

# Art and Culture in the Dwira Festival of the People of Adansi, Ghana: Purification Ritual for Ancestral Protection



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## ABSTRACT

This study focused on the role of art and culture in celebrating the Dwira festival by the Adansi people, Ashanti Region, Ghana. Fomena is the seat of the paramount chief of Adansi and New Edubiase towns, which were the centre of the festival and the study. Ethnography research under the qualitative research design was used to unveil the art and culture of the Dwira festival through structured personal interviews, focus group discussions and direct observation. Various stages of the Dwira festival celebrated by the seven provinces of the Adansi, including Fomena and New Edubiase townships, were emphasised. The major artistic elements used to celebrate the festival were captured and described by the researchers. A central artistic element unique from the other known arts is the human footprints in rock, which are believed to be the footsteps of the creator of the Adansi, referred to by the people as *Adansi Bona*. The study recommends building a typical museum in Adansi to preserve relics of the Adansi land, and developing the Bona shrine in the Bona forest as a tourist site for cultural preservation, as well as income generation and employment for the host communities. The study contributes to scholarship on preserving cultural heritage in Ghana

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## INTRODUCTION

Dwira, or Amenyinase Nkabom Festival, is celebrated by the Adansi people in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Afriyie opines that some festivals in Ghana are meant for purification and protection, and through the Dwira festival, the Adansiman seek such redress from *Bona* (Creator).<sup>1</sup> It is a celebration of the life, history, culture, and heritage of the Adansi people, as handed down from the beginning to date.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Ernestina Afriyie, "The Implications of the Odwira Festival for Christianity and Christian Mission in Okuapeman," *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies* 6, no. 3 (2020): 145–57.

<sup>2</sup> K. Aidoo, "Celebrating Akiwasidae With The Ashanti People Of Kumasi Ghana," 2020, <https://theculturetrip.com/africa/ghana/articles/celebrating-akiwasidae-with-the-ashanti-people-of-kumasi-ghana>; Shirley Dankwa, Loretta

seven provinces in the Adansi state celebrate the Dwira festival. Each province has a role to play during the celebration, and the celebration is performed simultaneously. New Edubiase, one of the provinces, adopted the "Amenyinase" as the festival's name, which also signifies the establishment of the Adansi states as an autonomous unified state, with Fomena as the seat of the paramountcy.

Dwira, which means "purification and protection", is a festival slated to be observed throughout the day and night to show reverence to the ancestors and to seek protection from *Bonasuo* in the "Bona Forest". A respondent explains that this process is called *Dwira Twere* (Purification and Protection Rites). The *Bonasuo* is sprinkled on the principal streets of each province of the Adanse kingdom, and then, the chief priest of Bona sends some of the *Bonasuo* to the Asantehene. Similar to other festivals in and outside Africa with reference to Ghana, the Dwira festival is endowed with arts – visuals and performing, taking over all facets of the festival's celebration. Dankwa et al. note and appreciate some key features of the Kloyosikplemi festival, including art forms and community appearances.<sup>3</sup> The visual aspect was observed through leather works, textiles, sculpture, rock art, and body painting. The festival's music, dance, and verbal art show the performing arts.

Festivals in Ghana celebrate historical continuity, cultural, ideological, and social, and related to the culture and ideology of the people.<sup>4</sup> The Dwira festival of the Adansi is a symbolic event that ensures the continuity of their culture and ancestry. The festivals and arts in Ghana are inseparable, each ethnic group having its own unique artwork. The core aspects of the performances were done to pacify gods or venerate ancestors. Festivals use art forms like ritual objects, dance, drumming, and sculpture to preserve and transmit their fundamental beliefs, values and ideas to future generations. Local materials are used for most art elements in celebrating the Amenyinase Nkabom festival, allowing the aged and young to reflect on past experiences and maintain the beginning of our existence. The artworks at festivals help create a better understanding of our culture and its existence. With all the literature by the writers mentioned above, there is no dispute that art is involved in the celebration of festivals in Ghana, including that of Amenyinase Nkabom of the Adansi.

Festivals promote community cohesion and economic benefits through businesses and community services. The Kwahu Easter festival in Ghana, a significant cultural event, has successfully integrated paragliding and street carnivals to improve its relevance.<sup>5</sup> Government and social leaders can structure celebrations to benefit the economy, such as helping to commercialise local dishes to boost employment.<sup>6</sup> The Ghana National Chamber of Commerce and Industry 2023 report has urged the government to offer business incentives amid the country's escalating unemployment crisis.<sup>7</sup> However, studies have shown that traditional festivals can help reduce the unemployment rate in the country.<sup>8</sup> They appealed to various stakeholders, like chiefs, to resolve skirmishes to boost tourism and promote peace through festival celebrations. Festivals also serve as platforms for social, religious, and economic development.

The paper discusses the relevance of the arts in celebrating the Dwira festival as a preservation of cultural heritage in Ghana. Ghana's diverse ethnic groups, each originating from a source characterised by numerous events, have created festivals to commemorate these innumerable events. Art and life are

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Asare-Kumi, and Isaac Eshun, "Background, Cultural Values and Functions of Traditional Festivals in Ghana: The Case of 'Kloyosikplemi' of the Yilo Krobos," *International Journal of Art and Literature* 3, no. 2 (2019): 25–40.

<sup>3</sup> Dankwa, Asare-Kumi, and Eshun, "Background, Cultural Values and Functions of Traditional Festivals in Ghana: The Case of 'Kloyosikplemi' of the Yilo Krobos."

<sup>4</sup> Aidoo, "Celebrating Akiwasidae With The Ashanti People Of Kumasi Ghana"; Dankwa, Asare-Kumi, and Eshun, "Background, Cultural Values and Functions of Traditional Festivals in Ghana: The Case of 'Kloyosikplemi' of the Yilo Krobos."

