



Metallic Embellishments in Asante King's Regalia: Their Making and Significance

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Abstract

The study discusses the metal decorations of Asante King regalia, its production and cultural value. The study will apply a phenomenological approach of research and endeavour to know the experiences and meanings ascribed to these metallic objects by Asante people in their lives. This was done by the use of several data collection tools such as observing the regalia making process first hand, conducting in-depth interviews with the artisans themselves, royal custodians, and experts in the cultural field and conducting focus groups with members of the community at the Manhyia Palace. The observations helped in making the complex craftsmanship and symbolism incorporated in the metallic pieces. Historical stories, spiritual implications, and social purposes of the embellishments were revealed through interviews and the overall reflection on the current relevance and conservation was made possible through focus groups. Results of the study showed that the metallic ornaments are not only decorative but they are also powerful signs of power, identity, and continuity in the Asante culture. The significance of these regalia in supporting the legitimacy of the Asante King, and the communal heritage is highlighted in this phenomenological inquiry. The research leads to a more accurate understanding of the Asante material culture and provides suggestions on how these cultural values can be preserved under the influence of modernization.

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Introduction

The Oxford English Dictionary defines Regalia as the Insignia of Royalty used at coronations and other such occasions. The Regalia include the various forms of Ghanaian crafts such as weaving, embroidery, carving, metal work, leather work and others. However, in this paper, the researchers would like to concentrate on the metallic aspect of Ghanaian crafts in relation to the making of the metallic objects in an Asante King's Regalia. Some of the metallic objects in a king's Regalia show the imagination and ingenuity of the Ghanaian metal worker and ranks him among the peaks of art design anywhere, while others are important not for their beauty and dignity but for their historical connections, their social and ritual functions on their Symbolic meaning. The Regalia of an Asante King has been of special significance in that they have not been merely symbols of the kingly office but has served as the chronicles of early history and the evidence of Asante traditional religion, cosmology and social organisation.

Historical Background of Regalia

The Asante people have since time immemorial believed in life after death; they accordingly worshiped their ancestors who they believed were the link between the living and the almighty God (Akyeampong & Obeng 2005) ^[4]. In order to understand the traditional functions of the Regalia, it is necessary to break these functions into political social and religious aspects since the

regalia embrace the functions of these into one general theme. The Regalia are often described as political Art. The king who is the direct representative of our ancestors on earth occupies the throne which embodies and enshrines the souls of the people both living and dead. Accordingly, the Regalia are a symbol of his authority and power as well as his wealth in relation to that of his subjects (Vale, 2000) ^[17].

In Asante culture, individuals are told that long ago, no other person was allowed to use an item such as cloth, sandals etc. which is of the same design as that of the king. It was interesting to note that since the beginning of kingship, the regalia has been a symbol not enhancing the prestige of the king as a person but the office which he holds, this is why the significance of the regalia to a king is that they remind him of his responsibility to his people and that if he does any wrong to his people, it could cause his destoolment. The regalia therefore are a symbol of office, showing the authority, power and wealth of the kingly office.

Socially, the regalia not only show the supreme position of the king amongst his people but also help to show his position amongst other kings. Certain items of regalia could be used by subordinate chiefs only with the authority of the paramount king or in the case of the Asante, the Asantehene. This shows that amongst his people, the king is the most powerful, the source of authority and the people accept him as such (Reindorf, 1985) ^[14].

Usually at durbars, the king occupies a pedestal or platform higher above that of his subordinate chiefs and this makes his regalia which show his position and wealth to be seen clearly. Another social factor of the regalia is that any piece of it could be used as the king's official seal. For example, a king who wanted to collect something from a subordinate could send messenger with one or more of his state swords as a sign or source of the message.

Thus socially, the regalia are the symbol of the position, power and authority as well as wealth of the kingly office. Religiously, the regalia play a more vivid role. The king being the direct living representative of our ancestors, who are in turn the link between the Almighty God and the living people, is the custodian of the throne which embodies and enshrines the souls of the people. In Asante, the throne popularly known as the Golden Stool is supposed to have been religiously and spiritually invoked by the tribes' most powerful fetish priest, Okomfo Anokye and it is in this Stool that the souls of all the Asante people are embodied in unity. This shows that the king is the custodian of the souls of all the Asante people (Ampene & Nyantakyi, 2016) ^[5].

