

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26. For more information about the Centre for Asia Minor Studies, consult its website <https://bit.ly/3dslFve> (accessed 11 November 2019).

27. The original name of Dido Sotiriou's book is *Matomena Chomata* (Bloodstained Earth). However, it was translated into Turkish under the title *Benden Selam Söyle Anadolu'ya* (Farewell to Anatolia) in 1970.

28. Kosmas Politis book was first published in Greek in 1963 under the title *Stou Hatzifrangou* (At Hatzifrangou). It was republished in 1988 under an extended title *Stou Hatzifrangou Ta Sarantachrona Mias Chamenis Politeias* (At Hatzifrangou A Forty Year Commemoration of a Lost Town), which was also used in the Turkish publication in 1992.

29. Peter Mackridge, "The Myth of Asia Minor in Greek Fiction" in *Crossing the Aegean An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange Between Greece and Turkey*, ed. by Renée Hirschon (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003), 237.

30. Kırkica is today's Şirince, a very popular town of Aegean.

31. Dido Sotiriou, *Benden Selam Söyle Anadolu'ya*, trans. by Attila Tokatlı, 12th ed. (İstanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1996), 12-13.

32. Ibid, 17.

33. Ibid, 23.

34. Ibid, 34.

the other hand, Greeks were presented as shrewd,<sup>35</sup> industrious and the best brains of Asia Minor.<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, love affairs between different communities were not common and they were mostly condemned by society. In the novel, an old Greek man warned the young ones by telling an anecdote of a Greek man and a Turkish woman, who madly fell in love, got married and had a son who was stabbed to death as a result of paying the penalty of his parents.<sup>37</sup> Manolis also had mixed feelings of pity, disgust and fear when he fell in love with a Turkish girl during the First World War, while he was living in the service of a Turkish farmer after he was drafted for forced labor and assigned to a labor battalion.<sup>38</sup>

The distant but respectful relationship of Greeks and Turks began to deteriorate after the Balkan Wars when the Young Turk government tried to incite Turks against Greeks.<sup>39</sup> Turkish hatred intensified after the outbreak of the First World War, mainly due to the efforts of the Germans who were manipulating and guiding the Turks.<sup>40</sup> Turks at the beginning resisted these attempts but they were eventually convinced by the promise of Greek wealth and money.<sup>41</sup> In reprisal, Greeks formed armed bands to protect their communities from Turkish attacks.<sup>42</sup> The Greek occupation of İzmir was the breaking point of Turkish and Greek relations. Greeks were drunk with excitement and they drew a parallel between the arrival of the Greek army and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>43</sup> Their arrival would finally end their five century long enslavement. In the novel, the reader is constantly reminded of the Greek past of Asia Minor. Thus with the Greek occupation these territories were finally returned to their rightful owners. But the tide turned against the Greeks when the Great Powers withdrew all their support and left them on their own. It therefore follows that they could not live together with the Turks as before due to mutual hatred and all kinds of barbarism.<sup>44</sup>

Dido Sotiriou presented the Exchange of Populations as the heaviest price thus far Greeks had paid for their misdeeds. Her protagonist, Manolis, had to leave Asia Minor, the fertile land of his forefathers, with the rest of his countrymen, for the rugged and barren land of Greece. They chased after a dream which was so heavily reliant on the promises of the Great Powers who abandoned them to their fate. Anguish and remorse were the dominant

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35. Ibid, 21.

36. Ibid, 55.

37. Ibid, 26-27.

38. Ibid, 93-95.

39. Ibid, 44.

40. Ibid, 44, 55.

41. Ibid, 61-62.

42. Ibid, 65.

43. Ibid, 135.

44. Ibid, 166-167.

feelings that were sensed at the end of the novel, which reflected the involuntary loss of their ancestral lands.

*Yitik Kentin Kırk Yılı* which was also published during the same period presents a personal account of loss and grief of its author, Kosmas Politis who was born in Athens in 1888. When he was two years old, his family moved to İzmir where he stayed and worked as a clerk in various banks until the collapse of the Greek army in 1922.<sup>45</sup> He was as much a refugee as Dido Sotiriou was and his novel *Yitik Kentin Kırk Yılı* also reflects his ardent yearning for his hometown. The novel centers around the lives of Greeks living in the quarter called Hacifrangu in İzmir at the turn of the twentieth century. The author depicted his hometown, İzmir, as a beautiful and cosmopolitan city with lively streets full of cafes, shops, and vibrant fresh food markets. It was also pictured as a multinational melting pot with an incredible diversity of European, Levantine, Greek, Armenian, Jewish and Turkish cultures.

Politis did not make much room for the Turkish characters in the novel but one of them stood out, the police commissioner Hafız Efendi, who was a migrant from Thessaly and fluent in Greek. After the overthrow of the Ottoman control in that region, his father could only endure Greek rule for three years and eventually left Thessaly for Bursa.<sup>46</sup> Intercommunal relations did not prevail in the novel but in a rare incident, Greek boys were cursed by Turks, mainly by Cretan refugees, while they were passing through the Turkish quarter. Further conflict was prevented by the warning of a Cretan who stated that the harassment of Greeks was forbidden by sultan's order.<sup>47</sup>

In contrast to Turks, a Jewish family, who migrated from Corfu and eventually settled in Hacifrangu played a central role in the novel. Since they spent all of their lives among Greeks and living within that culture, they felt themselves as foreigners in the Jewish quarter.<sup>48</sup> Even though they were accustomed to the Greek culture and fluent in Greek, the only daughter of the family, Perla, stated that she would only marry a Jew despite of her flirting with Greek boys. They were not religious but their customs and rituals commanded them to do so.<sup>49</sup> Towards the end of the novel, Jews were held responsible for the missing of a Greek boy and the Jewish family had to leave the quarter due to hostile and aggressive behavior of the Greeks.<sup>50</sup>

Except for a few occurrences, intercommunal relations were presented as serene but aloof. Turkish and Greek inhabitants of İzmir were similarly quite superstitious and they both made offerings to the statue of the weeping Virgin

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45. Mackridge, 238.

46. Kosmas Politis, *Yitik Kentin Kırk Yılı İzmir'in Hacifrangu Semtinden*, trans. by Osman Bleda, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1994), 29.

47. Ibid, 68.

48. Ibid, 48.

49. Ibid, 82-83.

50. Ibid, 271.

Mary for miracles.<sup>51</sup> However, their expectations about the future were different from each other. Greeks were aware of the Greek past of Asia Minor, thus children were taught the ancient Greek names of the region by their teachers. They were hiding weapons for the *Megali Idea*, the unification of all historical Greek lands, and waited for the resurrection of King Constantine.<sup>52</sup> Although not harassed, they did not feel free under the yoke of Turkish rule.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, Turks resented the autonomy of Crete, which was granted after the Greco-Turkish War of 1897.<sup>54</sup> Most of the Turks were aware of the fact that the course of events was not in favor of the empire but some, like police commissioner Hafız Efendi, believed that Young Turks could change the tide of destiny.<sup>55</sup>

The road to the Exchange of Populations was summarized in a brief interlude. In this section, it was stated that Turks left Asia Minor in the hands of Germans who promised to cleanse these territories of the Greek population. They were successful at inciting Turks against Greeks who were assigned to labor battalions and endured horrible conditions during the First World War.<sup>56</sup> In the author's view, the Great Powers were to the main cause of the Asia Minor Catastrophe as they did not feel pity for the land and its inhabitants and had sent the Greek forces, foreigners, who seemed to have no palpable connection with the land.<sup>57</sup> Turks showed respect to Greeks prior to the hatred and armed conflicts but everything changed after that because the Greeks took up arms against their homeland and were eventually labeled as traitors.<sup>58</sup> The interlude closed with the burning of İzmir, which marked the end of the Greek presence in Asia Minor.

Both Sotiriou and Politis described the mutual relations between Greeks and Turks as respectful, trusting but also distant. They seemed to have maintained tolerance to each other. The crucial turning point in their relations was the interference of the Great Powers, who pursued their own interests. Germans lured Turks with prospects of Greek wealth and Britain and France promised Greeks the land of their forefathers. Mutual relations deteriorated to such a point that coexistence was no longer possible. Greeks were aware of their misdeeds but tried to justify their acts by emphasizing their centuries-long ties to Asia Minor. The novels were filled with regret and yearning but also reflected the heavy burden of forced migration as the incomparable price they paid for their wrongdoings. The longing for homeland was prevalent in

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51. Ibid, 106-107.

52. Ibid, 91.

53. Ibid, 191.

54. Ibid, 140.

55. Ibid, 32.

56. Ibid, 169.

57. Ibid, 170-171.

58. Ibid, 168.

the novels since they were written by those who personally experienced the forced separation and resettlement. The genuine feeling of loss was strong enough to evoke the sympathy and emotions of readers.

### **The Perception of the Exchange of Populations in Turkish Novels**

The Exchange of Populations was one of the largest Turkish migration flows towards Asia Minor in the twentieth century. However, besides its compulsory nature, it was not unique; thus it did not excite some kind of uncommon attention and a spirit of extraordinary compassion. This seems to be related to the fact that the Ottoman Empire had turned into an asylum for Muslim migrants and refugees starting from the second half of the nineteenth century. Due to the Russian advance on Crimea and the Caucasus, hundreds of thousands of Muslims were forced to leave their hometowns and seek refuge in Ottoman lands. Approximately 1.5 million people, mostly Tatars, Circassians and Abkhazians fled to the empire under desperate conditions.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, the rise of nation-states on former Ottoman territory in the Balkans generated another migration and 800,000 refugees arrived in the empire in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, 413,922 Muslims found shelter in the empire after the Balkan Wars of 1912-13.<sup>60</sup>

The Exchange of Populations could be accepted as a continuation of the former Muslim migrations, but nevertheless it received enough attention from official circles. The influx of Muslim migrants was seen "as a factor strengthening the cohesion and homogeneity of the Turkish nation."<sup>61</sup> The main purpose of the population exchange as stated by Şükrü Kaya, the then Minister of Internal Affairs, in 1931, was,

The primary debt of a nation, the highest duty of a government is to assure the unity of a nation within its country. The basis of the convention of population exchange implemented in Lausanne is related with this object and formed for this object.<sup>62</sup>

Therefore, the migrants subjected to the Exchange of Populations were planned to be integrated into Turkish society and they were expected to share the

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59. Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Turks An Introductory History to 1923* (London: Longman, 1997), 336-337.