<sup>5</sup> Theresa Addai and Henry Ofosu Ameyaw, "Historical Background and Socioeconomic Significance of Modern Ghanaian Festivals: The Case of Kwahu Easter," *International Journal for Research Trends and Innovation* 9, no. 1 (2024): 40–48.

<sup>6</sup> Afriyie, "The Implications of the Odwira Festival for Christianity and Christian Mission in Okuapeman"; S M Ayesu, E K Howard, and K Asubonteng, "Socio-Cultural and Economic Significance of Textiles in Akuapem Odwira Festival," in *International Conference on Applied Sciences and Technology: Kumasi Technical University*, 2015, 241–53.

<sup>7</sup> C. Affre, "Chamber Of Commerce And Industry Appeals For Incentives To Reduce Unemployment Rate," February 22, 2024, [yen.com.gh/ghana/252109-ghana-chamber-commerce-industry-appeals-incentives-employ-unemployed-graduates/](https://yen.com.gh/ghana/252109-ghana-chamber-commerce-industry-appeals-incentives-employ-unemployed-graduates/); <https://yen.com.gh/ghana/252109-ghana-chamber-commerce-industry-appeals-incentives-employ-unemployed-graduates/>.

<sup>8</sup> Addai and Ameyaw, "Historical Background and Socioeconomic Significance of Modern Ghanaian Festivals: The Case of Kwahu Easter"; Dankwa, Asare-Kumi, and Eshun, "Background, Cultural Values and Functions of Traditional Festivals in Ghana: The Case of 'Kloyosikplemi' of the Yilo Krobos"; Ayesu, Howard, and Asubonteng, "Socio-Cultural and Economic Significance of Textiles in Akuapem Odwira Festival."

inseparable to Africans, as seen in the Dwira or Amenyinase Festival of the Adansi. Festivals in Ghana typically involve scheduled activities and culminate with a significant event. Various artistic elements are crucial in these activities, as seen in the Dwira festival of the Adansi. Given this, the paper seeks to reposit the research questions; (i) what art forms accompany the celebration of the Dwira or Amenyinase festival of the Adansi people? (ii) What is the significance of these arts to the celebration of the Dwira or Amenyinase festival?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research Approach and Design***

The study of the Dwira festival, a significant cultural event for the Adansi people, was conducted using an ethnographic research method under the qualitative research design. The study aimed to gather comprehensive data on the Arts and Culture's role in the Adansi People's Dwira Festival celebration and enhance comprehension of its artistic elements. The principles of ethnography allowed the researchers to capture the essence of the festival as it unfolded in its natural setting.

### ***Sample Selection Procedure***

The research focused on two main sites: Fomena, the heart of the Adansi paramountcy, and New Edubiase. These two areas were purposively chosen due to their central role in the Dwira festival. This is to ensure that the full range of activities and traditions associated with the event are captured. Fifty-six (56) study participants who are well-versed in the history as well as the cultural and artistic performances in the Dwira festival were purposively sampled. They included two paramount chiefs, four divisional chiefs, three traditional priests, seven elders in the Adansi Traditional Council, fifteen elderly men, twelve elderly women and thirteen youth (Seven males and Six females). Each of the study participants voluntarily decided to participate in the study. All gave their consent (either written or verbal) to their recruitment for the study after they were formally explained the nature of the study and its protocols to them.

### ***Data Collection Procedures***

The study used direct observations, structured interviews, and focus group discussions to gather authentic information about the artistic aspects of the Dwira festival. The interview guide was tested in a pilot on a small sample size and reviewed by three ethnography researchers. Finally, the interview guide was revised based on their expert suggestions. This was finalised for the actual study. The study was supplemented by visual documentation methods such as photographs and audio-visual recordings. The team meticulously transcribed historical video footage from local languages to English to gain a comprehensive understanding of the festival's background and development.

### ***Validation of Findings***

To validate the research findings, the team consulted secondary data sources, including library archives and electronic records. These sources provided additional context and supported the primary data by ensuring a well-rounded analysis.

### ***Data Analysis Procedure***

The ethnography thematic analysis principles were applied to the data from interviews and direct observations at the festival, involving description, analysis, and interpretation. The researchers analysed secondary data sources, including library archives and electronic records, using content analysis. This analytical method allowed us to systematically examine and interpret the artistic elements such as sculpture, leatherwork, jewellery, textiles, graphic design, stone art, painting, verbal arts, mixed media arts, music, dancing, and drumming of the festival, leading to insightful conclusions about their significance and role within the Dwira festival's celebrations. Qualitative thematic analysis provided a thorough perspective on the cultural and artistic dimensions of the festival.

## PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *The Adansi people*

The Adansi people are believed to be the first state from the Akan ethnic group to master the architectural art of building, hence the name "*Adan – Sie – Foa*" (literally, House-builders). Adansi is a distinct Twi-speaker state in the southern part of the Ashanti region. They are one of the two states occupying the Ashanti Region. Fomena is the traditional Adansihene king's seat, and the Adansi tribe comprises seven provinces: Fomena, New Edubiase, Ayaase, Akrokyere (Akrokerri), Akrofuom, Bodwesango, and Dompooase. The relevance of the Adansi State (Fomena) is enshrined in the maxim "*Se yedru amanfo so a, na yakae yaanom*", literally, "The sight of the ruins of a once prosperous but deserted settlement strikes a reminiscence of the old great folks who once lived on the deserted site." Adansi state, believed to be the first Akan state to become a kingdom, is believed to be the center of Akan dispersion and the site of God's creation, according to oral tradition. The Denkyira state overthrew it, leaving Adansi as an oral tradition.

