THE IGBO ỤBỌ-AKA: ITS ROLE AND MUSIC
AMONG THE NRI PEOPLE OF NIGERIA

by

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B.A., University of Nigeria, 1973

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MUSIC

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Dept. of Music)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

September, 1977

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts a socio-cultural approach to
ụbọ-aka musical phenomena in terms of the role of the instru-
ment as a communication medium with rich and varied tradition
of its own among the Nri people in Igbo culture of south
eastern Nigeria. The Igbo ụbọ-aka is a plucked idiophone
consisting of eight metal prongs which are linguistically
tuned with a bowl-shaped gourd resonator. This study is
needed in the light of the important socio-cultural roles of
ụbọ-aka musical tradition which are facing the prospect of
extermination in the face of social change.

The investigation rests primarily on my extensive
field work in the music of Nri people from 1966 to 1975 and
on current field recordings by Gwamniru Ezegbe and Levi Oji
who are my research assistants from 1976 to 1977, in addition
to current information on Nri culture from many Nri people.

The first chapter introduces the whole thesis by
presenting the method of investigation, the problems, the
purpose, the academic reason for this study, literary survey
and the scope of the study. Chapter 2 describes the Nri
people and their culture as they relate to ụbọ-aka musical
tradition. Chapter 3 is an organological study of the instru-
ment based on the systems of Draeger and Hood. The determinants
and the socio-cultural roles of ụbọ-aka music are discussed in
ethnographic context which concludes the socio-cultural back-
ground to ụbọ-aka music.

Chapter 5 discusses the transcriptions and the analyses using Professor Liang's "graphic space notation" specially designed for ụbọ-aka music. In the analyses, 30 musical examples that best typify ụbọ-aka musical tradition in Nri were selected and analyzed in terms of the musical parameters, linguistic content and social functions covering the characteristic scale-modes, the melodic contour typology, the intervalic structures, the correlation between the melodic contour and the speech tones and the rhythms of melody and speech.

Chapter 6 concludes the study with recommendations and shows that (1) the melodic contours are linguistically determined by the Igbo tonal language, (2) the rhythms of melody and words do not always agree and (3) that the musical parameters can change but not the socio-cultural roles as defined by the society.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

tradition; Eugene Okany, Ashok Malhotra and Pawan Bassi for their valuable services in the photographs. My thanks go specially to Ashok Malhotra for his help and guidelines in the technical drawings of the figures, and Reva Lander for her diligence, patience and expertise in typing the manuscript.

Finally, I am indebted to Gwamniru, my beloved wife, for her outstanding contribution and concern in organizing and making available current field recordings used in this thesis and to my mother, wife, daughter and many friends for their encouragement and moral support throughout my study and research in this University.

DEDICATED TO MY MASTER:

DANIEL C. ERINNE

He planted me in music,
the Universities of
Nigeria and British
Columbia watered, and
God gave the increase.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In an ethnomusicological study of this nature, the
method of investigation is oriented towards a socio-cultural
approach to musical phenomena. This approach is needed
because ụbọ-aka music, as a communication medium is context
sensitive with rich folklore and poetic song texts through
which the folkways of Nri people are orally transmitted,
preserved and perpetuated. Thus ụbọ-aka music is a means
by which Nri men interpret and communicate to one another
their concept of life and all that characterize their daily
existence. In this connection, the music is a traditional
document of daily life, philosophies, beliefs and ethical
values of Nri which expresses the gestalt of Nri people and
their culture. The music is therefore not an isolated sonic
order but rather a symbolic interpretation of the cultural
matrix behind it by which Nri people can be understood.
Some insight into cross-cultural relationships are considered
in the light of the wide distribution of ụbọ-aka under
different names in Africa and the Caribbeans which can lead
to new perspectives and cross-cultural comparisons. As a
result, this investigation attempts to study ụbọ-aka music
as a human behaviour and provides the ethnographic context:
the anthropological, sociological and linguistic aspects in
addition to studying the musical parameters. This approach

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is in line with Nketia's view in the study of any aspect of
African music which enables us to get nearer to our ultimate
goal of contributing to the study of man as a "music maker
and music user" (1962:4). Thus he recommends a combination
of musicological and anthropological methods in studying
African music for "the study of music in culture ignores
neither music nor culture, neither formal structure nor
function but unites both in a comprehensive statement of
meaning" (1962:1).

This study is necessary and urgent in the light of
the importance of the socio-cultural role of ubo-aka music
in Nri and in the entire Igbo culture, which is fast dis-
appearing in the face of cultural transformation and contem-
porary social change. The transmissional system of ubo-aka
is particularly vulnerable to such transformations and
acculturation. Its music is not written and has simply been
handed down from one generation to another through oral
transmission and rote learning. As a result, this study uses
a newly devised notational system specially for the trans-
cription of ubo-aka music with provisions for details of
performance technique, e.g., which thumb plays which note
and how. The proposed notational system is Liang's
"graphic space notation" an innovated notational system for
ubo-aka class of instruments throughout Africa and the
Caribbeans which is very useful and latently functional for
the instrument.

Although anthropological and sociological studies
of Nri people have been conducted extensively by Northcote
Thomas, a government anthropologist (1910-14), G. T. Basden
(a missionary) (1910-1938), C. K. Meek, an ethnologist (1931),
M.D.W. Jeffreys (1934), Thurstan Shaw, an archaeologist
(1959-1960) and M.A. Onwuejeogwu, a social anthropologist,
none of them had studied Nri music. To date, there seems to
have been no study of Nri music with the exception of the
field work by the writer from 1966 to 1975, both as a music
undergraduate and research fellow at the University of
Nigeria, Nsukka. On the other hand, a substantial pioneer
organological study of Igbo musical instruments was done by
Echezona in his Ibo Musical Instrument in Ibo Culture in
which he classified Igbo musical instruments on the basis of
the "systematik" of Sachs and Hornbostel: the idiophones,
aerophones, membranophones and the chordophones -- and
devoted a chapter to the organology of ubo-aka with a brief
discussion touching upon the aspects. His study is more of
a generalized ethnographical study rather than ethnomusico-
logical, which is creditable and serves as a basis for further
inquiry in the field. In addition, some scholars in African
music have studied ubo-aka under different names among
specific peoples of Africa and the Caribbean, namely:
G. Kubik (1964), three Yoruba members of the Mbira-sanza by
Thieme (1967), the Matepe mbira music of Rhodesia by Andrew
Tracey, mbira class of African instruments by Hugh Tracey

(1970), the original African mbira within the lower Zambezi
valley by Andrew Tracey (1972), the Brazilian mbira by
Thiermann (1971), the Caribbean marimbula by Thompson (1976),
an ethnography of mbira among the Shona people of Rhodesia
by Berliner (1974) and multi-part relationship in the mbira
music of Shona people by Kauffmann (1970). The most compre-
hensive of all these studies is Berliner's The Soul of Mbira:
an ethnography of the mbira among the Shona people of
Rhodesia. This study discusses mbira (or ubǫ-aka) in its
"broad cultural context" with the aim "to increase the
reader's appreciation of the art of mbira music and to defend
and dispel western misconceptions, regarding African music"
(Berliner 1974: 1-14). On the whole, Berliner's thesis
focuses on a sociological and anthropological study of the
mbira dza vadzima, the mbira of the ancestral spirits, which
is one of many types of Shona mbiras and has omitted any
"technical discussion" on music which Berliner acknowledged
(Berliner 1974: 13). Altogether, Berliner's thesis is an
excellent ethnographical study of mbira which is suitable
for cross-cultural study and further inquiry in the field.

In the light of the above discussions, the purpose
of this thesis is to investigate the music and the role of
the Igbo ubǫ-aka as an important musical instrument with
rich and varied tradition of its own among the Nri people of
south eastern Nigeria. Ubǫ-aka is a plucked idiophone with
eight metal prongs and a gourd resonator as shown in Plate I.
The word Nri has three main references in Nri tradition:

(1) it is the name of a priestly people in Igbo culture who are the direct descendants of Nri, the eldest son of Menri and traditionally the ancient ancestor of the people; (2) it is also the name of a territory occupied by Eze Nri (the king) and his people; and (3) it is also the name of a ritual political title which is the highest title exclusively for Eze Nri. As used throughout this theis, Nri refers to the people as well as the territory they inhabit. The choice of Nri people rests primarily on their role as the priestly core in Igbo culture exerting dominant cultural influence on a wide extent of the peripheral Igbo areas. This is so because of the extensive hegemony of Nri in Igboland since (circa AD900-911), until the interruption of British admin-istration in 1911 when Eze Nri (the King of Nri) was ordered to abolish all the codes which bound all villages and towns in Nri sphere of influence with the exception of the ritual influence which continues (Onwuejeogwu 1972: 44). Among the Igbo people of Nigeria, the Nri are foremost in retaining their cultural heritage as based upon the traditions of their ancestors. To date, the deeply rooted cultural legacy of Nri still exists in the face of social change -- hence the Nri people constitute the key to the study of any aspect of Igbo culture. The relative importance of Nri is further emphasized in the following statement:

> Where then can ancient lbo
> law and custom, religion and
> language be best studied? In
> my opinion the conditions are
> most favourable at Nri, the
> home of the priestly cult ....
> (Basden 1966B: xx).

