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## Visual Documentation on Fort Metal Cross in the Western Region of Ghana: The Role of the Graphic Artists in Heritage Preservation

**Eric Kwadwo Amissah**

Senior Lecturer, Department of Graphic Design Technology,  
Takoradi Technical University, Ghana

**James Kwasi Gyimah**

Senior Lecturer, Department of Graphic Design Technology,  
Takoradi Technical University, Ghana

**Derek Ben Kwofie**

Tutor, Department of Art and Culture,  
Peculiar International School, Kasoa, Ghana

### Abstract

*This study focuses on the visual documentation of Fort Metal Cross, a historical site located in the Western Region of Ghana. The aim of this study was to provide a far-reaching visual record of the fort, highlighting its historical significance, cultural value and architectural features. The qualitative case study research with visual documentation was conducted through a combination of Canon DSLR Camera with 50mm, 17mm - 35mm lens, DJI Mavic Pro 2 Drone, and smartphone techniques. The research team captured high-resolution images of the fort's exterior and interior, paying close attention to its unique architectural elements, such as the bastions, cannons, and defensive walls. Additionally, diagrams were taken to showcase the fort's surroundings and provide a virtual tour experience for viewers. In addition to the visual documentation, the research delved into the historical background of Fort Metal Cross with extensive archival research to gather information on its construction, purpose, and role in the transatlantic slave trade. This historical context provided a deeper understanding of the fort's significance within the broader historical narrative of Ghana and the African continent. The finding of this research contributed to the preservation and promotion of Fort Metal Cross as a significant cultural heritage site in Ghana, fostering a greater appreciation for its historical and architectural value to showcase its colonial past and educate future generations about the struggles and triumphs of their ancestors.*

**Keywords:** Graphic artists, visual documentation, Fort Metal Cross, heritage preservation, Ghana

### 1. Introduction

Visual documentation in the graphics discipline is an essential tool in heritage preservation as it captures the physical attributes, historical context, and cultural significance of a site (Beck, 2013). As an approach to capturing and presenting information, visual documentation is a versatile method that encompasses the capture and presentation of information through visual means. The graphic artists have involved the use of various visual elements such as photographs, diagrams, charts, and videos to effectively communicate complex concepts, processes, or data (Tobiasz et al., 2019). Visuals have the ability to enhance comprehension, engage the audience, and facilitate knowledge retention (Reyes, 2021). They provide a visual representation that complements textual information, making it more accessible and appealing to a wide range of individuals. Visual documentation serves as a valuable tool in fields such as research, education, and business (Alba et al., 2023). In research, visual documentation aids in the recording and analysis of data, enabling researchers to draw meaningful conclusions. In education, it supports the learning process by presenting information in a visually stimulating way, catering to different learning styles. In business, visual documentation is utilized for marketing purposes, showcasing products or services in an appealing and informative manner (Shabiralyani et al., 2015).

Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB) (2024) cited Van Dantzig (1999) that in promoting and preserving the country's heritage culture, the Western Region of Ghana has become a home to numerous historical sites, and Fort Metal Cross is a significant historical site in Ghana that holds immense importance and requires preservation (Adagya, 2024). Apenkro (2023) shared that Fort Metal Cross, located in Dixcove, was constructed by the British in the 17th century and served as a trading post during the colonial era. Its historical significance lies in its role as a key stronghold for the British in their quest for dominance in the region. The preservation of Fort Metal Cross is crucial not only for its historical

value but also for the broader context of heritage preservation in Ghana. Ghana, a country rich in cultural heritage, recognizes the importance of safeguarding its historical sites as a means to preserve its identity and promote tourism (Osei, 2019). Heritage preservation in Ghana extends beyond individual sites like Fort Metal Cross. It encompasses a broader effort to protect and promote the country's cultural heritage, including traditional practices, artefacts, and historical landmarks. This preservation not only serves as a reminder of Ghana's past but also contributes to the country's economic development through tourism.

There has been a numerous scholarly study on tourist site preservation in Ghana, such as monuments conservation practice in Ghana with issues of policy and management by Anthony Hyland in 1995; understanding the holistic value of castles, forts and lodges in Ghana's tourism development by Mensah-Ansah Samuel in 2012; heritage tourism development as a case study of Cape Coast Castle and Bonwire Town–Ghana by Godfred Osei Boakye in 2022 and other publications on castles and forts exclusive to Ghana museums and monuments boards and UNESCO's World Heritage. However, the absence of visual documentation concerning Fort Metal Cross in the Western Region of Ghana (Bruku, 2015), which hinders a far-reaching understanding of its historical significance and architectural features, has not been documented. Despite being a prominent historical site, there is a lack of photographs, drawings, or other visual representations that provide insights into the fort's original design, layout, and condition over time.

