



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to Healing Ritual of the Twelve Apostles Church of Ghana, 1975

Human Studies Film Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Human Studies Film Archives
Title:	<i>Healing Ritual of the Twelve Apostles Church of Ghana</i>
Date:	1975
Identifier:	HSFA.1977.02
Creator:	Breidenbach, Martha
Extent:	Film reels (color silent, 2,000 feet; 16mm) Linear feet
Language:	Moving image materials are silent; supplementary materials are in English.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Received from Martha Breidenbach in 1977.

Processing Information

Titles are supplied by the archivist for untitled films.

Preferred Citation

Healing Ritual of the Twelve Apostles Church of Ghana, Human Studies Film Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

The collection is open for research. Please contact the archives for information on availability of access copies of audiovisual recordings. Original audiovisual material in the Human Studies Film Archives may not be played.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Scope and Contents

Full film record of a weekly ritual performed every Friday in several hundred churches throughout Ghana. This church--known as the Church of the Twelve Apostles in Ghana and the Harrist Church in Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire)--is a modern African religious movement begun in 1913 by Liberian prophet William Wade Harris. Although Harris was an educated African who baptized in the name of the Holy Spirit, many of his followers were traditional healers and herbalists who continued to experience possession by ancestral spirits and dieties. Footage documents the blending of indigenous African and Christian elements in church services. Depicted is *sunsum edwuma* (healing or spiritual work) of prophets and prophetesses in an Elmina church. These adepts diagnose patients based on interrogation of the spirits which possess them during services.

Collection contains supplementary materials, namely associated texts and annotations (recorded narratives).

Legacy keywords: Language and culture ; Ritual healing massage, bodily contact (315-29, 344-46 roll 2) ; Ritual purification and expiation ritual washings (22-24 roll 1, 80-120, 180-200 roll 2) ; Religious practices sacred objects and places healing "garden" (1-11, 33-110, roll 1) ; Religious practices sacred object and places healing font (well) cross (185-87, roll 1, 243-49, 385-402, 418-424 roll 2) ; Ritual revelation and divination invocation by prophetess "lifting the cup" (350-384 roll 1) ; Ritual music invocation spirits (540-628 roll 1) ; Ritual revelation communication spirits invocation with cross staff (674-80 roll 1) ; Religious practices ritual spirit possession water, as medium for (630-858 roll 1) ; Ritual propitiation prostration shrine (385-402 roll 2) ; Ritual propitiation ; Ritual propitiation prayer (446-70 roll 1, 712-973 roll 2) ; Prophets prophets priesthood ritual adepts church members (227-340 roll 1) ; Ritual cult symbols cross staff (227-40 roll 1) ; Ritual healing cult symbols Holy Bible (295-315 roll 1) ; Ritual music cult symbols calabash rattles (227-340 roll 1, 719-90 roll 2) ; Ritual healing cult structures shelter (530-37 roll 1, 719-90 roll 2) ; Ritual healing cult structures altar table red cloth (19-90 roll 2) ; Ceremony religious practices music and dancing ; Music vocal instrumental ritual propitiation spirits (540-628 roll 1) ; Ritual spirit possession dancing kinesics stylization (62-124 roll 1, 170-174 roll 2) ; Ritual cult symbols red color symbolism (50-150 roll 2) cross of holy font (418-24 roll 2) ; Sapho Marta ; Sapho Nana

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect the views of the Smithsonian Institution or Anthropology Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

Local Numbers

HSFA 1977.2.1

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Fanti (African people)
Religion

Cultures:

Fanti (African people)

Types of Materials:

silent films

Places:

Africa, West
Elmina (Ghana)