Based on a decade of fieldwork in southeastern Ghana and analysis of secondary sources, this book aims to reconstruct the religious history of the Anlo-Ewe peoples from the 1850s. In particular, it focuses on a corpus of rituals collectively known as ‘Fofie’, which derived their legitimacy from engaging with the memory of the slave-holding past. The Anlo developed a sense of discomfort about their agency in slavery in the early twentieth century, which they articulated through practices such as ancestor veneration and spirit possession, and by forging links with descendants of peoples they formerly enslaved. Conversion to Christianity, engagement with ‘modernity’, trans-Atlantic conversations with diasporan Africans, and citizenship of the post-colonial state coupled with structural changes within the religious system – which resulted in the decline in Fofie’s popularity – gradually altered the moral emphases on legacies of slavery in the Anlo historical imagination as the twentieth century progressed.

Meera Venkatachalam holds a PhD in Social Anthropology from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (2007). She has conducted post-doctoral work at the Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh. Her writing has appeared in *Africa* (journal of the International African Institute) and *Journal of African History*. 

Slavery, Memory, and Religion in Southeastern Ghana, c. 1850–Present
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Slavery, Memory, and Religion in Southeastern Ghana, c. 1850–Present

Meera Venkatachalam

International African Institute, London

Cambridge University Press
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Glossary

Most non-English words used in this work are Ewe, though a number of terms in other West African languages have also been used. All words below are Ewe, unless indicated otherwise. This glossary is intended for English speakers, and alphabetical ordering follows the English language. This list is not an exhaustive list of all foreign language words used in the following pages, but a Glossary of the most frequently occurring non-English words in the book.

Ewe uses the Roman alphabet supplemented by the following international phonetic alphabets: ĐĐ, ɛɛ, ŋ⁄, ññ, ɔɔ, ɔɔ. I have not used these in my text. The presence of certain sound clusters (Dz, Gb, Kp, Ny, and Ts) make Ewe a rather difficult language to learn. The tilde (~) mark nasalises vowels.

I stick to the Anlo dialect of Ewe as far as possible. I use Anglicised spellings throughout the book. Instead of Anloɔ, I write Anlo; instead of tro, I use tro, and adadada is adadada.

The final ‘e’ at the end of many Ewe proper nouns should be pronounced ‘é’. French spellings include this marking, while English spellings do not. In this text, Lomé is Lome, Sacrebodé is Sacrebode, and Kpalimé is Kpalime.

The plural of most Ewe words are attained by adding – wo, usually at the end. I follow this convention.

Ab(e)rewa Anti-witchcraft movement; deity in the Anlo-Ewe Gorovodu pantheon; wife of Kunde

abusua (Tw; pl. mmusua) matrilineage

Ada One of the deities of the Yew cluster

adadada ‘cooking for Ada’ (deity); part of the funeral rites for a dead Yew initiate

adeha ‘hunting group’, casual supplicants of Gorovodu shrines, who organise ritual events, and are closely associated with the cult, but are not initiated into it
Glossary