Also, the absence of visual documentation poses several challenges for researchers and historians interested in studying Fort Metal Cross. Firstly, without visual references, it becomes difficult to accurately reconstruct the fort's original appearance and understand its architectural style (Apenkro, 2023). Visual documentation allows for a more precise analysis of the fort's construction techniques, materials used, and architectural influences, shedding light on the historical context in which it was built. In perspective, this study focuses on the crucial role played by graphic artists in the preservation of heritage, specifically through visual documentation of Fort Metal Cross in the Western Region of Ghana (Bruku, 2015). Fort Metal Cross, a historical landmark, holds significant cultural and historical value for the people of Ghana (GMMB, 2024). The objective of this research is to explore how graphic artists contribute to the preservation and promotion of this heritage site. In an attempt, the following research question was asked: How can Fort Metal Cross, Ghana, be preserved through visual documentation? The impact of this study serves as an educational tool, helping to engage the public through graphics and promote tourism, which in turn contributes to the economic development of the region.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The study adopted visual communication theory using Gestalt theory by German Psychologists Max Wertheimer (1880–1943), Kurt Koffka (1886–1941) and Wolfgang Kohler (1887–1967), who, in their studies, observed that we tend to perceive objects as organized patterns and elements (Murray, 2012). Interaction Design Foundation - IxDF. (2016) confirms that Gestalt theory has six basic principles: (1) similarity, (2) continuation, (3) closure, (4) proximity, (5) figure/ground, and (6) symmetry and order. These principles posit that upon receiving sensory information, the brain organizes the data into coherent visual representations that can be further processed by the eye (Mungan, 2020). The interpretation of these visual representations is influenced by our pre-existing knowledge and our present mental state. These visuals included the use of images, symbols, and graphic design to convey the cultural heritage preservation of Fort Metal Cross in the Dixcove, Ahanta of the Western region, Ghana (Osei-Tutu & Von Hesse, 2018; Sen, 2022; Amisssah et al., 2023). The theory focused on how visual elements convey messages and meanings, examining the role of graphic artists as mediators between cultural heritage sites and diverse audiences.

This framework delved into the theories and concepts associated with visual communication, surrounding the application of images, symbols, and graphic design as embodiments to effectively convey the cultural heritage of "Ahantaland." Visual communication theory allowed the study to express its cultural identity, traditions, and values through visual means (Kelly, 2015). This framework was understood by exploring how images, symbols, and graphic design could be used to effectively convey the cultural heritage of the people of Dixcove, Ahanta and their tourist site of Fort Metal Cross. Images, as part of documentation, play a vital role in visual communication as they have the ability to evoke emotions, tell stories, and capture the essence of a culture (Mungan, 2020; Kelly, 2015). Whether it is through photographs, paintings, or illustrations, images provide a visual representation of cultural practices, rituals, and traditions. They also serve as a means of preserving cultural heritage, allowing future generations to understand and appreciate their roots.

The theory integrated an understanding of the role of graphic artists in visually documenting Fort Metal Cross and its implications for heritage preservation (Bentkowska-Kafel & MacDonald, 2018). It considered the socio-cultural, ethical, technological, and participatory dimensions of the documentation process, highlighting the importance of collaborative, inclusive, and culturally sensitive approaches to heritage conservation (Ghana's Museums & Cultural Heritage, 2021). Visuals in the form of still shots or photographs were used as a form of documentation and preservation, whereas the graphic artists played a decisive role in visually documenting Fort Metal Cross for preservation purposes. Through the study's visual representations, the researchers captured the site's architectural features, historical context, and cultural significance, contributing to its documentation and archival. This process creates awareness and advocacy about the importance of heritage preservation through the visual storytelling efforts of Fort Metal Cross as a cultural heritage asset (GMMB, 2024).

### 2.1. Graphic Arts in Heritage Preservation

Heritage preservation stands as a testament to individuals' collective history, culture, and identity, especially artists (Nilson & Thorell, 2018). It preserves the tangible and intangible remnants of bygone eras, ensuring that future

generations can learn from, appreciate, and connect with their cultural heritage. In this endeavour, graphic arts emerge as indispensable tools, bridging the gap between the past and the present and serving as guardians of our shared heritage. Graphic arts play a pivotal role in the documentation and representation of heritage sites, monuments, and artefacts. Through meticulous illustration, photography, and digital rendering, graphic artists capture the intricate details of historical landmarks, providing invaluable records for preservation and scholarly study. These visual representations serve as windows into the past, offering insights into architectural styles, cultural practices, and societal norms of bygone eras (Mekonnen, Bires & Berhanu, 2022).

