



Celebrating the Ashanti

**The Oxford Academy
Year Nine**

Introduction

Last year, in November and December, ten Nine Year students of The Oxford Academy, attended a course in African Studies, on the Ashanti, whose capital city was present-day Kumasi. They ruled most of Ghana and parts of neighbouring Ivory Coast and Togo, for nearly two hundred years, creating the Ashanti Empire, whose gold underpinned international currency and whose cloth called Kente, has become a symbol of the African continent.

Here is presented the work and writings of those ten students, as a memento of our time together and as a learning resource for their fellow students. Welcome to Kumasi.

Natty Mark Samuels
African School
September 2021

Photographs by Carly Molloy

Dedication

to

Nora Ward
aka Trailblazer

Headteacher of The Oxford Academy

for pioneering African Studies at the school

to

Jeanette Booth

her Personal Assistant

for the administrative support through this cultural education

and to

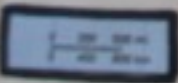
Julie Thomas-Boswell
Learning Mentor

for her belief in the students

Guide of Africa



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AFRICAN STUDIES

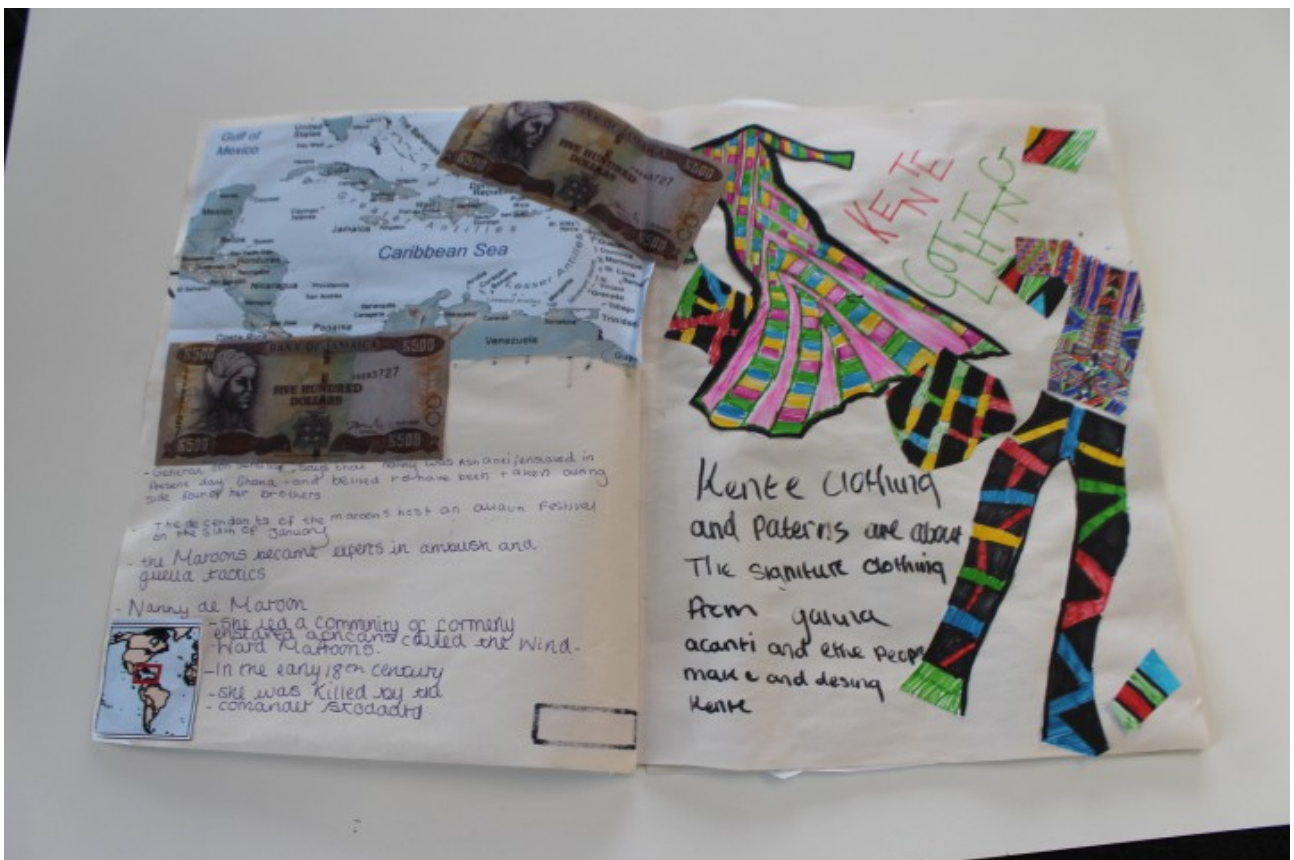


Made by:
Faith Agbetele, Zola Amodiaso



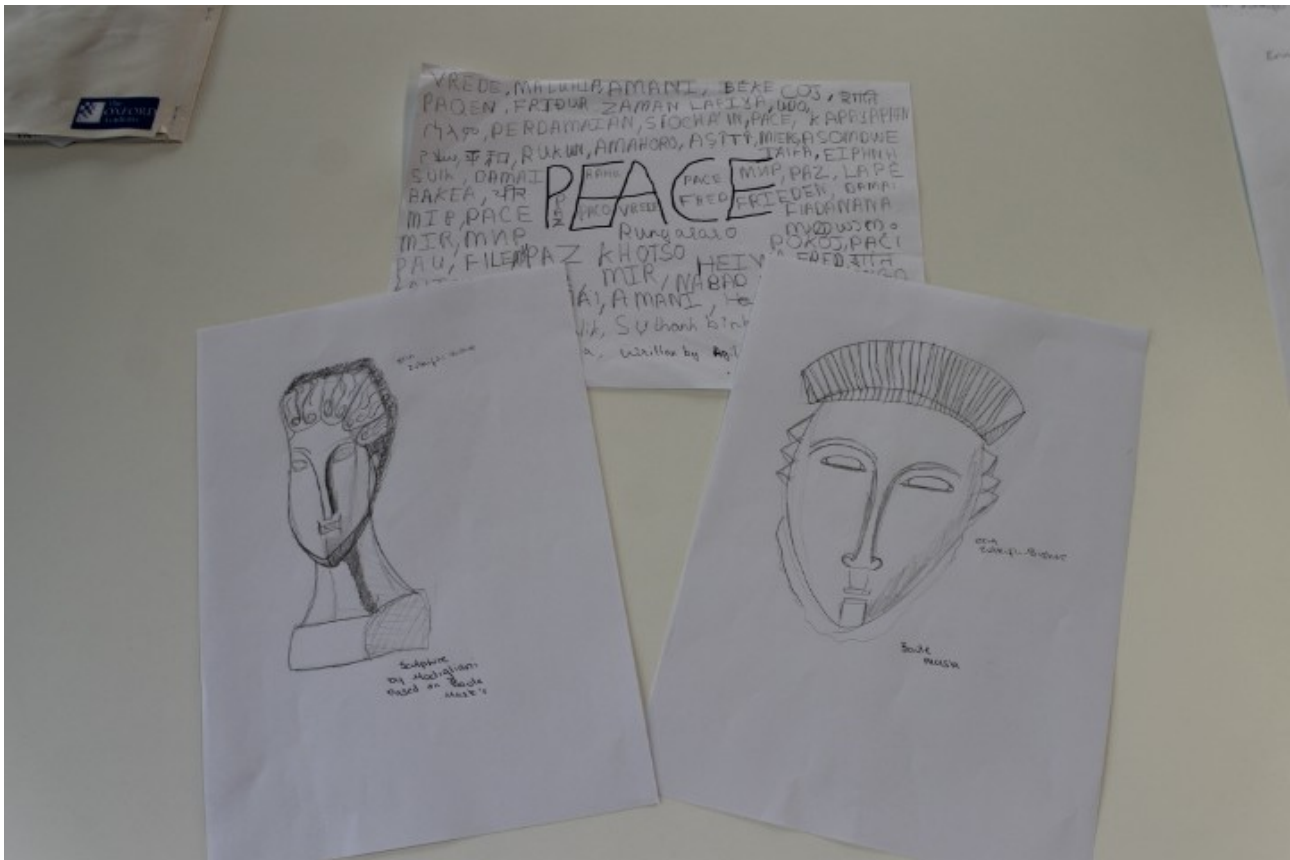


Kente



Nanny Maroon, depicted on the left on the Jamaican currency. An Ashanti enslaved, she is Jamaica's only National Heroine.

Above on the left and below, we see art based on the Baule of the Ivory Coast. Like the Ashanti, they are part of the Akan. They have produced some of the greatest sculpture in Africa, influencing European creativity, such as the work of Modigliani, shown in the bottom right hand corner above.



In the past seven weeks of African Studies, I have learned a lot about new topics and history in Africa and the Caribbean. One of the topics was kente cloth, which is a traditional clothing worn in Ghana, but was once only worn by the rich people, but is now worn by everyone. Kente cloth is now often made of silk that is imported from other countries, but was originally made from cotton, in various colours and patterns.

The goldweights (Akan goldweights) were made of brass and used for weighing gold, by the Akan people of West Africa.

African art describes the modern and historical paintings, sculptures and other visual culture of Africa.

Nanny Maroon was Ashanti. The word "maroon," comes from the Spanish word cimarron, meaning wild. Nanny escaped and ran away and she founded a settlement which became known as Nanny Town.

Faith Agbebaaku

Questions for a Master Weaver

How long would it take to finish a cloth?

Do you plan the design?

Do you use assistants?

How often do you make a cloth?

Do you make a lot of profit from weaving?

Where's the supply of silk come from?

How heavy is the cloth?

Do you think more people should wear kente?

Do you think other clothing should have kente in it?

Do you enjoy it?



Miners and traders in gold, the Ashanti craftsmen made goldweights from brass, for the weighing of the gold.