*adurú* (Twi; pl. *nnuru*) drinking medicine
*adze* witchcraft
*adzeto* owner of witchcraft, witch/wizard
*Afa* Divinatory system of the Anlo-Ewe; a knowledge system; also revered as a deity
*afedo* local patrilineage
*afedo-me* ancestral house
*afeme* house, home
*Agbodedefu* a ritual associated with a Yewé cult, where a ram is sacrificed to the sea;
*agbota* a ceremonial role within some Anlo cults, in particular Fofie
*agumaga* divinatory apparatus used by an Afa diviner
*ahe* uninitiated members of any cult associated with shrines in an informal capacity
*aklama* unique personality traits and distinguishing features of an individual
*akonkofo* (Twi) a social group in Asante of the early colonial period, consisting of wealthy businessmen, who often rebelled against the fiscal policies of the *Asantehene*
*akple* cornmeal porridge staple of the Anlo
*alaga* The state of going wild within the context of the Yewé cult, in reaction to insults
*Alegba* protective deity, the guardian of ritual knowledge, the gatekeeper of the Anlo-Ewe pantheon
*alomevi* person acquired through working with one’s hands; one of the many terms used to refer to a slave in the late nineteenth century in Anlo
*Amaka* one of the deities of the Yewé cluster
*anamtsi* a combination of ceremonial herbs and water
*amedzodzo* process of sponsoring a descendant
*amedzoto* *Amo* = person, *dzoto* = ancestral part which makes up an individual, or ancestral sponsor
*amefewle* bought person, someone acquired through the slave trade
*amegasi* soothsayer
*ametsiava* war captive, prisoner-of-war, enslaved person; also an ancestor who has died a premature death, usually attributed to human agency
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glossary</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>asafohenega</strong></td>
<td>war chiefs of the left and right wing of the Anlo army; borrowed term from Twi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asantehene (Twi)</strong></td>
<td>the Asante king</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>asekyere (Twi)</strong></td>
<td>‘pedigreeing’, the offence of exposing or referring to an individual’s non-Asante ancestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>atike</strong></td>
<td>medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>avadzi</strong></td>
<td>war stool, symbolising one’s slave-owning status in society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avleketi</strong></td>
<td>One of the chief deities of the Yew cluster, the Goddess of the Sea and wife of Hevieso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>avlesi</strong></td>
<td>a sub-category of Yew vodusi, pledged primarily to Avleketi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>awadada</strong></td>
<td>awo = war; dada = mother, war-chief of the Anlo, in charge of the central wing of the army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>awoamefia</strong></td>
<td>title of the paramount chief of the Anlo, which translates into ‘he who lives in seclusion’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>awoba</strong> (or awowa, a loan word from Twi, pl. nnwowa)</td>
<td>pawn or indentured labourer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>batakari</strong></td>
<td>tunic worn by northern peoples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bayi (Twi)</strong></td>
<td>witchcraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blekete/Brekete</strong></td>
<td>Drumming rhythm; a Gorovodu deity; an anti-witchcraft cult; a type of ritual knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>boko</strong></td>
<td>Afa practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bone</strong></td>
<td>the abode of unborn souls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>dasi</strong></td>
<td>a sub-category of Yew vodusi, pledged primarily to the serpent Voduda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>dufia</strong></td>
<td>chief of a duko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>duko</strong></td>
<td>city-state, chieftdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>duko</strong></td>
<td>town or village, generally not as big as a duko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>dzidzidome (Mina dialect)</strong></td>
<td>born-betweens, category of people with male slave antecedents and free mothers in Mina society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>dzingbe/dzingoli</strong></td>
<td>the sky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>dzo</strong></td>
<td>magic, medicine, protective measures used to combat witchcraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>dzogbe</strong></td>
<td>destiny, the mechanism which charts out the specific path the individual has to follow during his or her lifetime; dzogbe may also refer to those ancestors who have not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary

followed the path of destiny and linger on
as unhappy presences

dzoto
mother and father parts, and ancestor souls,
which go into the making of the luvo

Eda
one of the deities of the Yew cluster

Evegbe
sense of 'Eweness', Ewe identity, oneness of
Ewe people, the Ewe language, Ewe nationalism

Eweme
'Ewe inside', the central Ewe belt

fetarotro
cow sacrifice, associated with Gorovodu cult

fiamanya
uninitiated members of the Fofie cult
(translation, 'unknown queens')

fiasidi
initiate of a troxovi shrine, akin to trokosi
(translation 'woman fit to marry a chief')

foasi
ceremony associated with the Nyigbla cult in
the 1800s, by which two or more initiates
from each Anlo clan could be recruited into
that cult

Fofie
cult associated with slave ancestry, organised
around a deity from Kete Krachi

fofiesi
pledged to Fofie, term used to describe a
full-fledged initiate of the Fofie cult

fome
lineage, family

gbogbe
breath, or the force which kept the body alive

goro
kola nut

Gorovodu
cult associated with slave spirits from outside
Anlo, and forms of medicinal knowledge
derived from outside Anlo

Hevieso
thunder god; head of the Yew pantheon;
husband of Avleketi

hlo
clan, organised patrilineally in Anlo

hlofia
leader of a hlo, or clan

hlokponu
clan house

Hogbetsotso
festival held annually during the first weekend
of November in most large Ewe towns to
mark the peopling of Eweland after the
mythical exodus from Notsie.