In the limelight, Weber (2018) shares that graphic artists serve as interpreters and communicators of heritage, translating complex historical narratives into visually compelling forms. Through their creative endeavours, they distil the essence of heritage sites, making them accessible and engaging to diverse audiences. Through illustrated maps, interpretive signage, or multimedia presentations, graphic arts facilitate the interpretation and understanding of heritage, fostering meaningful connections between viewers and cultural landmarks (Nowacki, 2012). Graphic arts serve as powerful tools for raising awareness about the importance of heritage preservation and advocating for the protection of endangered sites. Through evocative imagery, graphic artists evoke emotional responses, instilling a sense of urgency and responsibility towards safeguarding our collective heritage. Graphic arts inspire individuals, communities, and policymakers to take action in preserving and conserving these invaluable treasures by visually highlighting the beauty, significance, and fragility of cultural landmarks (de Giorgio, 2023; Chao, 2023).

Graphic arts promote community engagement and empowerment by involving local stakeholders in heritage preservation initiatives. Through collaborative mural projects, participatory mapping workshops, and community-based exhibitions, graphic artists empower communities to take ownership of their cultural heritage (Petronienė & Juzelėnienė, 2022). By amplifying diverse voices and perspectives, graphic arts ensure that heritage preservation efforts are inclusive, equitable, and reflective of local identities and values. Advancements in digital technologies have revolutionized the field of heritage preservation, opening new avenues for graphic artists to document, visualize, and disseminate cultural heritage (Pouloupoulos & Wallace, 2022). From 3D modelling and virtual reality to augmented reality and interactive installations, graphic artists harness cutting-edge tools to create immersive and interactive experiences that breathe new life into ancient ruins, historic sites, and cultural landscapes (Skublewska-Paszkowska et al., 2022). Bajaj (2023) is of the view that graphic arts stand as indispensable allies in the noble pursuit of heritage preservation. Through their unparalleled ability to document, communicate, and advocate for cultural heritage, graphic artists breathe life into the relics of the past, ensuring that they endure as living testaments to our shared human experience. As custodians of our collective memory, graphic arts inspire us to cherish, protect, and celebrate the rich tapestry of cultures, traditions, and histories that define who we are as individuals, communities, and nations (Bajaj, 2023).

## 2.2. Visual Documentation

Documentaries, over the years, have been of great benefit to man in almost every aspect of his life. Visual documentaries have been used over the years to help graphic artists appreciate what happened in the past. Sometimes, it could be that these documentaries do not take place in real-time, but that, notwithstanding, is being appreciated because they tell a story (Aufderheide, 2013). Miller (2009) is of the notion that documentaries are often used to educate students about social issues. Teachers and university professors use documentary films as tools to educate and engage students in classroom activities. From Miller's assertion, it is seen that documentary is a way of educating learners on real issues confronting the society in which we live. The documentary is also seen as an instrument that can aid instructors and tutors in carrying out activities in classrooms and lecture halls.

Kilmurry (2017) emphasizes how documentary film enables us to empathize with others, fostering a shared sense of humanity, amplifying the voices of the marginalized and the scorned, and seeking to hold those in power accountable. The importance of documentaries deals with the fact that documentaries assist individuals in understanding certain experiences by trying to understand how people feel in real life. Also, a documentary helps to address issues such as the negative treatment of people. Obe (2021) says that documentary films share important, often hidden stories and make more people aware of them, and they are some of the best ways to get information, inspiration and entertainment. A documentary is like a storyteller who tells others about things and events that are happening or happened that they did not know. Documentaries can also be fun and can inspire their audience. The researcher can say with confidence that documentaries have many benefits for people and society, from the different views on why documentaries are important that they showed above. It is clear that documentary helps to show what is secret in society and helps to teach others about things that are happening around them. Documentary films try to make the world better by making people aware, giving information, challenging views, convincing, teaching, entertaining, and supporting views in real life. Documentaries not only give the individual a chance to understand and connect with their world, but they also do more than that to involve the individual in important issues. It is clear that documentaries can help those who are ignored or left out in society to have a voice.

## 2.3. Ghana's Forts and Castles and Their Locations

Ephson (1970) says that forts and castles are signs of the rich trade between African people who lived here and European companies from Portugal, the Netherlands, Denmark, England, France, Sweden, and Brandenburg of German Prussia. These old things are the basis of Ghana's government, law, religion, health, and architecture. He also says that the history of Ghana will always include the forts and castles because they were very important before and after Ghana became free in 1957. GMMB (2024) says that forts and castles in Ghana are National Monuments. Table 1 shows a list of the different European places (castles and forts), not counting the trade lodges, with their places on the coast/hinterland,

the year they were built, and the European countries that built them, as Lawrence (1963) and Van Dantzig (1980) wrote, with more details from the researcher. The forts and castles on the tables are in order from when they were built, from the oldest to the newest.

