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WOMEN AND VERBAL ARTS IN THE OGUA-EDINA AREA

Esi Sutherland-Addy

Introduction

In the musical/literary universe of Ogu-Edina, typical oral and musical forms of the Fante people prevail as they have over many centuries. Definitions of art forms in Africa are still being debated in academia and there is no doubt that this debate could be applied to a discussion of musical/literary universe of the Ogu-Edina area. The debate has been wide-ranging bringing up fundamental questions on whether various forms of culture may be defined as art, and what the parameters of an African aesthetic really are. However for our present purposes, we will not enter into the aesthetist definition. A broad functional definition regularly employed by scholars such as Nketia is sufficient as it helps to situate the forms to be presented in their social contexts. The paper will examine the social function and status of the art forms concerned and seek to establish these functions as criteria for defining their nature. The following categorization could thus be made of musical/literary universe of the Ogu-Edina area: Forms associated with the state e.g. poetry of drums and horns (Mmenson and Mbombaa). Drums and songs associated with traditional militia (Asafo); religious forms (traditional Akom, Christian Choral Music) popular recreational music ("band" or brass-bands, and ompe) are all part of this universe.

Under these rubrics we can capture broadly, three lyrical forms which have been dominated by women as composers and performers. These are Adzewa, associated with Asafo (state) tradition, Adenkum, which may be placed primarily among the popular recreational bands and Ebibindwom, which is associated primarily with the Church.

Extending the discussion of definition, the gender of performers and audience has been discovered to be a critical factor affecting the nature of particular performances as well as entire genres on the basis of composition, performance, organization, function and audiences. We have chosen to compare and contrast the three forms of musical-literary art mentioned above to establish the contribution of women artists to the musical and literary universe of Edina and Ogu. It is equally hoped that a discussion of the provenance, function, organization, performance and thematic concerns of the forms in question will establish their distinct status as separate genres with much complementarity among them. The history of the evolution of these forms will be provided as will an analysis of characteristic literary and aesthetic devices to

establish the distinction between the 3 forms and thereby along with other factors, establish *Adenkum*, *Adzewa* and *Ebibindwom* as three distinct genres (*agoro*)<sup>1</sup>. It should be explained that the literary text is carried in the form of lyrics. Our major interest is in the use of literary devices for self-expression. Much will be done to explain the context in which this literary expression is presented but the paper works on the basis that these forms, while involving music and dance, are also legitimately literary.

Most of all however it is hoped that the fore-grounding of women in connection with the musical/literary arts will throw some light on a number of important ways in which the collective and individual view point and sentiments of women are expressed.

### Research Approach and Methodology

This research was begun in September, 1994 to investigate the objectives enumerated above. A number of background interviews were undertaken seeking to locate the most respected performers and the most knowledgeable people in the area of the arts in general. We were able to confirm that *Adzewa*, *Adenkum* and *Ebibindwom* were typical of the Oguaa-Edina and were indeed essentially performed by women.

Our search for performance groups however, indicated a fairly alarming situation since many groups were said to have become defunct (e.g. *Nkum* and *Anarfo Adzewa* groups). We were however directed by several sources to the OLA *Bentsir Adzewa* group as the most authentic, vibrant and popular group. In Edina also there was a consensus that *Akonkar Adenkum* group was the best and most authentic.

Some of these groups were found to be very busy with various engagements. The *Ebibindwom* soloists in both towns were definitely the most difficult to interview. Their calendars were filled with engagements. One of them who is considered to be among the best in the area could not spend time with us until the end of March, 1995 even though she was approached in early February. After some difficulty, two soloists in Elmina agreed to be interviewed and to sing. We were led in all cases by persons closely affiliated to the performers.

It was decided that the best thing was to hire a small ensemble from among the membership of each group and to have a proprietary performance. All groups were very co-operative and appeared to enjoy the idea of being associated with the Institute of African Studies Research and the academic programme as was explained to them.

In all 6 <i>Ebibindwom</i> songs	} Have been
15 <i>Adenkum</i> songs	} transcribed for this
17 <i>Adzewa</i> songs	} paper

## Provenance and Evolution

*Adzewa:* We have become acquainted with two very different versions or accounts of how *Adzewa* came about.

In our own research, we were led to the OLA *Bentsir Adzewafo* (or group). The *Bentsir* group claims that it is through their female ancestor *Kwaadua* that *Adzewa* came to *Oguaa*. Their male ancestor *Safohen Enudadze* married *Kwaadua* from *Asebu*, a major Fante settlement inland and brought her to the *Bentsir* quarter in *Oguaa*. Judging from a song in the repertoire about Macarthy and *Kwaadua* one can date the provenance of *Adzewa* in *Oguaa* to just before the 1820s.

1. Fante	English Version
1) <i>Iyi menyɛ den? Edom asee m'adze a, ohiam ayee!</i>	1) What am I to do in this situation? The Warring hosts have destroyed the precious thing that I own, ayee!
2) <i>Asebunyin ba Adwoa</i>	2) <i>Adwoa</i> , daughter of a citizen of <i>Asebu</i>
<b>Chorus/refrain</b>	<b>Chorus/refrain</b>
3) <i>Edom Asee madze a Ohiam ayee!</i>	3) The warring hosts have destroyed the precious thing I own, ayee!
<b>Verse</b>	<b>Verse</b>
4) <i>Kwesi Bronyi ba Adwoa</i>	4) <i>Adwoa</i> , daughter of the Whiteman
<b>Chorus/refrain</b>	<b>Chorus/refrain</b>
5) <i>Edom Asee madze a Ohiam ayee!</i>	5) The warring hosts have destroyed the precious thing I own, ayee!
<b>Verse</b>	<b>Verse</b>
6) <i>Kofi Dadze ba Adwoa</i>	6) <i>Adwoa</i> , daughter of <i>Kofi Dadzie</i>

**Chorus/refrain**

- 7) *Edom Asee madze a Ohiam ayee!*

**Verse**

- 8) *Waye kəkɔɔ a, wonkyen Bronyi ba Adwoa*

**Chorus/refrain**

- 9) *Edom Asee madze a Ohiam, ayee!*

**Verse**

- 10) *Ayee, mbɔɔɔr ee*

**Chorus**

- 11) *Mbɔɔɔr Enyaado ee Mbɔɔɔr a*  
 12) *Obronyi se "Mbɔɔɔr" a*  
 13) *Mbɔɔɔr Enyaado ee*  
 14) *Edom Asee madze a Ohiam, ayee!*

**Verse**

- 15) *Eben adze a? Mɔdzea Ohiam o*  
 16) *Kwesi bronyi ba Adwoa*

**Chorus/refrain**

- 7) The warring hosts have destroyed the precious thing I own, ayee!

**Verse**

- 8) *Adwoa*, however light skinned you are, you cannot be paler than a child of white parents.

**Chorus/refrain**

- 9) The warring hosts have destroyed the precious thing I own, ayee!

**Verse**

- 10) Ayee! Lamentable one

**Chorus**

- 11) Pity *Enyaado*<sup>2</sup> ee; such a pity.  
 12) The Whiteman says "such a pity".  
 13) Pity *Enyaado* ee  
 14) The warring hosts have destroyed the precious, ayee!

**Verse**

- 15) What is it? It is that which is precious to me.  
 16) *Adwoa*, daughter of the Whiteman

**Chorus/refrain**

- 17) *Edom Asee madze a Ohiam ayee!*

**Verse**

- 18) *Ayee mbobor ee*

**Chorus/refrain**

- 19) *Mbobor Enyaado ee Mbobor a,*

- 20) *Obronyi se, "mbobor" ee!*

- 21) *Mbobor Enyaado ee*

- 22) *Edom Asee madze a Ohiam ayee!*

**Chorus/refrain**

- 17) The warring hosts have destroyed that which is precious to me, ayee!

**Verse**

- 18) Ayee lamentable one!

**Chorus/refrain**

- 19) Pity *Enyaado* ee, such a pity

- 20) The Whiteman says "such a pity"

- 21) Pity *Enyaado* ee

- 22) The warring hosts have destroyed that which is precious to me.

The background of the song is that in the Macarthy War (1824), Kwaadua's husband took a number of warriors in a company to support Governor Macarthy. The Fantes were decimated by the Asantes and none of Enudadze's men survived. Left with the burden of redeeming the lives of these men, as was the practice of the day, she compensated each of the 99 families with gold dust. This got to the ear of the Governor, who came to greet her and offer his condolences.