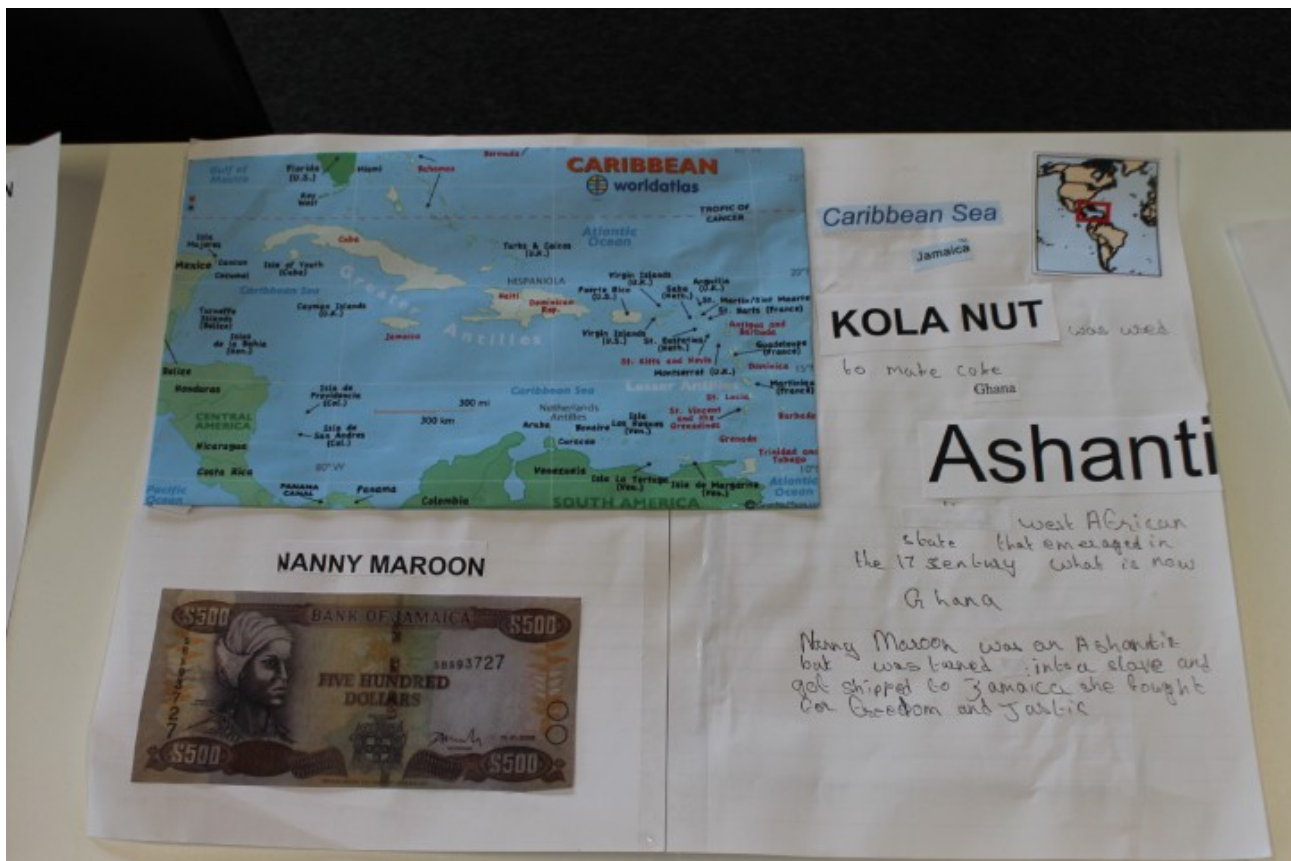
The kente pattens are very pretty, colourful and inspiring. The designs are mesmerising to look at.

Erin Zulkifi-Bishop

I have enjoyed doing African Studies. I have learnt what tactics were used in war at the time - and about cloths, such as kente. Then I learnt about items such as the Golden Stool, sacred to the Ashanti and people and important figures in their history, such as Osei Tutu. I also learnt about the trade across the Sahara Desert.

I hope all of you can learn this.

Agil Thomas



A map of the Caribbean, where Nanny Maroon was taken to; demonstrating the original link of Ghana with Jamaica.

In this course I have learnt about the Ashanti people and their kente cloth. Also, I learnt about some national heroines like Yaa Asantwaa and Nanny Maroon. We also learnt about Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of independent Ghana, who popularised kente cloth. We gained knowledge about Osei Tutu, who was the founder of the Ashanti nation. We also learnt about the Golden Stool that fell on Osei Tutu's lap.

We also learnt about the Baule people and how the Baule art inspired some European artists like Amedeo Modigliani. We learnt about kola nuts and how they were a sign of peace.

We also learnt about the gold trade in West Africa.

Daniel Viveiros

AKAN Goldweights

Ashanti

NANNY MAROON

KOLA NUT



West Africa



A Talk With Modigliani



Baule



Ashanti goldweights

Yaa Asantewaa

HONOURED BY THE ASHANTI

to the Akos of Ghana

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No one will cut me today. These without breath shall not be placed within me. For they say I was created on Thursday by God whom they call Nyame.

No farmer will use his hoe. Nor shall any tree be felled. Because today is the day of my birth. They call me Asase Yaa, some know me as Mother Earth.

I always give them yam and plantain. But today is my day of rest. The farmer and I will awake tomorrow; shining at our best.

Blood is poured on me. The flesh is mixed with yam. At the four corners of the farm, they deposit this fusion. It is planting time, so they have come to ask permission.