	Name of Fort	Location/Region	Year of Construction	Owner of the Facility
1	Fort St. Antonio	Axim, Western	1515	Portugal
2	Fort St. Sebastiano	Shama, Western	1520	Portugal
3	Fort Nassau	Moree, Central	1612	The Netherlands
4	Fort Amsterdam	Kormantse, Central	1638	The Netherlands
5	Fort Crevecoeur (Ussher Fort)	Accra, Greater Accra	1649	The Netherlands
6	Fort Witsen	Takoradi, Western	1652	The Netherlands
7	Fort Ruychaver	Near Awudua Dada - Prestea, Western	1652	The Netherlands
8	Fort Batenstein	Butre, Western	1656	The Netherlands
9	Fort Fredriksborg Royal	Cape Coast, Central	1658	Denmark
10	Fort Coenraadsburg	Elmina, Central	1660	The Netherlands
11	Fort Oranje (Orange)	Sekondi, Western	1670	The Netherlands
12	Fort James	Accra, Greater Accra	1673	Britain
13	Winneba Fort	Winneba, Central	1673	Britain
14	Fort Royal	Cape Coast, Central	1697	Britain
15	Fort Vredenburg	Komenda, Central	1682	The Netherlands
16	Fort Gross Friedrichsburg	Princetown/Pokesu, Western	1683	Brandenburg
17	Fort Dorothea	Akwidaa -Ahanta West, Western	1685	Brandenburg
18	Fort Metal Cross	Dixcove, Western	1692	Britain
19	Fort Sophie Louise	Takrama, Western	1694	Brandenburg
20	Fort Patience	Apam, Central	1697	The Netherlands
21	Fort De Goede Hoop	Senya Beraku, Central	1705	The Netherlands
22	Fort Elize Carthago	Near Axim, Western	1702	The Netherlands
23	Fort Komenda	Komenda, Central	1708	Britain
24	Fort Tantomquery	Otuam, Central	1721	Britain
25	Fort Singelenburgh	Keta, Volta	1734	The Netherlands
26	Fort Fredensborg	Old Ningo, Greater Accra	1741	Denmark
27	Fort Venon	Prampram, Greater Accra	1745	Britain
28	Fort William	Anomabo, Central	1753	Britain
29	Anomabo Fort	Anomabo, Central	1754	France
30	Fort Apollonia	Beyin, Western	1768	Britain
31	Fort Prindsenstein	Keta, Volta	1783	Denmark
32	Fort Kongesten	Ada, Greater Accra	1783	Denmark
33	Fort Augustaborg	Teshie, Greater Accra	1783	Denmark
34	Fort Amoku	Near Ankaful - Saltpond, Central	1787	France

*Table 1: A Comprehensive List of Early European Forts*

	Name of Castle	Location	Year of Construction	Owner of the Facility
1	St Jorge	Elmina, Central	1482	Portugal
2	Cape Coast Castle	Cape Coast, Central	1653	Sweden / Britain
3	Christiansborg Castle	Osu, Greater Accra	1661	Denmark

*Table 2: A List of Early European Castles*

According to GMMB (2024), Wikipedia contributors (2023), and UNESCO-WHC/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory Mission (2019), the following castles and forts listed below are considered World Heritage Sites (WHS):  
Three castles:

- Cape Coast Castle at Cape Coast, Central Region
- St. George's d'Elmina Castle/ Elmina Castle at Elmina, Central Region
- Christiansborg Castle at Osu, Greater Accra Region
- Fifteen forts:
  - Fort Good Hope at Senya Beraku, Central Region
  - Fort Patience at Apam, Central Region
  - Fort Amsterdam at Abandze, Central Region
  - Fort St. Jago at Elmina, Central Region
  - Fort San Sebastian at Shama, Western Region
  - Fort Metal Cross at Dixcove, Western Region
  - Fort St. Anthony at Axim, Western Region
  - Fort Orange at Sekondi, Western Region
  - Fort Gros Friedrichsburg [de] at Prince's Town, Western Region
  - Fort William (Lighthouse) at Cape Coast, Central Region
  - Fort William at Anomabo, Central Region
  - Fort Victoria at Cape Coast, Central Region
  - Fort Crevecoeur (Fort Ussher) at Accra, Greater Accra Region
  - Fort James at Jamestown, Greater Accra Region
  - Fort Apollonia at Beyin, Western Region

Again, GMMB (2024), Wikipedia contributors (2023), and UNESCO-WHC/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory Mission (2019) further classify the remaining forts into the following categories based on their condition or state, as are follows:

Four forts are partially in ruins:

- Fort Amsterdam at Abandze - English Fort at British Komenda in the Central Region
- Fort Batenstein at Butre in the Western Region
- Fort Prinzensten at Keta in the Volta Region

Five forts are in ruins with visible structures:

