



The Making of an African King: Patrilineal and Matrilineal Struggle Among the ?wutu (Effutu) of Ghana

Anthony Ephirim-Donkor

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Kingship (chieftaincy) disputes are commonplace in Ghana. These disputes may begin as rivalries among eligible candidates, or when ineligible candidates are elected caretaker kings due to their invaluable services to a royal family. However, upon the demise of the caretaker rulers, sometimes their descendants refuse to cede power, thus creating protracted and sometimes violent power struggles. This is exactly what happened to the ʔwutu-ʔbe (Effutu) of Simpa. In 1898, twenty-seven years after the death of a caretaker ruler elected by the Otutano Royal Family for his invaluable service to the royal family, his nephew contested the throne plunging the ʔwutu into a cycle of contentious internecine struggle.

The Making of an African King examines the source of the struggle as seen by colonial administrators, and the final court ruling in June 2013 between the patrilineal Otutano Royal Family against the non-royal Acquah faction that favors the matrilineal system of descent practiced by the Akan.

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