60. Ahmet Akgündüz, "Migration to and from Turkey, 1783-1960: Types, Numbers and Ethno- Religious Dimensions," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 24 (1998): 99.

61. Erol Ülker, "Assimilation of the Muslim Communities in the First Decade of the Turkish Republic (1923-1934)," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* [Online], <http://7ejts.revues.org/index822.html>.

62. Ibid.



common identity of Turkish citizens. Their distinct characteristics were to be eliminated and blended into the whole. Most importantly, they were included into the scope of the campaign, *Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş* (Citizen, Speak Turkish) because a majority of them could not speak Turkish, which caused disappointment in some politicians.<sup>63</sup> As a result, government policies succeeded in homogenizing the population and migrants' peculiarities eventually wore off.

The obscurity of migrants was also reflected in academic studies, which treated the Exchange of Populations as an ordinary migration flow until the 1990s. One of the first books which was particularly focused on the Exchange of Populations was written by Kemal Arı in 1995. In his book, *Büyük Mübadele Türkiye'ye Zorunlu Göç* (The Great Exchange of Populations Compulsory Migration to Turkey), he presented a detailed examination of the forced migration and its economic and political repercussions in Turkey. His book created a revival of interest in the subject and various books, theses, dissertations and, to a lesser degree, articles have been written on the subject since 1995. Oral history studies and compilations of memoirs of the first generation of migrants also became common. Kemal Yalçın's *Emanet Çeyiz* (Entrusted Dowry) and İskender Özsoy's *İki Vatan Yorgunları* (The Exhausted of the Two Homelands) stand as the two most cited examples of this genre. Furthermore, a non-governmental organization called *Lozan Mübadilleri Vakfı* (The Foundation of Lausanne Treaty Emigrants) was founded by mainly second generation of migrants in 2001 in order to create greater awareness among the public of the subject. For this purpose, the foundation has organized various conferences and workshops and issued many publications on the topic.<sup>64</sup>

In addition to academic studies, literary works also showed an increase during the same period. References to the Exchange of Populations were very few and mostly indirect until 1960.<sup>65</sup> However, starting from the 1990s, quite a number of novels have been published on the subject. Some of them were written by the second and third generation of migrants as in the form of

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63. Çomu, 196-197. The main target of the campaign was the assimilation of non-Muslim minorities to the majority language community. However, "this movement incited other Turkish speakers to closely watch and listen to their fellow citizens to detect and condemn any use of a non-Turkish language." [Senem Aslan, " "Citizen, Speak Turkish!": A Nation in the Making," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 2(2007): 246.]

64. For more information about the foundation, consult its website <https://bit.ly/2ABkLhk> (accessed 18 October 2019).

65. Hercules Millas, "The Exchange of Populations in Turkish Literature: The Undertone of Texts" in *Crossing the Aegean An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange Between Greece and Turkey*, ed. by Renée Hirschon (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003), 221.

collecting family records and blending them with fiction in their writing.<sup>66</sup> Other authors with no migrant past, showed interest in the topic due to its tragic and romantic aspects. Two recent publications, *Mor Kaftanlı Selanik* (Thessaloniki in Purple Caftan) by Yılmaz Karakoyunlu and *Bir Avuç Mazi* (A Handful of Past) by Fügen Ünal Şen, which were both published in 2012, will be discussed in this section.

Yılmaz Karakoyunlu was born in a family from Diyarbakır in 1936 in İstanbul. Besides his career as a novelist, he is a politician and a former member of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. His book, *Mor Kaftanlı Selanik* is a compilation of stories from various parts of Turkey and Greece, mainly from İzmir, Tekirdağ, Thessaloniki, Drama and Rethymno, to reflect the impact of the Exchange of Populations on both sides of the Aegean. It not only includes the psychological distress of migrants related to their forced displacement but it also reflects the official procedure behind the compulsory population transfer through the imaginary conversations between Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his friend and head of the Turkish delegation to Lausanne, İsmet İnönü and also between Eleftherios Venizelos and his friend Aristeidis Stergiadis, the Governor-General of İzmir from 1919 to 1922.

The book covers a period longer than a year starting from the pre-Lausanne days to the arrival of the first migrant groups to their new places of residence. All the characters from different cities were subjected to the compulsory exchange and they all reacted to their departure with an equal measure of sadness and gloom. The married couple from İzmir, Eleni and Philip, were quite reluctant to leave but they were aware that the dreadful acts of the past would not let them live peacefully as before.<sup>67</sup> Even though the Great Fire of İzmir was mentioned briefly in the book,<sup>68</sup> it seems that this catastrophe did not have a direct effect on their house, which they entrusted to their Turkish neighbors who came to bid farewell in tears.<sup>69</sup>

In Drama, while Hasan Hodja was waiting for his departure, he had a long conversation with his childhood friend, Sokratis, who told him that everything had turned upside down for Turks and Greeks when Thessaloniki was captured by Greece in 1912. A state of fear had grown between them, which was used as a trigger for ethnic conflict.<sup>70</sup> Sokratis was also deeply touched by the leaving of his friend and said that it deeply hurt him to expel those who also belonged to that land.<sup>71</sup> In Tekirdağ, the Exchange of

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66. Kemal Arı, "Türk Roman ve Öyküsünde "Mübadele," *Atatürk ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi Dergisi*, I (2017): 23.

67. Yılmaz Karakoyunlu, *Mor Kaftanlı Selanik Bir Mübadele Romanı* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2012), 119-120.

68. Ibid, 19.

69. Ibid, 123-124.

70. Ibid, 60.

71. Ibid, 143.

Populations also came as a shock and despair for Greeks who would be deported to Greece under the terms of the Convention. Barba and Eva, the married owners of a tavern, refused to leave their homeland and stated that neither Athens nor Ankara cared about the migrants.<sup>72</sup> Markos, an old and wealthy Greek whose family migrated to Tekirdağ almost a century ago reacted more fiercely to the compulsory population transfer and chose to hang himself instead of leaving his home.<sup>73</sup> Barba and Eva were luckier than Markos because their Turkish friend, Captain İhsan, registered them as migrants from Alexandroupolis-which in reality was not included in the scope of the Exchange of Populations- and they managed to stay in Turkey after taking their new Turkish names, Bahri and Havva.<sup>74</sup>

In Rethymno, Muslims reacted violently to their departure<sup>75</sup> and one of the main Turkish characters of the novel, Şerife, stayed in Rethymno, her homeland, after her marriage to Vasili, her childhood Greek friend from the neighborhood.<sup>76</sup> This was not the only example of the interethnic marriages. Halil, who was among the Turks that left Drama, married his beloved Sofia, who secretly followed the Turkish company along their journey to Turkey.<sup>77</sup> In another story, Şevket Bey, who was sent to exile in Thessaloniki by Sultan Abdülhamit II, believed that if the sultan had remained as the ruler of the country, they would not have been forced to leave.<sup>78</sup> Despite his rather short stay in Thessaloniki, it is obvious that he had developed strong bonds with the city. At the end of the novel, some of the main characters, such as Hasan Hodja, Şevket Bey, Barba and Eva came together in Tekirdağ, at the Şarköy Migrant Distribution Center.<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, Eleni was resettled in Şerife's quarter in Rethymno. She arrived at Crete without her husband, Philip, who could not endure the hard voyage and the agony of being forced to leave his homeland.<sup>80</sup>

The emergence of the Exchange of Populations was told through the conversations of the statesmen who were held responsible for the forced displacement. The novel also made references to the homelands of both Atatürk and Venizelos. Atatürk was born in Thessaloniki and his mother and sister suffered the hardship of the migration.<sup>81</sup> Conversely, Venizelos was

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72. Ibid, 72.

73. Ibid, 239.

74. Ibid, 367.

75. Ibid, 267.

76. Ibid, 413.

77. Ibid, 366.

78. Ibid, 31.

79. Ibid, 378.

80. Ibid, 197,263.

81. Ibid, 21.

raised in Chania and had many Turkish friends when he was a child.<sup>82</sup> Even though the author accepted the responsibility of both Turks and Greeks in the Exchange of Populations, he was inclined to give a greater share of the blame to the Greek side. In the novel, İsmet Pasha was strictly against the idea of forced displacement and stated that Venizelos' plan was about accepting all the artisans and merchants of the Ottoman Empire into his borders.<sup>83</sup> Atatürk's real intention was not clearly revealed but he was more inclined to the idea of forced migration since he ordered İsmet Pasha to finalize the Exchange of Populations Convention at Lausanne without delay.<sup>84</sup> Greeks were presented as the ones who were paying the price for their greed and evil ways. Aristeidis Stergiadis told Venizelos that they were not satisfied with their acquisitions after the Balkan Wars and they ambitiously demanded more. The British forces were weary and the British government rather sent Greeks to Asia Minor by manipulating their greed and ambition. They were successful; but Greeks had to endure the shame of the Asia Minor Catastrophe.<sup>85</sup> Venizelos also accepted the guilt of their actions during the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922, which was presented as the main cause of the compulsory population transfer by the author.<sup>86</sup>

In the novel, the leaving of homelands was presented as a heavy burden which became difficult to carry especially for the migrants who ended their lives or died of the stress caused by being forced to depart their homes. Nevertheless, most of the migrants felt motivated and hopeful about the future. They realized the bitter fact that no turning back was possible for them, so they were ready and able to say farewell to their past and embrace their new lives. Their loss made their hearts heave in constant agony but they gradually learned to deal with it. The novel ends with positive and encouraging remarks about the future potential of migrants on both sides of the Aegean.

In contrast to Karakoyunlu, Fügen Ünal Şen, a journalist and a third generation migrant, preferred to focus on the story of just one Turkish migrant family and pointed out the financial and emotional damage they suffered during their forced displacement in her book, *Bir Avuç Mazi*. Fethi Bey was the head of the family who was born and raised in Elassona (Alasonya), Greece. He married Cevriye and they had two daughters, Şehbal and İkbâl the latter of whom recently married Sami, the son of a wealthy cloth merchant from Thessaloniki. Two storylines alternate in the text one of which centers on the last days of the family in Elassona in May 1924, the other is about their

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82. Ibid, 33.