The Asantes were ancestral worshippers who had a great reverence for departed spirits whose living representative was the king. The king also represented the sun and his symbol was gold, the queenmother represented the moon and her symbol was silver. Thus, at court all articles of paraphernalia for the king's use were made of Gold whilst those for the queenmother were made of silver (Adjei, 2024) ^[2]. Because of the position, power and authority of the king in relation to his subjects, the splendour at court called for artist in Gold and Silver to make innumerable ornaments. Other craftsmen such as blacksmith and carvers also had their share of the works.

According to Adjaye (1990) ^[11], who depicted that looking at the functions of the king religiously and in relation of his religious beliefs of his people, one can see that it is only proper that he should occupy a prestigious position and possess certain item which distinguish him from his subjects

and enhance his office to the degree of his power and authority. The Historical background of the Asante king's regalia is directly connected with the history of the people's religious beliefs since kingship is in itself directly connected with the people's religious beliefs. One might say that the Asante king's regalia are purely ceremonial but this is because the king sits in state at ceremonies such as the Adaekese festival attended by his full Regalia and these are the times when he is seen amidst his full pomp and pageantry. There are a number of lesser occasions such as when he is presiding over his court or attending a funeral where certain items of regalia may be used according to the demands of custom (Arhin, 1980) ^[6].

McCaskie (2007) ^[11] opine that the regalia are also directly connected with the history of traditional Ghanaian craftsmanship. Chiefs are the custodians of the legacy of the various traditional craftsmen. One point of interest is that the handiwork of the various craftsmen in relation with the stools, the swords, etc. which help as symbols to give meaning and reality to what the people believe to be the explanation of life on earth as well as life after death which on the other hand could be considered abstract.

Various Metallic Objects in an Asante King's Regalia

According to Sheales (2011) ^[15], the various Metallic looking objects in an Asante's kings' regalia are made in different ways. Some are made purely in metals whilst some may only have metal components incorporated into other materials to make complete items. These metallic objects include: -Hand Rings, Bracelets, Pendants, Amulets, Personal ornaments, Swords, Stools, Chairs, Umbrella tops, Linguist Sticks, Headgear, Sandals, Drums, Fans or Fly Whisks and Guns. All these items are important in the king's Regalia, each playing an important role as to the functions and significance of the Regalia.

Usually the designs incorporated in the various items have their own traditional meanings and symbolism and it is the duty of the craftsman to know the meanings and reasons for the use of the various designs so that he can be able to produce what is really wanted for every occasion for which his piece of work is needed. These craftsmen undergo long periods of apprenticeship before they are considered masterful enough to work on their own. The uses of the various items of Regalia as well as their making are talked about more vividly in a latter chapter asserted by Baah *et al.* (2023) ^[7].

Materials Used in the Construction of the Various Metallic Objects

As the researcher pinpointed in the introduction, some of the metallic embellishments in the regalia such as Rings may be made out of solid metals whilst others may only have metal parts. It must be noted here that it would be absurd to have a large item of Regalia to be solely made of a heavy metal since the items are constantly being carried from place to place. For instance, if a stool is solely made out of iron, its transportation would be very difficult and as such stools as well as other large pieces such as chairs are usually made out of lighter materials with certain parts made out of metal for both decorative and meaningful purposes. Various materials are used together with metals in such a way as to ensure easy carriage and remove awkwardness. These materials include: Wood, Leather, Cane, Beads, Calabashes Feathers, Cloth and Skins of Animals.



Source: <https://www.bbc.com>

Fig 1: Some Materials Used in the Construction of the regalia

These materials may either be used singularly with the necessary metals or it may have more than one of these materials going together with one or more types of metals. Metals which are usually used include: Gold, Silver, Copper, Brass, Bronze, Iron, and Aluminium. The method of incorporating these metals into the other materials depends on the object being made, the metal used, as well as the craftsman's discretion. Usually, there is a reason for the use of any of the materials involved. Wood when used in the construction of certain items of regalia are usually light in weight, soft and strong in that even though it should be light to ensure easier carriage, it should also be soft to ensure easy workability and strong to ensure durability. Examples of wood that are usually used are the "Nyamedua" (Tree of God) and "Sese" (*Runtumia Africana*) asserted by Obeng (1998) ^[13].