With the role of Nri in Igbo culture, the significance
of any aspect of Nri music in Igboland and perhaps comparat-
ively in African framework has much to commend it. Thus Nri
music is a reliable guide to every aspect of the traditional
music of Igbo people and possibly to the study of both African
and Caribbean music that might have been influenced by Igbo
culture through cultural contact in the past. Today there
are traces of African musical practices among the countries
of West Indies where many west Africans were shipped during
the era of slave trade. For example, ubọ-aka exists among
the Caribbeans under different shapes and generic names, e.g.,
the Caribbean marimbula(Thompson 1975: 78-95) and the
Brazilian mbira (Thiermann 1971: 90-94). There is no doubt
that the results of this study can form a basis for further
ethnomusicological inquiry in a broad cross-cultural per-
spective and which may serve as a guide in resonstructing
the cultural history and patterns of migration of many African
people.

The academic reason for this study lies in the fact
that ubọ-aka with its linguistic tonal structure, rich folk-
lore and poetic song texts, has the potential for being
included in African music education in schools, colleges and
higher institutions of learning. Thus the ubọ-aka is a
potential instrument for teaching the traditional scales,
melodic and rhythmic patterns, intervalic relationships and
the Igbo tonal language because of its eight metal keys which

are linguistically tuned and representative of the Igbo
traditional modal structure. In this way, the study of this
instrument will increase our knowledge and understanding of
ubọ-aka music and the cross-cultural matrix associated with
it, not only among Nri people but also the whole of Africa
and the Caribbeans where the instrument is in use. This
study will also preserve for purpose of reference and sub-
sequent research, a large number of typical items of oral
tradition and forms of Igbo music and African music in general.

Limitations of this study exists because of a lack
of previous literary surveys in the field. As a result much
of ubọ-aka music has been lost following the death of many
traditional performers in the past and partly due to the
effect of social change which prevents the modern youths from
active participation in ubọ-aka music. There is no discussion
on the history and evolution of the instrument in the absence
of written records. Probably, future archaeological and
anthropological research may reveal the past history of this
instrument to engender further inquiry in the field.

On the whole, while not exhaustive, the scope of this
study covers the following: (1) the ethnographic context of
ubọ-aka music and its relationship to Nri culture including
the sociological background of texts, associated events,
cosmological and theological ideas, the socio-cultural roles
and values; (2) the organology of ubọ-aka, including design,
construction and tuning, art of playing, distribution and

other points of interest and (3) selected tunes of ụbọ-aka

music including statements of modality, rhythm, correlation

between melodic structure and speech tone, transcription

and analysis with reference to musical parameters, linguistic

content and social function.

CHAPTER II

NRI PEOPLE

This chapter attempts to discuss Nri people with
reference to their social and cultural background as they
relate to ubọ-aka music. The need for this arises because
the approach in this investigation is to study music in
context. Thus it provides the extramusical content, the
deep structure which is of paramount importance in an ethno-
musicological inquiry of this nature.

Among the Igbo of Nigeria, Nri people occupy an area
surrounded by Agulu, Adazinnukwu, Nimo, Enugwu-ukwu and
Nise towns within the old Awka Division (now known as Njikoka
Division) in south eastern Nigeria. The area is nearly
surrounded by streams and lakes, and is situated 400-600
feet above sea level in the depression of Idemili Lake (Ezu-
oye-tọlọ) on latitude 6.08^{ON} and longitude 6.02^{OE} about
eighteen miles east of Onitsha as shown in Fig. 1. Nri
comprises two major villages, Agukwu and Akamkpisi. Agukwu
comprises three maximal lineage segments and which are sub-
villages, namely Uruọji Obeagu and Agbadani; Akamkpisi com-
prises three sub-villages: Diodo, Uruọfọlọ and Ekwenanuka.
On the whole, Nri people live within the rain forest belt of
north equatorial region of West Africa which is topographic-
ally a thickly forested depression, almost surrounded by
high ridges and water. The following lakes exist: Ezu
Idemili, Nwantukpọ and Ulasi (Onwuejeogwu 1972: 42). The
hottest periods are within the months of March and April,

FIG. 1

THE POSITION OF NRI IN IGBO CULTURE OF NIGERIA

(Ilogu 1974: XVI)
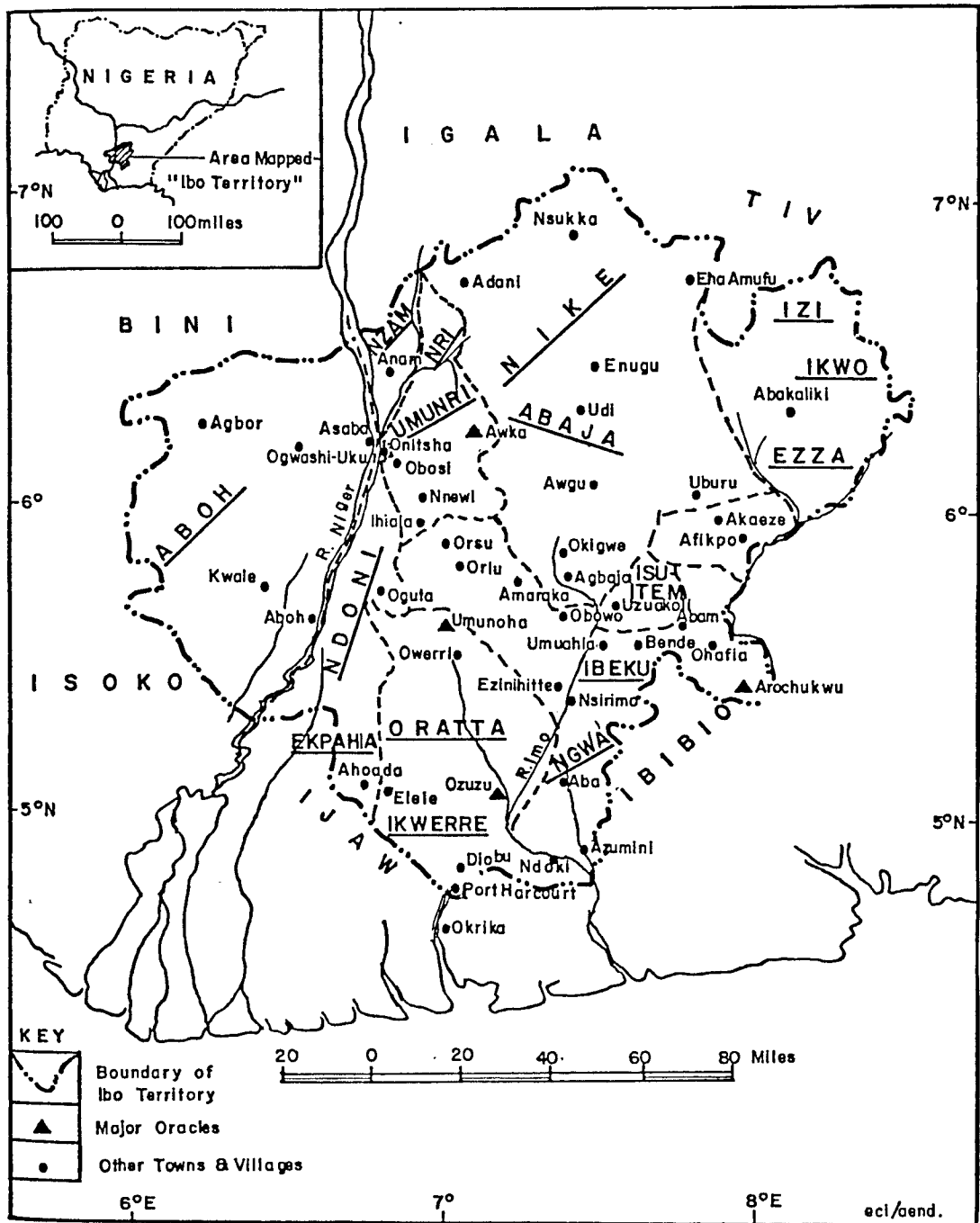
coldest in December, and the heaviest rains occur in the
months of June and July. The occupations include mostly
subsistence farming of yam, coco-yam, maize, cassava and
vegetables; domestication of goats, sheep and poultry which
determines livestock tenancy; trading on tobacco, clothing,
fish, ivory, etc., in addition to predominant priestly
functions and business enterprises both traditional and
modern.

The line of inquiry in this study proceeds from a
brief history of Nri including the social organization,
religious beliefs and practices, the folklore of ụbọ-aka
and a general discussion of the different meanings of music
in Nri life. Thus Chapter II briefly introduces the cul-
tural situation and concludes with a summary.