83. Ibid, 29,44.

84. Ibid, 75.

85. Ibid, 101.

86. Ibid, 182-183.

journey from their arrival port in Turkey, Mersin, to their new home in the Cilician town of Dörtyol.

The Turkish population living in Ellassona had firm bounds with their homeland but during their last days in the town a climate of fear was prevalent among them. Especially after the Balkan Wars, Turks suffered from the pillage, murder and incendiary acts of Greeks, from which Fethi Bey and his family were saved with the help of his close friend Niko.<sup>87</sup> But still they felt the pain of leaving their home in their hearts. They were also struck with a startling sense of unfamiliarity. They no longer belonged to the place they would leave, nor did they belong to Turkey. For İkbâl, Turkey was a strange land; thus nobody could force them to settle there.<sup>88</sup> They bemoaned the fact that no one had asked them whether they wanted to stay. If they did, they would probably stay despite the constant fear, uncertainty and turmoil.<sup>89</sup> However, Fethi Bey saw the Exchange of Populations as the invitation of Mustafa Kemal; therefore they had to go because Mustafa Kemal had requested them to do so.<sup>90</sup>

Before their departure, a Greek woman with her baby was settled in their home in Ellassona.<sup>91</sup> She was subjected to the Exchange of Populations just as they were. Her name was Mitra and she was from a Thracian village called Kalikratya in close vicinity to İstanbul.<sup>92</sup> Mitra could not speak Greek, which created doubt about her Greekness among Greek officials. On the other hand, the majority of the Turkish population living in Ellassona could only speak Greek, which caused them to be labeled as Greek descendants in Turkey.<sup>93</sup> The author described both the Greek and Turkish migrants in the same way: "they were so exhausted, so lonely and so foreign."<sup>94</sup> In this way, a connection was forged between the Greek and Turkish migrants who were united by the same fate and bound together on a journey to unknown places. But on the other hand, their foreignness was evident in Turkey. Besides their lack of Turkish fluency, there were notable differences among them especially between native and migrant Turkish women. Whereas the migrant women were not hiding from men, the natives were confined to indoors.<sup>95</sup>

In the novel, the family realized that they had no choice but to leave. Thus, they convinced themselves that they had better forget their hometown

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87. Fügen Şen Ünal, *Bir Avcı Mazi Bir Mübadele Romanı* (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2012), 61.

88. Ibid, 16.

89. Ibid, 17, 41.

90. Ibid, 17.

91. Ibid, 21.

92. Ibid, 70.

93. Ibid, 52.

94. Ibid, 19, 24.

95. Ibid, 125.

as soon as possible because the wound inflicted upon their soul would kill them slowly.<sup>96</sup> On the night before their departure, Cevriye took a handful of soil from her garden in Ellassona, wrapped it in a cloth and carried it in her bosom through her journey to Turkey. She squeezed it every time she needed strength.<sup>97</sup> When they reached their new home in Dörtyol, she found a green sprout in the soil, which she mixed with the earth of her new garden. This fragile sprout was a souvenir from her former home, which helped her to embrace her new life.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, even though they were devastated about leaving their former homes behind, they were optimistic about their new life and had a sense of hope for the future.

Fügen Ünal Şen's novel bears certain similarities with *Mor Kaftanlı Selanik*. The pain of separation from home was also so intensely felt that people chose to take their own life rather than having to face the sorrow of leaving. In *Bir Avuç Mazi*, Sami's father, Tevfik Bey, shot himself due to the suffering caused by the compulsory population exchange.<sup>99</sup> Additionally, conversion to Islam was also acknowledged as an effort to be exempted from the forced population transfer. In the novel, Mitra's brother, Yannis, took the Turkish name Ahmet and expected to be resettled in his village, Kalikratya, in the disguise of a complete stranger.<sup>100</sup> Amicable interethnic relations were also mentioned through the firm friendship of Fethi Bey and Niko based on years of close personal association. Even inter-communal marriages between Turks and Greeks were existent in the novel. Cevriye's sister Cemile eloped with Gregori and eventually had a son called Aleko.<sup>101</sup> Gregori left his wife Cemile dying after being shot while she was warning Turkish villages against the attacks of Greek armed bands in 1912.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, even though strong interethnic ties in the form of close friendships existed, the fragile and volatile nature of these relations was implied to be vulnerable to prejudice and political emotion. Greeks were also held responsible for the shift in the reciprocal relations into a more negative direction.

However, most importantly, both Karakoyunlu and Ünal Şen depicted a future full of hope for their characters. Even though migrants grieved the loss of their hometowns, they adjusted themselves relatively easily to the change and quickly adapted to their new lives. In these novels hope was a more dominant feeling than despair, longing and regret. Since these novels were written long after the implementation of the Exchange of Populations, authors had a chance to examine the integration process of Turkish migrants into

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96. Ibid, 98-99.

97. Ibid, 187.

98.. Ibid, 254-255.

99. Ibid, 220.

100. Ibid, 194.

101. Ibid, 198.

102. Ibid, 200.

Turkish society. On the other hand, both of the authors did not personally experience the forced population transfer, so their narrative fell short of reflecting the anguish of experience. Despite their initial reactions including anger, disapproval and disappointment at forced displacement, the Exchange of Populations gradually appeared as a reasonable and acceptable solution for the migrant community.

### Conclusion

The Exchange of Populations was one of the many tragic episodes in Turkish and Greek history that affected the lives of almost 1,6 million people who endured the pain, hardship and fear of forced migration. It was also a strong subject with dramatic potential that fostered a considerable growth of interest and popularity in literary circles. Its popularity is still on the rise after new publications of many existing books, some of which have kept their best seller position such as *Benden Selam Soyle Anadolu'ya*. The subject is particularly attractive to those primarily interested in tracing their family history and others who want to learn more about the nation building process in both countries.

The Exchange of Populations occurred after the disastrous defeat of the Greek Army in Asia Minor which is known as the Asia Minor Catastrophe. But, on the other hand, it materialized after the Turkish War of Independence resulted in a clear Turkish victory over the Greek forces. Therefore, the approaches to the forced migration differed in the two countries due to different perceptions of shared historical events. The Greek side saw it as the heavy burden of their failures and mistakes and they recounted their wrongdoings as well as suffering in the form of a personal testimony. Their narratives only focused on their former lives in Asia Minor and comprised no information about their adaptation in Greece. However, the Turkish side approached the subject as a necessary preliminary stage in the formation of the new Turkish republic. Turkish authors were aware of the official procedure by making research on the subject and referring to the memoirs of the first generation of migrants. They fused fiction with reality and mentioned interethnic marriages and Christian and Muslim conversion efforts as methods of avoiding forced deportation. These were presented as rare exceptions in order to add another dose of tragedy to the subject. Finally they reached the conclusion that despite their initial misery, migrants were content with their lives in Turkey and remained hopeful about their future by focusing on the present and not dwelling on the past.

In the Greek novels, refugees mourned for the loss of the land of their forefathers. They genuinely regretted throwing themselves into a venture with the support of the Great Powers and becoming susceptible to every kind of

evil, which led to their final separation from the almost sacred land of Asia Minor. In addition, their belonging to this land defined their distinct identity and complicated their integration into Greek society. On the other hand, Turkish migrants had a historic bond with the land but this bond was only consolidated with the existence of Turkish rule. The former migrations of their kinsmen from the Balkans could be accepted as a proof for this statement that they belonged to these territories for as long as the Turks were the rulers. Therefore, migrating to Turkey seemed as a logical solution for the majority of them which eased the pain of leaving their homes behind. This thought also precipitated their integration process in Turkey.

On the subject of the interethnic relations, the Greek novels approach was quite different to the Turkish ones. Greco-Turkish relations were depicted as smooth but distant by Greek authors who created an air of sufferance and implied that Greeks were groaning under the yoke of the Turkish rule. They had chosen to tolerate Turks until the day of their salvation. However, from the Turkish standpoint, interethnic relations were quite peaceful and amicable until the annexation of a large piece of Ottoman territory in the Balkans by Greece in 1912. The Balkan Wars actually marked a huge turning point in the relations between two communities when Greeks became more aggressive and violent and made the lives of Turks unbearable. In a way, Turkish authors were also pointing at Greeks as responsible for ending the possibility of their coexistence.

As a final remark, the Exchange of Populations was accepted as the best solution to the problem of Greco-Turkish conflict through homogenizing territories of both nations with the approval of the Great Powers. As mentioned before, state interests were given priority over individual human rights at the Lausanne Peace Conference and people were given no chance but to leave and to obey the convention. The novels are filling in the sparse discourse on issues related to the misery and distress of migrants especially in Turkey where they remained silent for years. These literary works also played a major role in creating a distinct identity for these migrants by identifying them with Greek ones who also endured the same journey of forced migration. Despite remaining in the background for the most part, Turkish migrants were given a separate status, which distinguished them from the rest of the Muslim and Turkish migrants in Turkey.<sup>103</sup>

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103. In Turkey, people who had migrated to the country from the Balkans or the Caucasus are generally known as *muhacir*. However, the second and third generation of those who were subjected to the Exchange of Populations, prefer to call themselves as *mübadil*, in order to underline their difference.



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## **From Anomansa to Elmina: The Establishment and the Use of the Elmina Castle – From the Portuguese to the British**

*By Peter Kwame Womber\**

*The objective of this article is to trace the genesis of the foundation of Elmina, the establishment of the Elmina Castle, the initial purpose(s) for the building of the castle, and other issues such as socio-economic that took place. By this, the article examines the presence of the Europeans in Elmina (on the Guinea Coast), the genesis of the establishment of the Elmina Castle, and how the British eventually took over the Elmina Castle. From the historical background of Elmina (Edina, or Anomansa), the political organization, economics, and culture, the paper has been limited and focused on the coming of the Europeans (Portuguese early exploratory activities and some other reasons), and the building of the Elmina castle. This paper has also discussed into detail, the transfer of the castle from one European power to the other till the British era. It has considered the rivalry that existed between the Europeans (specifically, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English), the European-Local relation, the activities of which the Elmina Castle was used for, and the general impacts of the Castle on the lives of the people of Elmina and the Guinea Coast in general.*

### **Introduction**

The Elmina Castle in the Central Region of Ghana is the first castle built by the Europeans (the Portuguese) on their arrival at the then Guinea Coast or Gold Coast.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the establishment of the castle was initially for commercial purposes.<sup>2</sup> However, with time, the purpose for which the castle was built was shifted to something else. As time went by, the Portuguese who had held a monopoly of the Elmina (originally called “Anomansa”) and her surrounding villagers could not enjoy their monopoly due to the influx of other European countries. The questions that come to mind are: why did the purpose of the establishment of the castle abolish? Why were other European countries so interested in that particular site? What was the relationship between the indigenes and the various European countries who came to occupy Elmina? These and other intriguing questions have resulted in this article.