Where leather is used, it is usually the skin of a powerful animal such as the Leopard, Lion, Bear or Elephant. The leather and skins may be used in cases where the pieces required are to be light and at the same time to show the power of the king in relation to the animal whose skin is being used. The skin and leather may be used in the making of headgear. Where cane is used, it is of the very flexible kind, this enables it to be twisted into various shapes or forms. Beads which are used in the making of a king's regalia are of the rich type found around the coasts of Ghana and which are popularly known as Aggrey beads (Figure 1). Usually these beads may be worn around the necks, arms and legs of the females in the king's entourage. Unlike the kings in the Volta Region as well as other Coastal regions of Ghana, who wear beads around the necks, the Asantehene seldom uses beads on himself and whenever it is used, it is done so together with other items like cloth to make the pieces (McCaskie, 2018) ^[12]. Calabashes or pieces of it are usually used as base materials for other materials such as cloth, leather and feathers as well as metals for making certain pieces such as headgear. This is mostly used in the North of Ghana but the Asante craftsmen also use it almost in the same proportion (Daitey *et al.*, 2024) ^[9].

Feathers, Cloth, leather and Other Materials

Feathers used for the purpose of Regalia making are also usually from powerful birds such as the eagle, a colourful bird such as the Peacock to show the pride and beauty of the king. Cloth is also used with metals in various ways; the metal may be used in the form of badges and are pinned onto the cloth serving as base material. Furs of various powerful animals are incorporated in certain items of Regalia together with other items. It is noteworthy here that certain items are made with more than one material as well as metal. For instance, a chair could be made with wood, leather, colour as well as metal (Aidoo, 1972) ^[3].



Source: <https://www.theafricareport.com>

Fig 2: Feathers, cloth, leather and other materials for regalia

Methods

The qualitative method of phenomenological research (Flood, 2010) ^[10] where verbal information is collected in the form of personal interviews and focus group discussions was used in the study. Phenomenological method was quite appropriate in this study, as it was centred on the person and shared existence of the respondents of Manhyia Palace, Accra. Knowledge of these general experiences was necessary to the knowledge of how these Kings embellishment was produced. The study noted that it is worthy to de-mystify the overall philosophical presumptions of phenomenology. It also lived on the lived experiences of the participants about Kings Regalia in the Ghanaian culture as evident in Manhyia Palace and how the participants make meanings out of these traditional processes.

The sample size of the research was the respondents available in Manhyia Palace. All the data were collected in this community and the overall figures of the persons available were 52 as indicated by Table 1.0. The researchers picked 26 respondents on purpose, and according to the requirements that the right sample size is approximately half of the existing population (which implies that it is best to have as much and as thorough data as possible) (Creswell, 2014) ^[8], it was the most suitable choice. The sampling of the relevant participants of the study was conducted using purposive sampling. This is through the use of preliminary research of conducting in depth interviews with the respondents themselves, royal custodians and cultural field experts as well as carrying out focus groups with the members of the community at the Manhyia Palace.

Table 1: Distribution of the accessible and sampled population of the study

Population of the Study	Accessible Population	Sample Size (30%)
Royal Custodians	8	4
Manhyia Community	24	12
Cultural Field Experts	10	5
Tour Guides at Manhyia	10	5
Total	52	26

Source: Researchers Fieldwork (2025)

The researchers have thoroughly analysed the interview transcripts through a thematic analysis, which is how Terry *et al.* (2017) ^[16] define the concept and identified key statements, phrases or quotes that demonstrated what the participant knows and what he/she experiences as a traditional King regalia. These significant lines of thoughts were categorized under clustering of meaning and these were broken down into themes. Themes were used to create descriptions of the experience of the participants of the various metallic embellishments. The thematic descriptions also exposed the contextual factors that informed such experiences e.g. historical context, social significance. It resulted in the discovery of a better understanding of the symbols and meanings inherent in the different chief's regalia and it assists in the preservation and appreciation of this rich cultural heritage.

