

Who Were the Builders of the Earthworks in the Forests of the Southern Ghana?

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The earthworks in the forests of southern Ghana are among the most remarkable archaeological features in the country. The identity of the constructors of these earthworks has been debated for several years. Test excavation of an earthwork site near Ngyeduam in the Central Region of Ghana has produced pottery relevant to discussions on the identity of the builders of the earthworks. The pottery from the excavation is described, and the implications of the pottery for the archaeology of the earthworks are discussed. Contrary to claims by other researchers that the earthworks were not built by the Akan, there is continuity between the pottery from the earthworks and that of the modern Akan, whose ancestors, more than any other group in Ghana, were probably the builders of the earthworks.

Introduction

Several writers have reported and commented on the earthworks in the Birim Valley and western Akim districts of southern Ghana (see fig. 1). These earthworks are found in the semi-deciduous forests of southern Ghana in such places as Osenasi, Manso and Akwatia (Junner 1931: 8-9; Braunholtz 1936b: 34-35; 1936a: 469-474; Davies 1961: 24-25; 1967: 288; Wild 1935: 214-215; Kiyaga-Mulindwa 1978: 36-51); Abodum, Kokobin, Batabe, Domiabra, Ewisa, Kotokuom, Otumi, Tapimarang Tiripi (Atiankama), Kotobohu, Nyameadom, Boadua, Esomona, Aiyola Forest Reserve, Abofo, Asawase, Bieni, Adekuma (Bomso), and Anamasi, Anamasi Edimso (see Junner 1932: 16; 1935: 14; Wild 1935: 14; Davies 1961: 14-26; 1967: 288, Kiyaga-Mulindwa 1978: 36-189).