In an attempt to discuss the issue at hand, I have, first and foremost, traced the historical foundation of Elmina (from its original name to current); the economic activities that the indigenous people engaged in before the arrival of the Europeans; the activities that went on during the presence of the Europeans; the

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1. "Elmina Castle," Easy Track Ghana, <https://bit.ly/3cdb9Xh>.

2. Bryan Hill, "Elmina Castle and Its Dark History of Enslavement, Torture, and Death," Ancient Origins (Ancient Origins, March 19, 2020), <https://bit.ly/3deCJVp>.

rivalries that existed between the European countries; and some benefits gained by both the indigenous people and the Europeans.

### The Founding of Elmina

Elmina, Edina, Anomansa, or Amankwaa Kurom are all names of one ancient town in today's modern Ghana. The Elmina or Edina town dates back 1300s.<sup>3</sup> History has it that three cousins, Takyi, Sama, and Kwaa Amankwaa, allegedly migrated from WALATA Empire in ancient Mali<sup>4</sup> with their people, settled briefly at *Obutokur* (now Takyiman in the Brong Ahafo Region) and finally wandered down to Eguafo, a village about 20 km from Elmina. We are told that among these three cousins, Kwaa Amankwaa was the most legendary hunter. One day, in his hunting expedition, he got lost. To the works of the *gods*, one can say that Kwaa Amankwaa's lost was symbolical. His fate was to be determined by his Creator. As history has it, his desire to find his way home was temporarily halted for a search of water to quench his thirst. He accidentally found water at a spot. We are told that the more he drank the water, the more it came in, so he called the area *Anomansa* ("inexhaustible water"), which became the name of the town before the European presence on the Guinea Coast.<sup>5</sup>

History has it that, later, Amankwaa followed the water downstream and discovered a lagoon. Overexcited, he exclaimed, "Be enya!" ("I have got it") which has since been the name of the lagoon. Amankwaa later found his way back to Eguafo. He returned to Anomansa with his people to settle there. It is said that the original township was just a strip of land about a mile directly opposite the site of the Elmina Castle, which was then a huge rock the town people perceived to be a sacred abode of some gods of the land Coast.<sup>6</sup>

Since Amankwaa was the founder of the area and because it was the practice, whenever people from the nearby village visited or went to trade there, they said they were going to *Amankwaa Kurom* ("Amankwaa's village"). To them, the town was known as such. As the town's population increased, Kwaa Amankwaa was installed the chief to see to the welfare of the people. This shows that, politically, the people of Anomansa were organized. They now have a leader to take up

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3. Steven A. Wilson, "St. George Castle," Elmina Castle - Easy Track Ghana, accessed May 29, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2zJEhs7..>

4. Mark Cartwright, "Mali Empire," Ancient History Encyclopedia (Ancient History Encyclopedia, May 25, 2020), [https://www.ancient.eu/Mali\\_Empire/](https://www.ancient.eu/Mali_Empire/); J.Ki-Zerbo (ed.), *UNESCO General History of Africa, Vol. IV, Abridged Edition* (California: University of California Press, 1998); Manuel Campagnoli, "Ghana and Mali," Walata, accessed May 29, 2020, [http://www.walata.org/eng/itinerar\\_3.htm](http://www.walata.org/eng/itinerar_3.htm).

5. A. Ashun, *Elmina, the Castle and the Slave Trade* (Cape Coast: Nyakod Printing Works, 2004), 1.

6. Ibid, 2.

executive, judicial, legislative, and religious functions. King Kwaa Amankwaa had a military unit known as the *Asafo*. The security of the people and the state were in the hands of the king, who discharged this obligation through the various *Asafo* companies (in ten divisions with specific roles). The *Asafo* could be described to be the embodiment of all the security agencies we know of today. During wars, the *Asafo* played a particular role just like the army, air force and navy when attempting to defeat an enemy or invader. The *Elminians* on a religious basis celebrates festivals. They have the *Edina Bakatue* (celebrating the opening of the Benya lagoon on first Tuesday of July) and *Edina Bronya* (Edina Christmas, celebrated from the first Thursday to the Saturday of January in the New Year). We can testify to these facts at hand that the local people were or are well organized before the coming of the Europeans.<sup>7</sup>

The populace of Elmina is into all types of business activities including buying and selling, running provision shops (both wholesale and retail), and chiefly and currently the making of salt, fishing, and fish smoking on commercial levels. However, up until this time of commerce, the people who lived in the past were hugely into agriculture, not necessarily for a business venture but for domestic purposes.

With its natural bay as described by the Arabs in about 1400s as *Al mina*, the then Anomansa, as the town was called, gradually metamorphosed into what we now call Elmina. With its natural harbour, many fishermen from different places in Ghana do fishing businesses in Elmina. At one moment, it is acknowledged that not less than 70% of the populace of Anomansa, at the time the Ashun (2004) wrote his account, were fishermen.<sup>8</sup> The rest of the population did their own little daily local jobs to survive or to support their basic needs. Currently, we can say the same issue about the people of Anomansa. Due to the relatively increasing rate of formal education, and handcrafts, the majority, especially the youth, have found different minor businesses (i.e. selling of computers, phone and accessories, provision shops, Masson, carpentry, vulcanizing, etc.) to keep life going.

### **The Early Exploratory Activities of the Portuguese, Factors That Motivated Them and the Establishment of the Elmina Castle**

Elmina Castle is well known as the premier construction built by the early Europeans in tropical Africa. It is recorded by DeCorse (2001, I) that in about 1550-1637, the castle was renovated and or expanded by the Portuguese. Its

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7. A. Ashun, *Elmina, the Castle and the Slave Trade* (Cape Coast: Nyakod Printing Works, 2004), 2, 8-10; "Edina Bakatue Festival," Visit Ghana, June 28, 2019, <https://visitghana.com/attractions/edina-bakatue-festival>.

8. A. Ashun, *Elmina, the Castle and the Slave Trade* (Cape Coast: Nyakod Printing Works, 2004), 2.



Cape Bojador, which had been previously doubled by some Norman adventurers, who are said to have traced the African coast as far as south as Sierra Leon. Prince Henry anxious to secure the crown of Portugal the advantages, which he foresaw must arise from these discoveries, obtained from Pope Martin V a grant assigning to Portugal all lands or islands which had been or might be discovered between Bojador and the East Indies. The spirit of the age led the sovereigns of Europe to respect this grant for a time, and secured to Portugal the exclusive right of trading the coast.<sup>11</sup>

In 1441, Antonio Gonzales and Nuno Tritan examined the coast as far as Sierra Leone, beyond which it does not appear that the Portuguese had penetrated at the death of the Prince in 1463. According to Cruickshank, during the reign of Alphonzo in 1469, Fernando Gomez gave the trade of the coast of Guinea for rent of five hundred *ducats*, obliging himself to extend the discovery of the coast five hundred leagues during the period of his exclusive privilege. Cruickshank remarks that it is probably owing to this monopoly that we have no detailed accounts of progressive discovery from the time of Prince Henry's death until the accession of John II to the throne in 1482, during which period the whole coast of Guinea, with the Bights of Benin and Biafra, had been visited by the Portuguese.<sup>12</sup>

At this stage, we shall consider the presence of the Portuguese in Elmina, on the coast of Guinea. Elmina Castle, as the fortress eventually came to be known, played a crucial role in Portuguese attempts to monopolise the trade in coastal Ghana.<sup>13</sup> We also learn from Cruickshank that King John, alive to the advantages of the African trade, determined still further to secure and protect it, by forming establishments on the coast; and with this view, he sent out an expedition under the commander of Don Diego d'Azambuja, at the commencement of his reign. It consisted of a squadron of ten caravels and two means of transport, with five hundred soldiers and two hundred labourers. They landed at Elmina, the *mines*, upon the Gold Coast, which had been selected for this purpose, and they were prepared to carry out their intentions of building a fortification by force if the African King should seek to oppose them. We are told that the debarkation was effected with a great deal of ceremonial pomp. The Portuguese marched to the local village, unfurled the royal banner of Portugal upon a high tree, placed an altar under its shade, celebrated mass and offered up prayers for the speedy conversion of the Africans and the prosperity of the church about to be erected.<sup>14</sup>

From this point, we notice that the natives, accustomed to seeing the Portuguese arrive upon their coast in the simple guise of traders, were not

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11. Ibid, 14-15.

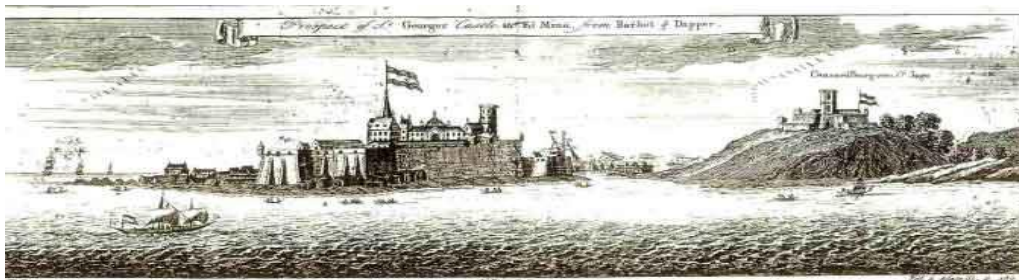
12. Ibid, 15-16.