Results and Discussion

Factors Which Influence the Use of Various Design Construction

The Asnates have various traditional designs which stem from various sources. These designs are usually symbols depicting certain special events, they may be symbols depicting a powerful animal or bird, and these symbols may also be used to depict the symbols of the various clans or states. Other sources of Asante designs include various popular Asante sayings or proverbs and conundrums. Some design also come out of the Asante Code of laws which are said to have been read out to the people for the first time by Okomfo Anokye at the assembly during which the Priest invoked the Golden Stool which was to be the unifying block of all the souls of the Asante people. Presumably this was to give the laws the force of sanctity.

In effect the designs incorporated in Asante Craftsmanship are symbols that carry meaning. These traditional designs are also directly with the history of the people, their age old religion, their wars, their calamities, and their social organisation as their popular stories and proverbs. This shows that the designs, at least most them have been handed even from craftsman to craftsman and this is one of the results of long periods of apprenticeship. Some of these traditional designs are meant for special purposes. There are some used mainly at funerals and some mainly at festivals and others social events. There are some used for rebuke as well as some for praise. Most of the designs used in constructing art pieces in metal are also used in other mediums such as cloth and wood. The biggest collective designs are known as the Adinkra designs which all had meanings which are still used. As the researchers have already said the various designs used are also connected with religion. Traditionally the Asantes lays much in store for his Religious beliefs and practices, Religion permeated every aspect of his life therefore it is not surprising that his statistic designs should portray Religion. These designs stem out of the belief in an Almighty God but since the king is believed to be God's representative on earth

some of these may directly refer to his authority and power. The study depict that the designs are incompatible from Asante traditional Religion, Political authority and Social life. Their belief in God, Life after death and the king as God on earth, their Political art which enhances the position of the king and their social activities gave rise to their Artistic designs.

Reasons for the Use of Particular Metals for Particular Objects

There is a reason for any of the materials used in making the various items in a kings Regalia. In the case of metals this fact may be due to the fact that these metallic objects are made by different metal workers – Gold and Silver smiths, Blacksmiths, Brass and Bronze workers as well as gunsmiths. The point here is that as the study already indicates, the king for whom the items are being made is considered by his people as their religious political, social as well as their economic authority and thus there must be a reason for any thing that he uses and this reason should not be degrading. Gold, considered the most valuable metal is the king's symbol. His rings and other ornaments are made of Gold. Even though sometimes Silver is found amongst his Regalia these silver ornaments are usually worn by the queenmother who is the moon. Due to this requirement in and Silver ornaments for the king's Regalia, there are a number of smiths in the king's employ who engaged only in working for the king. Iron is one of the widely used metals in the making of Regalia Iron is considered the strongest metal and thus portrays the strength and power of the king. It is mostly used in the making of heavier items such as swords and guns. Workers in brass deal with decorative pieces as well as casting of money caskets (kuduo) and Gold weights.

Apart from the fact that gold was used to show wealth, it is also useful for making ornaments because of its malleability and ability to take polish; this is also true for silver. All these metals were used in areas where they could be convenient for the user; thus for easier carriage Iron would not be used for ornaments. The cost of the materials also counts as a reason for the use of the metals thus gold being so expensive would not be used for a heavy piece like a sword. Another factor is the availability of the materials. Metals which were readily available were used more often than those that are scarce. One can see that even though the reasons for using particular metals for particular items are not many they are still very understandable for they are conveniently used to solve a lot of problems including religious, political, economic as well as social ones.

How the Various Metallic Objects Are Made

As the researchers have already said, there are several other materials apart from metal which are used in the making of the various metallic objects in an Asante king's regalia. Apart from various materials being used, various methods are also used. Various other crafts are also incorporated in the making

of the items, eg. A carver may have to carve the work before a metal worker decorates it with metal.

The Stool: The stool has three parts namely the seat, the base and the supporting column coming between the seat and the base. The stool is carved out of one piece of wood. The carving begins with a prayer or libation to the spirit of the tree out of which the wood has been obtained, usually, “Sese” (Funtumia Africana) or “Nyamedua” (Alstoncea Boonei) and to the tools to be used. It is the design of the column, Sekyedua which gives the stool its name and special character. It may be the craftsman’s representation of a human being, an animal or any object that he fancies, a court scene, an incident in the history of his state or people, a proverb or maxim or a message which the king for whom the stool is being made wishes to give to his people.