### *Amenyinase*

Amenyinase (Aman-gyinae-ase), which means "state establishment or genesis of state", is where all the autonomous chiefs are united under one Adansi paramount chief. None of the Adansi chiefs was subject to the other before the meeting at Amenyinase. The unity occurred during the reign of Ewurade Basa. Amenyinase existed because Fomena "*Faman yi*" had not been founded. That is why the Adansi have a proverb, "*Adansi Nkotowa Nkotowa ye da yen abon mu*", which means "Adansi's like crabs each stays in its hole". At that meeting, Abu Bonsra Afriyie, who had the *Afenakwa* (Sword of Authority) from his late father, was made the leader of the Adansi.

### **Dwira or Amenyinase Nkabom Festival**

Dwira festival is a month-long celebration with rich traditional activities to mark the occasion. The Adanseman provinces observe all the activities simultaneously, with peculiar activities assigned to the various provinces. It mainly commences from mid-November to mid-December. The two major faces that are observed in the Dwira or Amenyinase Nkabom festival are (1) Private events, such as purification rituals and visits to the royal mausoleum, which are exclusively reserved for chiefs and court functionaries; and (2) public events like stool regalia, street processions, and chief durbars. The various activities in commemoration of the festival have been discussed as follows.

### *Ntaaso Agoro*

The Dwira Festival takes place in one month, with significant activities. *Ntaaso agoro* or *Ntaasogoro* (Twins Performance) on Friday, *Fofie* on the Akan calendar by the Chief of Akrokerri, marks the beginning of the festival. This celebration is held annually on the second or third Friday of November (15<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> November). It is noted that Akrokerri and Odumase are twins, but for reserved reasons, Akrokerri, being the younger, performs the *Ntaasogoro*. Akrokerrihene is also the Ahenkwaa of the Bona shrine. The *Ntaasogoro* performance occurs on *Fofie* night. After the *Ntaasogoro*, a month's ban on all social activities such as funerals, outdoorings, and marriage, conventions, among others, is adhered to within the jurisdiction of the Adansi land. Artistic elements cannot be looked down on throughout the celebration, and the arts play a significant role; without them, the celebration cannot yield its intended purpose. Some artistic elements in this celebration include Black cloth, *Ahenema* (Native Sandals), *mmentia*, stools, dancing, and drumming.

### **Outdoor of Dwira festival by Akwamuhene**

Ten days after *Fofie* is *Akwasidae* (24<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> of November). *Akwasidae* (Sacred Sunday) is an Akan celebration that honours its ancestors, which is held every six weeks in all Akan-speaking states in Ghana (Aidoo, 2020). Where chiefs present themselves to their subordinates through regalia, performances, and customs, Aidoo (2020) opined. The *Akwasidae* is observed and led by the Akwamuhene of Fomena and Ayaase. The day for this celebration is Sunday (Kwasiada), hence, *Akwasidae*, meaning Sacred Sunday. This celebration paves the way for the other provinces of the Adansi to commence their celebration of the Amenyinase or Dwira Festival. The provinces then develop their programme to commemorate the

Dwira Festival. During the Akwasidae by the two Akwamuhene, the role of art is exhibited throughout. The visual, performing, and verbal arts facilitate the execution of the entire process.

### ***Dwira Twere (Ancestral Day)***

The first Thursday after the *Akwasiidae* is a black day for the Adansi State and is termed ‘*Black Thursday*’. On the evening of ‘*Black Thursday*’, all the chiefs within the Adansi state observe and perform rites for the ancestors of the Adansiman. They do this to remember their ancestors and mourn them for the sacrifices and contributions that have kept the survival of Adansi society, as in the case of the Odwira festival among the Akuapim (Afriyie, 2020). This takes place in various towns within the Adansi state. Libations and sacrifices are made to the ancestors, and special rites are performed. War songs, dirges, lamentations, and appellations are observed throughout the various palaces within the Adansi jurisdiction. The various clan heads summon their members to the family house and perform rites to remember their ancestors. Unique art forms are used on this particular night, making the occasion remarkable and successful. A very charged and gingered atmosphere is created, which draws crowds from various homes to catch a glimpse. The name “Dwira” (Remembrance and Purification) of the festival of the Adansi is given its meaning on this ‘*Black Thursday*’ night through various displays of tradition and culture, and all those who witness it cannot wait to watch a replay of it.

### ***The Sprinkling of Bonasuo***

After Black Thursday, there is White Friday (*Fiadafufuo*). The *Fiadafufuo* becomes the grand day to celebrate the Dwira festival (Amenyinase Nkabom festival). On the dawn of *Fiadafufuo*, Chiefs go to the Bona Enclave at the Bona Forest with their stool to sprinkle the “Bonasuo” on them for purification. The royal mausoleum and purification rituals are exclusively accessible to chiefs and court functionaries.<sup>9</sup> Aidoo posits that on such days, celebration “involves the purification of black, ancestral, hand-carved stools.”<sup>10</sup> Following the stools’ purification, the Bonahene (Chief Priest of Bona), through his executioners “Abrafo”, sends “Bonasuo” to all provinces of the Adansiman for purification and protection. The chiefs of the various provinces sprinkle the “Bonasuo” in their principal areas of the town. Once each province receives the “Bonasuo”, they carry their chief and the queen mother in a palanquin for the sprinkling to be made. The power vested in the divisional chiefs and the ranks is now revealed, where some chiefs demonstrate their powers. They go through the principal parts of the town to ensure that the sprinkling and purification are made to protect the people and the land. There is also a sprinkling of mashed foods in addition to the “Bonasuo”. Aidoo continues that mashed yams and strong drinks are offered to the ancestors.<sup>11</sup> The sprinkling of “Bonasuo” on stools revitalises and breathes new life obsessed with the spirits and the state. All these are done to welcome the ancestors’ good spirits and drive away the bad ones. The “Bonasuo” also offers protection from their creator, Adansi Bona, to the entire land and the people. The *Tuotohene* (Gunfire chief) fired guns throughout the procession. The rich cultural display is exhibited at this juncture, and the people become more than proud to see their chief and queen in their best costumes and carried in palanquins across principal areas of the town.<sup>12</sup> Performing arts, especially music, drumming, and dancing, is used throughout the procession, as observed by the researchers. It is noted that the significance of the role of the artistic elements here cannot be overemphasised. Artworks are used from the cradle to the last moment of the day.<sup>13</sup>