13. R. C. DeCorse, *An Archaeology of Elmina* (Washington and London: Smithsonian, 2001), 7.

14. B. Cruickshank, *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa, Volume 1*(2nd Ed.) (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1966), 16-17.

prepared for this display of power, which they perceived with great distrust. The King, Camaianca (others render the name as Caramansa or Kwamena Ansa) objected to the establishment of a permanent settlement and does not seem to have yielded anything like a cordial assent when they commenced building their fortification. Overawed, however, by the superiority of the Europeans, Camaianca did not resort to any forcible opposition, until the Portuguese labourers began to quarry a rock, which the Africans considered sacred. Then they had recourse to arms. Several of the workmen were wounded, and Azambuja, who appears to have acted with great discretion, had much difficulty in appeasing them, which he preferred to do employing presents and excuses rather than to resort to force, rightly judging that their future intercourse would be rendered more agreeable by such forbearance.<sup>15</sup>

We become aware that it is very evident, however, that this, the first European settlement on the Coast of Guinea, was established in opposition to the wishes of the local Africans. The fort, which was built with great expedition, received the name of St. George; and Azambuja, after a government of two years and a half, returned to Portugal. At this juncture, we have been able to trace the genesis of the Elmina Castle. Other settlements were formed at different points of the coast and forts built. But it was not until Columbus had given a new world to Spain that the great importance of these African settlements was fully acknowledged.<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 2.** *Anquandah, J, Castles, and Forts of Ghana, Ghana Museums & Monuments Board/Atalante, undated: 2000? (With fine photographs by Thierry Secretan) 59* (of Elmina Castle, quoting Jean Barbot, 1682): This castle has justly become famous for beauty and strength, having no equal on all the coasts of Guinea. Built square with very high walls of dark brown stone so very firm that it may be said to be cannon-proof (Source: [kwekudee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot.com](http://kwekudee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot.com))

Anquandah also says that the Portuguese were the first to have founded the Castle “Sao Jorge da Mina” in 1482. It is acknowledged that “Sao Jorge da Mina” was established by the Portuguese to protect the land endowed with gold discovered by the Portuguese in about 1482. By 1486, the castle had been fully

15. Ibid, 17-18.

16. Ibid, 18.



constructed with its original plan intact. Since the construction of this building was its first kind on the “discovered” land, it (the castle) made the town now known as Elmina appeared as a city or citadel.<sup>17</sup>



**Figure 3.** St. George's Castle (Elmina Castle), Elmina [1482]

Source: <https://bit.ly/3dfxuom>.

Amenumey (1998) shares the same views of other scholars that the Portuguese were the first to land on the Guinea Coast. He supports the view that the Portuguese were interested in finding a sea route to Asia by going around Africa to trade directly with Asia and not pass through any states controlled by Muslims. According to Amenumey, the Portuguese knew about the gold of West Africa from the people of North Africa, which for centuries had been carried across the Sahara to North Africa and Europe. We are told that the Portuguese, therefore, wanted to divert this trade into their own hands, and hoped at the same time to bring Christianity to the people of West Africa. The enterprise was inspired and organized by a member of the Portuguese royal family known as Prince Henry the Navigator. Prince Henry died, but the voyage was continued by the Portuguese sailors and finally Guinea Coast/Cape Coast (Modern day the Republic of Ghana).

Amenumey (1998) narrates that the sailors (the Portuguese) arrived off the coast of Elmina in 1482 as has been established by other historians. They took gold in large quantities from the area of Shama near the mouth of River Pra. To protect their monopoly, King John II sent one Don Diego d'Azambuja, together with soldiers, masons, carpenters to build a fort on the Gold Coast. Amenumey says that the Portuguese selected a site at the mouth of River Benya. Thus, they got the chief of Eguafo, Kwamena Ansah, to permit them to build a fort there. The fort they built was Sao Jorge de Mina (St. George of the Mine), which later became the Elmina Castle to date.<sup>18</sup>

The castle could have been built at any area along the coast but it was, however, regarding its location, strategically selected by the Portuguese who

17. J. K. Acquandah, *Castles and Forts of Ghana: For Ghana Museum and Monuments Board Books* (Belgium: Atlante/Paris 42 rue Sedaine, 1999), 52.

18. D. K. Amenumey, *A Concise History of Ghana: From Pre-Colonial Times to the Twentieth Century* (Accra: Woeli Publishing, 1998), 99-100.

navigated the area at the time. The Portuguese opted to build the castle at the endpoint of narrow headland hemmed in at both sides by Benya River (a sort of Lagoon) and the Atlantic). The natural site provided a source of naturally protected port or waterfront. According to Acquandah (1999), at some point in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there was some attack on the Portuguese. It appears that it was the Castilians who did the first attack then subsequently followed by the French in that chronological manner. Per the record, we are tempted to believe that these two groups were the Portuguese first encounter. Nonetheless, in all those attempts, the Portuguese managed to hold a monopoly on trade for a while until in about 1612 when the monopoly held by them was broken by the people of England.<sup>19</sup>

Ashun (2004, 23) also has the view that, in 1471, the Portuguese, led by their Captain Joao Satarem and Pedro D'escobar came to Elmina. Ashun also says that the information that led to the exploration was gathered from the Moorish prisoners after they conquered Ceuta in 1415. The Portuguese started their exploration for two main reasons as we are told by Ashun. The first was economic, they wanted to get to the gold-producing lands of sub-Saharan Africa, and also to find a new sea route to India and the Far East, where Europeans have been obtaining spices and other foreign goods. The Europeans wanted to find a sea route to eliminate the need for northern Sudanese caravans and the Muslim middlemen. The second reason was to spread Christianity to counteract Islam and more importantly, to get in touch with the kingdom of Prester John, which was a Christian kingdom in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>20</sup>

As usual, the system of trade that the Portuguese came to meet was barter which took the form of exchange of goods and services. No currency was necessarily required by the local market before one could buy or sell. Barter system of trading was to be later adopted by the Portuguese. As the locals became interested in European goods such as guns, liquor, used and unused clothes, tobacco, and many other items, the Portuguese became particularly interested in gold. As a result, gold was exchanged for European goods by the *Elminians*. The frequency and consistency at which gold was used as a medium of transaction for perishable items gave the idea that gold was really in abundance in the villages surrounding the town. By this impression, the Portuguese then called the town "El Mina" which simply means the mine or place of mining.<sup>21</sup> One can assume that probably the people of Anomansa did not know the use of gold for the reason that it (gold) was used to buy schnapps, second-hand clothes, and other perishable products. In that era, the locals needed what they thought was

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19. J. K. Acquandah, *Castles and Forts of Ghana: For Ghana Museum and Monuments Board Books* (Belgium: Atlante/Paris 42 rue Sedaine, 1999), 52.

20. A. Ashun, *Elmina, the Castle and the Slave Trade* (Cape Coast: Nyakod Printing Works, 2004), 23.

21. Ibid.

necessary, and since “exchange” is no crime, the Portuguese, knowing the value of gold, did not give any clue than to get as many as they wanted so far as the Elminians needed those of their perishable consumable products. We cannot say the same for today. Gold has become scarce comparatively, and valuable in the Ghana market and the globe. People of Ghana now know the value of gold, as a result, all attempts, both proper (registered small scale mining) and improper (unregistered miners known as “galamsey” in local terms), are being employed to extract/mine gold in various parts of Ghana.

Since the period of the Portuguese arrived, there was no single occasion, year, or single season that the Portuguese did not show up to exchange their goods with the local people for gold which they [Portuguese] saw more valuable than the local communities or villages. Gradually, step-by-step, and strategically, a monopoly was to be established on the Guinea Coast by the Portuguese.<sup>22</sup> The vision(s) of the Portuguese came to fruition. Nonetheless, the Portuguese were later to face rivalry from other European states.

### **The Construction of the Elmina Castle**

Daaku (1970: 8), has the thought that the Elmina castle was built by the support of one Dom Joao. He explains by saying that, after the discovery of the Mina, however, it once more attracted the attention of the Portuguese Crown. This is seen from the fact that the contract of Fernao Gomes, to whom the enterprise had been farmed out, was not renewed in 1474; but instead, the Guinea trade became a royal monopoly, under the charge of Dom Joao. Eight years later, Dom Joao, now king, caused a castle to be built at Mina, which was to protect the gold trade from interlopers and hostile Africans and to ensure that the Crown was not cheated out of it. To give a legal stamp to the Crown’s monopoly, the title ‘Lord of Guinea’ was added to the Portuguese royal titles and Mina was raised to city status.

Dantzig, in the *Forts and Castles of Ghana*, gives three main motives for the exploratory activities of the Portuguese. First was to establish contact with the legendary ‘Prester John’, leader of fable Christian Empire beyond the ‘Mountains of Moon’, and to attack together with him the Muslims in their rear. The second motive was to transform Lesbon, then still a mere re-distribution market for Asian goods from Venice (which in its turn received the goods via the land-route and many middlemen from India and the Far East) into the terminus of sea-route around Africa to India. The last motive was to gain direct access to the sources of Africa’s gold.<sup>23</sup>

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22. Ibid, 24.

23. Albert Van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles of Ghana* (Accra: Sedco Publishing Limited, 1980), 1-3.

### The Portuguese Monopoly Through Trading Activities with the People of [El]Mina

As already discussed, currently, the people of Elmina are into all kinds of businesses of which fishing is the major activity among the many. Before this period and immediately after the building of the castle, the Portuguese regularly traded with the locals. All importations were done by the Portuguese in enormous quantities. These importations included both used and unused clothes, Moroccan linen and blankets, bracelets, kettles, and other less valuable items in exchange for gold dust and valuable ornaments supplied by the people of [El]Mina.