Like dutiful children they come to me, their humble portion. For protection from snakebite. To assist in cultivation. They come with a gift of water. To pay homage by libation.

And when a girl begins to become a woman. Her mother will go around, informing the village of that new fact. Then she'll return to pour wine over me. Invoking Nyame, myself and her ancestry.

They ask permission also, when it is time to put someone inside me. In a hole cut peace. I become tooth. So many inside me. I am the Final Room.

When someone's word is in doubt. Needing to prove themselves right, before the blood begins to boil. They get on their knees and touch me, their lips against the soil.

They have another name for me. They call me Aberewa - the Old Woman. But are always respectful, reverential. The People of Gentle Petition.

I'm glad to be their Mother. To nourish and to nurture. I know I've been blessed Nyame. So I'll enjoy my sacred day celebrations. Honoured by the Ashanti.



Kumasi

Questions for a Master Goldsmith

Where does the gold originate from?

How long does it take to become a goldsmith?

How much labour does it take?

How long does it take to make a gold earring?

How is the gold extracted?

In this course I have learned about kente cloth and that it used to be worn by the elite. I've learned of national heroes such as Yaa Asantewaa and Nanny Maroon. And that Kwame Nkrumah popularised kente.

I've learnt about a fruit called kola nut, which is especially popular in Islamic communities, due to them not being allowed to consume alcohol. It is a sign of peace and given as a gift.

I also learnt about coffee from the Blue Mountains in Jamaica.

William Brandao



Daniel Virens

Peace - Kola

PEACE

You can
give Kola Nuts
to resolve
conflict and bring
Peace

Kola
nuts are
gifted as a
token of peace
and welcoming

A Baule mask

My name is Anthony Owusu. I was the teaching assistant for the African Studies program. We learnt about the Ashanti ethnic group from Ghana.

According to ancient oral tales, the Ashanti are part of the larger Akan group who originally came from Nubia, in modern day Sudan. Due to the Axum Empire's expansion and invasion during the 5th century, the Akan had to flee.

They migrated west to the Sahel and established small trading kingdoms, specifically around the east of Lake Chad and then eventually, were a part of the Ghana Empire, also known as Wagadu.

Growing up in Ghana as an Ashanti, my paternal grandfather who was a well respected clan head, by the Asantehene, the king of Ashantiland. He would tell my cousins and I the history of our people and the traditions and customs associated with it. Sat surrounding a little bonfire in the night, my grandfather would sing folk songs and tell us stories about the great heroes who made brave sacrifices for the Ashanti Empire.

Anthony Ofunsu

Teaching assistant and sixth form student.



Six of the ten students who took the course, with teacher and teaching assistant.

The kola nut is native to the forests of West Africa. These trees are members of the cocoa family and the nut was used in Coco-Cola production. Salaga was one of the main markets for kola nut trade. The Hausa of Nigeria were major traders of the nut. Kola nuts are given as tokens of peace and as gifts of welcome.

Erin Zulkifi-Bishop

During this course we've learnt a lot about the Ashanti people and a little about Jamaica. From learning words like 'Kumasi,' which means "The tree lived;" to learning about Osei Tutu, one of the founders of the Ashanti Empire.

Summer Honey Herbert

In this course I have learnt about the history of West Africa. For example, I know that the kola nut is indigenous to West Africa and the clothing that the Ashanti wear is colourful and diverse. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of independent Ghana, popularised kente cloth. The Akan people of Ivory Coast, such as the Baule, sculpt masks, such as the Goli. The mask is used for tribal dances during harvest festivities, in processions to honour distinguished visitors and at the funerals of important figures.

Kyle Fermin

Artists and Writers

Faith Agbebaaku

Zosia Alves De Asis

Erin Zulkifi-Bishop

William Brandao

Yusuf Dhorat

Kyle Fermin

Summer Honey Herbert

Agil Thomas

Daniel Viveiros

An African School Production