The celebration of the Dwira or Amenyinase Nkabom festival of the Adansi ends with the presentation of the Bonasuo to the Asantehene at Manhyia Palace in Kumasi. The paramount chief of Adansi, together with all the seven provinces’ chiefs led by the Bonahene, presented the Bonasuo to the Asantehene. This is done on an *Akwasiidae*, where the Asantehene showcases the splendour, magnificence, and wealth of the Ashanti people through regalia, performances, and customs.<sup>14</sup> This paves

<sup>9</sup> Ayesu, Howard, and Asubonteng, “Socio-Cultural and Economic Significance of Textiles in Akuapem Odwira Festival.”

<sup>10</sup> Aidoo, “Celebrating Akiwasidae With The Ashanti People Of Kumasi Ghana,”3.

<sup>11</sup> Aidoo, “Celebrating Akiwasidae With The Ashanti People Of Kumasi Ghana.”

<sup>12</sup> Afriyie, “The Implications of the Odwira Festival for Christianity and Christian Mission in Okuapeman”; Ayesu, Howard, and Asubonteng, “Socio-Cultural and Economic Significance of Textiles in Akuapem Odwira Festival”; Dankwa, Asare-Kumi, and Eshun, “Background, Cultural Values and Functions of Traditional Festivals in Ghana: The Case of ‘Kloyosikplemi’ of the Yilo Krobos.”

<sup>13</sup> Ayesu, Howard, and Asubonteng, “Socio-Cultural and Economic Significance of Textiles in Akuapem Odwira Festival.”

<sup>14</sup> Aidoo, “Celebrating Akiwasidae With The Ashanti People Of Kumasi Ghana.”

the way for Adanse Bona (Creator of the Land) to purify and protect the entire Asanteman. This occasion takes place in the last Akwasidae of the Asantes. After Akwasidae, the ban is lifted so that normal activities and festivities can continue.

### **The Artistic Elements in the Dwira Festival**

The Dwira festival highlights the interconnectedness of arts and celebration through various artefacts such as sculpture, leatherwork, jewellery, textiles, graphic design, stone art, painting, verbal arts, mixed media arts, music, dancing, and drumming. Although individuals use these interdependent arts simultaneously, showcasing the interdependence of arts and festival celebrations, the study focused on the visual art forms.

### **Visual Arts in the Dwira Festival**

Visual arts dominated all areas of the festival celebration by the people of Fomena and the New Edubiase. The visual art forms identified include textiles, leatherwork, mixed media, sculpture, rock, and body art.

#### **Textiles**

Textile, originating from the Latin verb "texere," is a cloth or woven fabric used to cover the body in harsh weather conditions. It has been an essential part of human development for centuries, with the discovery of dyed flax fibres in Georgia 34,000 BCE indicating its existence in prehistoric times.<sup>15</sup> Today, textiles are used for decorations, bags, baskets, and furniture in various textures and colours;<sup>16</sup> however, the fashion industry has had a 400% increase in consumption in two decades.<sup>17</sup> Textile products are naturally made to cover our nakedness. This spans from the pre-historic era when clothes were made from the pelts of animals. The function of textiles became enormous as man advanced in life and culture. Every culture and group of people have their costumes and ideas behind them, especially when using them on festive occasions.<sup>18</sup> Almost all clothes, especially locally made ones, are accompanied by names. The styles of sewing and wearing depend on whether a male or a female will use it.<sup>19</sup> Danso et al. continue that Clothing is a vital way to express personality, emotions, and culture, and Ghana has a rich clothing tradition.<sup>20</sup> This affirms that a person's role determines the type of clothes he/she wears, which an informant makes.

Danso et al. identify traditional Ghanaian clothes such as Adinkra, Kente, and Fugu that men and women wear.<sup>21</sup> In the same vein, the Dwira festival exhibited similar textile products such as Kente, Nwira (white cloth), Brissi (black cloth), fugu/batakari (smock), jerseys, printed clothes, and other ordinary clothes in abundance. The kind of textiles worn during the Dwira festival confirms what Dzramedo et al. opine that mass production and rapid fashion changes have made clothes more accessible and affordable, leading to the rise of secondhand clothing, particularly in Africa.<sup>22</sup> All of these textile products were specially made for use. While the black cloth (Brissi) was significant on Black Thursday of the festival (Dwira Twere), the white cloth (Nwira) became significant on the morning of *Fiadafufuo* (White Friday) of the grand Durbar. In Ghana, fabrics, strip-woven such as kete, kente, and smock, are valuable cultural heritage items. A study in Agotime-Kpetoe, Agbozume, Daboya, and Bonwire found that Asante and Ewe weavers use synthetic yarns, while Daboya uses indigo-dyed cotton. Further research and festivals are encouraged to preserve culture. Frimpong and Adom opine that originally,

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<sup>15</sup> M. Issah, "History of Textiles in Ghana, The Akan Background," 2013, [https://cultureafrica.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/history-of-textiles\\_2.pdf](https://cultureafrica.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/history-of-textiles_2.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Issah, "History of Textiles in Ghana, The Akan Background."

<sup>17</sup> Xuandong Chen et al., "Circular Economy and Sustainability of the Clothing and Textile Industry," *Materials Circular Economy* 3, no. 1 (December 6, 2021): 12, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42824-021-00026-2>.

<sup>18</sup> H. Adam, "An Introduction to the Eye-Catching World of Ghanaian Traditional Dress," Culture Trips, 2017, <http://theculturetrip.com>.