- Fort Nassau at Moree in the Central Region
- Fort Fredensborg at Old Ningo in the Greater Accra Region
- Fort Vredenburg at Dutch Komenda in the Central Region
- Fort Vernon at Prampram in the Greater Accra Region
- Fort Dorothea at Akwidaa in the Western Region

Two sites exhibit traces of former fortifications:

- Frederiksborg at Amanful, Cape Coast
- Fort Augustaborg [de] at Teshie

Wikipedia contributors (2023) added that there are other coastal forts included in Ghana's material cultural heritage list of the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board:

- Fort Fredericksburg at Amanful (distinguished from Fort Frederiksborg/Fort Royal near Cape Coast Castle)
- Fort McCarthy at Cape Coast
- The Little Fort at Anomabo
- Fort Tantumquery at Otum

The following forts are not listed as heritage because they are largely destroyed or otherwise lost/do not exist (Wikipedia contributors, 2023; GMMB, 2024; UNESCO-WHC/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory Mission, 2019):

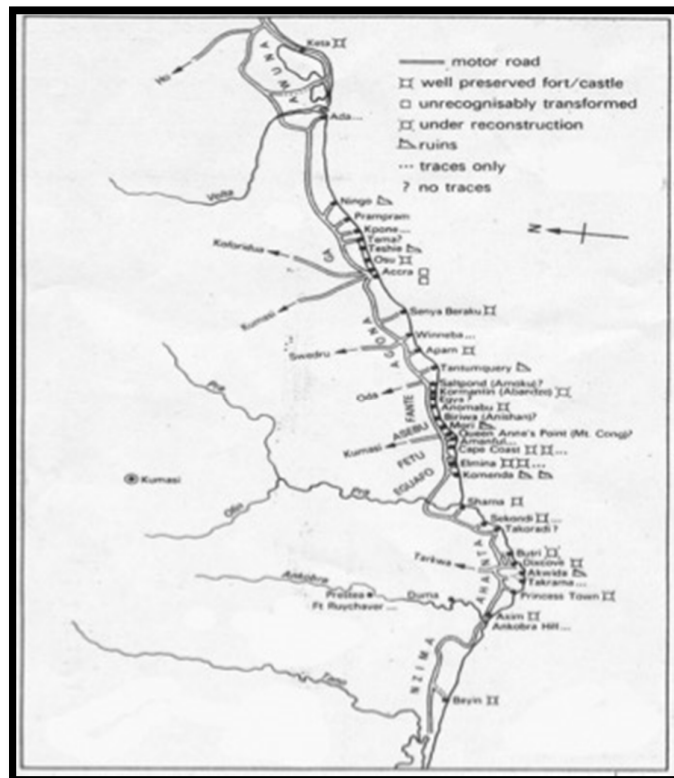
- Fort Winneba at Winneba, Central Region
- Fort Sekondi at Sekondi, Western Region
- Fort Kongenstein at Ada, Greater Accra Region
- Fort Elize Carthago near Axim, Western Region
- Fort Ruychaver on the banks of the Ankobra River, Western Region
- Fort Witsen near Sekondi, Western Region

The researchers are of the view that the GMMB (2024) captured only three (3) castles and thirty (30) forts, whereas UNESCO did capture three castles and thirty-five (34) forts to the extent of including the ones that are not World Heritage Sites (WHS) and those that are partially in ruins, those that are in ruins and those that do not exist at all. It is argued that the fort that is not in existence should not be captured because they are not physically there, but it is very important to note that all of those are still a part of Ghana's History and must be known by all. According to the above information, with regard to the number of forts and castles and their locations, it is clearly depicted that Ghana harbors many more forts than a Castle. That notwithstanding, from general observation, the castles have the most recognition even though they are very few compared to the forts. The above information on forts and castles also indicates that the Central region holds fourteen (14) forts and two (2) castles, the Western region holds twelve (12) forts, the Greater Accra region holds six (6) forts and one (1) castle, and the Volta region has two (2) forts. The facts and figures make the Central region the region with the greatest number of European buildings (forts and castles) in Ghana, followed by Western, Greater and finally, Volta Region, respectively.