The connection between the *Asafo* and *Adzewa* has been corroborated by Christopher Erasmus Edumadzie in his 1992 study of the *Effutu Adzewa Ensemble*. Revealing that the *Effutus* adopted *Adzewa* from the Fantes in their migration, he states that *Adzewa* players even though not warriors themselves form an integral part of the *Asafo* company.

However, there appears to be another account of the provenance of *Adzewa* according to the research undertaken by E.B. Smith<sup>1</sup>. The leader of the *Boka Nworaba* (Eastern Star) group based in Accra and her counterpart of the *Oguaamba Adzewa* group, told the researcher that after Moses led the Israelites across the Red Sea, a feast was held at which Emilia, Moses' cousin suggested that the whole host of Israelites dance in appreciation of God's kindness. All gourds (*Mfoba*) containing water were emptied.

"They beat and shook them in rapid succession creating a sort of music for the movements they executed" (Smith 1969: 2). According to them therefore, the coming of *Adzewa* to the Fante coast may therefore be put at four to five hundred years roughly coinciding with the settlement of Europeans on the Coast. While this latter tradition of origins is interesting, there does not appear to be much evidence to support it. There is more convincing evidence to indicate that on the Fante coast line (from Elmina to Winneba), *Asafo* is the association to which *Adzewa* groups are linked. Also a substantial number of songs sung by the *Bentsir* group invoke the names of ancestors or gods in the *Asafo* division to which they belong and recount wars and exploits<sup>4</sup>.

Furthermore, in speaking about the function of *Adzewa*, it is said that women used to sing recitatives called *Mnomombe* as they awaited their husbands, brothers, lovers and sons gone to war in ancient days. This ritual known as *yere twe mnomombe*, ("we are dragging on the litany of vigil in battle") is traceable to Asante and further to Takyiman from which the fantes are said to have migrated. J.K. Fynn and O.H. Kwesi Brew confirm this ancient ritual<sup>5</sup>. This puts proto-*adzewa* possibly many years before the 1800s.

It should be noted here, that we shall be talking about major thematic variation between the *Bentsir* group and the *Oguaamba/Boka Nworaba* later on in the paper. Suffice it to say that a great affinity to Christianity is noted in the latter and that there appear to be grounds to postulate that the latter two groups evolved much later.

### **Ebibindwom**

As indicated above, Christianity is a possible motivating force or context for development of new forms or variations of previously existing forms. We now turn our attention to *Ebibindwom*. *Ebibindwom* is acknowledged to have evolved in the Methodist Church of Ghana. Around the 1930s, the renowned Methodist Priest and Composer Father Gadiel Acquah was one individual credited with the promotion of this music. Its name *Ebibindwom* (African Music) indicates that its mode of expression is the Fante spoken and musical idiom to enable the congregation, especially those who did/do not speak English, to participate more fully in the service. Associations were set up under the umbrella of the Church. One of these, the Christ Little Band, was set up by Rev. Samuel Henry Brew Attah Ahoma for illiterate women in the congregation. *Ebibindwom* therefore may have its provenance from approximately the mid 1800s, when the Reverend gentleman was at the height of his career<sup>6</sup>.

### **Adenkum**

*Adenkum* presents us with an interesting historical perspective. According to Maame Saka, the present leader of the *Akonkar Adenkum* group in Elmina. This group has upheld a tradition passed on inter-generationally from ancient times.

In his study on the same group (along with others) in 1963 the late B.A. Aning provides an elaboration of the origins of *Adenkum*<sup>7</sup>. Unlike my informant who was not specific, his informant (the leader at the time), indicated that the form originated in Elmina and that it had been played for over 100 years.

Aning argues convincingly that *Adenkum* songs recorded from Asante refer to *Atakora Kosum* who hails from Mampong (Aning, 1964:5) as the founder of the form. J.H.K. Nketia is also cited as indicating that the *dondo* (hour glass drum which is a key instrument in *Adenkum* performance) was introduced into Asante from the Dagomba area in the north by Atakora of Mampong.

This song form accompanied by slim-necked gourds appeared among the wives of the Asantehene Kwaku Dua in Kumasi. The form was used by his wives to praise him and to express their love for him. This puts the date of the origins of *Adenkum* before 1838.

It may further be noted that there was an intensive flow of political and commercial activity linking Kumasi and Elmina. Thus, even though *Adenkum* is currently more wide spread among Fantes than Asantes, the oral traditions of the Akan, and other documented accounts on this interaction and migration, point to primary influences in a southerly direction rather than vice-versa.

### Organizational Structure and Performance Arrangements

Before delving into questions of performance which we hope will establish the vibrancy and particularity of each form, we provide a brief idea of the organization and performance arrangements of a prototype of each group.

A typical *Adzewa* group in Oguaa/Elmina consists of a core of members who trace their ancestry back to leaders of one of the indigenous Military Organizations (*Asafo*).

*Oguaa* is divided into quarters and inhabited, (with the arrival of the Fantes) by members of the respective *Asafo* companies. *Oguaa* has the largest number of companies that a Fante town might have and that is seven. These are traditionally ranked in the following order of importance based on the chronology of their establishment.

Name	Colour
1. <i>Bentsir</i>	Red
2. <i>Anafo</i>	Blue and White
3. <i>Ntsin</i>	Green
4. <i>Nkum</i>	Yellow
5. <i>Amanful</i>	Wine and Black
6. <i>Abrofomba (Brofo Nkoa)</i>	White
7. <i>Ankrampa</i>	White and Black.



One of the appellations used by the *Bentsir* women for themselves is, *Noma* (number) one. These women therefore are an integral part of the hosts of the *Bentsir Asafo* group. The respondents spoke in terms of "our ancestors" implying that the members belong to the same stock through their fathers. They indicated that one is "born into" the group.

They thus expect their children and descendants to carry on the art form. While young persons in their twenties were observed during our research, the core of the group appeared to be over 40 years old with a number of them in their 70s.

Respondents went on to add that affiliation to the group could be sought by any one, especially women. Prospective affiliates could approach the group with a bottle of gin and a small admission fee and tender in their candidacy as affiliates. This done, such a member could request for particular songs to be played, or request the group to accompany her to funerals and other social functions.

We observed that the OLA *Bentsir* group has a number of officers, namely:

- a) the Obaa Panyin or leader of the group. She has custody of instruments and takes care of negotiating fees as well as the distribution of drinks and money among members.
- b) The group also has a number of *Ndwomtufo* (or cantors – literary "raisers of the song") of ages ranging from about 50 to late 70s. These served as mouth-pieces of the group as regards the historical narrative and explanation of background to songs during research sessions.
- c) There is a committee of elderly women overseeing the group's affairs including accepting/rejecting engagements.
- d) There are male instrumentalists, one playing the *aso* or *dawuru*; the hoe-head percussive instrument. The other is the *Okyerema* or drummer who plays the one *apentsima* drum in the ensemble. There are a number of other young men from the *Asafo* who join the women in clapping and singing during performances.

Smith (*op. cit.*) speaks of an interesting variation of the organizational structure described above which is attributable to influences perhaps from literary and other social societies which have characterized modern Ghana since the colonial period. The *Oguaa Mba* for example was reported to have officers such as:

"President, Secretary, Treasurer, Porter, Leader, Policeman and Patron. All these were elected by acclamation", according to Smith. Their functions were clearly defined. For example, the Porter would arrange for benches and make sure they were

returned at the end of the performance. He marked those who were present and noted absentees. The Leader composed and improvised almost all the songs, and the Patron provided moral and financial support. He also settled disputes.

Smith also speaks of the emergence of a "quack" *Adzewa* ensemble in the environs of Cape Coast set up by unemployed young people. They were said to be "spoiling the *Adzewa* proper."

### **Ebibindwom**

According to *Mena Adwoa Mansa* and *Mena Adwoa Boabema* of Elmina, the Christ Little Band<sup>8</sup>, a voluntary group made up of women in the Methodist Church, are usually those who rehearse and sing *Ebibindwom* in the Church when requested. These days males also join the group and play instruments such as the *dondo*. Other benevolent organizations such as the Hope Society also have a tradition of singing *Ebibindwom* at their meetings and at funerals.

While the Christ Little Band has its organization, the respondents indicated that a cantor could build up her solo reputation over the years and need not necessarily be a member of the band. Taking the entire church or gathering as her chorus she could break out in song and the whole gathering would take up the refrain, responding as performers rather than audience.

### **Accoutrements for Performance**

We will look briefly at the ensemble of instruments and performers in readiness to play. Following that, the major aspects of performance of each form will be described.