<sup>19</sup> D K Danso et al., "Ghanaian Cultural Values and Their Foreign Influence: A Spotlight on Clothing," *J Fashion Technol Textile Eng* 7: 1, *Of* 8 (2019): 2.

<sup>20</sup> Danso et al., "Ghanaian Cultural Values and Their Foreign Influence: A Spotlight on Clothing," *J Fashion Technol Textile Eng* 7: 1."

<sup>21</sup> Danso et al., "Ghanaian Cultural Values and Their Foreign Influence: A Spotlight on Clothing," *J Fashion Technol Textile Eng* 7: 1."

<sup>22</sup> Bernard Edem Dzramedo, Isaac Aboagye, and Manasseh Kudjo Amesimeku, "Exploring Factors Influencing Consumer Preference for Secondhand Clothing over Traditionally Produced Textiles Goods in the Tamale Metropolis in Ghana," *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 10, no. 2 (December 19, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2023.2292367>.

Kente was meant for royals and chiefs; however, today people of all ages now use them.<sup>23</sup> It was confirmed that the Kente cloth was everywhere and in grand style during the grand durbar of the Dwira festival celebration. Traditional priests and priestesses were seen in their batakari and fugu during their display.



*Figure 1: Sub-Chief wearing white kente fabric*  
*Source: Photographed by the researchers*



*Figure 2: Edubiasehemaa and others in black fabric on Black Thursday*  
*Source: Photographed by the researchers*

### **Leather Work**

Leather artefacts also played a pivotal role in the Dwira Festival of the Adansi. Animal skins and hides have been used for centuries in clothing, shoes, and tents, but rot in hot weather and are rigid in the cold one. Modern leather production uses sophisticated machinery and chemicals, with chrome tanning now used in 90% of the time.<sup>24</sup> Leather work from the study refers to pelts, which have been treated chemically

<sup>23</sup> Alex Osei Afriyie et al., "A Comparative Study on the Techniques, Tools and Materials for Indigenous Weaving in Ghana," *Textile* 21, no. 1 (2023): 69–89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14759756.2021.1989940>; Dickson Adom, "Asante Kente: A Home Craft and a Cultural Repository of the Place Identity History of the Asantes," *Sage Open* 14, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231224780>.

<sup>24</sup> Miriam Appiah-Brempong et al., "An Insight into Artisanal Leather Making in Ghana," *Journal of Leather Science and Engineering* 2 (2020): 1–14.

to withstand putrefying and using appropriate tools and techniques to make articles from them.<sup>25</sup> In addition to natural leather, artificial leather can also be made. Some of the leather items were made from natural and artificial leather. Direct pelts can also be dried and used for particular purposes. Some items also had leather integrated to facilitate its function and finishing. The leather industry has evolved significantly, with modern methods, such as chrome tanning, replacing traditional methods like vegetable tanning. Despite this, traditional leather production still exists in developing nations like Ghana, where low-quality leathers are often produced due to a lack of scientific principles.<sup>26</sup> Enhanced knowledge can help identify green technologies, optimise processes, and develop waste management schemes. Leather artefacts identified at the Amenynase Nkabom festival of the Adansi include Ceremonial slippers, which will be discussed at length, footstools, armrests, drums, mats, amulets, boots, wrist bands, chairs, pouffe and others.

The *Ahenemma* is a pair of sandals worn by the Akan people of Ghana.<sup>27</sup> They continue to argue that the *Ahenemma* is a ceremonial slipper (traditional sandal or native sandal), which is mostly worn during ceremonies like festivals and durbars. The *Ahenemma* adds much colour to the costume worn for the Dwira festival. A critical value of this slipper is that it destools a chief or king any time the subjects publicly remove it from the chief. The top or upper part of *Ahenemma* comes in different designs and symbols, which are proverbial.<sup>28</sup> Those with white, black, and gold colours have a common name called “Sika frɛ mogya” or “Sika asɛm”. This is partly because yellow or gold signifies wealth in most Ghanaian societies.<sup>29</sup> Those with embossed or appliqué designs of our traditional symbols reflect the meaning of the symbols. It is worn by kings, queen mothers and their subordinates. Aside from wearing it to protect our feet, it shows class, identity, and status on festive occasions.<sup>30</sup>



Figure 3: “*Adepa na ani wɔ so*” (All eyes are on better things)  
Source: Photographed by the researchers



Figure 4: “*Ti korɔ nnkɔ agyina*” (Two heads are better than one)  
Source: Photographed by the researchers

<sup>25</sup> Appiah-Brempong et al., “An Insight into Artisanal Leather Making in Ghana.”

<sup>26</sup> Appiah-Brempong et al., “An Insight into Artisanal Leather Making in Ghana.”

<sup>27</sup> Steve Kquofi et al., “Historical and Socio-Cultural Significance of the Ahenemma Mpaboa in the Asante Royal Regalia,” *International Journal of Education, Culture and Society* 7, no. 3 (2022): 119–28.

<sup>28</sup> Osuanyi Quaicoo Essel, “Telling the Indigenous Ghanaian Fashion Cosmivision: The Case of Royal Ahenema Sandals,” in *Sustainability Challenges in the Fashion Industry*, 2023, 265–77, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-0349-8\\_16](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-0349-8_16).

<sup>29</sup> Essel, “Telling the Indigenous Ghanaian Fashion Cosmivision: The Case of Royal Ahenema Sandals”; Kquofi et al., “Historical and Socio-Cultural Significance of the Ahenemma Mpaboa in the Asante Royal Regalia.”

<sup>30</sup> Essel, “Telling the Indigenous Ghanaian Fashion Cosmivision: The Case of Royal Ahenema Sandals”; Kquofi et al., “Historical and Socio-Cultural Significance of the Ahenemma Mpaboa in the Asante Royal Regalia.”