The designs used in this depict that the making of a stool begins with the carving. It is not all kings who have authority to decorate their stools with metal but kings who are entitled to do so may have theirs decorated with Gold or Silver or both and this is where the metal worker comes in. These craftsmen are charged with the decoration of the seat, column, and base of the ceremonial stools with varying designs in gold and silver. The stool sometimes gets its name from the decorative design used. This is usually one or a combination of any of the following: - horizontal or vertical bars or bands; crosses, moon and stars; crescents; circular or rosette patterns or stylized animal forms such as that of a crocodile.

These designs are put on the stool by riveting of the sheet gold or silver onto the stools. In other cases, the gold may be used in the form of Gold leaf and embossed on the wooden frame. A ceremonial stool usually has a bell or a number of bells of cast-iron or brass attached to it and the numbers of bells indicate the status of the king to whom the stool belongs. These bells are usually attached by using leather bands as links.

Chairs: Chairs are almost made in the same way, the framework is of wood, the seat of leather, wood or metal. Like the stool, the frame may have varied designs. The metal designs on the chairs are put on by the use of rivets which were of two kinds, the ‘mpeaboo’ and the ‘Aukaahono’. The Mpeaboo was so called because it was shaped like the gold weight used for measuring gold dust levied, as war tax and the ankaahono which was so called because it resembled a sliced orange. These brass nails were used to adorn the body of the chair in bands of several lines. Elaborate repousse work also in brass was used but silver was also sometimes used by those entitled to do so.

Ceremonial Swords: Swords have three parts, the blade, the hilt and the sheath. The blade is usually made of steel and it may be designed for cutting or piercing or both and it usually has incised lines or symbolic designs on it. Certain swords have two or three blades which converge at the top where they fit into the hilt. The work on the blades is done by blacksmiths. They beat or forge the steel flat to the required thickness and cut out the designs using chisels and hammers. The hilt is usually made of wood and consists of the grip and porummel. The carved wooden hilt is then wrapped in gold leaf on which is worked irregular and wavy lines, dots chevrons, zigzags and other geometrical patterns. Sheaths were made to encase the blades and were usually made of the skins of various animals. Sometimes, there is a gold cast

of some animal or fruit hanging from the sheath this illustrates some maxim or proverb as the case may be.

Guns: Guns were mostly imported but efforts were made at producing local ones with little success due to the difficulty in obtaining. However a type called the Fumu gun and made of brass was developed. The Asantehenes guns were richly adorned with gold and silver decorations on the butt, barrel and the end of the barrel by either riveting or embossing.

Drums: These were made out of wood by carvers and the leather of an animal usually the antelope is stretched at the top. Usually the body of the drum is carved out of the Tweneboa or Twenedua tree (Cordia Millenii). There are special carvers for these and it is a Taboo for a carver to carve his own drum especially the Atumpan. In the case of the Atumpan, the tense membrane or drum head is made out of an elephant’s ear and is stretched across the rim and held by a number of pegs made from the wood of the ‘Ofenuma’ tree with a rope obtained from the fibre of the ‘Bofunu’ tree. By either loosening or tightening the pegs the drum head is either loosened or tightened or this helps to differentiate the tones of the drum. Broadly speaking, the technique for making the atumpan drums hold good for other drums with the materials and form changing from drum to drum. The body of an Asante king’s drum is usually decorated with engraving directly on the wood or on beaten brass wrapped round the body. It was also fashionable in the past to decorate drums with the skull, jaw bones or limbs of defeated warriors.

Finger Rings: As already mentioned, rings are usually made of gold and silver. They are casted by gold smiths by first making the model from bees wax and then pouring. Others were made by using sheet gold or silver and the designs are put on by engraving.

Bracelets, Amulets: These are also usually made of solid gold or silver by casting in the same way as rings. Where they are made larger, they were usually made larger, they were usually made in wood, leather or cloth before the gold decorations are put on by using either gold leaf or gold badges and are pinned on them.

Pendants: These were also mostly made of gold by casting or with sheet metal with engraved designs or they could be partly made of sheet metal and soldered onto a part that has been casted beforehand.