### ***Adzewa***

Instruments used in the *Adzewa* ensemble:

- a) The *Mfoba* or *Akor* is the most important instrument of the ensemble. It is a gourd with a wide bulbous bottom section, a short wide neck and a smaller upper bulb which is cut open. There is therefore a circular hole at the top. There is no opening at the bottom. Several of these are used in performance. Some of them are enmeshed with beads/seeds and others are not. There are 3 sizes with the larger ones giving a more sonorous sound and maybe described as "stamping and struck idiophones". During the performance of 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1995, about 10 gourds of different sizes were used. These were played by holding the neck with one hand and hitting the side of the gourd with the other. They were also shaken and stamped against the thigh. The top was also cupped at times. The gourds are played with different

well-blended rhythms making them a harmonious aspect of the performance. They keep the basic rhythm of the song.

- b) The *dawur* (or *aso*), which is a hoe head struck with a thin piece of solid metal, provides percussion and a time line within the complex polyphonic context.
- c) The *apentsima* (also referred to by the generic term for drum: *kyen*) is the only drum accompanying the *Adzewa* ensemble.

This is corroborated by Edumadzie (*op. cit.*). It is held between the thighs of the drummer and tipped away from him. The waxed surface is used and the hands are cupped and flattened producing a complex rhythm.

It is important to note that this drum does not provide the basic rhythm. It rather weaves a complex and highly distinctive strand of syncopated drumming into the musical sequence. The drummer interacts closely with dancers in a performance and indicates the end of a performance with a crescendo which ends abruptly. We further note that the ensemble described by Smith (1969) includes all instruments described above but also:

- i. Wood clappers
- ii. *Ekyinba*, Slim drum
- iii. *Akasaw*, metal bowl with rings round its edges for rattling.

Again this difference leads one to suspect that the groups spoken of by Smith are syncretic in the sense that they have absorbed the characteristics of other forms and have added instruments such as the *Akasaw* from modern recreational bands and *Ekyinba* from the *Asafo* ensemble.

- b) In both cases however, hand clapping is of the essence for keeping the time line. It may be noted that the accompaniment to the singing is not melodious but rhythmical.

Indeed as indicated above, the *Apentsima* from our observation takes up a kind of solo so that the singing is inlaid by drum music that does not keep time but acts as another distinct layer of musical activity which nonetheless blends into the performance. The instruments apart from the drum, when not being played, are presented in a brass bowl with a red cloth on top, red signifying the colour of the *Bentsir Asafo* company. It is known as "*tendza*" (Danger).

### *Adenkum*

The *Adenkum* ensemble consists of a number of Adenkum rattles. These are slim-necked gourds with bulbs measuring about 4 – 6 inches in diameter. The necks are about 10 – 14 inches in length with diameters of 1 - 1½ inches. These are also enmeshed with beads and contain tiny stones or seeds. There is often a small hole at the bottom of the bulbous end. There were about 16 of these used during the performance we observed (25<sup>th</sup> February, 1995).

These are played singly except that during the performance in question one player sitting in the front row had two which she simultaneously hit against her thigh. She appeared to lead the entry of the *Adenkum* into the performance. *Adenkum* are the principal instruments of the ensemble. They are held by the neck and shaken in the air in a controlled fashion, struck against the thigh or struck by the base of the palm. Alongside the above is the *Dondo*<sup>9</sup>. The ensemble has two of these which are played in a duet. While they may play rhythms that give a poly rhythmic effect, they stay quite close to the time line that is provided by the hand clapping and gourds.

### *Ebibindwom*

It may be noted that *Ebibindwom* in its early stages was only accompanied by hand clapping. Today however, a number of instruments may accompany *Ebibindwom* such as:

- a) The *frikyewa* – iron hand castanets fixed onto the thumb and middle finger and played by one of the cantors.
- b) The *dondo* described above. Sometimes two *dondo* are played but usually there is only one. The *dondo* may play some verbally based pieces that acknowledge the recitative expertise of the cantor, but its rhythms keep close to the time line provided by the hand clapping and *frikyiwa*.
- c) We were informed that these days some groups are even accompanied by the *Kyen*.

### Performance – Its Context and Nature

Having attempted to give a brief insight into the organization of the three genres and their accoutrements for performance, we now find it necessary to discuss aspects of performances. The three genres share a number of contexts for performance but each has distinctive arenas as well. Such shared contexts include funerals. However, *Ebibindwom* is performed in more restricted circumstances such as church services and meetings of religious groups or benevolent societies. In the case of *Adzewa* and *Adenkum*, they maybe found at national and traditional state functions [(e.g. com-

missioning of official buildings, festivals, funerals, and social functions, (both joyous and sombre)].

The *Adenkum* originated as a social *agoro* and used to be performed even at European style dances held during the first half of this century. In contrast the *Adzewa* groups being linked with the *Asafo* see it as part of their function to move with the *Asafo*. Informants on *Adzewa* recalled oral tradition when their ancestors would sit at the shrine of the *Asafo* (*siwdo*) waiting for their husbands, brothers, lovers etc. and singing *Mnomombe* lyrics referred to as "*ko sa bra fie*"<sup>10</sup> (go to battle and return home). These were also referred to as *Ndwom a nye awasa*. *Yetow a nna mbanyin ha* "*pawa*" *aba* ("stirring and moving songs and recitatives when we sing them the men's power come to the fore"). These days *Adzewa* women continue the tradition of performing at the shrine on ritual occasions. It may thus be seen that *Ebibindwom* and *Adzewa* have some ritual functions which *Adenkum* does not.

We have discussed the relative importance of pedigree in the membership of *Adzewa* and *Adenkum* where the core belongs to particular groups determined by patrilineal affiliation in the case of the former and matrilineal in the case of the latter; but which also have membership from other members of society. In the case of *Ebibindwom*, things are different as membership of particular church or benevolent groups is not in any systematic way linked with family background.

Participation in performance may also be compared. In terms of gender, men are usually found taking up particular duties of instrumental accompaniment and participation in the chorus. Normally Lead Singers are women in all cases. They may alternate as *ndwomtufo*, those who raise the song and *mbodofo*, those who take up the song before the full chorus (*ngyedofa*) come in.

As we have said above, the performing chorus may consist of a number of persons belonging to the group, often between ten and twenty-five, with the majority being women. Only members play the *mfoba* (about ten in the case of *Adzewa*). However, the audience is free to join in the singing (*ngyedo*), clapping and dancing. The most dramatic manifestation of this is the case of *Ebibindwom*, when sung in the church or at a funeral, where the entire gathering may join in. The lead singer(s) may perambulate up and down the aisle, pace in front of the performers, or stand in the middle of the performing group and perform facing inward towards their colleagues. Anyone in the group may exclaim with joy and ecstasy at the sheer beauty of the performance, or give encouragement, for example *Ebei nye dew* (Gosh - is it great/sweet or moving!).

### Dancing

The dance is an integrated part of both *Adzewa* and *Adenkum* while *Ebibindwom* is characterized more by a swaying body movement, animated clapping and slight

movement on the spot. *Adzewa* has a distinctive graceful body movement. With the body leaning forward the dancer makes small but rapid foot movements. The dance is in two or three marked stages and transforms into a vigorous dance with more hopping, pronounced foot movements and rapid swaying of arms. There is often only one dancer in the arena at a time. Even if there are one or two others, a particular dancer (usually from the group) is always the lead dancer. She coordinates with the drummer and ends the piece suddenly by a characteristic sweep of the arms and a sudden movement of the body.

Dancers may be brought into the arena if a dancer or performer puts the red cloth (*lendza*) on him or her. Otherwise, adults and children dance on the fringes of the performance arena.

*Adenkum* is very similar to *Adzewa* performance. However, many more *Adenkum* are distributed and played by the performers. Also the *dondo* drummers stand while in the case of *Adzewa* players of the *kyen* and *dawur* are seated.

The dance is a gentle gliding movement accompanied by graceful arm movements and the waving of handkerchiefs, one in each hand. From our observation, three or four people could be in the arena at the same time. The ending of a song or session however, is completely different from *adzewa*, in that it is controlled by the lead singer and the drummers. The drummers begin to soften the timber of their performance gently until it comes to a complete stop.

Audience participation is the same as for *Adzewa*. The audience may also participate by showing appreciation for various performers and giving them money. We observed that it is conventional for members and associates of the *Bentsir Asafo* group to pay money when moved by a song charged with emotion, praising a parent or direct ancestor; or recollecting a really trying moment in the life of their particular family.

*Adzewa* and *Adenkum* also share an important personality in the group who maybe designated as the Jester for want of a better term. This performer talks very loudly, cracks fairly indiscreet jokes and loudly shouts her adulation of the group and its performance or performers. She dances in a highly exaggerated manner and adds to the drama with facial movements. She has no special time of participation and may suddenly decide to jump into the performance at anytime. This personality is quite common in Fante performance genres. They are commonly also found in *Asafo* and *Anansesem* (story telling drama). Her antics often amuse the group and the audience. However, she may be asked to "shut up" or "sit down" in a rather exuberant but jocular manner, should she over step her bounds.