### **“Nkapo” (Leather wrist and armband)**

The *Nkapo* is a circular padded leather worn on the wrist or arm for diverse reasons. The entire work is made of leather, and some designs, like appliqué, can be integrated. The “Nkapo” is a leather bangle. It helps identify an individual as a chief and is also worn for protection. Most chiefs at the festival were seen wearing it at the grand durbar. It is also part of the “Nkabere”. “Nkapo”, as captured in the Dwira festival.



*Figure 5: The “Nkapo” (Leather wrist or armband)  
Source: Photographed by the researchers*

### **Mixed-media Arts**

Mixed-media arts refers to artworks that have the visibility of more than one art medium. Burger highlights mixed-media art as a distinctive artistic technique that integrates various materials, creating a multi-dimensional sensory experience for both the artist and audience.<sup>31</sup> These include blending of paint, fabric, paper, photographs, found objects and digital elements. Alternatively, they are artefacts made of two or more art media. Some books or artists barely bring out this type of art and put it in areas where they are not supposed to.<sup>32</sup> This research critically observed the materials from which most traditional artworks were made and resolved in categorising them as such. Examples of the mixed media works used in the commemoration of the Dwira festival have been described below.

### **“Nsenee kye”**

This is a wig with a metal symbol inserted in an appliqué design. It has a hairy leather and metal board as the primary materials for its composition. The Nseneehene wears this crown or cap. This chief is considered to be risking his life for the safety of the paramount chief. Whenever the chief is given something to eat in the state, the Nseneehene tastes it before the significant chief. His cap or crown helps identify him amid the numerous chiefs. The chief is also considered a significant chief’s faithful or trusted when given food or drink in public. The symbol in the metal is the Sankofa symbol, and other symbols can also be inserted.



*Figure 6: The “Nsenee kye” (Nsenee crown)  
Source: Photographed by the researcher*

<sup>31</sup> N. Burger, “Mixed-Media Art – Piecing Together Artistic Visions Art. Art History,” January 11, 2024, <http://mixed-mediaartincontext.org>.

<sup>32</sup> G. Grove, “ What Is Mixed Media. Free Art Investment Guide,” September 26, 2023, <http://whatismixed-mediaart?%7Cgrovegallary>.

### **The Brass Pot (Yaawa)**

This is a vast pot initially made of brass, but part of the original brass, rock, and cast cement is currently seen. It was revealed that they integrated other materials into reconstructing the brass work to safeguard its originality. A search on its use made it known that “Bona” immersed his head in it, which contained water during the festival celebration. The chiefs are seated on the rock before it goes for the “Bonasuo” at the enclave. The *Yaawa* is found on the rock on which the Adansi Bona’s footprint was made.



*Figure 7: Yaawa (Brass pot)*  
*Source: Photographed by the researchers*

### **Sculpture**

Meyer views sculpture as an artwork that is seen in various forms and varies. She argues that sculpture is a branch of visual art operating in three dimensions.<sup>33</sup> She furthered that materials for the carving and modelling in sculpture include stone, metal, ceramics, wood and other materials. The identified sculptural artefacts of the Dwira festival include: palanquins, wooden stools, cast rings, royal swords, linguist staff, bracelets, gong gong, etc.



*Figure 8: Gye Nyame stool (Except God)*  
*Source: Photographed by the researchers*

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<sup>33</sup> I. Meyer, “Types of Sculpture – Our Guide to 3-Dimensional Art Formats,” Art History, August 1, 2023.

## Rock Art

Rock art, also known as rock carvings, paintings, drawings, and engravings, is created on natural rock surfaces, like boulders, cliffs, and cave walls.<sup>34</sup> He added that rock art has three categories: pictographs (painted rock art), petroglyphs (carved rock art), and earth figures (large surface scrapings). The Bona footprint is associated with the petroglyphs and rock art. This type of rock art is stone sunk-in of a human foot into a rock as if stamped in wet clay. It was revealed that it was the footprint of Adansi Bona, as he was going for the “Bonasuo” for the chiefs of the seven provinces of the Adansi states during one of the celebrations of the “Bona” and “Brensemase” festival. The footprint is seen as a giant one, not less than one inch deep, despite weathering, which has occurred over time. The print's date was unknown, but it dates back to the Adansi people's early settlement and the Okomfo Anokye era, around the sixteenth century. The footprints on the rock or stone were four (4), as counted by the researchers, and were in a forward movement position towards the brass pot and the “Bona” enclave. It will be an exciting experience for all to visit the “Bona” forest and the enclave to see this unique natural artwork. Several other rocks are found in the forest, also linked with the “Bona” and the “Berensemase” festival.



Figure 9: Adansi Bona” footprints in a rock at “Bona” Forest (Both closer view and distance view)  
Source: Photographed by the researcher

## Body Arts

Body arts refer to all arts visible on any part of the human body for an intention. Alternatively, body arts can refer to arts with the human body as support. Body art is a centuries-old practice that uses the human body as a canvas for self-expression, encompassing a diverse range of individuals.<sup>35</sup> According to some respondents, some reasons for body art include medicinal, identification, religious, tribal, war, entertainment, remembrance, beautification, and others. Any groupings of body arts are made for one or more of these intentions.<sup>36</sup> Body art is represented by paintings, marks, scars, plaiting, and any other form that tends to be visible on the human body. The Three (3) significant body art groupings are Body paintings, Body marks and Coiffure. Samples of body art are displayed during the Dwira festival of the Adansi people.



Figure 10: Dansikran (Dancing crown)  
Source: Photographed by the researchers

<sup>34</sup> J. Vadala, “ An Introduction to Rock Art,” Human Relations Area, May 24, 2019.

<sup>35</sup> D. Team, “ Body Art & Performance: A Guide to Visual Human Expression,” July 18, 2023.