Historical Description

Not much is known about the history of Nri people.
Whatever little is known is mostly based on oral tradition
and the recent findings of Igbo-Ukwu excavation[1]. The
paucity of data on this subject makes it difficult to arrive
at definite conclusions and as a result, opinions differ on
the subject. For example, some sources link the origin of
Nri with the Igala Kingdom of northern Nigeria, others with
the Nile valley or with the Israelites who left Egypt during
the exodus[2].

A brief discussion of these speculations might throw
some light on this topic. According to one source, Nri,
Igala and other Umueri people were founded by Eri who later

settled in northern Igboland. As the legend goes, his sons
founded Nri and other Umueri people (Jeffreys 1956: 119)[3].
On the other hand, Nri oral tradition while admitting cultural
relationship between Igala and Nri, does not support the
hypothesis that Nri people originated from Igala. Probably,
the two cultures descended from a common ancestor as one
account from Umueri clan states:

> We are all descended from Eri, but Igala
> went one way, Aguku [Agukwu-Nri] another,
> Amanuke another, Nteje another, and
> Igbariam another. This separating of
> Igala from us happened so long ago that
> now we do not hear Igala nor can they
> hear our language.
>
> (Isichei 1976: 4)

Nri people admit to a passage through Igala lands
prior to settling in their present location. In fact,
cultural interaction cannot be denied in such a situation.
Further, a brief statement collected from the palace of Eze
Nri about the origin of Nri, is very illuminating:

> Nri which neans Menri, was the oldest son
> of Eri who had five brothers: Aguleri,
> Onoja (Igboariam), Nsugbe, Nteje, Amanuke
> and a sister, Adamgbo. The origin of Eri
> and his fore-fathers, is not clear to us.
> But we know that Nri and his brothers
> passed through Igala in the North in their
> downward movement. Nri was their leader.
> In his journey, after passing through
> Nkpumenyilenyi (the present Enugwu-ukwu town),
> he finally settled to our present home named
> after him as Nri town; his permanent abode
> from where he reigned over Igbo land and
> beyond. We have been God's chosen priestly
> people for a long time to the present day,
> and we are the source head of Igbo people.
> This is why our priestly function is widely
> recognized throughout Igbo land and beyond,
> a sacred duty handed down to us by our
> ancient fathers. (Nri Priests at Obu Eze, Sept.1972)

Today, evidence of cultural contact between Igala and Nri is found in the similarity between the names of traditional week days and some vocabularies among Nri and Igala people as shown in Tables I and II respectively.

Native Week Days	Igala Name	Nri Name
First Day	Eke	Eke
Second Day	Ede	Oye
Third Day	Afọ	Afọ
Fourth Day	Ukwọ	Nkwọ

(Boston 1968: 208)

TABLE I.   THE TRADITIONAL WEEK DAYS

Nri	Igala	Meaning
Afa	Ifa	A priestly oracle and ritual.
Ita	Ita	Naratives by a special priest that explains mysteries or hidden facts.
Oke	Oke	Great or big.
Okolobia	Abokolobia	A grown-up young man.
Onoja	Onojie	A name of one of the ancestors.
Onu-ebo	Ebo	A shrine-area for confession and purification of title holders.

(Boston 1968: 32-206).

TABLE II. LIST OF SIMILAR WORDS IN IGALA AND NRI

In addition, ubọ-aka in terms of distribution is a popular traditional musical instrument among the descendants

of Eri, namely Nri, Igala, Aguleri, Nsugbe, Nteje, Amanuke,

Igboariam etc. Further, Eze Nri (King of Nri) is attired

in white Igala cloth at his coronation, and at the King's

burial ceremony, aka beads and okwechi cloth from Igala must

be provided which support the hypothesis that there is

ancient connection between the sacred kingships of Nri and

Igala[4] (Isichei 1973: 27-30).

On the other hand, Basden's hypothesis traces the

origin of Igbo people to the Nile Valley area of the Middle

East (1966B: 414). This is further substantiated by his

discussion on similarities between the Israelites (the

Hebrews) and the Igbo people based primarily on the affinity

between the native law and the Mosaic system[5] (Basden 1966B:

411). The similarities under discussion include the follow-

ing examples: the practice of repetition of words to express

a single idea by either reduplicating verbs or adding their

cognate nouns such as, ona atumu ntamu (i.e., he murmurs a

murmer), ogalu aga (he passed by a pass), etc.; the provision

of a city of refuge for a sinner or an offender to which the

culprit runs in order to save his or her life. This is a

common practice between the Igbo people and the Israelites

as it is written in the book of Deutronomy 4:41-43.[6] Thus

among the Igbo people, Nri town is the traditional city of

refuge where sinners and the rejected ones are accepted,

virtually purified, forgiven and rehabilitated. The law of

Deutronomy which states that "the woman shall not wear that

which pertaineth unto a man" is in line with an Igbo taboo

for a woman to wear ǫgǫdǫ (a loin cloth which is tightly
rolled and passed around the waist and between the legs to
hold and hide a man's private part) which is an abomination
that requires purification and pardon by Nri priests. This
taboo against "what pertaineth unto a man extends to musical
instruments such as ụbǫ-aka, ǫja (flute), igba drums which
are socially defined for men's use. The basis of the
similarities rests primarily on the core characteristics of
Igbo traditional religion which share identical traits with
the faith of the Israelites which include, the knowledge and
the acceptance of the supreme God, belief in the supernatural,
the prevalent practice of sacrifices in varying degrees, the
making of image to represent God, the worship of beings
other than God resulting in polytheism and idolatry, a definite
acknowledgement of God as the supreme creator "yet enthroned
in a multitude of other beliefs" which later developed into
animism[7] (Basden 1966B: 414).

On the basis of the above discussion on similarities
and the priestly role of Nri in Igbo culture, one may be
justified in associating Nri people with the Israelites who
left Egypt during the exodus. The people while in search of
the promised land might possibly have strayed southwards through
Igala into that part of eastern Nigeria they occupy today as
one of the Igbo people. In this connection, it is also
possible that the word, Igbo, is derived from a corruption
of the word, Hebrew, by being mutilated to Ubru, Ibru, then
to Uburu, a name of an Igbo town, and later from Heebo to
Igbo[8] (Njaka 1974: 17).

In 1938, further information on the history of Nri people and Igbo culture was revealed by a chance finding. At Igbo-Ukwu, a town nine miles from Nri a man was digging in his compound when he discovered a number of remarkable bronze works of art. This was excavated by Professor Thurston Shaw in 1959 who published the findings in 1970 in his book, Igbo-Ukwu: An account of archaeological discoveries in eastern Nigeria (2 vols.) (Isichei 1973: 22). The findings were obtained from three different sites at Igbo-Ukwu town. The first includes a burial chamber of a ruler or a religious dignitary in a seated position, richly dressed and surrounded by treasurers such as elephant tusks, bronze rods and carvings, etc. Revealed at the second site was a store-house of beads, bronze bowls and numerous bronze objects. The third site was a pit containing pottery of all kinds and a remarkable bronze roped vase (Shaw 1970: vols. 1 and 2).[9]

The method of radio carbon dating dated the findings to the ninth century, A.D., which in the absence of contrary evidence may indicate a thousand year-old occupation. This ancient culture is linked with divine kings of Nri people because of the following arguments: the system of burial is similar to the modern burial of an Eze Nri; the ichi facial scars on the bronze human face recall the "facial scarifica- tion" characteristic of titled men of Nri; the elephant tusk is a common traditional symbol of the titled men throughout Igbo culture (Isichei 1976: 12-13); and the roped vase suggests

the "roped bronze pot" still made in the area which also refers to the roped bronze ritual pot that according to oral tradition, was taken by an Nri man who fled and founded the town of Oraeri near Igbo-Ukwu. Further, dating of the findings to the ninth century A.D. is in line with the chronology of M.A. Onwuejeogwu, an anthropologist who did detailed field work in Nri culture. He dated the migration of a section of Nri to Oraeri between 909 and 1049 A.D. (Onwuejeogwu 1972: 10).

However radio carbon datings are not without controversy. For example, a fifteenth century date has also been suggested.[10] (Lawal 1973: 1). The familiarity of ancient Igbo-Ukwu cultures as shown in the find, led some critics to question the antiquity of these artifacts. And, there is doubt as to the reliability of the radio carbon dating in equatorial regions. There is also a tendency to associate the bronze work with those of Benin and Ife of Nigeria, but Professor Thurstan Shaw argues that both metallic analysis and workmanship of the bronze objects are different from those of Benin and Ife; he only admits to these objects belonging to a West African complex[11] (Onwuejeogwu 1972:5).

Altogether, the relationship of Igbo-Ukwu findings with Nri is still undisputed. In this connection, archaeological discoveries have contributed to the knowledge of Nri history and culture. Today, what is certain is that Nri are Igbo people who are traditionally ritualists, sharing a common ancestor with Umueri and Igala people. The exact origin of Nri is not yet known.