home
a pawned individual, though the word is also
used for a bought person

hozi
stool of wealth

hubono
Yew shrine owner

hunku
sacred palm nuts, part of an Afa diviner’s
apparatus

husunu
a male Yew initiate, a vodusi’s counterpart.
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<th>Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>juju</td>
<td>(Colloquial) magic, witchcraft, medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>klu</td>
<td>generic term for slave (word used in context of religious servitude, and also for a prisoner-of-war)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kodzogbe</td>
<td>the world of the living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koku</td>
<td>protective deity found in Anlo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kope</td>
<td>settlement comprising several patrilineages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kpole</td>
<td>divining beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kpopo</td>
<td>novice Yewo initiate, usually living in the shrine for a period of confinement. On completion of the period, they are known as vodusiwo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kpoli</td>
<td>signs of non-kin determinations/life signs, made by Afa divination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunde</td>
<td>an anti-witchcraft cult; head of the Gorovodu pantheon; husband of Ab(e)rewa; a slave-spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>luo</td>
<td>the physical elements of a person, believed to have powers special to an individual; luvokuto refers to the soul of death, while luvogbea refers to the soul of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mami Wata</td>
<td>a mermaid; a water spirit revered all over West Africa, whose worship is believed to generate success and mishaps in equal measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mamma</td>
<td>protective deity which was brought into Anlo in the 1980s from Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mawu</td>
<td>the supreme God in Christian Ewe culture; one of the many Ewe trowo in some Ewe sub-cultures; along with Lisa the original cosmic couple in Ewe-Adja-Fon myth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mawufe</td>
<td>the abode of Mawu; heaven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mawusubosubo</td>
<td>Sunday service; Worship of Mawu (the Supreme Being)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medzi</td>
<td>one of the sixteen signs made by Afa beads as they are cast during divining sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>midao</td>
<td>a Yewo priest, usually one step above vodusiwo and husunuewo in the Yewo cultic hierarchy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minao</td>
<td>a Yewo priestess, usually one step above vodusiwo and husunuewo, in the Yewo hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nkwanwaa</td>
<td>youngmen; a social class in Asante which arose in the nineteenth century, largely as a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
nukpekpe
Yewo initiation ceremony

nuevo
mouth opening, after which spirits speak freely through a person, generally used within the contexts of cultic initiation, especially Gorovodu and Fofie

nuvuvu
moumouth opening, after which spirits speak freely through a person, generally used within the contexts of cultic initiation, especially Gorovodu and Fofie

Nyigbla
patron deity of Anlo and war god

obosom (Twi; pl. abosom)
natural forces transformed into deities

donko (Twi; pl. monkonfoo)
generic term for slaves in Asante from the northern grasslands

ohoho (Twi; pl. ahoho)
free stranger resident in Asante from a neighbouring Akan kingdom

otani (Twi, pl. ntafo)
term used to refer to Muslim traders in Asante from the English sentry; minds of the possessed Gorovodu spirit mediums

senterwa
from the Twi osfoko; priest, especially in the context of Gorovodu cult; owner of Gorovodu god-objects

sofo
from the Twi osfoko; priest, especially in the context of Gorovodu cult; owner of Gorovodu god-objects

sosi
a sub-category of Yewo vodusi, pledged to the thunder god, Hevieso

sro
spouse; also means pledged in ritual contexts

suman (Twi, pl. asuman)
word used to refer to man-made deities, like protective charms and amulets

togbi
ever, grandfather

togbui
ancestor

togbuiwofenoli
ancestor who has led a dissatisfied life

tokomefia
ward chief, subordinate to the dufia or town chief

tro
deity, used mainly to denote ancestral deities in Anlo

troklu
initiate of a troxovi shrine, generally male

trokosi
initiate of a troxovi shrine, generally female

trosi
pledged to the troso, term often used to describe Gorovodu spirit mediums in Anlo

troxovi
tro = deity; kono = unfruitful, lost (i.e. lost to parents and dedicated to deity); vi = child; literally, deities that took children.

Tsiefe
the world of the ancestors

vide
a little bit

vodu
deity, usually referring to nature spirits
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<th>Glossary</th>
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<tr>
<td>Voduda</td>
<td>serpent deity in the Yew cluster; companion of Avleketi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vodusi</td>
<td>pledged to the <em>voduwo</em>, used for a female initiate of Yew shrines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yewesi</td>
<td>ritual language spoken by members of the Yew cult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yewesi</td>
<td>‘pledged to Yew’, generic term for all Yew initiates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zikpi</td>
<td>stool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zikpifeme</td>
<td>stool house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zizidzela</td>
<td>Nyigbla shrine initiates</td>
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</table>