So extensive and popular was the cloth trade that a factor maintains a large shop for old linen c.1500-1507. Anquandah says that the commander of the castle wrote to King Manuel in 1503 that: "Sir, I Diego d'Alvarenga, kiss the royal hands of your highness and I report that I have received the old linen."<sup>24</sup> Daaku (1970) also reiterated and emphasized on this point and added that the Portuguese equally obtained cloths, leopard skins, and beads from Benin carried to their headquarters (Elmina) in Gold Coast.<sup>25</sup>

During the early part of the trading activities, in about the sixteenth century, there were relatively high numbers of imported slaves from the place called Dahomey to Anomansa. Polanyi and Rotstein (1966) have demonstrated how vital slaves and the overseas slave trade were to the archaic economy of the *Fon* ethnic group of then Dahomey, 'a region open "parkland" between the dense forests of what are now Central Ghana and Western Nigeria'<sup>26</sup> (today Benin) and their European trading partners such as the Portuguese, the British, and the French.<sup>27</sup>

The reason for the importation of slaves was that people or porters were needed to carry enormous quantities of consumable and non-consumable products from the port to the mainland Cape Coast. As a result, the Portuguese made it possible to bring in people from Dahomey to carry the goods for the exchange of gold and ivory in large quantities.<sup>28</sup> It is not only the kingdom of the Fons who engaged in slavery activities. Basil Davidson (1969, 281) has opined that Akwamu and Asante, Yoruba kingdom, Oyo, and coastal states like Allada equally engaged in slave raiding and commerce but not as effective as the Fon

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24. J. K. Acquandah, *Castles and Forts of Ghana: For Ghana Museum and Monuments Board Books* (Belgium: Atlante/Paris 42 rue Sedaine, 1999), 55.

25. K. Y. Daaku, *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast 1600-1720* (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1970), 6.

26. B. Davidson, "Polanyi K. and Rotstein A. (1966). Book Review," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* (1969), 281.

27. Ibid, 281.

28. K. Polanyi and A. Rotstein, *Dahomey and the Slave trade. An analysis of an Archaic Economy* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966).

kingdom. Polanyi and Rotstein (1966), and Davidson (1969) have depicted how crucial slaves were to the then economic development of the Guinea Coast, and of the Fon kingdom and their European partners. Due to the impact of slaves in the economy of Dahomey, the king fully participated in the commerce of slaves to extent that “every year, for example, a nationwide census was taken of the population [including war captives/slaves]...”<sup>29</sup> According to Polanyi and Rotstein (1966), “the counting of slaves and captives was entrusted to two other officials [by the king]. With their reports made, the total tally could be arrived at”. According to Polanyi and Rotstein, “sacks containing the census tallies for each village were placed in four large bags....” Apart from these bags, their account holds that “there were three other sacks: one in black representing men killed in battle, one in red representing deaths from illness, and one in white indicating captives...”<sup>30</sup>

However, in about 1637, the Dutch were able to drive the Portuguese from Gold Coast and took over the trading activities. The possible reason is that Europe, at this period of trading, adventuring, and looking for more trade benefits or opportunities, saw a massive hit of Mexican gold which was more or less of higher value than the gold discovered so far in Elmina and other parts of Gold Coast. As a result, attention was turned from Elmina by the Portuguese government to elsewhere. To add to the reasons, it is observed that the Portuguese government in his attempt to strengthen his base at Elmina, pumped huge sums of money in building warships, convoys, artillery, etc. These investments made the government ran into deficits with less benefit from Elmina. It was therefore economically reasonable for the government to cut down his budget on Elmina and then back down in the end for the Dutch to have their way.<sup>31</sup> Nonetheless, until we get into 1637, the Portuguese benefited a lot from the gold trade.

In another account too, we read that in about 1529 the Portuguese still held trade monopoly in the Guinea Coast.<sup>32</sup> The interpretation given is that although the Portuguese faced rivalries, interlopers of other European states like Dutch, the Portuguese were able to fend them off the site. One of the mechanisms the Portuguese employed was to make sure that the local chiefs and those locals who engaged in the trading activities sold their gold only to the Portuguese. So, an agreement was signed between the Portuguese and their African trade partners. The terms of the agreement were that if anyone is caught trading with other

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29. B. Davidson, “Polanyi K. and Rotstein A. (1966). Book Review,” *Economic Development and Cultural Change* (n.p. 1969), 282.

30. Cited in B. Davidsson, “Book Review” (1969).; Cf. Ibid, 282.

31. J. K. Acquandah, *Castles and Forts of Ghana: For Ghana Museum and Monuments Board Books* (Belgium: Atlante/Paris 42 rue Sedaine, 1999), 55-59.

32. K. Polanyi and A. Rotstein, *Dahomey and the Slave trade. An analysis of an Archaic Economy* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966).

Europeans apart from the Portuguese, the fellow will be penalized, sentenced to prison, flogged, etc.<sup>33</sup>

The obvious thing is that Anquandah and Ashun are presenting the same issue under different periods. Nonetheless, what is clear to us is that there was a Portuguese monopoly on the Gold Coast. And that they were later ousted by the Dutch. Concerning Ashun's account of how the Portuguese regulated trade monopoly among themselves and the locals, it seems to appear that it had nothing to do with the agreement rather than an imposition of or appeal to threat and fear. The point that I am trying to raise is that the agreement favoured only a party.

## **The Portuguese Monopoly Faced a Challenge**

### The French Encounter with the Portuguese

We have been able to examine the presence of the Portuguese and their activities on the Guinea Coast (Elmina). We are next to talk about the first European power to challenge the Portuguese. The French were the first European power, who challenged Portugal's claim to Guinea. In 1542, a French ship that visited Cape Three Points carried back to France 1,000 ounces of gold. And although French activities were mainly confined to upper Guinea, the Portuguese were forced to establish a system of patrolling on the Mina coast to check intrusions into their preserve. However, much French wished to challenge Portuguese claims, their internal political troubles in the sixteenth century tied their hands.

France in the 16<sup>th</sup> century became an absolute monarchy and became firmly established in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Absolute monarchy is a variation of the governmental form of monarchy in which all governmental power and responsibility emanates from and is centered in the monarch<sup>34</sup> It is said that in France, Louis XIV was the most famous exemplar of absolute monarchy. Louis XIV attempted in several ways to eliminate the remnants of medieval feudalism (a type of government organized according to the social system of ranking), which he succeeded, and established a centralized state under an absolute monarch.<sup>35</sup>

This attempt of Louis XIV brought about a series of civil wars. There was the problem of territorial boundaries which contributed to the civil wars between the

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33. A. Ashun, *Elmina, the Castle and the Slave Trade* (Cape Coast: Nyakod Printing Works, 2004), 25.

34. G. Le Bon, *The Psychology of Revolution*, trans. Bernard Miall (Kitchener, Ontario: Batoche Books, 2001).

35. *Ibid.*

16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. As a result of the civil wars, the French could not get support from *home*. Their (French) activities on the Mina coast, therefore, eventually died out, only to be followed by those of the English. There is one thing we should note about Daaku. He says in his *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast From 1600-1720*, 1970, page 9, that, the French were followed by the English in about 1554. In other words, Daaku opposes the idea that the French were followed by the Dutch as some scholars like Cruickshank, Acquandah, Amenumey, put it.

Nonetheless, we should equally acknowledge that sometimes historical facts are written from the perspective and in perspectives, which most often than not, culminates into what is called one of the biases of a historian.<sup>36</sup> And that what we can accept as historical facts depend on the interpretation given by the historian. Daaku<sup>37</sup> subjectively states that the Dutch arrived later on the Gold Coast scene than either the French or the English, but they were better organized and equipped for the trade than any of their predecessors. Whatever the case might be, there was the challenge of the Portuguese monopoly by other 'Europeans'.<sup>38</sup>

### The Dutch

Next, we shall examine the presence of the Dutch on the Guinea Coast. While the Native American race was fast disappearing under the harsh yoke of their Spanish taskmasters, as Cruickshank<sup>39</sup> will reiterate, the superior physical qualities of the African race marked them out as admirably suited to replace the extraordinary depopulation which was going on. Under these circumstances, Portugal was not allowed to enjoy African possessions unmolested. The Pope's grant (*Romanus Pontifex*, a *papal bull*, written in 1455 by Pope Nicholas V to Afonso V of Portugal, and it confirmed to the Crown of Portugal dominion over all lands south of Cape Bojador in Africa) was no safeguard against miserliness.<sup>40</sup>

In 1494, the *Treaty of Tordesillas* was signed. Under this treaty, the *world* was divided into two parts (the division/imaginary line was drawn from north to south of the globe); the western part for Spain, and the eastern part for Portugal. Cruickshank reports that the Dutch, at that time famous for their maritime power, was tempted to make encroachments upon the Portuguese rights, and

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36. E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (United Kingdom: University of Cambridge Press, 1961).

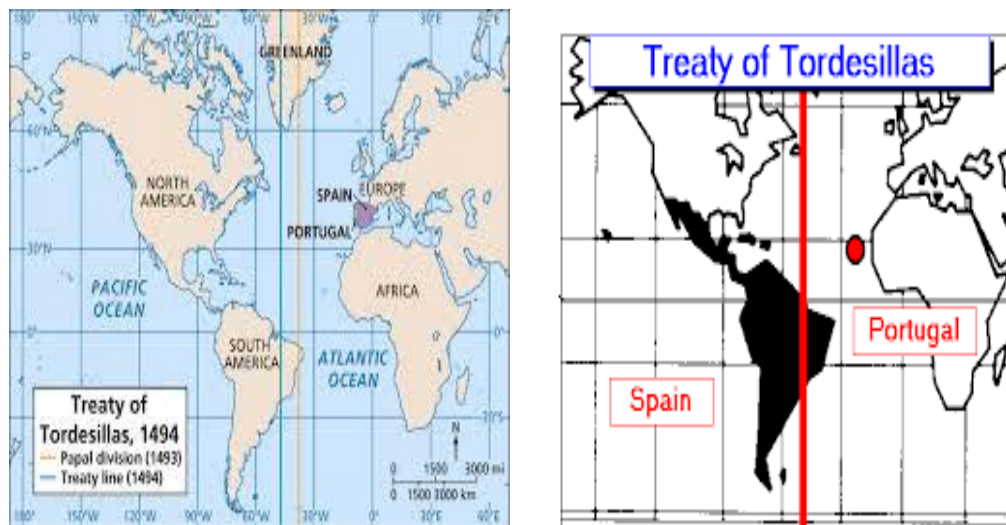
37. K. Y. Daaku, *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast 1600-1720* (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1970).

38. K. Y. Daaku, *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast 1600-1720* (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1970), 9-10.

39. B. Cruickshank, *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa*, Volume 1(2nd Ed.) (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1966).