Head Dress: There are two categories of Head dress comprising of caps, hats, helmets and crowns which headbands or fillets and turbans. Caps were usually made of cotton, silk or locally woven cloth. These were decorated with talismans which were with gold or silver leaf. Hats are chiefly made of the hides of certain animals and gold and silver decorations made in the form of badges are pinned on them. These head-dresses were usually made of light materials and then decorated with gold. It is unusual to find an Asante king wearing a crown of solid metal like those used in Europe.

Sandals: Sandals have changed from something much cruder to the present ones that are used. They were first made of wood or the bark of a tree. The ones that are now used are made out of hide – particularly cow-hide and the straps are

adorned with gold and silver decorations.

Umbrella Tops and Linguist Staffs: These two are made in the same way but only that the linguist staffs are longer and have designs all along the body whilst an umbrella top's design comes on at the top. They are carved out of wood and on the top are usually carved symbol of a saying, proverb or message. After the carving in wood they are wrapped in silver or gold leaf.

Fly Whisks: These have two parts, the handle and the whisk. The whisk is made out of the tail of an animal or loose strands or tough hairs. The handles were usually made out of skins or leather and decorated by wrapping around it with gold or silver leaf.

Gold Weights: These are cast brass forms of designs or symbols which were traditional with the people. The casting was made in the lost wax process. There were other brass containers (Kuduo) for storing gold dust as well as other valuable items. These were hollow casts with designs all around the body and on the top of the lid is usually a casted symbol.

Uses of the Various Metallic Objects

It is a fact that Asante Art and for that matter African art is functional, despite their beauty and awe-inspiring behaviour, they serve as instruments for the realization of certain functions. The items in an Asante King's Regalia are functional in one way or the other. They may either be performing Religious functions, Political function, Social functions or all the functions in general. The study delves into the various functions or uses of the metallic objects in an Asante king's Regalia.

Stools: In Asante, the stools are the most important of the King's Regalia and the Symbol of his high office. The reason given for the choice of a stool as the principal object to betoken the office of a king is the one time existence of a special relationship between a person and his stool. This reason may be only conjectural. The first gift a father makes to his child who has begun to crawl is a stool. A young girl undergoing the rite to mark her attainment of puberty is placed on a stool? Due to this relationship between a person and his stool, the stool became stamped with one's personality and it is understandable that it should also be used to mark the position of a king vis-a-vis his subjects.

The personified state's soul was similarly denoted by the stool of the founder of the state or the most distinguished of its rulers or by a special stool believed to have been received miraculously from the supreme God as a gift. There are several types of stools which the king may use on one occasion or another. There is a stool for sitting in state, for sitting on during a funeral and even for dining. The king's personal stool is one of the most important. It is blackened with soot mixed with egg yolk and kept at the stool house in remembrance of the king after his death.

These black stools apart from being articles for remembrance were also used during war. A black or ancestral stool could be taken into war and when the war is going badly, the captain of the army would stand on it and give directions. When the army sees the captain standing on the stool they realize that they must fight more bravely else their ancestral stool might be captured. Ceremonial stools are used by kings when they

sit in state or are performing rites connected with the ancestral cult. They also feature prominently at installation when the chiefs are placed on them three consecutive times as a sign of their enthronement. These ceremonial stools may also be blackened after the king's death. The ceremonial stool for a king who is destooled before his death is not blackened and may be retained as an extra ceremonial stool for his successors. The point of interest in a ceremonial stool, which may later become a black stool, is how it is shaped and ornament may have their symbolic meanings. One can deduce from the above that stools of a king's regalia perform religious, political and social functions and it is the chief emblem of royalty in Asante.

Chairs: These are also ceremonial seats. These seats are usually called "Asipim" chairs. Asipim, means I stand firm. These Asipim Chairs are also of various designs or shape. Some of these were used by the king when presiding over his court in peacetime and when sitting in state to declare war against an enemy. In effect, the chairs served almost the same functions as the stool.

Swords: The next most important of the king's regalia after stools and chairs are weapons of all descriptions. These originated as implements of hunting, farming and military purposes, but in time some of them assumed certain Political Social and ritual functions. Swords are of various designs and are used for several purposes. Among the regalia of the Asantehene, no fewer than six different swords can be distinguished according to their use. A sword has three parts, Blades, hilt and sheath. There are various functions for various swords. Some are used for purifying the soul of the ruler and black stools. Some were used for war, some are used for taking the oath of Office (Nsuafe). This is also used by elders and subchiefs for swearing the oath of allegiance. It is further used as a badge of credence by those who go on the King's errands.