Social Organization

The two dominant themes of social organization of Nri are the umunna and ikwunne concepts which apply to all people in Igbo culture (Onwuejeogwu 1972: 18-19). The umunna concept refers to the father's lineage which is dominant in Igbo social organization while the ikwunne concept stresses the mother's lineage but subordinate within the patrilineal framework. Ikwunne mainly serves as a reminder of the original home of the mother, thus effecting the traditional cultural link between the mother's father's home and the father's home through their children and relatives. The entire social organization emphasizes male dominance over females. Thus each lineage is made up of a number of umunna, a territorially kin-based unit whose narrowest referents are the children of the same father but of different mothers; its widest referents are the patrilineal members who must not marry from among themselves (Uchendu 1965: 39-40). Based on this fundamental social structure are the social institutions such as age-grade system, title institutions, secret societies, initiation schools, marriage regulations and kingship system which are characterized by theocracy and generontocracy.[12]

Economically, the smallest producing and consuming unit is ugwulu (the individual single or compound family) while the biggest producing and consuming unit is the umunna. Thus, the Nri people derive their spirit of individualism

and co-operation from these structures which encourage
individual as well as group achievement within the communal
context of umunna concept.

On the whole, the basic political organization follows
the structure of patrilineal umunna with a highly diffused
and democratized political power within the segmentary para-
meters of each umunna. In this way the umunna system encourages
political and social dialogue, equality, communalism and
egualitarianism at all levels of lineage segments. On the
other hand, ichi-echichi (title taking) such as ozo or isa-
ekwu, encourages individualism and gives prestige and a con-
siderable amount of ritualistic political power and authority
to the holder. The entire social organization is contained
and ranked under the ritual and political authority of Eze
Nri, the king (to be discussed later). It is under this basic
social framework that ubo-aka music is learned, transmitted
and perpetuated. For example, the earliest exposure to ubo-
aka music is within one's umunna where a child can interact
easily with his or her relatives who play the instruments.
Most of the learners get their teachers from within respective
umunna. At times when a youth visits his ikwunne (i.e., the
mother's original home) he can learn from the relatives of
his mother who know how to play. According to custom, child-
ren are required to be visiting their ikwunne for purposes of
meeting their mother's relatives. During these visits ubo-aka
can be taken to the mother's father's home for entertaining
the mother's relatives thereby promoting dialogue and mutual

understanding. This _ikwunne_ visit continues late into adult

age. In every situation _ubọ-aka_ is always played only by

men as socially defined. Further discussion on the relation-

ship between _ubọ-aka_ music and social organization will be

provided later under the socio-cultural roles of the instru-

ment.

Age-grade System

Age-grade system is one of the arms of social organi-

zation in Nri tradition. It is organized on village basis

with loose ties between corresponding sets in neighbouring

villages. This tradition initiates and classifies individuals

into their appropriate age sets for purposes of division of

labour, economic, social and political duties as well as

social identity and discipline within the overall framework

of social organization in the town. Individuals born within

a three-year period fall into one age-grade although this

varies with different Igbo communities. For instance, at

Ihiala all childeren born within a five-year period are

grouped into one age-grade (Ilogu 1974: 26). Further in Nri,

each age-grade is three years older than the one immediately

preceeding it. Membership is open to both male and female

within each age group. However, females have no defined

age limit since their admission into the fold strictly depends

on when she is married. The social status of members of one

age-grade can vary, but this does not disrupt the equality

which members share and enjoy. Thus there is no social dis-

crimination on clan basis within the system except for

differences between male and female privileges. Interested
persons below the age limit of an age group may be allowed
to hold membership on condition that one's elder brother or
sister is not in the same group. Any person holding member-
ship should have a good character, otherwise, he is dropped
from the group. Each of the groups must have onyeisi-ogbo
(a leader) from among themselves who must be the first to
hold the highest traditional title such as the ozo-title.
He chairs all meetings of the peer. In the past, records of
meetings were kept by memory but nowadays written minutes
are kept. Other officers of the group include a secretary,
financial secretary and treasurer.

There are several transitional phases undergone
by every age-grade in its life time. There is the early
stage prior to eighteen years of age when members are loosely
organized by elders of each village with such duties as
cleaning the streams, market squares, village squares and
being initiated into masquerade societies. At this prelim-
inary stage, they are not recognized as legitimate although
they may be holding meetings. But between the ages of
eighteen and twenty-one, age grouping is officially instituted
and accorded due recognition by the community. At this adult
stage, the elders give special names to the sets. The
determinant for the given names are the characteristic
activities, behaviours and inclinations identified with the
group during the preliminary stage. Some of the given names
are self-explanatory: Okuana (the fire of the soil), Amu-Oku

(the mantle of fire), Ndukaku (life is greater than wealth),
Udokafulukwe(peace is seen and accepted), Amakekwu (however
you talk), etc. At this level, an elderly man from one of
the older age-grades, is attached to the new group as patron
and advisor who also teaches and explains omenani, the
traditional customs, norms and mores. Should there be
quarrels and misunderstanding among the group, he must be
consulted for settlement and clarifications. The activities
of the group include serving as night guards, collection of
dues and fines, prosecution of offenders, membership in
masquerade society, protection of public morality, etc.
They also engage in recreational activities such as music
making, organization of dance, drumming practices, instru-
mental music performance and singing. Every member knows
how to play at least one of the traditional musical instru-
ments such as ubo-akwara (harp), ubo-aka (thumb piano), igba
(drum), ekwe (wooden drum), oja (flute), ngedegwu (xylophone),
oyo (shaker) or can sing very well. In olden days, before
the coming of the Europeans, members engaged in public wrestl-
ing matches at eke market square or at the King's palace.
The ogene music or the xylophone music with flute, usually
accompanied wrestling contest. The victor was always at the
lips of women and wellwishers, and became the pride of his
parents, relatives, friends and umunna.

Among Nri people today, the list of the age-grades are
as follows starting with the youngest to the oldest procedur-
ally: Ndukaku, Udokafulukwu, Okuana, Amuoku, Akum, Akpali,

Atigwe, Abakari, Amakekwu, Okpatu, Iruenyi, Nri buenyi,
Iruatu, Iruagu and Irugo (the oldest). The existence of a
group ceases only when all the members shall have died.

On the whole, the age-grade system, apart from its
religious, social and political functions, provides an
avenue for training in team spirit, mutual understanding,
self-discipline, socialization and companionship, and
"provides impetus towards achievement, ambition and hardwork
because no one likes to be left behind by the members of his
own set" (Ilogu 1974: 27).

Ozo Title

Ozo-title is a very important social institution in
Igbo land. Among Nri people, the institution grew out of two
major factors: the need for priests who would supervise the
cult of the ancestors and keep the family (or umunna) ofo (a
symbolised wooden staff of truth and justice); and out of
economic needs of the peasant society wherein holders could
invest their wealth of crops and livestocks. In this connec-
tion, title-holders derive much dividends from the fees of
new candidates and thus secure for themselves means of liveli-
hood in old age when they are too old to work. (Ilogu 1974:
31). The ozo man pays heavily to hold the title; about
₦800 (approximately $1,200). The number of shares of an
individual is determined by the number of ofo one has bought
in such a way that one could sell or buy ofo and so get less
or more shares -- a kind of stock and shares (Okonkwo and
Onwuejeogwu 1972: 62).

Thus, the controlling factors are birthright and money, particularly the latter for titles must be paid for; they are not free gifts bestowed as honours for service rendered to the community (Basden 1966: 130).

A definition of the title in Nri tradition by Okeke Okonkwọ, an Nri man who is a title holder, throws further light on this topic:

> A traditional ọzọ man is the person who
> can be the chief priest of a temple obu.
> Obu is a place we communicate with our
> ancestors. In obu there are okponsi and
> ofo in the altar. There we offer things
> to our dead ancestors called ndi-ichie.
> Only the oldest man of the obu as a person
> who took the ọzọ title can officiate.
> (Okonkwọ and Akunne 1972:6).

The ọzọ-titled man is essentially a priest in the society. He shares in the spirit of the land through his relationship with ana (the earth goddess), communicates with the spirit of ancestors and upholds the omenana (the ordinances of the land). It is believed that the ancestors are between the alusi (forces) and that they can allow these ancestor forces to harm or reward their children according to how our lives are led in this world. Therefore the title holder must live a righteous life and "uphold publicly and privately the morality of the land and observe all the taboos, religious ceremonies and rituals of all the gods and goddesses of his community" (Ilogu 1974: 31). He is expected to be holy and just, and must not gossip or tell lies. Thus he practices annually a ritual of self-cleansing known as isa-ile whereby he partakes of a white cock sacrificed

for the cause of truth and justice to wash his tongue, and undergoes a ritual confession of deeds at the ọnu-ebo purification ceremony held once annually before the gods prior to ọnwa-asatọ (a harvest festival of the eighth month). As a result, high ethical lifestyle is expected of him in his words and actions. For example, when an ọzọ man plays ụbọ-aka what he communicates through the music is expected to be highly ethical, spiritual and reliable, and full of wise statements which may be allegorical, proverbial or idiomatic and suitable for teaching mores and norms of the society. One of the ọzọ titled men by the name of Okechukwu Mmankọ of Agbadana village, Nri is shown in Plate I playing the ụbọ-aka. A close look at his feet shows akali-ọkpa (white thread rings worn around both ankles of the feet) which are one of the characteristic symbols for recognizing an ọzọ man throughout Igbo land.