### 2.3.1. Variance of Forts and Castles

Forts and castles have been used interchangeably for a long time, which has made most people think of forts as the same as castles, but that is not so. The differences will be captured under this subheading. According to Difference between (2013), castles and forts share significant similarities and are, at times, interchangeable in usage. The primary distinction between the two lies in the fact that castles were primarily constructed for safety or protection, while forts were designed for military purposes. Hasa (2015) posits that the word 'fort' is derived from the Latin term 'fortis', meaning strong, whereas the word castle is derived from the Latin word "castellum" meaning fortified place. Hasa also added that both castles and forts were built for specific purposes. Forts were fortified buildings which were mainly constructed for military purposes (Hasa, 2015). Forts were mainly defensive, that is, to defend against the enemies. On the other hand, castles were both offensive and defensive structures, meaning they protected residents from their enemies and enabled them to plot an attack against their enemies. Castles were also for administrative purposes, such as controlling the surrounding community. Pariona (2017) points out that forts are different from castles in the sense that they are not residences but rather military fortifications intentionally built for war and to defend specific territories. Castles are large fortified residences or groups of large buildings that were constructed with strong walls to protect against attacks. Pariona added that castles are or were inhabited by lords or noblemen, used as administrative centers to rule the surrounding communities, and it was a symbol of wealth and power, but Forts were for defence purposes only. As indicated by Hasa and Pariona above, it is clear that forts and castles, even though has been seen by many to be the same, are not. It is seen that, in a way, both forts and castles are fortified buildings that are used to defend a city or town, but then castles had other purposes served. It is seen that castles were conducive to domestic use, as opposed to forts, which were mainly for security reasons. It was also revealed that forts were inhabited by the military, but castles were inhabited by noblemen and lords.



*Figure 1: A Map of Coastal Ghana Indicating the Geographical Positions of Various European Trade Stations, Including Fort Metal Cross*  
Source: Van Dantzig, 1980

### 3. Methods

The research methodology employed in this study primarily focused on qualitative methods. Qualitative case study research design was appropriate for this study as it aimed to explore and understand the experiences, perspectives, and behaviours of research participants and groups in a specific context of this study (Priya, 2021; Tenny, Brannan & Brannan, 2022). This approach allowed for in-depth exploration and analysis of an involved phenomenon, which was essential for gaining a deeper understanding of the visual documentation of Fort Metal Cross in Dixcove in the Western region of Ghana. The research design involved conducting face-to-face interviews, site visits, and examination of pre-existing visual records. These methods provided rich and detailed data that could be analyzed to uncover meaningful insights and patterns (Rashid et al., 2019). The research design also incorporated a case study approach, which allowed for an in-depth examination of Fort Metal Cross.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with ten (10) key stakeholders, one (1) Chief (Traditional Ruler of Upper Dixcove), one (1) Assemblyman, three (3) Elders of the town, two (2) members from Ghana Tourism Authority, three (3) Tour guides/workers of Fort Metal Cross who had direct experience or knowledge related to this research. These interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility and the exploration of new themes and ideas that arose during the interview process (Research America, 2024). The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Site visits were key in this research to observe and document the research. This involved visiting Fort Metal Cross at Dixcove in the Western region of Ghana and surrounding towns to observe the activities and interactions that took place. Detailed field notes were taken during the site visit to capture important observations and insights. Canon DSLR Camera with 50mm, 17mm - 35mm lens, DJI Mavic Pro 2 Drone, and smartphone were used to capture still images and video scenes for the documentation. In addition to interviews and site visits, pre-existing visual records were examined. This included photographs, videos, or other visual materials that provided insights into the research topic (Glaw et al., 2017). These visual records were analyzed to identify patterns, themes, and significant findings, allowing for a thorough analysis and interpretation of the data. These methods employed to scrutinize visual data and derive significant findings involve a systematic and rigorous visual analysis process (American Library Association, 2021). The visual data analysis was guided by established qualitative research methods (Priya, 2021).

This qualitative research necessitated a thorough examination of the overall ethical considerations of the research. These considerations were of utmost importance as the study ensured the protection and well-being of the participants involved in the study. Ethical considerations in qualitative research encompassed various aspects, such as informed consent was taken from Ghana Tourism Authority to ensure confidentiality, privacy, and the potential for harm or discomfort (Yip, Han & Sng, 2016). In qualitative research, obtaining informed consent from participants was crucial. Researchers provided detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits to the participants. This process allowed research participants to make an informed decision about their participation and ensured that they were aware of any potential consequences.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Fort Metal Cross and Its Historical Significance and Cultural Value

This study aims to capture the rich history of the Fort Metal Cross from the perspective of the people. This history was captured with the help of document reviews and interviews that were carried out by the researchers. Based on the data gathered from the review and the interviews, it was realized that the fort was built by the British in the year 1690 to serve seven main purposes, as opined by Lawrence (1969). As per Lawrence, the fort served various functions, including securing trade with the indigenous population, providing permanent accommodation for traders, facilitating the berthing of ships for cargo embarkation and disembarkation, supporting ship repairs and maintenance, establishing proximity to the lucrative gold fields of the Wassa land, accessing timber, limestone, and granite from Akyuma and Busua Villages, and acting as an entrepot for traditional African export commodities such as gold, ivory, and palm oil (Osei-Tutu & Von Hesse, 2018).