40. B. Cruickshank, *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa*, Volume 1(2nd Ed.) (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1966), 18-19.

commenced that career of hostility against them, which ended in driving them out successively from most of their settlements. The Dutch established themselves at Mouree, only twelve miles from the chief settlement of the Portuguese at Elmina, from which they succeeded in expelling them (Portuguese) in 1637, and with the fall of Elmina the power of the Portuguese on the Gold Coast became extinct, the minor forts yielding, as a matter of course.<sup>41</sup> De Marees<sup>42</sup> also shares the view that in 1637, a fleet was sent by Count Maurice of Nassau-Siegen from the new Dutch colony in northern Brazil, mounted guns on St. Iago hill and forced the Portuguese in the Elmina Castle into submission.<sup>43</sup>



**Figure 4.** *The Treaty of Tordesillas, 1494*

Source: <https://bit.ly/2Xb7k0s>; <https://bit.ly/2ZPnDCa>.

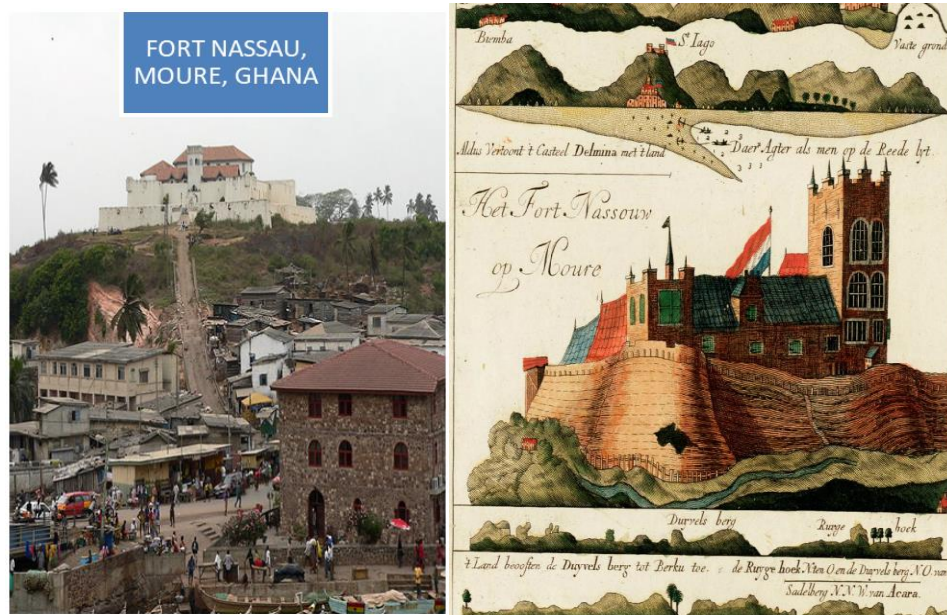
For Ashun (2004), around 1596, when the Dutch failed to win over Elmina from the Portuguese in 1596, the Dutch then went to establish a lodging fort called Nassau in Moree [also called Mowire] (20 km from Elmina) in about 1612. In 1625, the Dutch tried to take over Elmina the second time but were defeated once again. They were defeated the second time because the attack came from the sea, where the Portuguese were very strong.

41. Ibid, 18-19.

42. P. De Marees, *Description and Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea (1602)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), xv.

43. P. De Marees, *Description and Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea (1602)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), xv.





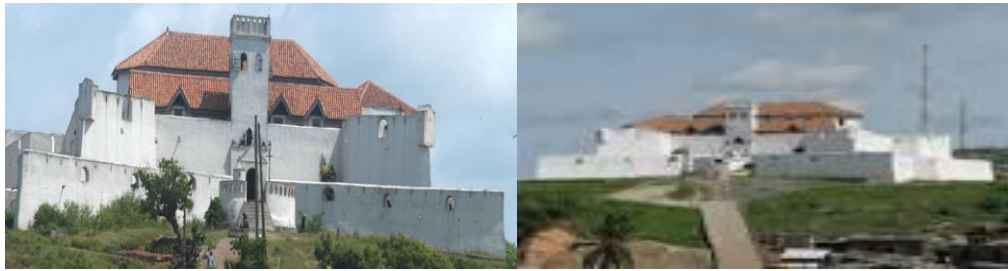
**Figure 5.** Fort Nassau

Source: pinterest.com

It has been documented that the generalissimo of the Dutch battalion was Hans Coine. He led the Dutch to attack the Portuguese in a well-organized form than before in about 1637. According to Ashun<sup>44</sup>, the final surrender of the Elmina Castle by the Portuguese came after three days of fighting, on the 29th day of August 1637. For the record and I think due to the harsh conditions of the terms imposed on the locals, the people of Anomansa assisted the Dutch to defeat the Portuguese. Nonetheless, three other possible reasons are given by Ashun: (1) the birth of the trans-Atlantic slave trade did not go down well with the people of Anomansa; (2) the indigenes were reduced to servitude/serves; and (3) the Portuguese adjusted the scale they were using for the measure.<sup>45</sup> At this time of the conflict, it was the Dutch whose tactics carried the day: the Dutch attack came from two strategic positions: seaward direction and then from land (where the locals threw stones from the top of the hill known as the San Jago that overlooked the castle). We do not, however, see that battle as an easy one. The Portuguese, for some time now, had tried as much as possible to control that territory they “garrisoned” and they would not lose guard. All that we can say is that the attack came to the Portuguese as “surprisingly unaware”.

44. A. Ashun, *Elmina, the Castle and the Slave Trade* (Cape Coast: Nyakod Printing Works, 2004), 26-27.

45. Ibid., 27.



**Figure 6.** Fort St. Jago, Elmina (the 1660s)

Source: <https://bit.ly/3dfj17c>.

Now, although it was the Portuguese who constructed the Elmina Castle, their monopoly still came to an end. Between the periods of 1637 to 1872, the Dutch took the stronghold of the castle. During these periods, and like many small villages or states, the population gradually increased from about 4,000 to about 10, 000 (in the latter part of the seventeenth century), and from 10,000 to about 15, 000 around the later part of the eighteenth century. We should not forget that slaves had been already imported from Dahomey to this part that we are examining. It is possible that those slaves never returned or did not have their freedom to go back or better still developed the interests of staying at Elmina forever and as a result, they married some of the locals and produced babies that help contribute to the population.

As the first castle built in tropical Africa, the Dutch, after taking over, reconstructed the castle. What they first did was to change the Portuguese church in the castle to something else, like *agora* (market place) or public sales center. At the riverside of the castle, the Dutch built their church. Other reconstructions took place. We are told that Jean Barbot, the author of the book *Description of the Coast of North and South Guinea* published in 1732, once visited the Elmina Castle at the time of the Dutch control. He is said to have celebrated Easter and participated in other religious activities in the Dutch new church in the castle. He also attested to the beautification projects that the Dutch took to make the castle a magnificent than before. However, in about 1872, the British took over the castle from the Dutch.<sup>46</sup>

Amenumey also tells that other European Nations began to challenge the Portuguese monopoly from about 1530 onwards. He says that the French and the English came, but the strongest challenge was provided by the Dutch. Starting from 1598 says Amenumey, the Dutch built forts at Mouree, Butri, Kormantin, and Komenda. In 1637, they captured Elmina Castle from the Portuguese, and in 1642 they took those of St. Anthony at Axim. The Dutch forced the Portuguese to surrender their forts on the Gold Coast and leave altogether. Amenumey says the

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46. J. K. Acquandah, *Castles and Forts of Ghana: For Ghana Museum and Monuments Board Books* (Belgium: Atlante/Paris 42 rue Sedaine, 1999), 59-61.

Dutch succeeded against the Portuguese because the latter had spread their activities and interests too widely.<sup>47</sup>

### The English

After the expulsion of the Portuguese by the Dutch, the English did not remain as idle spectators as Cruickshank (1960) puts it. Impelled by a similar spirit of adventure, and as eagerly alive to the motives of self-interest as their Dutch contemporaries, they turned their attention to the advantage of trade with Africa. In the later part of the reign of Edward VI, the English merchants commenced trade with the Coast of Guinea, but without any support from the government. They were, therefore, able to contend against the Portuguese, who endeavoured to maintain their exclusive right to trade, upon the strength of the Pope's grant. Nor had these early adventurers less to contend against after the Dutch who had altogether expelled the Portuguese from the Coast in 1637. But, the spirit of adventure which the discovery of new regions had roused, inspired them with energy and perseverance not easily daunted, and the prospect of gain made them insensible to risks attending the prosecution of their trade. The English, however, received some encouragement from James I., whose favour invested their enterprise with a higher degree of consideration.<sup>48</sup>

The English indeed took over the Elmina Castle in about 1872 as various historians (Daaku, Acquanda, and the likes) say. Their descriptions of how the Elmina Castle passed through the hands of one European power to the other is quite similar and quite divergent in terms of explanations. Ashun has his story to share with us so far as Elmina Castle is concerned and how the British took over it. He says that the Dutch upon the takeover of the Elmina castle extended the dungeons and continued the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In 1872, long after the trans-Atlantic slave trade had been abolished, the castle and other Dutch possessions became unprofitable and costly to maintain. On the 6<sup>th</sup> April 1872, therefore, the Dutch traded their possessions in northern Sumatra in Indonesia. Ashun says that the British were made to pay £3,790 Ls. 61/2 d for the stores and fixtures in the Dutch forts. The transfer of the Elmina castle to the British was truly a blow to the people of Elmina.<sup>49</sup>

Ashun further explains why the *Elminians* were not happy when the Dutch transferred the Castle to the British. Ashun starts by explaining that, in those days, one needs to understand that, the Europeans went into alliances with the

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47. D. K. Amenumey, *A Concise History of Ghana: From Pre-Colonial Times to the Twentieth Century* (Accra: Woeli Publishing, 1998), 100.

48. B. Cruickshank, *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa, Volume 1* (2nd Ed.) (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1966), 19-20.

