



Drink, Power, and Cultural Change: A Social History of Alcohol in Ghana, c. 1800 to Recent Times (Social History of Africa)

By Emmanuel Akyeampong

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"[This book] is well-written, accessible to a variety of readers, thoroughly researched, original in approach and insight, and broad in its implications. . . . Akyeampong takes very seriously the challenge of conceiving African history in terms of indigenous intellectual categories and in terms of the experience of those involved. Real people come to life in these pages...." - Charles Ambler, University of Texas

"Drink, Power, and Cultural Change" presents a social history of alcohol in southern Ghana over the past century and a half and highlights its centrality in the culture of power. Alcohol could bridge the gap between the spiritual and living worlds, as the blessings of the gods and ancestors were necessary for success. This made alcohol an indispensable fluid, access to which was highly contested. Liquor revenues were critical for British colonialism, while protests against liquor regulations formed a significant part of local politics and drinking bars were hotbeds of nationalist agitation. Akyeampong's innovative analysis blends the disciplinary approaches of history, anthropology, social medicine, theology, and political science. A wide variety of sources forms the basis of his study, including proverbs, highlife music, comic opera, popular literature, and photographs in addition to the more familiar colonial and missionary archives and oral tradition. "Drink, Power, and Cultural Change" presents a novel lens through which to examine African social history, and its concern with questions of ritual, gender, power, and health gives it a very broad appeal.

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About the Author

Emmanuel Kwaku Akyeampong completed his Ph.D. in African history at the University of Virginia in 1993, and is assistant professor of history at Harvard University. His articles on the social and cultural history of Ghana have appeared in *Histoire Sociale*

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the *International Journal of African Historical Studies*

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