Eze-Nri: the King of the People

Eze Nri once ruled over a large extent of Igbo land, but in contemporary times his political influence is waning. The extent of Nri hegemony in the past approximately extended fron circa 900 to 1911 A.D. as shown in Fig. 2. (Onwuejeogwu 1972:30). According to Northcote Thomas, a government anthropologist, the King had great authority in Igboland.[13]

> He is the spiritual potentate over a
> large extent of the Igbo country and so
> great is the awe which he inspires that
> recently when probably for the first

time in history an Eze-Nri entered the
native court of Awka while a sitting
was going on, the whole assembly rose
and prepared to flee.

(Thomas 1913: 48).

Today, he is still the head of Nri people, and rules
over Nri town in matters religious, social and political with
ritualistic authority over all Umu-Nri and Umueri clans. He
reigns with the help of a cabinet of twelve elderly title-
holders known as nze-mabọ selected out of six villages of
Nri. These elders are also among the guild of traditional
high priests of Nri.

Eze Nri maintained an exalted position among Nri
people and throughout Igbo land. This high priestly position
was attested to in the past by homage paid to him from
different parts of Igbo especially during igu-arọ and onwasatọ
festivals.

Qualification for the monarchy today is limited to the
descendants of Ifikwuanim, namely, Agbadani, Obeagu and
Uruọji villages of Nri.[14] Some families however, do not take
part in the divine kingship. Accession to the throne is by
rotation from one family in one village to another usually
determined by ritualistic priests after consultations with
ancestral spirits. There is normally seven years of inter-
regnum between one reign and another. At the death of a King,
the village from which arises the next King is known but the
actual successor to the throne is not known until certain
inexplicable events in form of omens occur in the life of the
prospective candidate. The omens comprise the following

FIG. 2

APPROXIMATE EXTENT OF NRI   HEGEMONY AD 900-1911
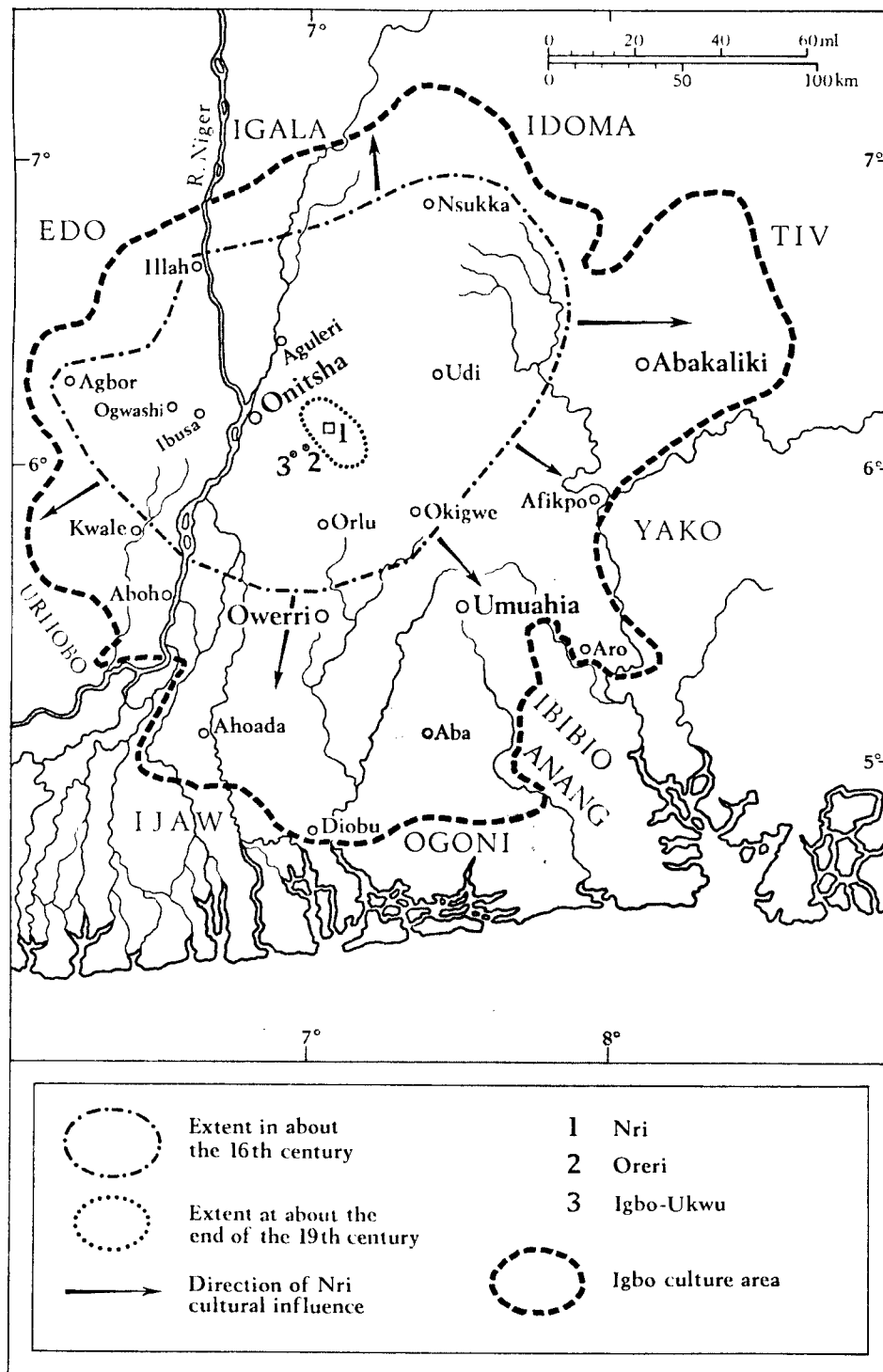
(Onwuejeogwu 1975:   50)

FIG. 2

APPROXIMATE EXTENT OF NRI   HEGEMONY AD 900-1911
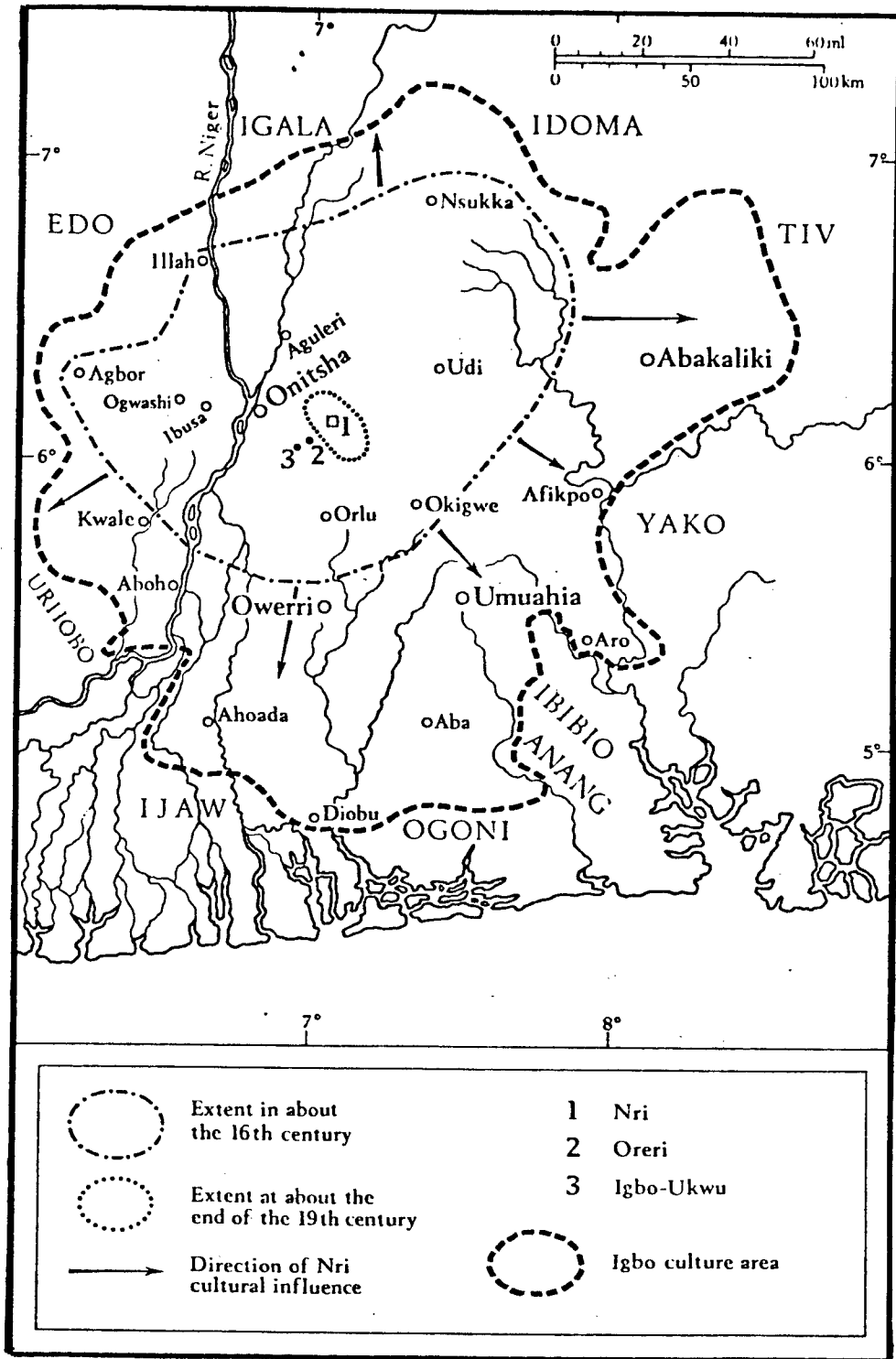
(Onwuejeogwu 1975:   50)