<sup>36</sup> Dickson Adom, *General Knowledge in Art* (Kumasi: Adom D. Publications, 2014).

## The Role of Performing Arts in Dwira or Amenyinase Festival

The Performing Arts encompasses music, theatre, and dance. The study merged music, dance, and theatre as a single form of art, highlighting that visual arts allow viewers to contemplate the artist's emotions, while music immerses listeners in feelings. Music can create an atmosphere of emotions that no words can describe.<sup>37</sup> Music is also considered a universal aspect of all human societies.<sup>38</sup> As music is an aspect of universal cultures, all human cultures and for Africans, music is incorporated in various stages of celebrations in Ghana. Amparbin and Owusu-Baah assert that through music, leaders and organisers of political parties can better communicate to the public to attract sympathy.<sup>39</sup> They further recommend that the leadership of political parties should organise and encourage regular musical activities for members and the party as a whole. The Dwira/Amenyinase festival has a rich musical culture that supports the development and communalism among Adansi citizens. Indigenous and contemporary music are performed, depending on the activity at stake<sup>40</sup> during the Amenyinase festival. Music that links directly to the culture and stages of the performance of the Amenyinase Nkabom festival was purely indigenous and proverbial compared to those activities that sought to woo the attention of all and sundry to be partakers of the festival.<sup>41</sup> The record system was staged on the main streets and lots of contemporary songs were played during the festival celebration. All these helped release stress and cheer to bring out the best performance of the players.<sup>42</sup> Kuan suggests that music can be a cost-effective and non-invasive method for treating anxiety, depression, and sports-related pain.<sup>43</sup> This is reflected in the celebration of the Amenyinase festival of the Adansi people, in which keep-fit clubs organise sports and clean-up exercises with amusing acapella songs to release stress.

On Thursday night of the “Dwira Twere”, local songs are sung as chiefs sit in mini-durbar at the palace. Wallrup writes that music brings emotions that atmospheres pour out spatially. Inasmuch as ‘*Mmentia*’ music is performed, a solemn mood changes the atmosphere and depicts the sadness and remembrance of departed souls.<sup>44</sup> Cassar emphasizes the importance of musical culture in fostering communication and emotional connection among individuals.<sup>45</sup> Curt Sachs and Erich von Hornbostel, interested in studying non-Western music traditions, recognized that music was not just an art form but also a communication tool that reflected cultural values and beliefs. In Sach and Hornbostel musical instruments’ classification, ‘*Mmentia*’ is grouped under aerophone instruments, that is, musical instrument that uses air through a column to produce sound.

Although there was no peculiar music for the Adansi state, each paramountcy had its own music. This confirms the adage in the Adansi: “*Adansi Nkotowa Nkotowa ye da yen abɔn mu*”, literally, Adansi are like crabs, with each in its hole. This indicates that each paramountcy of the Adansi was independent until the Adansi unity occurred at Amenyinase. A particular music that is performed to mourn the chief of New Edubiase dominates on the Black Thursday Night. This music is performed in memory of the late, brave chief, Guahyia Asiamah I.

<sup>37</sup> Cadence Helleeson, “Music as Art: A Study of Expressing Emotion Through Music and Art,” 2023.

<sup>38</sup> Georgina Barton, “The Relationship Between Music, Culture, and Society: Meaning in Music,” in *Music Learning and Teaching in Culturally and Socially Diverse Contexts* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 23–41, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95408-0\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95408-0_2).

<sup>39</sup> Ernest Francis Amparbin and Emmanuel Owusu-Baah, “An Analysis of Music and Politics: The Ghanaian Instance,” *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, October 30, 2023, 1289–96, <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.202341011>.

<sup>40</sup> P. Obeng, J. Brewu, and E. Opoku, “Use of Indigenous and Folk-Game Songs for Teaching and Learning in Early Childhood Education Setting,” *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 4, no. 6 (2022): 1–36; James Isabirye, “Can Indigenous Music Learning Processes Inform Contemporary Schooling?,” *International Journal of Music Education* 39, no. 2 (May 24, 2021): 151–66, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761421996373>.

<sup>41</sup> S. Ndah et al., “Ndwomkro Musical Type as Cultural Preservation Medium among the Akan in Ghana,” *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science* 9, no. 6 (2021): 5–11.

<sup>42</sup> Garry Kuan, “The Effect of Music Listening on Athletes’ Anxiety, Depression, and Pain: A Mini Review,” *The Asian Journal of Kinesiology* 25, no. 2 (April 30, 2023): 19–25, <https://doi.org/10.15758/ajk.2023.25.2.19>.

<sup>43</sup> Kuan, “The Effect of Music Listening on Athletes’ Anxiety, Depression, and Pain: A Mini Review.”

<sup>44</sup> Erik Wallrup, “Music’s Attunement: Stimmung, Mood, Atmosphere,” 2023.

<sup>45</sup> C. Cassar, “The Role of Music in Different Cultures: A Look at Ethnomusicology,” *Anthropology Review*, 2023.