The Ahanta people, one of the seven coastal groups of Ghana, lived in Nfuma before the Europeans came (Osei-Tutu & Von Hesse, 2018). The British called it "Dick's Cove" or "Dickie's Cove" after Dick, an English settler who was among the first to arrive on Nfuma's shore (Biveridge, 2014). Van Dantzig (1980) says that the British built a fort there, which they later named Fort Metal Cross. The fort was made of rubble and mud, covered with lime to keep it dry, and had a roof that did not leak. It stood on a flat rock that jutted out into the sea. Lawrence (1969) gives seven main reasons why the British built the fort. The most important reason was to trade with the local people and stop the Dutch and Brandenburg companies and other traders from taking advantage of them (Osei-Tutu & Von Hesse, 2018; Biveridge, 2020).

Biveridge (2020) shares that the Royal Africa Company, an English National Charter Company, needed a permanent place for its traders to stay. That was the second reason. The third reason was the calm sea in the cove, where ships could anchor safely and load or unload goods. They could also fix and maintain their ships there. The fourth reason was that Dixcove was in a good location to reach the rich gold mines in the inland, especially the Wassaland. The British wanted to control that area to get a steady supply of gold. The fifth reason was that Dixcove was close to Akyuma and Busua villages, where there was a lot of wood. The wood was used to make planks and beams for ship repairs and British forts on the Gold Coast (Osei-Tutu & Von Hesse, 2018). The sixth reason was that Dixcove had a lot of limestone, granite, and gneiss. These were important materials for building and keeping up the British forts. The last reason was that Ahanta-land had become a big trading center, where they could export African products like gold, ivory, and palm oil to Europe (Biveridge, 2014).

Two old graves were in the fort's main yard: one for Nana Hima Dekyie I, a Leader of Ntwarkro (Upper Dixcove), and one for a virgin girl from Ntwarkro's royal family. The townspeople said that the place where the British built the fort in the 1690s was their cemetery, and they respected it as a holy place. The British did not listen to the people of Dixcove, who did not want them to build there. They said that the place was the best and safest for them. The British made a deal with them and started building the fort. But before building the fort, they performed some rituals, like burying a virgin girl in the fort's area to make the land's gods and the dead people happy. Lawrence (1969) also says that two officers, a writer, a sergeant, a gunner, four soldiers, and a master sawyer worked full-time for the Royal Africa Company and ran the trade in the fort. They had forty-one slaves and three free canoe men to help them. The trade went down a lot from the late 1700s, mainly because the local people mixed the gold. They sold them from the Dixcove coast with other things (Biveridge, 2014). The Dixcove fort changed a lot from how it looked at first because of big attacks and fights, mostly because of trade problems with the Dutch and sometimes the Brandenburgers. Some important events were the 1712 New Year attack by John County, the 1750 Ahanta fight, and the 1780 Dutch attack (Beveridge, 2014).

It was indicated that the Dixcove and Nzema chiefs did not get along, and they worked with different companies: the British and the Dutch (Biveridge, 2014). At the same time, Britain and the Netherlands fought sometimes on the Gold Coast, especially in 1780. So, the fort and other places where they traded were attacked by both sides. The British had to change the fort to make it safer because the Dutch and Brandenburgians always tried to take over the trade. They made the fort stronger and better at fighting back. The fort did not make much money in the late 1700s, but it was still important for the British on the Gold Coast. Anquandah (1999) says that the water in the cove and the bay was always peaceful, and it was a good place for ships to get and drop off goods. Small ships also stayed at the bay to fix things.

The British gave Dixcove's fort and other places and forts they protected west of the Gold Coast to the Dutch in 1867 after they made a deal. The Dutch changed the fort's name to *Metalen Kruis* (Brass Cross) after one of their ships. The Ahanta people did not trust the Dutch and fought back, so the Dutch had to stop them. However, the Dutch did not stay long, and the British got the fort back in 1872. They called it *Fort Metal Cross* (Osei-Tutu & Von Hesse, 2018), and it was a British office with many changes and fixes. It had many uses, like a home for the District Commissioner, State Council, and a place for important people to rest, a police station, a library, and a post office. The fort got some changes in 1958, like small fixes, painting, and making the ground better to look nice and stop it from wearing away. The fort now has seventeen rooms, like rooms for soldiers, dungeons, offices, workshops, a storeroom, an auction room, and other things. It also has canons, bastions, a tower for the Governor, and a bell to tell people when to work. Robert Fidler, a foreign investor, rented the fort in 2001 and made it into a hotel/leisure place, but he ruined some of the old things. Robert Fidler and his team run the place now, and they paint and fix it often. Biveridge's (2020) map shows how important the place is in history. You can see the map of the Dixcove coast, Western Region, Ghana, in figure 2.