PLATE 1.　　NRI ỌZỌ MAN PLAYING ỤBỌ-AKA.

phenomena: sudden deaths in his family, loss of wealth and mysterious collapse of walls of his compound no matter how strongly built and well maintained. In addition the would be Eze-Nri must have held the highest title in the town. Other requirements include: consultation with the oracle to ascertain if the candidate is, in fact, the choice of Nri fathers, undergoing a process of purification and preparation for headship if the oracle is in favour, agreement of the elders of the town to have him as King and a journey to all the towns having ancestral connections with Nri to worship their gods and receive homage from them.

At the coronation Stage, the procedure is as follows: the would be Eze Nri is prepared for burial and buried which, according to the following statement is self-explanatory:

> ...At his accession he goes through
> a symbolic death to humanity and
> rebirth as divinity. He is buried
> in a shallow grave and then exhumed
> and painted with white clay, a
> symbol of innocence and immortality.
>
> (Isichei 1976: 10)

At this stage, his wives and family mourn for him as if he were dead. But by sunset, he is taken out of the grave, and a banana stem is used to replace the corpse. The candidate is then washed with water specially from a sacred lake after which he is whitened with nzu (white clay). He then becomes an mmọ (a ghost of the dead) and is forever sacred. His eldest wife is also whitened with nzu, and both of them use only white igala cloth. Further, the wife puts on a white head tie. The King, in addition remains barefooted but wears

a copper anklet. It is interesting to note that part of the coronation ritual of Eze Nri is similar to that of Atta of Igala especially in the symbolism of burial of the candidate and the transfiguration into divinity.

On the coronation day especially after the ceremonial enthronement by the arch-priests, there is general rejoicing which feature the okanga-eze (the royal band), ufie music (the royal, sonorous wooden drumming), individual drum ensembles and solo musicians such as akpele (horn) players, ekpili (rattle) ballad singers, ubo-aka (mbira) performers, ubo-akwara (wooden harp) players along with different dance groups, all in praise of the new King. From now onwards, he is saluted with clapping of hands and addressed by the title Igwe (the sky). He takes a new name at his accession. For example, the personal name of the present Eze-Nri is Tabansi Udene but on his coronation, he took a new name: Nrijimofo-nke-abua. He receives and greets his guests or visitors by striking a metal gong monotone to which people present at the palace respond with hand clapping after each stroke.

The following list of Eze Nri is well remembered along Nri people although the exact period of their reign (with the exception of the present King) has been lost in antiquity: Nri-Ifikwuanim, Nri-Namoke, Nri-Bife, Nri-Fenene, Nri-Jimofo, Nri-Alike, Nri-Enwenatam, Nri-Afia, Nri-Ezimolo, Nri-Anyagbo, Nri-Ezeleani, Nri-Obealike and the present King: Nri-Jimofo II.

The King does a number of duties which are mostly

political, religious and social. His political duties comprise the general administration of Nri town which includes settlement of disputes, assignment of itinerant priests to different parts of Igbo land for rituals; coronation and installation of other traditional leaders and kings in Igbo culture, and intervention in wars between two towns or warring parties. He intervenes by the help of an egbo (a wreath of palm fronds) which the King raises and throws between combatants as a symbol of cease-fire.[15] The intervention takes place whenever a war is unnecessarily prolonged, unjustified or involves much bloodshed and suffering. In addition, he looks after the aka-Nri on humanitarian ground. These aka-Nri are dwarfs who were rejected by their parents in other parts of Igbo land. In this connection, the King rehabilitates them in his palace by teaching them trades and mostly priestly duties.

He performs his priestly function mostly during igu-arọ ceremony and ọnwasatọ festival. Igu-arọ is an annual event every Februrary usually fixed by the King and his cabinet of high priests after consulting with the ancestral spirits. Then, notices and invitations are sent to all peoples within Nri sphere of influence. It lasts for a day during which the King calendars the traditional thirteen lunar months in the year by arranging them in seasons for sacrifices, initiations, festivals, planting and harvesting, which are determined annually. On the scheduled day, he officiates with ndi-nze (the titled men) and adama (the arch priests); he

blesses the kola-nuts, the whole year with the seasons and
offers special prayers of protection and prosperity for all
Igbo people. Then he explains the omenani-Igbo (i.e., the
Igbo tradition, customs and belief) and gives a brief account
of the history and the cultural heritage of Nri people.
This is followed by announcing the seasons of the year after
which delegates from different parts of Igbo land pay homage
to the King in the midst of many dance groups, singers, royal
musicians and solo-performers of string, percussion and wind
instruments. The onwasato festival is an annual sacrificial
feast to the ancestral spirits to mark and celebrate the
harvest of new yams. It is usually held in the traditional
eighth month of the year which falls in September annually.
Eight days prior to the first day of festival, the ozo-title
holders visit a sacred place called onuebo which is a place
for self-purification, confession and confirmation of their
uprightness to convince the public that they have never
committed any abominable acts or evil against the laws and
customs of Nri. Thus, they pass through the onuebo in a
procession without talking to one another. It is generally
believed that any of them who is guilty of any abominable
act and pretends to pass through the test, must die before
the feast. The Eze-Nri is exempted from this process of puri-
fication and attestation by virtue of his sanctity and
divinity. Instead, he offers a sacrificial goat known as
eghu-Nri-ma Nri to ozo title-holders as soon as they return
from onuebo. Other sacrifices include sacrifice of yams and

a big cock with a gallon of palm wine known as nni-umu-ada
offered on eke day by the daughters of each family to the
spirits of their forefathers. On nkwo day, known as ubochi-
okuku-mmo, the titled and non-titled men along with the
generality of Nri offer sacrifices of appeasement and invita-
tions to ancestral spirits with cocks and goats, etc.

At the King's palace, two main sacrifices take place:
first, is the sacrifice to the spirits of late Kings, followed
by the sacrifice to late ozo-title holders known as ndichie-
ora. This ritual is conducted by the oldest titled priest
in the town. The King's opening ritual for the festival
begins with his drawing eight lines with nzu chalk on each
shrine in his palace. Then, prayers are offered with
libations for his subjects especially for all Nri native
dibia (the priestly doctors), ndi-okpu-uzu (the blacksmiths),
and ndi-nwanyi-di-ime (the pregnant women) for continued
divine guidance and protection. This is followed by general
rejoicing at the King's arena which features ufie music
(royal wooden drum), Igba-eze (the royal band), dance groups
and solo performers of oja (flute), akpele (horn) ngedegwu
(xylophone) ubo-aka (plucked idiophone) ubo-akwara (chordo-
phone), odu-enyi (elephant tusk), etc., which continues till
very late in the evening when the crowds gradually disperse.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

The principal God among Nri people is known by
several names: Chukwu-Okike or Chi-Okike refers to "God the
creator of the Universe"; Chineke means "the God that creates";

Chukwu means "the great God". He manifests Himself as the
Author of life, light, knowledge, heaven and earth. He is
almighty, omnipresent and omniscient; the Author of chi which
He gives to each man at the time of his or her birth. Under
the Creator, are other gods which are intermediaries between
God and man. These gods have assigned powers from the 'Great
God' for specific duties. They are worshipped with sacrifices
as gods of the land. The list of the gods are shown in Table
III according to rank:

Table III.   LIST OF NRI GODS

Rank No.	Name of God	Meaning
1.	Chineke or Chukwu	God the Creator of the Great God.
2.	Anyanwu	The Sun God.
3.	Ana	The Earth Goddess.
4.	Ngene	Mother Goddess of Protection.
5.	Iyiazi	God of Oath and Sole Protector of Nri people.
6.	Anuoye	Goddess of Protection.
7.	Aro	God of Year and Protection against Diseases and Poisoning.
8.	Idemili	Goddess of Water, Protection and Retribution.
9.	Akwali	Goddess of Productivity.
10.	Ogwugwu	Goddess of Fertility.
11.	Ifejioku	God of Good Harvest and Yam Force.