## The Performance Structure and Context

The performances of all three groups have a clear structure or pattern. We have shown the elements of performance above and shall now discuss the structure of a typical performance as well as the nature and broad structure of the lyrics in the various genres.

### *Ebibindwom*

As this form is often embedded in a church service, its performance may be requested by officiants of the service. On the other hand a cantor, moved by the subject of a sermon or the pathos of a funeral may raise a song relevant to the context and mood. If there is a group meeting, after formulaic aphoristic call-and-response which is used for group identification, an invocationary song may be sung.

In the predominant form of *Ebibindwom*, a number of stanzas are sung in recitative form by the cantors. These are not necessarily repeated from the *ndwomtuo* to the *mbodofo*. There are also set lines that the chorus sing in response, consisting of repetitive, simple chorus lines. Clapping, percussion and drumming join into a loud joyous throng. It is important to note that brief drum sequences of the *dondo* can be struck from time to time during the solo as a sign of encouragement and admiration. The songs are brought to a close by a gesture from the leader and the slowing down of the tempo of her singing. The interactive relationship between the cantors (*indwomtuo*) and the chorus (*mbodofo*) not only reflects the structure of song types but more importantly reflects a dramatic narrative form. This will be described in a later section. *Ebibindwom* as has been mentioned above is often sung as part of a church service or funeral gathering. Performances may consist of one or two recitatives only. However, when performed by a group at a meeting for example, a closing song may be sung.

*Adzewa* performances are preceded by a pre-performance ritual: the pouring of libation by the *Obaa panyin* with gin usually provided by the clients. The text that we recorded requested the ancestors related to the *Asafo* and *Adzewa* groups, and the founders in particular, to come into the gourd and guide and inspire the performance.

## 2. Libation Text

*Obaa Panyin:*

"We implore you (God)  
Everything we do, we call you  
If we do not call you,  
If we do not call you, we cannot succeed  
So come and bless it for us.  
This event that is happening.

Bless it for us  
 So that it may go on peacefully  
 Ah, people of *Aboradze* group  
 The ancestors of the *Aboradze* family  
 (We are standing in the *Aboradze* compound)  
 All of you come and take some and drink  
 Old lady Kwadua, Murgua  
 I implore you, you and all your elders  
 Come, come into these *Akor* (gourds)  
 Right now we are undertaking this in your names  
 So you also must come.  
 Dame, Mansa  
 Dame, Ekua Gyaema you and your children  
 All of you, come into the *Akor* (gourds)  
 Come and fill them with your spirit.  
 So that they will sound sweet, so very sweet.  
 If we receive honour  
 We give it to you.  
 It is in your very names that we do everything.

**Interlocutor:** (it is true)

*Obaa Panyin:* So the Honour also goes to you.  
 All of you come into the gourds.  
 If there is an evil one coming  
 Knock him/her away  
 So that our event will go peacefully  
 So that our event will go smoothly."

Members then take a sip of the gin.

An identification call and response initiated by the leader is made as follows:

3. Fante	English
leader: <i>Ɔpon</i> <sup>12</sup>	door
chorus: <i>Ee Agyeko Ama ei</i> <i>Owuo yi a</i> <sup>13</sup> <i>Waaye hen bi o</i>	Oh, he who protects us in war his death It has done us a lot of dam age

A set of songs then begins usually led by a song of welcome and self praise. It may be noted that once the singing begins, songs flow at the inspiration of the leading can-



tor, but care is taken to make these relevant. The song is raised and the gourds join in followed by the clapping and the *dawur* in such close succession it appears almost simultaneous. The *Apentsima* then joins in. At the beginning of a performance session the lyrics chosen may be sung with no accompaniment or with just hand clapping. Recitatives maybe selected. This is also done during performance, when the group is tired. The performance has typical closing songs such as:

4. Fante	English
solo verse: <i>Womma yenko hen siw yi do o mpantompanto wo ho</i>	Let us go unto this shrine of our (our god) <i>mpantompanto</i> is there
refrain: <i>womma yenko hen siw yi do o</i>	Let us go unto this shrine of ours
solo verse: <i>Nana Anoma Mpanto wo ho a</i>	Is <i>Nana Anoma Mpanto</i> there?
refrain: <i>Womma yenko hen siw yi do o</i>	Let us go unto this shrine of ours
solo verse: <i>Ee wonkada Guae na wonhwe hen siw yi do o</i>	Ee go and sleep in Cape Coast and see this shrine of ours
refrain: <i>Womma yenko hen siw yo do o</i> ours.	Let us go unto this shrine of ours
Solo verse: <i>Adzewafo a hen siw yi do o</i>	Adzewa performers, this shrine of ours
refrain: <i>Womma yenko hen siw yi do o</i>	Let us go unto this shrine of ours
solo verse: <i>Bentsirfo a hen siw yi do o</i>	Ah people of <i>Bentsir</i> this shrine of ours
refrain: <i>Womma yenko hen siw yi do o</i>	Let us go unto this shrine of ours
solo verse: <i>Wonhwe Kweku Mpanto wo ho a?</i>	Look here, isn't <i>Kweku</i> <i>Mpanto</i> there?

Refrain: *Womma yenkw hen siw yi do o*

Let us go unto this shrine of  
ours.

### Adenkum

The structure of the *Adenkum* performance follows very closely that of the *Adzewa*. Libation is poured to ancestor-leaders of the group followed by the following appellation of the group.

	5 Fante	English
call:	<i>Wonyim</i>	They know it
response:	<i>yewo ha</i>	We are here
call:	<i>Ikyir hen a wonnihwe</i>	If you hate us you do not look at us
	<i>Wonyim hen</i>	We are known
Response:	<i>Yewo ha</i>	We are here

A song of welcome is also sung. There appears to be a lead player of the *Adenkum* gourds who has two gourds which she strikes against her thigh. She is always the first to take up the rhythm and is joined by other players of gourds, hand-clapping and the drums. This order is not strictly kept but the untrained eye/ear may not be able to tell which started first.

It is important to note that all the genres discussed above are performed on serious occasions of ritual, social or political importance. Women in these contexts perform at full throttle and with much confidence and assertiveness. They are in control of the entire performance and are obviously not mere support groups for a male dominated performance event.

### Poetic Form

In seeking to establish the generic specificity of *Adenkum* and *Ebibindwom*, it is necessary to examine the texts of the various corpuses. As part of our field work, we solicited indigenous categorization of song types. The categories stated below have been assembled from random statements made about types. There are certain categories which were identified within all genres. One particular category was identified only with *Ebibindwom*.

Performance Genre	Category in Fante	Translation
All Groups	<i>Ndwom a nye awasa</i>	songs which give goose Bumps; stirring, moving Songs.
All Groups	" <i>dadaw dze</i> "	Ancient ones
All Groups	" <i>life dze</i> "	High-life ones
<i>Ebibindwom</i>	<i>Wiadze ndwom</i>	Songs of the world.

While we shall not strictly follow these emic categories, they are recognized as important reference points requiring further investigation. This is all the more so because they are not based on a comparative framework between genres. They are broad categorizations within genres. It is one's expectation that further research particular through musicology would be required to establish an emic differentiation between the genres. The rest of our discussion on the poetic structure will thus be based on literary criticism as developed within the field of oral literature. The nature and poetic structure of the three genres appear to be mostly unique to each genre. One however notices overlaps in a few cases among the genres and these will be discussed accordingly.

For example, some *Adzewa* songs appear to be styled upon a typical *Adenkum* melodic line. There are also overlaps with other genres to be noted. For example the *Mboguo* (interlude song) from the *Anansesem* tradition is picked up in *Adzewa*. Typical *Adenkum* and *Adzewa* melodies are provided on pp. 18a and 18b respectively.

Ruth Finnegan in her *Oral Literature in Africa* (1970) takes a quotation from S.G. Williamson (1958)<sup>14</sup>, which may be seen to be in complete contrast to our findings. Williamson essentially regards the lyrics of *Ebibindwom*, as simple. Our research reveals a wide variety of poetic structures and stanzaic formulations within all the genres studied, *Ebibindwom* being the most complex. Although some similar techniques have been used, each genre has formulations that distinguish it from the others.

