

Obituary

James Anquandah, who passed away after a short illness on September 8th at the age of 79, was one of the earlier and longest serving Ghanaian archaeologists. He was a person of great energy and dedication whose work will be remembered for a long time. Two great West African archaeologists took over the Chairs at Ibadan and Legon in the late 1970's, James Anquandah at the University of Ghana at Legon and Bassey Andah at the University of Ibadan. Both had been staff members at the University of Ghana. Both were two of the most dedicated African archaeologists whose accomplishments need to be better known; Bassey has been well recognized but James Anquandah less so. James was the very first university undergraduate to major in archaeology in an African university, as a student he worked with Peter Shinnie in the Sudan, he read for a University of Ghana Diploma in Archaeology and went on to take a M.Litt at Oxford in 1967. On his return to Ghana, he spent much time as the executive secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana. His passion for evangelical Christianity never waned but in 1973 we persuaded him to become the first West African lecturer in Archaeology. In his career as a field archaeologist he excavated with me at Begho, later worked on medieval towns on the Ghana Coast, on the hilltop villages in the Shai hills with their stone walled enclosures and stone houses, and on sites associated with the Slave Trade along the coast, particularly at Elmina. James Anquandah brought to everyone's notice the Koma civilization in northern Ghana, characterized by its wonderful terracottas, an equal of many in the Jenne area of Mali. Sadly, like those of Mali, looters dug the Koma terracottas, many being sold outside Ghana. This work fired James Anquanda's interest in African art history that he successfully introduced at the University of Ghana, and he helped develop the Museum at the Department of Archaeology. He built up from his time as chair of the Department of Archaeology (1981-1993) the number of courses offered and in which as many students read

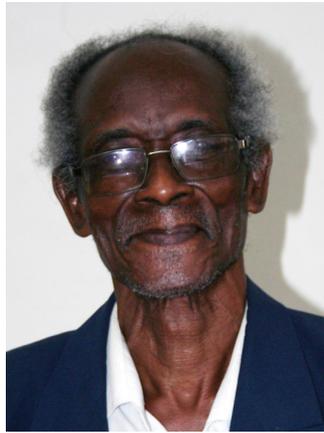


Photo courtesy of the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, University of Ghana.

Archaeology as read History. He was a prolific scholar from the time of the publication of his first two books in 1979: *Discovering Ghana's Past*, the first survey of the archaeology of an African country by one its scholars; and *Together we sow and reap: the Christian Council of Ghana 1929-1979*. These books were soon followed by *Ethno-archaeological clues to Ghana's great past and - a great future?*, and later books included *Koma-Bulsa: its Art and Archaeology* (1998), *Castles and Forts in Ghana* (1999), edited volumes on the *Transatlantic Slave trade* (2007) and *Current Perspectives in the Archaeology of Ghana* (2014).

He was also for many years (1991-1997) a very influential Dean of Social Studies who helped buildup Archaeology as a key discipline at the university, taking it beyond being the study of stones and bones as it had previously been regarded. It is partly from his endeavors that the University of Ghana became a major center for African Heritage studies. To James Anquandah's commitment and efforts much is owed in Ghanaian archaeology and African archaeology in general. He will be greatly missed.

Merrick Posnansky