Fig. 3. SKELETAL STRUCTURE OF NRI SOCIAL ORGANIZATION.

A = <u>EZE</u> <u>NRI</u> (King)

B^{1-12}
= <u>NDI</u> <u>NZEBAMQ</u>
(The Council)

C^1 = <u>AGUKWU</u>   )
C^2 = <u>AKAMKPISI</u>) Nri Town

D^{1-6}
= <u>QNUKU</u>)
   or) Village
<u>OGBE</u>)

E^{1-3}
= <u>UMUNNA</u>

F^{1-3}
= <u>NGWULU</u>
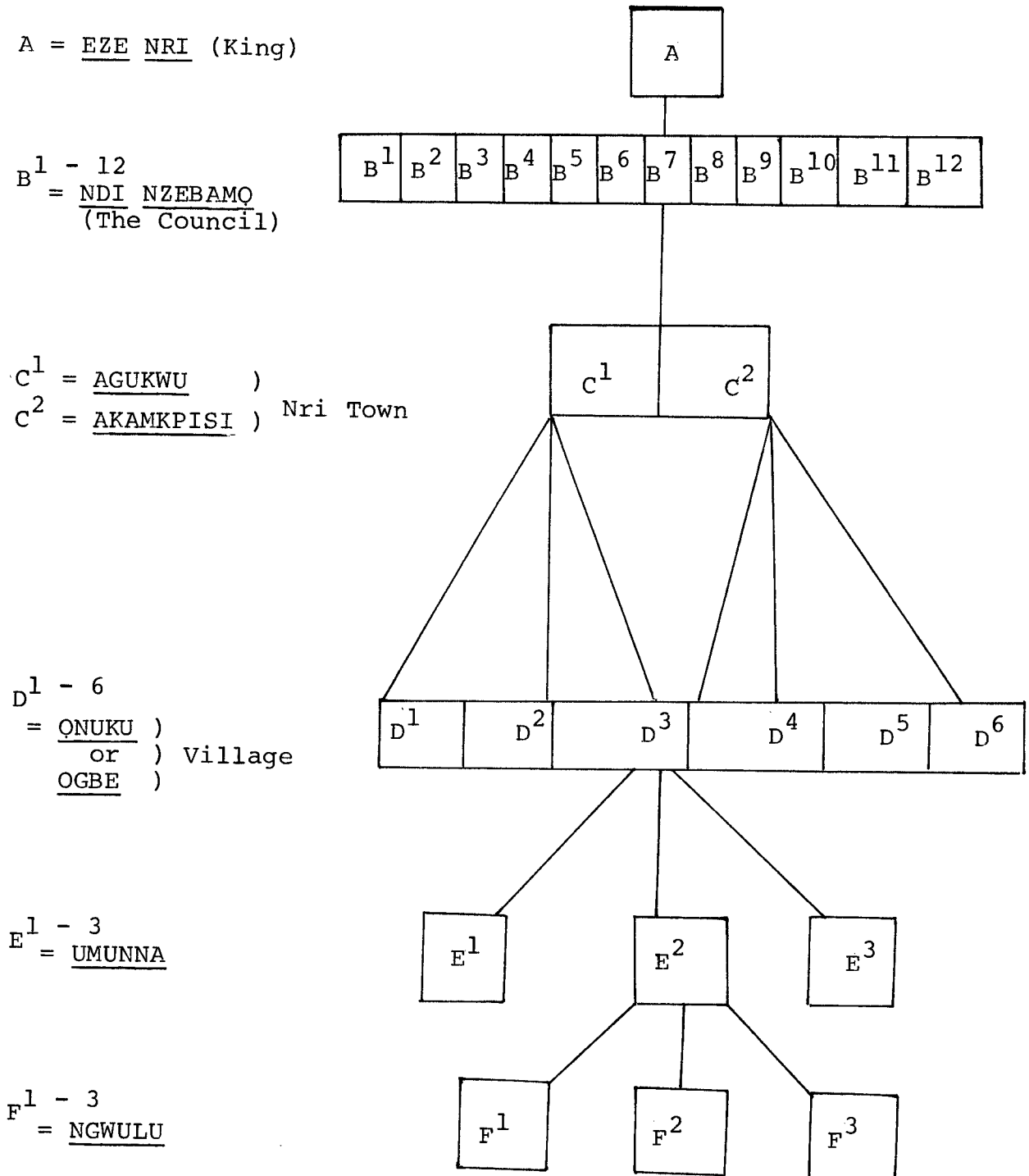
N.B. Age-grade organization is a characteristic
     feature of each level of social structure.

The ritual theme developed from the conception of the
Cosmos. To Nri people the Universe is divided into two major
deparmments: <u>uwa</u> and <u>mmo</u> with alusi as intermediaries. <u>Uwa</u>
is represented by the visible world made up of <u>igwe-na-ala</u>
(the firmament and the earth). This <u>uwa</u> is occupied by <u>mmadu</u>
(human beings), <u>anumanu</u> (animals) and agu (forests). <u>Mmo</u> the
dead ancestors) are the men who lived on earth and founded the
lineages. If a dead person was good and popular in terms of
good moral behaviour and uprightness during his life on earth,
he becomes <u>ndi-ichie</u> (a canonized father); but if he was bad
and wicked he becomes <u>ajo-mmo</u> (an evil spirit). In this connec-
tion, the spirit world or the land of the spirit is <u>ana-ndi-mmo</u>.
<u>Ekwensu</u> (the devil) and the <u>alusi</u> (the gods or the mataphysical
forces) always intrude into the lives of the members of the
 lineage, but the extent of their success depends on the
pleasure of the dead canonized members (<u>ndi-ichie</u>). This is
why special relationship has to be maintained between the
living lineage members and the dead ancestors by the living ones
offering sacrifices (which is called <u>ilo-mmo</u> or <u>imeya-mmo</u>) to
the dead ancestors.

<u>Ubo-aka</u> music is affected by these religious beliefs
and practices especially when the music is religious in character.
In a majority of cases, the players allude to the powers of these
forces on human beings, i.e., the punishment that follows when
a god is displeased or blessings that come out of obedience
to Chineke (the great God), etc. At times, <u>ubo-aka</u> music may
be in the form of a personal reflection on one's <u>chi</u> who is
believed to be always with a person and controls his or her

destiny. In cases of over-indulgence in ubo-aka performance, elders attribute the causes to the bad influence of ekwensu (the devil), an offended ndi-ichie (dead ancestor) or agwu (the trickster alusi) which can confuse an individual.

On the whole, uwa, mmo and alusi interact in a complicated web of cosmic relationships. The traditional doctor-diviner called 'dibia-afa' can by manipulating the afa symbolism controlled by agwu (the trickster alusi) interpret the nature and characters of these relationships, and could by symbolic manipulations effect the control of the actions of ekwensu (the devil). Each alusi (i.e., the gods or the metaphysical forces) has its own chief priest and priests who control the actions through rituals.

The theological philosophy on which Nri culture rests, is identified by many diverse concepts. For example, ana the earth goddess of morality, fertility and productivity is the spring and source of life with metaphysical powers. Thus there is the concept of aja-ana, the sand of earth, which constitutes the earth-force that punishes whoever defiles the land. Ana is also a merciful goddess sometimes by giving warnings and signs of her displeasure before she punishes an offender. Offences such as nso or alu (taboos) provoke her anger beyond control; incest is a good example. In such a case, she can cause the death of the offender after putting the offender into processes of disgrace and misfortunes. As a custodian of morality, she purges the community of all uncleanliness and immorality. It is at ana-Nri that isubu-nso-ana (the concept

of dissolving iniquities, purification and abrogation of
taboos) are carried out by the ritual priests -- a practice
by which Nri men are known over a vast area of Igbo land.

The Order of Priesthood

In Igbo land, Nri town is well-known as a sacred
city of priests. As a result, priesthood is regarded as a
high calling among Nri people. The priests lead an incorrup-
tible life devoid of poisoning, witchcraft and all sorts of
uncleanliness. They are the guardians of Nri tradition and
Igbo culture in general.

The priests, in the past, attended the ceremonies
which conferred major traditional titles in many towns east
and west of the Niger; hence Nri countinues to be an important
religious centre in Igbo land. Further, in their visits,
they specialized in the purification of towns from all in-
iquities committed against _ana_ (the devine earth). (Leonard
1906: 34.) In this connection, the priests possess an orb of
office: a short wooden spear called _otonsi_ which they must
carry in all important religious ceremonies and rites of
intercession, purification, absolution, sacrifice, initiation
and coronation. In most of their itinerary, they travel in
the company of _aka-Nri_ (the dwarfs) who are trained as assistant
doctors and priests.