Some of these swords are used by couriers sent to distant lands e.g. to announce a death in the Royal lineage, or sent with a herald to declare war against an enemy. Some are used by the constabulary or Abrafoo, some were used for execution of wrong doers and others were used by the king's followers who carry fly-whisks.

Guns: These come under weapons and were used for hunting, and on the battle-field. They are also used at the funerals of members of the Royal family. The king's body guards guard him on ceremonial occasions with ceremonial guns. These are mainly used to show military might of the king and his people.

Drums: These are considered very important because they talk - They convey messages, recount history, recite proverbs and wise sayings or sing praises. e.g. The *Atumpan* drums. The speech imitation of the drums is facilitated by the fact that the language is tonal. Drums also provide music with other traditional musical instruments for dancing at festivals, funerals etc. they are used to summon the people to the king's palace when necessary. In general, drums serve as a medium for sending messages.

Finger Rings: These are included in the king's personal Ornaments. Rings are used to decorate the king's fingers. Whenever a king sits in state or is dancing in his Palanquin,

he places his hands in such a way as to enable him to show the rings on his fingers. These are usually made of Gold and show wealth.

Bracelets: These like ring are used for decoration of the arms. They may be made out of wood embossed with gold leaf and also show wealth. They also come under the king's personal ornaments.

Amulets: These are used like Bracelets but are often made of leather and contain charms.

Pendants: These are also part of the personal ornaments, worn around the neck for decorative purposes. They vary in sizes, length as well as designs. They are usually made of gold, beads and leather.

Head-Dress: These also fall into the personal ornaments section. There are two categories of head-dress.

- (a) 'Ekye', comprising of caps, hats, helmets, and crowns
- (b) 'Abotire' which includes head bands or fillets and turbans.

There is a head-dress for every occasion, funerals, festivals etc. These head-dresses are sometimes made with skins of powerful animals and are worn to show the kings power. It is used by the ruler at his installation sometimes it is used together with the ceremonial sword of the same design. These Head-dresses are used the way a European Monarch may use his crown.

Sandals: It is a taboo for an Asante king to walk bare footed. If he does, it is believed that he will precipitate a famine. When a chief is being destooled, one of the first acts is to remove his sandals and force him to walk away barefooted. The main function of the sandals is for walking but the design and ornaments used on them show how powerful the user is.

Umbrella Tops: The main use of the state umbrella is that of serving as a canopy, shelter from sunshine for the king wherever he may go. They also serve as another symbol of office.

There are three types of state umbrellas

- (a) The Katamanso or Coverer of a nation
- (b) The Bankyinie and
- (c) The Akuromponkyimiwa (which is of a smaller size).

This is for everyday use, while the first two are for ceremonial purposes. Every umbrella is named after the symbol on the top, known as Umbrella tops.

Linguist Staff: The Linguist (Okyeame) holds a very important place in society, He is the mouth piece of the king, He advises on traditional law and custom and are regarded as experts in traditional matters. They are sent as ambassadors to other states to declare war, make peace or convey important messages. They are present and always near the king on any occasion.

The Linguist's office is denoted by a mace or staff called Akyeamepoma. These staffs are usually made of wood with a symbolic emblem at the top like that of the umbrella tops.

Fans or Fly Whisks: These are usually carried by female followers of the king and they prevent flies from coming

close to the king by waving their fans at them. This is usually made of feathers on a pole decorated with metal.

Kuduo and Gold Weights: These are concerned with the king's treasury. They are not carried along wherever the king goes like the other items of regalia. The main use of the Kuduo is that it is a brass box for storing gold dust and other ornaments. It usually has designs around the box and on the lid. The gold weights were also a medium for measuring gold.

Cultural Values of the Various Designs

As the researchers have already mentioned, the designs used in the making of metal items for Regalia had symbolic meanings. These designs were traditional designs of the people relating to their history. Most of the designs used for Adinkra cloths as well as casts of proverbs and sayings were used in metal work and in such a way as to be appropriate for the occasion for which it is to be used.