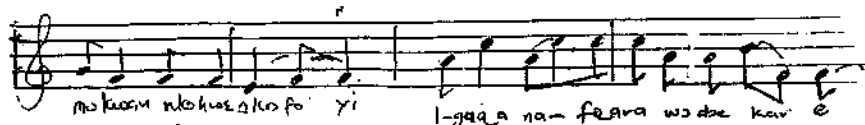
In the following paragraphs, a few of the structured patterns from all three genres will be discussed to exemplify the variety as well as distinctiveness of patterns. While the melody and other musical traits contribute to this variety, we will be looking at the material mainly from the point of view of the stanzaic structure which is marked by the roles played by the lead cantor (*ndwomtufa*), the other cantors (*mbɔdofo*) and the chorus (*ngyedofɔ*).

24b 49b

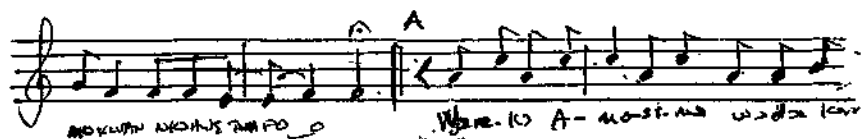
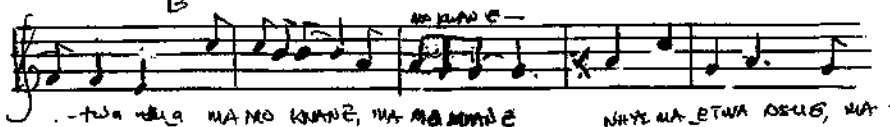
MA MO. KWAN

TEXT 10

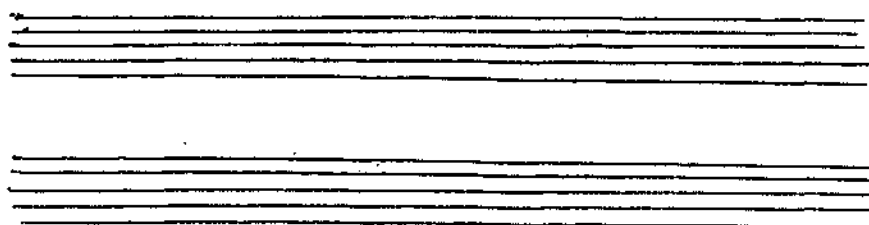
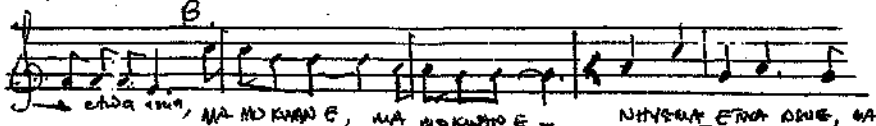
A



B



B



A - Cantor

B - Chorus / Response

18a 49a

ONYIM NE YER TEXT 15

8 A

Onyim neyer Kwesi Mawu onyim neyer pangin  
 benyin awo yer wo war naa? Onyim ne yer pangin  
 benyin awo yer wo war naa? Onyim ne yer pangin  
 Onyim ne yer e benyin awo yer wo war naa?  
 ONYIM NE YER e BENYIN AWO YER WO WAR NA A  
 O-PIA MENSIA ABODAPA KOTO SO-KU A ONYIM NE YER e  
 BENYIN AWO YER WO WAR NA A ONYIM NE YER pangin

A - Cantor  
 B - Chorus/response

*Ebibindwom* provides spectacular examples of this highly interactive mode which affects the poetic structure and makes room for both subtle and dramatic switches along the prosodic continuum of speech to song. The example to be provided below is a dramatic narrative presented in a speech-like chanted mode. The main narrative is performed in free style without accompaniment. There is a rhythmic melody closely following the melodic pattern of *Fante* syntax which appears to guide the cantor.

Each line may be delimited as a breath group with a pause. It is however important to note that half lines are marked by a much shorter pause. Expressions like "indeed" (*ampa*) and other exclamatory particles may be used to ensure regularity of the pattern. The narrative is interspersed by refrains that are closer to song than to speech. Towards the end, the soloist brings in a change in structure where the refrain is taken up in a song-like chant. This marks the end of the narrative. This section is accompanied by hand-clapping and climaxes the prosodic continuum from speech to song.

#### 6. Saul's Conversion:

Solo refrain: (lead cantor)	Cleanse me and use me for your work. My God Almighty
Both cantors:	Cleanse me and use me for your work
Solo refrain: (lead cantor)	My God cleanse me and use me for your work, Saul the murderer.
Refrain: Entire chorus:	Cleanse me and use me for your work.
Solo refrain: (lead cantor)	Alas my God I am filled with your good word But because I am a sinner.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Cantor	I cannot do your work
Solo (lead cantor)	Saul I am a murderer, Cleanse me and use me for your work.
(entire section repeat)	
Solo: (lead cantor)	Alas the man Saul indeed, He went to King Nebucadnezer, To get a warrant, He was going to Damascus to destroy the city, He was going to kill all the people of the church, Now as he was going: God revealed himself to the priest Ananias; there in Damascus; He said: there is a man coming to destroy this

land, so be alert.  
 When he comes pray for him and forgive his sins  
 completely;  
 And so slowly slowly: the man Saul walks through  
 this grassland,  
 He is going to this land of Damascus,  
 Right in the middle of his journey,  
 A great light shone about him, and he fell to the  
 ground,  
 Behold he heard a voice saying,  
 Saul, Saul, why are you hounding me,  
 And there and then: Saul's head was bowed to the  
 ground;  
 He could not lift up his head.

**Chorus refrain:**

My father God I call to you  
 Cleanse me and use me for your work.  
 Saul I am a murderer, cleanse me and use me for  
 your work.  
 My God I am filled with your good word, but be  
 cause I am a sinner  
 I cannot do your work  
 Saul I am a murderer,  
 Cleanse me and use me for your work.

**Solo (lead cantor)**

Well then, the people who were walking with him,  
 They took him to Ananias the priest,  
 They said: "God says we should bring Saul to you"  
 As soon as they took him there: Ananias the priest  
 lifted up his hand  
 High, he placed it on the top of Saul's head;

He said to him:  
 This very day you are called Paul (long pause)  
 God says I should transform you right in the midst  
 of your journey here;  
 And at that moment, when Saul was transformed,  
 And they called him Paul,  
 What he told Ananias the priest was that,  
 My Lord, I am transformed all together,  
 This very day I have come to know God.  
 Alas oh my God  
 God did not allow me to die in my sinful state.  
 Saul the murderer

**Refrain (lead cantor)**

**Both cantors:**

**Chorus**            God did not allow me to go and die in my sinful state.

**Clapping begins)**<sup>15</sup>

**2<sup>nd</sup> Cantor**            For I would have been guilty.

**Both cantors and chorus (sung)**    God did not allow me to go and die in my  
sinful state.  
In my sinful state.

**Solo (lead cantor)**            For I would have been guilty

**Chorus**            God did not allow me to go and die in my sinful  
state.

**Solo 2<sup>nd</sup> cantor**            For I would have been guilty.

**Chorus:**            God did not allow me to go and die in my sinful  
state.

**Solo 2<sup>nd</sup> cantor**            In my sinful state (sung simultaneously with cho-  
rus)  
For I would have been guilty.

**Chorus:**            God did not allow me to go and die in my sinful  
state<sup>16</sup>.

In the second example, the lyrics are in a sequence of two or more different sections marked by both a change in melody and a different set of lines.

The following *Adzewa* song which speaks of a (1945) battle between the *Bentsir Asafo* and *Nkum Asafo*, demonstrates this. First of all it may be noted that there is a call and refrain between the lead cantor and the chorus. At the fifth line the lead cantor in one line introduces the narrative which is taken up and reflected upon in the refrain. Thus the refrain is longer than the main verse. Also in the first four lines where there is a call and response, the chorus takes up part of the previous line. At the seventeenth line a new stanza is introduced by the lead cantor. This section is made more vigorous by a complete change in tempo and melody for the solo. The last line taken up by the chorus has the same melody as the ninth and eighteenth lines.



## Swansi Aboano

### 7. Fante

### English

#### solo: call

1. *Ao, Anamoamba worehwehwe waye hen*

Alas children of Anamo, they are trying to do us in

#### chorus: response:

2. *Hwehwe waye hen*

Trying to do us in

#### solo: call

3. *Sekyi Akomeamba worehwehwe woeku hen*

The children of Sekyi Akomea are trying to kill us.

#### chorus: response

4. *Hwehwe woeku hen*

Trying to kill us

#### solo: call

5. *Daano memenda yi nso etur atow*

The other Saturday too there was gun fire

#### chorus: refrain

6. *Hen ara a*

It is us indeed

7. *Etur atow Swansi aboano*

There was gun fire in front of Swansi stores

8. *Banyin wo hen o?*

Where are the men?