## Oguahyia

Transcribed by:  
I. Asare-Aboagye

*ff*  
Daa daa gu-da ooo Pie-sie Ogua-hyia - ce gu-da ooo  
*ff*

*f*  
: - tso sa-sa - aa m'a ni abere : In daa m'a nioo O-gua - hyia ecc m'a - ni

*ff*  
ooo tso sa - saa m'a ni abe - re: ee. Piaw!  
*ff*

## Oguahyia 2

Transcribed by:  
I. Asare-Aboagye

O-gua - hyi - a o ya o ya o ya o - yaa - O - yaa ecc Ye nim ko - oo

*ff*  
Ye - nnim dwa ne ooo O - gu a hyia ooo

Figure 11: Dirge and Chant for Chief of New Edubiase

### Call

*Daa daa guda ooo 2x*  
*Piesie ee, guda oooo*  
*ετῶ sasaa mani aberee*

*Always I am disturbed*  
*First born is disturbed*  
*It touched my soul and made me wild*

### Response

*Daa daa mani oooo*  
*Oguahyia eee mani oooo*  
*ετῶ sasaa mani aberee, Piaww!*

*Always my I am disturbed*  
*Oguahyia eee I am disturbed*  
*It touched my soul and made me wild*

### Call

*Oguahyiaa Oya Oya*

*Hail Oguahyia*

### Response

*Oyaa yieeeee!*  
*Yenim ko ooooo!*  
*Yennim Dwane oooo,*  
*Oguahyia oo!*

*Hail! Hail!!*  
*We know how to fight*  
*We don't retreat*

The music is about an unfortunate moment in the history of New Edubiase. The first line, “*Ohene Panin a εκῶ Gyaaman 2x*”, means their chief who went to war and was hit by a bullet. The second line, “*Nkranpa de saa no*”, Also means that vultures wanted to take hold of the chief's corpse. This is also to say that the corpse was rotten. “*Daa daa mani oooo*” means I have no one because the chief, who was the composer's father, is dead. The “*Oguahyia eee mani oooo*” means since his father, who is “Oguahyia Asiamah I”, is lost, he has no one. “*ετῶ sasaa mani aberee*” means from morning to evening, who will rescue him. This part is a very solemn moment for the chiefs of Edubiase, especially the Divisional Chief. It reflects how their forefather, Guahyia Asiamah I, was killed in a war at Akomfere, and his corpse was rotting, so his son, who was then *Gyaasehene* (Sub-chief) composed to commemorate his late father. This was a major song on the Black Thursday Night of the Dwira-Twere, which rekindled their spirits and morale for the festival.

The music performed during the Dwira festival includes chants and dirges that take the *Call and Response, Cantor, and Chorus* Musical Forms. In the dirge music above “Oguahyia 1”, the Cantor and Chorus form was incorporated inasmuch as they sing in a solemn mood for their souls to feel the presence of the lost relatives. The “Oguahyia 1” takes a recitative form, a speech-like song that looks like the person is reciting a poem. Repetitive songs' speech consists of a unique, language-dependent, and objectively measurable type of repeated pitch and duration contours.<sup>46</sup> The “Oguahyia 2” is a typical *Call and Response* form, the leader (Cantor) raises the song and the other group members (Chorus) respond to the call with different lyrics or rhythm/melody.

Call and response is a musical technique that resembles a conversation. A call is a musical phrase that is answered by another phrase; it could be vocal, instrumental, or both. It is rooted in African traditional music and is often used in other music genres.<sup>47</sup> Call-and-response is also used in live performances to connect with the audience. The Dwira music, a traditional African dance, is passed down to the armed services through military “cadence calls,” promoting teamwork, morale, and combating fatigue. The call and response is known as “Polychoral antiphony”, which is a form of Western classical music where two choirs interconnect through different musical phrase.<sup>48</sup> The technique, popular in the late Renaissance and early Baroque, influenced composers like Giovanni Gabrieli, who used acoustic

<sup>46</sup> Winfried Menninghaus et al., “Poetic Speech Melody: A Crucial Link between Music and Language,” *PLoS One* 13, no. 11 (2018): e0205980.

<sup>47</sup> Joshua Alfred Amuah and Emmanuel Obed Acquah, “Music Analytical Presentation of Newlove Annan's Mɔbɔ Dawur (I Will Tell It to the World)(Choral Composition),” *International Journal of Asian Social Science* 4, no. 1 (2014): 100–111.

<sup>48</sup> Tülay Ekici, “An Evaluation on the Human Voice and the Act of Singing,” *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology-TOJET* 21, no. 3 (2022): 1–14.

delay in Basilica San Marco to create an early call and response form.<sup>49</sup> In the Dwira festival celebration of the Adanse people, the indigenous music performed is mostly in call and response that ignites the spirit of the warriors.

The climax of the Dwira festival is seen in a dramatic form. The Chiefs in their palanquin with subordinates parading towards the durbar grounds, were observed. This showcases the powers that are bestowed on them. The chief linguist is the only linguist who becomes the mouthpiece of the paramount chief that day. The umbrellas and stools (Asipim and Asesedwa) are arranged in a colourful and orderly which portrays the true custom of the Adansi culture.<sup>50</sup> Drama is the mirror of life, and the performance practice of the Dwira festival mirrored the culture of the people.<sup>51</sup> The performance of libation commenced the occasion, an aspect of the Adansi tradition and religion.<sup>52</sup> In terms of socialization, the dignitaries present made a solidarity message which brought those from far and near together. Unity was the hallmark as the indigenes and foreigners donated assorted drinks and funds to help build the Adansi provinces were acknowledged.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends building a typical museum at Adansi to preserve relics of the Adansi land, developing and making the “damped” “Bona” shrine at the “Bona” forest as a tourist site for income generation and employment for the host communities.

## CONCLUSION

This study has revealed and documented the philosophical and artistic values of the Dwira Festival of the Adansi. Oral tradition was a significant source of information about the detailed history of the Adansi and the Amenyinase Nkabom festival the Adansi in detail. The captured parts are permanent, as most are believed to have been lost since some African arts are sometimes discarded immediately after use. Even the big brass pot (Yaawa), a permanent art, was seen with some parts broken off and integrated with cast cement and stones. Again, the musical form associated with the Adanse people is predominantly in call and response, where the leader raises and the chorus group responds in different or the same words, but in different rhythm or melody.

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<sup>49</sup> Ekici, “An Evaluation on the Human Voice and the Act of Singing.”

<sup>50</sup> Addai and Ameyaw, “Historical Background and Socioeconomic Significance of Modern Ghanaian Festivals: The Case of Kwahu Easter.”

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