One point of interest is that the handiwork of the craftsmen helps as a symbol to give reality to what a people believe to be the explanation of life upon earth as well as after death. However, as the researchers have already pointed out, the designs varied according to the items e.g. The designs on a Linguist staff differs from that of a stool even though they may have the same meaning. Examples of the designs and their meanings are: on Linguist staffs, if one sees an eagle having caught a cobra and trampling on a gun, it means that apart from the cobra and a gun, the eagle fears nothing. A cockerel and a hen illustrate the proverb that even though the hen knows when it is dawn, it leaves it to the cockerel to announce it. A reef knot (Nyansa po) means that the user is a wise man since it only takes a wise man to undo a reef knot. The designs used by the craftsman are very important cultural legacies which have been used and handed over through the ages and every craftsman may not go out of his way to use his own designs if he is working for a king even though it is usual to use abstract forms or stylized versions of the same design. The cultural importance of the various designs is further illustrated by the fact that they are used in every aspect of craftsmanship in that both the metal worker and carver may use the same designs for the same occasion. The cultural values of the designs are related to the political, religious, and social lives of the people and as such there is hardly any utilitarian object capable of artistic treatment which is not made of some ornamental design which gives aesthetic delight to the Ghanaian mind and eye.

As the researchers are aware these designs are symbolic, a symbol has a meaning but it is not everything that has a meaning that is a symbol. There is often some reason why a particular symbol is appropriate in a particular case. The underlying reason is easily detected even if it is not obvious or known to the persons who use the symbol. It seems reasonable for example, that the elephant should be made the symbol of power because of its huge size.

The ground for a symbol's suitability to stand for what is symbolized varies a lot. They may be in some genuine or imagined resemblance between the two; they may have derived from an historic background of the individual or the culture's past. In trying to find the motive behind symbolic relationships one may have to consider the symbolic nature, its daily or ritual usage, its name, location, its equivalent or it opposite. These symbols occur in various aspects of Asante craftsmanship They may appear as geometrical figures on solid pieces, which are functional and it is this functional

aspect that makes Asante crafts valuable.

Conclusion

From the preceding chapters, it is clear that traditionally, the Asante lays much store by his religious beliefs and practices, Religion has a large part to play in every aspect of his life, Religion for him is everything because it controls his politics, social life and even his economy. Since the researchers have already realised the incompatibility of the Asante man's Religion and his art the researchers can deem it safe to say that the art and crafts of the Asante man are also controllers of the actions of the person. The art and crafts of the Asante are not merely articles made only for their beauty; they were made to perform special duties. Among these crafts were wood carvings, metal work, leather work, pottery and others. Much more importance was attached to Art pieces that were used exclusively by the kings and chiefs especially the ones that were included in their Regalia.

As the study has already seen, Metal work plays a very unique part in the making of some of the most important items in an Asante king's Regalia. Apart from the king's cloths especially the Kente, the various metallic objects are the most important amongst the items which make up the kings Regalia. Some sort of metal work is found almost in every department of the kings Regalia. On his stools and chairs, state swords, ornaments and many other items metal is either solely used or is incorporated into a design for an item.

It is noteworthy that the metals are not used arbitrary. A particular metal may be used because of its value and importance; others may be used because of their toughness in character. Gold being a symbol of wealth and beauty may be used to show how wealthy the king may be whereas Iron could be used to show strength. The use of particular metals also depended on the piece being made and for whom it was being made. For instance, in Asante, lesser chiefs had to get permission from the Asantehene before they could use certain metals as well as certain designs on their items of Regalia. In effect Metals were very important in the making of Regalia items; seldom would a king go out without at least a ring on his finger. The importance of metal is further illustrated by the fact that most items of Regalia were made out of other materials before being decorated with metal, the metal being the beautifying object.

As far as Regalia is concerned, one is right to say that even though wood is the most widely used material, used, the study can say they are used mostly as base material and that metals can be thought of as the most important single item used to portray many values: Strength, Wealth, Beauty etc. Metals can therefore be termed as the most used material in the making of an Asante kings Regalia especially where contrasts are concerned and a study of metals. in relation to these items of Regalia, will never fail to show the importance.

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