9. *Etur atow Swansi aboano*

There was gun fire in front of Swansi stores

#### solo: call

10. *Kwesi Awotwemba worehwehwe waye hen*

Children of Kwesi Awotwe, they are trying to do us in.

**chorus: response**

11. *Hwehwe waye hen*

Trying to do us in.

**solo: call**

12. *Daano memenda yi nso etur atow*

The other Saturday too there  
was gun fire

**chorus: refrain**

13. *Hen ara a*

It is us indeed

14. *Etur atow Swansi aboano*

There was gun fire outside  
Swansi Stores

15. *Banyin wo hen o*

Where are the men

16. *Etur atow Swansi aboano o*

There was gun fire in front of  
Swansi stores

**solo: lead cantor**

17. *Wodze abasa woruwu e*

They have arms and yet they  
are dying

18. *Wodze abasa Swansi aboano*

They have arms in front of  
Swansi stores

19. *Banyin wo hen a*

Where are the men.

**Chorus: refrain**

20. *Etur atow Swansi aboano*

There was gun fire in front of  
Swansi stores.

The third and final example of structural variation is taken from the corpus of *Adenkum* songs based on the refrain being taken up as a call by the lead cantor. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> line the lead cantor calls in the chorus. Subsequently, the entire song consists of single line, sung in a call and response format, alternating between the lead cantor and the chorus.

**8 Fante**

**English**

**lead cantor/call/verse**

1. *Mowo Edinasem da aban mu o*

I have taken up the case of the Edina State and I have been imprisoned.

2. *Mowo Edinsem da aban mu*

I have taken up the case of the Edina State and I have been imprisoned.

3. *Mowura Aata ee*

I, Sir Arthur

**Chorus: refrain**

4. *Mowo Edinasem da Aban mu o*

I have taken up the case of the Edina State and I have been imprisoned.

**Call/verse**

5. *Ee Efua Nkoso ba Onoma*

Indeed I Onoma son of Efua Nkoso

**chorus/refrain**

6. *Mowo Edinasem da Aban mu o*

I have taken up the case of the Edina State and I have been imprisoned.

7. *Nkrofo a wode wonnkoko no na  
woredzidzi*

Isn't it those who said they would not go (and support) that are eating?

**Chorus/refrain**

8. *Mowo Edinasem da Aban mu o*

I have taken up the case of the Edina State and I have been imprisoned.

**Call/verse**

9. *Nkrofo a wode wonnkoko no na  
woruguraa*

Isn't it those who said they would not go (and support) who are now bathing?

**Chorus/refrain**

10. *Mowo Edinasem da Aban mu o*

I have taken up the case of the Edina State and I have been imprisoned.

**Call/verse**

11. *Nsu a wonnom bi da, woako akonom*      Water that they have never drunk  
before, they have gone to drink it.

**chorus/refrain**

12. *Mowo Edinasem da Aban mu o*      I have taken up the case of the Edina  
State and I have been imprisoned.

**Call/verse**

13. *Edziban a wonndzii bi da, woako ekedzi*      Food that they have never eaten,  
they have gone to eat it.

**Chorus/refrain**

14. *Mowo Edinasem da Aban mu o*      I have taken up the case of the Edina  
State and I have been imprisoned

**Call/verse**

15. *Etam a wommfura bi da woako akofura*      Cloth that they have never worn,  
they have gone to put it on.

**Chorus/refrain**

16. *Mowo Edinasem da Aban mu o*      I have taken up the case of the Edina  
State and I have been imprisoned

**Call/verse**

17. *Efua Nkoso ba'noma*      Onoma son of Efua Nkoso

**chorus/refrain**

18. *Mowo Edinasem da Aban mu o*      I have taken up the case of the Edina  
State and I have been imprisoned

It may be observed from this small number of examples that there is a wide variety of poetic structures within and among the genres under discussion. The inter-play between verses and refrains especially as assigned to lead cantor, other cantors, and the chorus is aesthetically very significant. The poetry is often dramatic for a number of reasons. Firstly it is often narrative. Even where only alluding to events, or reflect-

ing upon them, the personae are assumed by the performers. Direct speech is used in the narrative, and reflective aspects of many poems break into direct speech as well. Furthermore descriptions of events are vividly rendered but with a real economy of words. (See Saul's conversion). However, texts are also enlivened by intensity of instrumentation, changes in tempo and dramatic melodic shifts as described on (p. 25).

It may thus be safely concluded that far from being simple, the poetic structure of all three genres is not only complex and varied, but also has an important role to play in effectively conveying the message and import of the content. Further consideration of poetic devices will be provided on (p. 30).

### Composition

It is necessary to say a word about composition as we have entered into the area of structure and will be moving to thematic concerns. Questions as to how much of the text is set and how much is improvised by the performers during performance comes up as well as the issues related to the evolution of the forms. This is an area in which this researcher feels further work will be required.

We have managed to elicit an assertion from the *Ebibindwom* singers and the *Akonkar Adenkum* group that although the older songs inherited from the "mpanyinfo" (elders) appear to be the most cherished ones, new ones are composed sometimes upon request from those who need consolation. "Se obi n' asem bi ye no yaw a, ena odze aboto agoro no mu"<sup>17</sup>

We have also been given the impression that songs are composed by women. In a discussion during the *Akonkar Adenkum* recording session, a member of the audience asked if the performers would not compose a song since Nana Kondua, the V had been dead since 1993. The elders responded "Well the funeral is not scheduled yet. We shall certainly compose one".

As regards the level of improvisation in all forms, it seems reasonable to conclude that lead singers undertake interpretation during performance. This emerges from the number of times that the opening solo or call may be chanted/sung, the variation of tempo and pauses as well as the discretionary introduction of lines by the cantor especially with the call and response or verse and refrain structure.

It would appear that with the complex structure discussed above, especially with the interactive role played by the various performers, these forms require previous preparation before performance. This was certainly true of the *Ebibindwom* performers who wished that they had "platis" (rehearsal/practice) with a few more colleagues for the performance. For all three genres. The refrains and responses are often not repeated verbatim as lyrics progress but are parallel with crucial changes

in phrases or entire lines.

The custodianship of compositions is important to note. The role of the core membership especially those who have been "born into the group" or who are "replacing their mothers" is key to maintaining the integrity of the heirloom of lyrics composed in earlier times.

With respect to new or later compositions, account is taken of an *Adenkum* song which must have been composed around 1985 about Nana Kondua, the V of Edina. Like the African American tradition of the Blues, it is the integrity of typical poetic structure and melodic vein that are maintained. (This structure in *Adenkum* is illustrated on p. 18b). This in no way suggests a tight structure of creativity since we are still, even with the small corpus collected, discovering more and more melodic variations.

### Themes and Poetic Devices

To address an important objective of this study it is necessary to look at themes and poetic devices. We have observed a number of details that could be seen to provide a context for and contribute to the aesthetic and emotive effects of these poetic devices that are favoured in the presentation of these themes.

It would be obvious from our earlier discussions that themes and content of the various repertoires would be different in some respects. For example, *Ebibindwom* has a predominance of themes from Christian sacred readings and liturgy which are interpreted and intensely presented in the chanted mode using refrains to lay emphasis on particular aspects of Christian teachings.

In the case of the *Adzewa* songs collected, the allegiance to the *Asafo* group can be perceived as the reason why a large number of songs would speak of the exploits of the *Bentsir Asafo* company. Panegyrics are raised as well as laments to men gone to war recalling the culture of *Mmomombe*. In the song "*Egya oye nam, oye nam*" a fierce *Asafo* captain, Kweku Abaka is praised for his fierce prowess in battle. Depicted metaphorically as a "sharp weapon of war" he is said to have, upon death, left his "sharpness" to his children thus negating the effect of death and, in fact, being very much alive through his descendants. Again, while depicting with poignancy the fear and loneliness of war, the song "*M'egya Kegyam*" has a call and response section where the cantor, taking on the personality of a warrior facing battle, calls the name of various ancestor warriors asking each of them to "go and provide support". The chorus answers "in battle".

9	Fante	English
1. call:	<i>M'egya kegyam o</i>	Pray, my father come and accompany me.
2. refrain:	<i>Ōko no a</i>	in battle
3. call:	<i>Barima kegyam</i>	strongman, come and support me.
4. refrain:	<i>Ōko no a</i>	in battle
5. call:	<i>Amoosi kegyam</i>	Amoosi come and accompany me.
6. refrain:	<i>Ōko no a</i>	in battle
7. call:	<i>Obanyin Anamoa</i>	the man of stature, Anamoa
8. refrain	<i>Ōko no a</i>	in battle

In this brief extract, the call for support to the ancestors of the *Asafo* group emphasizes indirectly the fact that these are the dependable ones on whom one can call in times of war and travail.