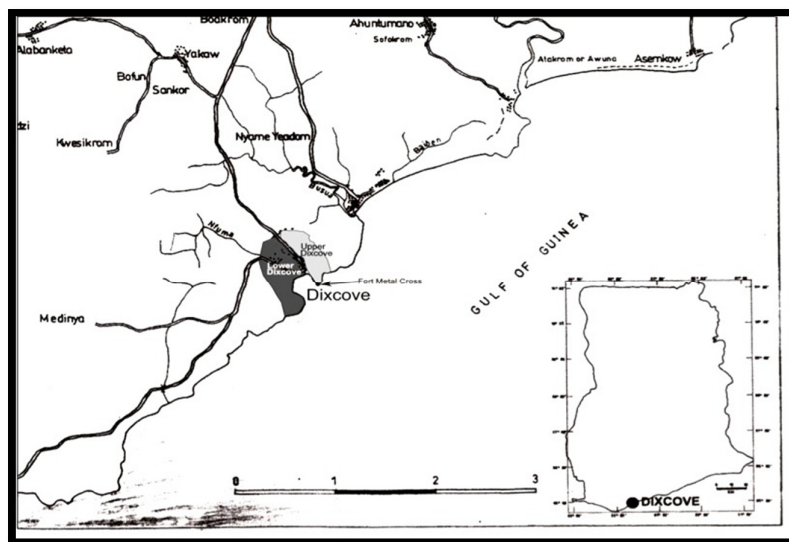


Figure 2: A Map of Dixcove, Displaying Fort Metal Cross and Adjacent Towns  
Source: Biveridge, 2020

#### 4.2. Photographic Metaphors of Architectural Features and Activities of Fort Metal Cross

The study found out that the fort has seventeen (17) rooms around a big yard in the middle. The rooms are a kitchen, four rooms for soldiers, dungeons for men and women, a tower for the Governor, the Commander's room, a prison for slaves, a room for selling things, a workshop that is open, a storeroom, a place for weapons, three bathrooms, two toilets, and two rooms that the Royal African Company's workers used for business and office work (Osei-Tutu & Von Hesse, 2018). The fort also has a big water tank under the ground, spurs, canons, bastions, and a metal bell that hangs over the fort to tell people when to work or relax. Some new things are two pools, small houses for visitors, a place to welcome people, and a big area for events (Bruku, 2015). Figures 3 to 13 show pictures of different rooms and places in and around the fort. They took the pictures to record them.





*Figure 3: Ariel View of Fort Metal Cross*  
*Source: Fieldwork, 2021*



*Figure 4: Ariel View of Upper Dixcove Township*  
*Source: Fieldwork, 2021*



*Figure 5: A View of Fort Metal Cross with the Bell and Canons and Governors' Tower*  
*Source: Fieldwork, 2021*



*Figure 6: The Soldiers' Quarters*  
Source: Fieldwork, 2021



*Figure 7: Dungeons in the Fort*  
Source: Fieldwork, 2021



*Figure 8: A View of the Chalets and Swimming Pool*  
Source: Fieldwork, 2021



*Figure 9: A View of the Canoe Landing at Dixcove*  
Source: Fieldwork, 2021





*Figure 10: A Marking in the Courtyard Indicating Where the Young Virgin Was Buried Before the Building of the Fort  
Source: Fieldwork, 2021*



*Figure 11: A Marking Indicating the Buried Place of the Late Chief - Nana Hima Dekyie I  
Source: Fieldwork, 2021*



*Figure 12: A Canon Bearing the Symbol of King George III of Great Britain  
Source: Fieldwork, 2021*



*Figure 13: The Gate of No Return  
Source: Fieldwork, 2021*

## 5. Conclusion

Visual documentation is considered one of the most effective methods to narrate a historical account despite the availability of various storytelling techniques. In the case of the study's endeavour to create visual documentation of Fort Metal Cross, the objective of promoting the location as a tourist attraction was accomplished. Through the study, it was evident that the existence of approximately 34 forts and 3 castles along the extensive coastlines of Ghana. Among these identified structures, it was observed that Fort Metal Cross had suffered minimal damage. The fort still retains traces of its past while it is actively used as a tourist site. The process of visually documenting Fort Metal Cross involved various activities, capturing footage with tools such as cameras, drones, laptops, printers, and similar equipment, which played a crucial role in ensuring the accomplishment of the visual documentation process. In conclusion, this study has provided valuable insights and findings that contribute significantly to the preservation of heritage. The significance of this research lies in its ability to shed light on the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage for future generations. This study highlights the need for a more inclusive approach to ensure the longevity and accessibility of Ghana's cultural heritage on forts by examining various aspects of heritage preservation, such as conservation techniques, community involvement, and the role of technology. One of the key findings of this study was the importance of conservation techniques in preserving heritage. Through careful examination and analysis, researchers identified effective methods for protecting and restoring cultural artefacts and structures of Fort Metal Cross. For future research implications, this knowledge could be applied by heritage organizations and conservationists to ensure the physical integrity of heritage sites and objects, allowing them to be enjoyed by future generations.

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