49. A. Ashun, *Elmina, the Castle and the Slave Trade* (Cape Coast: Nyakod Printing Works, 2004), 27-28.

communities within which they had built the fort, lodge, or castle. Additionally, one group of African people saw other groups as enemies. In the case of Elmina, the *Elminians* never saw themselves as part of the Fantes but rather considered themselves to be friends of the Asantes. The *Elminians* assisted and supported the Asantes, who invaded the Fanteland and caused scores of trouble for the British.

During certain times, the British showed disapproval of the attitude of the *Elminians* and would support the Fantes to attack the people Elmina. Therefore, the *Elminians* now having to accept the British as their masters were seen as being sold to an enemy people. Thus, the Elmina people vowed never to allow the transfer of the castle from the Dutch to the British. To drum home their request, a delegation was sent to Holland to plead on their behalf, but sadly, they were not received. On the said date, Elmina castle became the property of the British. It is said that the chief and the people of Elmina showed some resistance and also alleged involvement with the conspiracy of the Asantes to invade the castle. The chief in question at that time, Kobena Gyan, was exiled to Sierra Leon. The township of Elmina was bombarded by the British as well.<sup>50</sup>

From the works of Amenumey, the Dutch did not succeed in keeping the trade of the Gold Coast to themselves either. They faced competition from England.<sup>51</sup> It is to be believed that the British took over the castle at the time the trans-Atlantic slave trade had been abolished and had almost completely stopped. They thus used the castle as a sub-administrative centre. However, this is not to suggest that the British did not take part in the trade. Rather, they used the Cape Coast castle; about 12 km east of Elmina, for their trade while the Dutch were at Elmina. During the Second World War, the British brought men from all English speaking West Africa except Liberia to the Elmina Castle, where they were trained and sent to India, and Burma called the Royal West Africa Frontier Force and fought for the British. Ashun also shares the same view with some historians that, in 1948, after World War II, the Elmina Castle was used as a police training school. The British ruled Elmina with iron hands until 1957 when Ghana became an independent state.<sup>52</sup>

### The Impact of the Elmina Castle

Now, we shall consider the impact, benefits, or gains (both positive and negative) derived by the people of Mina and Ghana in general so far as Elmina

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50. A. Ashun, *Elmina, the Castle and the Slave Trade* (Cape Coast: Nyakod Printing Works, 2004), 28.

51. D. K. Amenumey, *A Concise History of Ghana: From Pre-Colonial Times to the Twentieth Century* (Accra: Woeli Publishing, 1998), 101.

52. A. Ashun, *Elmina, the Castle and the Slave Trade* (Cape Coast: Nyakod Printing Works, 2004), 28-29.

Castle is concerned. Since 1872 when the British took over the Elmina Castle, it has served a variety of purposes: for many years it housed the Ghana Police Recruit Training Centre. In 1972, it was taken over by the Ghana Museum and Monuments Board and was included by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the World Heritage List. Recently, it has been used by the Edinaman Secondary School and now has historical museum exhibition themed "Images of Elmina Across the Centuries."

The historical name of Elmina has become immortalized in New World history and culture, manifesting itself in the "Mina Nations" of the Caribbean and South American black Diaspora. The "Mina Nations" were ethnic clubs that invoked ancestral spirits and preserved the language, art, culture, and cults of the West African slaves shipped to the New World from Elmina.<sup>53</sup>

The presence of the Europeans in Elmina changed some aspects of culture. Amateur type of education by the local people began to change to classroom-type as the Castle Schools were instituted by the Europeans. Foster (2001) says that recent research indicated the Portuguese undertook the earliest educational experiments on the Gold Coast. In a series of instructions to the captain at 'Edina' (Elmina) King Joao III advised his representatives to 'take special care to command that the sons of the Negroes living in the village learn how to read and write, how to sing and pray while ministering in church'.<sup>54</sup>

African traditional religion for the first time was challenged. Anquandah says that in 1503, according to historical narration by the Portuguese Diego de Alvarenga, a Portuguese missionary converted and baptized the paramount chief of the Efutu kingdom on the Mina coast together with 300 of his subjects. The chief permitted the Portuguese to build a church on the hill located opposite the Castle St. Jorge. The site was dedicated to the Portuguese saint, Jago.<sup>55</sup>

African-European contact and interaction resulted in material enrichment at the national, corporate, and individual levels on both sides. In the period 1490-1560, for example, nearly 1000 Kgs. of gold were exported from Mina to enrich the Portuguese crown. It is estimated that by the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Portuguese Gold Coast trade provided 10% of the world's known gold supplies. Certainly, history was made in an international monetary economy when the English Royal African Company's significant gold exports in 1672 led to the minting of gold currency that bore the designation of Guinea.<sup>56</sup>

Even the beginning of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries marked a high sense of interest of the European merchants to trade in slaves. The young

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53. J. K. Acquandah, *Castles and Forts of Ghana: For Ghana Museum and Monuments Board Books* (Belgium: Atlante/Paris 42 rue Sedaine, 1999), 61.

54. P. Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1965), 43.

55. J. K. Acquandah, *Castles and Forts of Ghana: For Ghana Museum and Monuments Board Books* (Belgium: Atlante/Paris 42 rue Sedaine, 1999), 62.

56. *Ibid.*, 14.

energetic Africans were being sold as slaves and as an exchange for other goods. This economic venture affected the social order of the Africans. Undoubtedly, with few exceptions such as Hawkins, European buyers purchased African captives on the coasts of Africa and the transaction between themselves and Africans was a form of trade. It is also true that very often a captive was sold and resold as he made his way from the interior to the port of embarkation – and that too was a form of trade. Many things remain uncertain about the slave trade and its consequences for Africa.

Rodney<sup>57</sup> (1972) draws our attention to the claim of the experiences of the rape of Africans, probably the superiors, ranging million in number between 1445 to 1870.<sup>58</sup> This economic venture created a problem for the Africans. Labour was drawn off from agriculture and conditions became unsettled. Dahomey, which in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was known for exporting food to parts of what is now Togo, was suffering from famines in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The present generation of Africans will readily recall that in the colonial era when abled-bodied men left their homes as migrant labourers that upset the farming routine in the home districts and often caused famine. Slave trading, after all, meant migration of labour in a manner one hundred times more brutal disrupt.<sup>59</sup>

### **The Elmina Castle Becomes a Prison Camp**

We are not ending this paper without talking about the Europeans, especially, the British, for using the Elmina castle as a prison, to camp most prominent African citizens.<sup>60</sup> In this case, we shall talk about two personalities here, both of Asante born. First is Nana Akwasi Agyeman Prempeh. He was born in 1872. On the 28<sup>th</sup> March 1888, he became the king of the Asantes at a tender age of sixteen. In 1896, he was captured by the British and held in the Elmina Castle for four good years.<sup>61</sup> He was then taken to Freetown in Sierra Leone and finally exiled to the Seychelles Island in the Indian Ocean. He was repatriated to Gold Coast in 1924 after some negotiations and became an honorary Chief of Kumasi and passed on in 1931.<sup>62</sup> His arrest could be numerous, but one of his charges on

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57. W. Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Ltd., 1972).

58. *Ibid.*, 103-104.

59. *Ibid.*, 108.

60. Bryan Hill, "Elmina Castle and Its Dark History of Enslavement, Torture, and Death," *Ancient Origins* (Ancient Origins, March 19, 2020), <https://bit.ly/2AiTXTa>.

61. W. Tordoff, "The Exile and Repatriation of Nana Prempeh I of Ashanti (1896-1924)," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 4, no. 2 (1960).

62. Thaddeus Ulzen, "February 1, 1896: Exiled Prempeh I and His Retinue Arrive at Cape Coast Castle," Edward A. Ulzen Memorial Foundation (Edward A. Ulzen Memorial Foundation, February 1, 2018), <https://bit.ly/2Xdp8ID>.

which the British imprisoned him was that he had refused to honour 1873 war treaty of Fomena, in Ashanti Region, which among others was compelling the Asantes to pay 50,000 oz. of gold to the British as a war indemnity fund. Finally, for the conspiracy to dislodge the British from the Elmina Castle.<sup>63</sup>

The next person to talk about is Yaa Asantewaa. Yaa Asantewaa, on the other hand, led the Asantes in a war against the British for the demand of the golden stool by a British governor Frederick Hodgson in 1900. She was also captured, held in Elmina Castle for a brief moment, and finally to the Seychelles Island.<sup>64</sup> Unfortunately, she died in exile.<sup>65</sup> At the seaboard side of the castle was the 'Door of No Return', the portal through which slaves boarded the ships that would take them on the treacherous journey across the Atlantic known as the Middle Passage. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, 30,000 slaves on their way to North and South America passed through Elmina's Door of No Return each year.

### Conclusion

In summary, we have been able to trace the genesis of the traditional name of Elmina, the founder, and how the early people of Anomansa organized themselves in terms of socio-culture, socio-political, and socio-economic. We have been able to trace the reasons why the Europeans came to Africa and the early exploratory activities of the Portuguese. We have also examined the rivalry that existed among the European traders, how the Elmina Castle was transferred from one European power to the other till the era of the English, and the activities that went on or how these European powers used the castle for, including the *capture* of two eminent Asante royals. We have been able to examine also the relationship that existed between the Europeans and the *Elminians*. And finally, we have been able to examine the benefits derived by both the Europeans and the people of Guinea Coast in general so far as the Elmina Castle is in existence.

At this stage, can one emphatically say that the presence of the European Nations on the Guinea Coast has led to Africa's underdevelopment at the expense of Africans? To voice my opinion on this question is another research for the future and those interested. However, one obvious thing was that, whereas the Europeans were interested and placed a high value on gold, the local people did not but preferred perishable goods. However, I will argue that, in the beginning, we do see any imposition of the Portuguese who first settled at Anomansa on the local people apart from the period where we see rivalries. Whereas the Europeans, especially the Portuguese who came first to settle,

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63. A. Ashun, *Elmina, the Castle and the Slave Trade* (Cape Coast: Nyakod Printing Works, 2004), 31.

64. R. West, *Yaa Asantewaa (Mid-1800s-1921)* (n.p., February 2019).

65. *Ibid*, 32.

needed gold the most, the local populace needed what they wanted and for that matter, they exchanged gold for those items highlighted in this article. It was during the end of the Dutch regime and the era of the British that we see some form of imperialism which is quite not different from Roman imperialism (the tendency to impose one's authority over others).

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