The poetic and emotive force of this song is produced by a number of devices quite typical of the *adzewa* corpus.

The first is that the collective takes on the persona of the individual who is usually lamenting his/her loneliness or pitiable condition. The persona here pleads with a large number of ancestors to accompany him into battle, his cry is taken up by the cantor, and reinforced by the chorus. These parallel, alternate calls, make a full-bodied and urgent plea. The persona although a grown man and warrior, calls for his father "*megya*". We find it significant that the cry is not for '*nana*' "*opanyin*" or other possible terms that connote more directly the concept of ancestor or elder. The warrior indeed is crying not for a remote intangible and venerated ancestor, but for his own father. This is likely to also symbolize the fact that one's membership of an *Asafo* group is through the father. This reference to the father imbues the cry with a sense of poignancy by exploiting the emotions aroused by the father-son relationship.

The second device is the piling of names of ancestors in the opening lines. Quoted in (9) above. The expressions *M'egya*, *Barima*, *Amoosi* are alternated in initial position and sung with emphasis. The last call "Man of stature, Anamoa" suddenly breaks the

pattern followed in the first 3 lines by putting the name of the ancestor in final position. This however only serves to reinforce the sense of numbers and grandeur of the military heritage of the persona established by the use of semantic and structural parallelism in this song.

It may be seen from the above that there is a clever interplay between evoking loneliness and fear on the one hand and concurrently evoking a history peopled by valiant and supportive ancestors that can be called upon, on the other.

Indeed this inherent sense of competition or even conflict is perhaps an inherent feature of these two *agoro* forms. If we take the self affirmative appellations that open and interject the performances of the *Akonker* group (text 5) we find this clearly demonstrated. "If you hate us; do not look at us" As we can see from the above example, innuendo is a major device used to achieve the desired effect. However texts are not devoid of satire and blistering attacks against lack of integrity, treachery and greed which the group has perceived among sections of the population. Again, the *Akonker* group's blistering attack (text 8) on the people of Edina comes to mind. The case in which Mr. Arthur decides to stand up for the interest of the Edina State, against the colonial administration only to find himself abandoned by his own people and sent to jail is the subject for this song. The emphasis however is not so much on these facts. The composer apparently imbued with a sense of indignation paints a vivid image of treachery and lack of principle by taking up developments after Mr. Arthur succeeds in getting himself out of jail. The treachery is made to remain in our consciousness by the constant refrain "I have taken up the case of the Edina State and have been imprisoned". However shameless behaviour consequent to his release is satirized.

Examples may be found in lines 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15. The people of Edina are depicted as engaging in festive activities, and signs of solidarity (eating, bathing, drinking) which are associated with an intimate immersion in a victory for which they are in no way responsible.

Taunting songs apart from featuring abusive innuendo and satire may also be based on a combination of abusive innuendo and ridicule. The *OLA Bentsir Adzewa* group refer to the *Oguaa Anafo* quarter which, instead of demonstrating their physical fitness by making a short journey by foot from Cape coast to Abora, go by motor vehicle. They are depicted as making a spectacle of themselves and worthy of being hooted at note: the particles "ee" and "oo" in line 1 of the following text depict hooting.

#### 10) Fante

#### English

1. *Ma me kwan ee, Ma me kwan oo*

1. Let me pass! Let me through!



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 2. <i>Yaanom etwa nsu e</i>                      | 2. Those people have crossed the water!                          |
| 3. <i>Ma me kwan nkohwe nkrofo yi</i>            | 3. Let me through to go and see those people!                    |
| 4. <i>Oguaa Anafo ara wodze "kar" etwa nsu a</i> | 4. <i>Oguaa Anafo</i> have actually crossed the stream in a car! |

References to the target group are disparaging: "those people". The expression "*Ma me kwan*" plays several connotative roles such as those of incredulity, great anxiety to witness a spectacle on the part of the persona as well as that of creating the image of a person trying to make his/her way through a crowd of people observing a spectacle.

Another feature typical of groups in competition are "taunting songs". This is a feature shared by both *Adzewa* and *Adenkum*. It may be noted that while several of the songs collected may be categorized as such we were not fortunate enough to elicit an emic category to that effect.

Songs from the *Adenkum* repertoire will be used to demonstrate other features shared with *Adzewa*. For example, the *Akonkar* group has in its repertoire a fairly large number of songs (6 out of 15 songs collected) that comment directly and without equivocation on the political situation of the state in various historical eras. This includes strong support for their state against enemies as well as a call for support of the status quo. The following extract illustrates fierce patriotism (Tuesday Gun fire, *Benada Tur*).

11. "We have fired gun shots on Tuesday, Butweku  
We have fired gun shots  
The Fantes, they are coming, Nana Gyan  
Guns have been fired on Tuesday  
Guns have been fired on Tuesday  
Did you know that Guns were not to be fired on Tuesday?"

In this highly allusive stanza, a battle of serious consequences between the Edina people and the *Fetu* state is depicted in the imagery of guns. This poem alludes to the fact that being a city state set up under the Europeans, Edina had several territorial battles with surrounding states. The battle in question was said to have taken place in the time of Nana Kobina Gyan and was said to have been won by the Edina because they took the ultimate risk of defying their great oath which bans fighting on Tuesdays. They resorted to this ultimate risk, having seen that the Fantes were seeking to take advantage of this oath. The battle is thus imbued with spiritual depth,

emotion and nationalistic passion.

The group also speaks to the people of the Edina state in general. A good example of this is an extract from the song "Nana Kondua V" (performed during the enstoolment of Nana Kondua V).

2. lead cantor: Let us unite and look after him, state of Edina.

Let us be solidly united

Nana the V, it is he that has come.

Let us be one.

Chorus: Nana the V, it is he that has come

Let us be solidly one

Let us be one

Nana Kondua the V.

He has come.

They also admonish their people very frankly. This may be seen in text 8 already cited. In this song the protagonist, Mr. Arthur is pushing a case in litigation on behalf of the state but is not supported by the people indeed he is shunned and allowed to be imprisoned. However, as soon as he is released they come to eat and make merry.

The Akonkar group also shows its disgust in the song "Edinafo Akonkonsafo" (Malingering Citizens of Edina). This song was made during one of the several rebellions of the local people against taxation during colonization. The song is based on an episode where citizens of Edina immediately reported to the Europeans those responsible for killing the one white person who died during the disturbances. This got the whole town into trouble with the foreign powers. Edina is compared with disgust and ridicule to Komenda where seven white persons got killed and the people got away with it because there were no betrayals.

However there are indeed a number of areas in which *Adzewa* and *Adenkum* show similar thematic concerns especially with political and social matters. In our research it is becoming clear to us that these two forms establish emphatically the serious interest that women of Ognaa and Edina have in the evolution politics and society not only in their own area but also nationally. They comment on the relations between governors and the governed.

Colonialism comes in for criticism in the repertoire of both groups. In the *Bentsir Adzewa* repertoire for example the case of Nana Mbra the IV against the British Colonial Government is taken up. The effrontery of putting a chief in jail is brought out vividly as the song created on this occasion depicts the situation as a matter for the brave.

12. Verse 1:

Lead cantor:           What shall I do  
                              Children of Nana Mbra IV take us with you  
  
Chorus:                 The case, the case  
                              It has become a matter for the brave  
  
                              Yes indeed the case has become a matter for the brave  
  
                              He has been arrested and taken to the Saltpond jail  
  
                              People of Ognaa give ear and listen.

These groups also serve as chroniclers of current and historical events. The text of "*Swansi aboano*" or "In front of *Swansi* stores" has been provided on page 22. This song refers to a battle between the *Bentsir* and *Nkum* over the *Fetu* Festival of Ognaa in 1945. The *Bentsir* were surrounded and slaughtered by the *Nkum*. This is readily admitted in the song and is all the more poignant since the story is being told from the *Bentsir* side.

Events are however not merely narrated or described, they are also commented upon. An *Adzewa* song of the evacuation of the whole *Bentsir* quarter together with their sacred icons in 1962 is reflected upon in the following extract.

13. Verse

1. Abundant Bedding:    I am in need of ground space, I am indeed in need of ground space.
2. Abundant Bedding:    I am in need of space.
3. *Bentsir* quarters of the Cape Coast state:    we have no where to sleep

*Aketɛbui, daadze w'ehiam' a, daadze w'ehiam' ara*

*Aketɛbui, daadze w'ehiam*

*Iguei Bentsir, yennyaa beebi yenda.*

**Chorus refrain**

4. Abundant Bedding:      Ground space
5. Alas I am in dire need of ground space
6. Alas Abundant Bedding; where shall I find a piece of land.

*Aketɛbui, daadze e*

*Daadze w'ehiam' o*

*Aketɛbui, daadze o*

Powerful Asafo companies have and defend territory. It is unthinkable that they would be without it. The epithet "Abundant-Bedding" is to show that they are lacking in nothing except the most crucial which is land or territory. An Asafo company is left in the inconceivable situation of having no land.

The subject matter discussed above is evidence of the broad range of issues about which women express an opinion. They do not show any tendency towards neutrality. Although many of their songs appear to be highly loyal to the status quo, others appear to demonstrate an independent and analytical stand on issues which they raise up. The language is not obscure, esoteric, overly figurative or allusive. Opinions are therefore expressed in plain language, so to speak. The songs also portray these women not only as being but more importantly as perceiving themselves to be fully integrated citizens with the right to condemn and praise, chronicle and conserve, at will.

Apart from matters of state and nation, or religion, *Ebibindwom*, *Adzewa* and *Adenkum* take up social matters in distinct ways. A set of themes that are shared, are those that provide a sombre reaction to some of the painful tragedies of life in the Akan world view from the women's perspective. Our informants told us that, when individuals (male or female) go through painful experiences, they "come and put it into our *agoro* and we make songs out of them to assuage their pain". This notion was repeated several times in various ways during fieldwork.

There is a great deal that could be said in this connection. We shall however dwell on the notion that these women are entrusted with the delicate task of aptly expressing the pain, frustration or sorrow of an individual perhaps better than the aggrieved persons themselves. Again this seems to be a highly significant indication of the esteem in which their opinions, creativity, eloquence, perception and understanding of the human conditions are held.

In this regard it may be noted that men come in for quite a drubbing in matters concerning the relationship between men and women as well as among women in the marriage situation. The following extract is from the *Adenkum* song "Onyim ne yer" (He knows his wife).

Lead cantor: <i>Onyim ne yer, Kwesi Mensa</i>	He knows his wife, Kwesi Mensa
<i>Onyim ne yer panyin,</i>	He knows his senior wife
<i>Barima a ɔwo yer wɔwar no a</i>	Is a man with a wife suitable for marriage?
<i>Onyim ne yer panyin</i>	He knows his senior wife
<i>Barima a ɔwo yer wɔwar no a</i>	The man that has a wife is he fit to marry?
Chorus: <i>Onyim ne yer o,</i>	He knows his wife
<i>Opia Mensa Abrompa</i>	Opia Mensa Abrompa
<i>Kotobonku a</i>	the hen-pecked-man
<i>Onyim ne yer</i>	He knows his wife
<i>Banyin a ɔwo yer wɔwar no a</i>	Is a man with a wife suitable for marriage?
<i>Onyim ne yer panyin</i>	He knows his senior wife.

Even though there is a touch of humorous sarcasm here, this is a serious song which interrogates the norm of polygamy from an interesting point of view. It may be observed that, the point of view that questions polygamy so fundamentally, does not occur very frequently in the treatment of this form of marriage by traditional artists. It is also significant that the theme is seen as tragic. Other issues such as that of (a) being an only child; (b) of having lost loved ones; (c) of being barren as well as (d) having false witness borne against one are frequently treated in all three genres.

For example an ancestor of the *Adzewa* group Aba Gyakoa who had lost all her relatives asked "who will turn me over (when I am sick on my sick bed?)"

The following extract shows the allusion to the fear of loneliness, and suffering in sickness and finally in death. The emphasis is placed on the pitiable nature of the situation through rhetorical questions and parallelism. The repetition of the verb "pity" and the nominal phrase "the lone one" also contribute to intensification of emotions.

16. Lead cantor: Ah, alas, when I am ill who will nurse me and turn me over?  
 Aba Gyakoa when I am dead who will prepare my body?  
 Aba Gyakoa when I am dead who will ennoble my body  
 The lone one, I am to be pitied.

*M'ara mo wo ho yi, meyar a, odandanfo nye woana?*  
*Aba Gyakoa, mowu a, odandanfo nye woana?*  
*Aba Gyakoa, mowu a, oyeyiefo o*  
*Obaako na mbobor meye a*

- Chorus: Who will properly prepare me?  
 Pitiful me, who will nurse me and turn me over?  
 The Pitiful one, I am alone  
 When I die who will prepare me?  
 The lone one, I am to be pitied.

*Oyeyiefo nye woana e*  
*Mbobor e, Odandanfo e*  
*Mbobornyi manko a*  
*Mowu a, oyeyiefo o*  
*Obaako na Mbobor meye a*

These thematic concerns and the manner in which they are expressed give a very serious and sombre aura to the repertoires of these three genres, despite the fact that a few songs do indeed address themes such as love in a more flippant manner. While these genre may be performed in some gay social contexts there is very little frivolity in them.

The licence to comment freely, appears to have taken by the performers and accepted by society. The performers seem in no way to be self conscious about using this license and it is obvious from the content that no one is above comment.

## Conclusion

We have attempted to place *Adenkum Adzewa* and *Ebibindwom* in the context of the tradition of oral and musical arts in the Oguaa-Edina area. In doing so, we are contending that in spite of some similarities these are separate genres based on their origins, contexts of performance, thematic concerns but more importantly melodic

and poetic structure. Some attention has also been paid to the evolution of the forms indicating dynamism and some syncretization in aspects of these forms.

We also have, on the other hand, tried to show that these genres can be viably defined by gender not only at the level of management and artistic control but also "point of view" and emotive intensity. We have finally proceeded to examine the significance of these genres in many spheres of local (and at times national) life. What we believe we have found is proof that these genres are a vehicle for the expression of women's view and their interpretation of the situation of their people and the human condition. The direct patronage enjoyed by the performers and performances of these genre range from requests for fresh composition, and performances, to the yielding of very large gatherings (at funerals, social and political events) to the compelling force which draws these to participate in concert in the performances led by anyone of these performing groups. The response is one of acceptance of the right of these women to make powerful statements about the community and to reflect deeply about life's vicissitudes on behalf of all.

#### References and Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> The Akan word *Agoro* better describes the idea that each is a total art form featuring verbal, musical and dance elements.

<sup>2</sup> *Eryaado* is a response to greetings. This is text number 1. The texts in the paper are numbered sequentially as they are cited.

<sup>3</sup> E.B. Smith "Adzewa Dance and Music of the Fantes (Oguua and Saltpond)" A minor thesis submitted to the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana in 1969 towards the Diploma in Dance submitted to the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, 1969.

<sup>4</sup> 10 out of 17 songs have references to ancestral fighters, leaders and generals and specific incidents of war of conflict with other *Asafo* groups.

<sup>5</sup> Personal communication with H.E. Kwesi Brew in Cape Coast 24<sup>th</sup> March, 1995. Personal communication with Professor John K. Fynn in the History Department, University of Ghana (20<sup>th</sup> March, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> Personal communication from H.E. Kwesi Brew.

<sup>7</sup> Aning, B.A. "Adenkum: A Study of Akan Female Bands". Minor thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the Diploma in African Music. Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon 1964.

<sup>8</sup> Elmina in Mr. Corangle's house, Council Lane. In the afternoon of 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1995.

<sup>9</sup> Hours glass drum which has two membranes connected by leather thongs with a core wooden hour glass structure. It is held in the armpit and played with a stick. Its tone may be varied by squeezing and releasing the leather thongs. It can play high, low and gliding tones.

<sup>10</sup> Kow Sekyi, Chief Flag Bearer (*Frankahutafo*) of *Bentsir* No. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Maame Ama Boa, Lead Singer of *OLA Bentsir Adzewa*

<sup>12</sup> Note that this word is expressed in the Twi dialect.

<sup>13</sup> Note that this word is expressed in the Twi dialect.

<sup>14</sup> W.S.G. Williamson "The lyric in the Fante Methodist Church" Africa 28 in Ruth Finnegan *Oral Literature in Africa*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1970.

<sup>15</sup> Hand-clapping was the only mode of accompaniment in the performance we observed. We were however made to understand that at this point all other instruments would come in free style.

<sup>16</sup> The Fante Version of song 6 has not been provided because of the length of the text and also because the structure can be demonstrated clearly in translation.

<sup>17</sup> Komfo Ama... The spokesperson of the *Akonker Adenkum* group expressed this emphatically during the performance.