As a result of the great socio-cultural, political
and theological role of Nri priests in Igbo land, Nri men have
the _ichi_ facial scars carved on their faces for identification.
This is necessary because Nri people are neither molested,

kidnapped nor killed because of their great priestly role in
Igbo culture:

> Certain groups of individuals, protected
> by religious sanctions were immune from
> attack wherever they went. They include
> ritual experts of Nri or men holding
> titles.
>
> (Isichei 1976: 65)

However, ichi marking is not confined to Nri priests
alone, titled and non-titled men in some other parts of Igbo
land especially those who share relationship with Nri people,
also have the ichi facial scars for immunity under the cloak of
Nri citizenship. It is also a symbol of gallantry and man-
hood restricted only to males, but it is more popular and
common among Nri people than the rest of Igbo. The ichi scars
were done by special artists or carvers from Umudiọka, a
neighbouring town. The marking covers the upper part of the
face from the temple to the forehead and stops at the bridge
of the nose. It was a painful practice indeed. In olden days,
it was said that the mother whose son was undergoing the ichi
marking continued to mourn for him because of uncertainty
surrounding the exercise. Some men were said to have bled to
death during the process, but whoever endured and survived was
a great pride to his parents and relatives. It is interesting
to read Baike's narrative of 1856 on ichi marking of Nri people:

> I inquired particularly after a supposed
> district or tribe mentioned by Clarke and
> some other writers as Itshi or Bretsh...
> Itshi which means 'cut-face' refers to
> certain individuals who are marked by
> numerous cuttings on the forehead which
> greatly disfigure the countenance. I

> fell in with one of these Itshi who con-
> firmed all these and told me that is
> confined to the families of wealthy.

<div align="right">(Onwuejeogwu 1972: 50).</div>

In Baike's statement 'itshi' may read nshi or ichi, and Bretsh should read Gburuchi (cut-face). However, with the advent of Christianity, the practice was dropped. In the past the ichi ritual ceremony went with special music of encouragement and endurance, usually sung by the Umudioka-ichi carver and responded to by men around. An Nri man with ichi marking is shown in Plate 2, playing his ubo-aka.

Other religious practices include the life rites undergone by every Nri which constitute the core of social and religious institutions. The life rites are: namely, birth, initiation, marriage and funeral ceremonies with specific types of music for each event. In this connection, music is a socially determined phenomena among Nri people: part and parcel of life in Nri.

When a new child is born irrespective of sex, it is an occasion for rejoicing for the umunna and the well-wishers. Sacrifices of thanksgiving are given to the goddess of fertility and reproductivity by a priest within the umunna. There are special birth songs sung by Nri women to announce that a fellow woman has safely given birth to a new baby: a kind of musical announcement for the good news. The words of one of them is as follows:

PLATE 2.   AN NRI ELDER WITH ICHI MARKING ON THE FACE.

O welu efe je nku,   gbaghalu ya na omulu nwa

"   "   " sie nni   "   "   "   "   "

"   "   " chuo iyi   "   "   "   "   "

Ife O-mene gi   gbaghalu ya na omulu nwa

English translation

Whoever has chance to fetch fire wood,

Leave it for she has given birth.

Whoever has a chance to cook

Leave it for she has given birth

Whoever has a chance to fetch water from a stream

Leave it for she has given birth to a child (three times)

Whatever she has done to you

Leave it for she has given birth.

There is also the ritual of ibu-afa (naming a child)
which is another occasion for general rejoicing, featuring
vocal and instrumental music by groups and individuals. It is
traditionally the prerogative of the parents and the older
relatives amidst feasting and dancing to give meaningful names
to the baby: names are not merely considered as tags by means
of which individuals may be distinguished, but are intimately
associated with various events in the life of the individual
as well as those of the family and the social group (Wiesch-
hoff 1941: 212). The determinants for given names are market
days, e.g., Nwafo, the child of Afo if the child is born on
Afo day, Mgboye, the time of Oye if born on Oye market day;
the wishes of the mother or father: Obinna meaning the heart

of the father, a male name if father wishes a son to be born;
gratitude to God in case of <u>Chukuemeka</u>: God has done well,
a thanksgiving name for blessings or favour received from God,
etc.

Initiation ceremony is another important phase in the
life of every youth irrespective of sex. It is usually a
ritual for passing from boyhood or girlhood into adult life.
For example, at Nri town there is <u>ufie-akwali</u> yearly, a
puberty rite for girls intended to secure the good will of the
gods to grant happy home life to a young woman and who by this
ritual becomes qualified to marry. During this ritual, "a
goat is killed, put into basket, and another basket is filled
with yams and carried to the mothers of maidens concerned.
Sacrifices and prayers are offered by the ritual priest"
(Ilogu 1974: 46). In the case of boys, they are initiated
first into the <u>mmọnwu</u> cult, an admission into the world of
spirit, and later into the age-grade by the ritual priests. To
the uniniated, <u>mmọnwu</u> is a ghost of the dead. Women are not
qualified to be initiated into the <u>mmọnwu</u> secret society.
Further advanced initiation continues into full adult life
for men in connection with taking the traditional titles such
as <u>ibu-amanwulu</u> and <u>ichi-ọzọ</u>, etc.

Marriage can be arranged on the basis of polygamy: a
symbol of high social standing of the man; and monogamy: a
symbol of respectable and responsible character. Monogamy is
more popular mostly because of economic limitations rather
than due to norms of Christianity. Members of each age-grade

regard marriage as a necessity in order to qualify as full-
fledged members of the society. The traditional marriage law
stipulates lineage exogamy, and a person may not marry within
the segment of his or her mother's or father's patrilineage.
Approval of parents and relatives in choice of marriage
partners is considered important. In some extreme cases,
parents choose wives for their sons in order to conform to
the traditional norm. Thus it is an alliance between two
families rather than a contract between two individuals.
(Uchendu 1965: 50). On the fixed day for marriage the bride
price must be paid in cash to the family of the would-be wife.
There is no fixed price hence there is usually long negotiat-
ion and bargaining between two families. When the bride price
is paid, there follows general rejoicing amidst music, dance
and feasting. In Igbo situation, chances of divorce are very
narrow because of the deep commitment of the two families.
But cases of proven barreness or unfaithfulness can be a basis
for divorce in rare cases. To Nri women, marriage is one of
the greatest blessings for it is the only means by which they
validate their social status in Igbo land. Marriage ceremony
is a social event which involves every individual family and
umunna within the town.

Once death is announced, it is an occasion for con-
gregational mouring in sympathy with the bereaved family.
Women mourn more openly than men. When an adult dies, more
serious ceremonies are performed such as wake-keeping during
the night of death. Throughout the following day, one could

see a weeping crowd of men and women amidst different ensembles of funeral music to console the bereaved. Everyone is expected to stay at the home of the bereaved family until the burial ceremony takes place. Before burial, the priest performs a goat-sacrifice to the gods and to the ancestral spirits for acceptance of the dead in the spirit-world. Nri people, as other Igbo, believe in life after death and in re-incarnation. As a result, there is concern for conditions of the souls of the dead in the spirit world. Good burial is accorded to every individual especially in the case of a good person to ensure his or her peace and rest in the land of the spirits and a peaceful return to the world in event of re-incarnation.

Burial is usually done by one's age-grade members. In the case of a dead ọzọ-man, the funeral ceremony is very elaborate involving first and second burial within a year's interval. In such situations cows instead of goats may be sacrificed to the gods and ancestral spirits. A dead ọzọ-man after burial is regarded as ndi-ichie (i.e., canonized dead ancestor) who can be worshipped or consulted through spirit medium by his lineage members.

The Folklore of Ụbọ-aka

According to Nri oral tradition, the exact origin of ụbọ-aka is a mystery. But it has been one of the talking instruments of their forefathers which is loved by men and spirits, and used for communication:

> Eri, the great spiritual ancestor
> taught it to his children: Nri,
> Nsugbe, Aguleri, Umuleri, Nteje and
> Igboariam as an instrument for men
> only. Nri then taught us through
> his two sons: Ifikwuanim and Namoke.
> Since then we use it for teaching,
> communication and comfort. The
> spirits, like men, love to hear the
> voice of ụbọ-aka.   Therefore, who-
> ever plays the instrument, must be
> careful not to offend the spirits.[16]

The above statement from Nri elders, is self-explanat-
ory. Support for this statement today, lies in the fact that
ụbọ-aka is still a very important instrument among the Umueri
clan: Nteje, Aguleri, Nsugbe, Nando, Igboarian, Nri and
Umuleri people who are the direct descendants of Eri. For
example, one of the great performers of ụbọ-aka among Umueri
clan today, is Ezigbo Obiligbo of Nteje; he occasionally comes
to Nri to play and sing in praise of the King. Further, the
above oral narrative shows that ụbọ-aka music has a long history
among Umueri clan, and that it has been a masculine instrument
which pleases men and spirits, hence women are not allowed to
play it as will be discussed later under the socio-cultural
roles.

One of the folk tales contains a penalty for offending
or disappointing the spirits in ụbọ-aka performance. It is
about a man who was a great ụbọ-aka player of extraordinary
skill and display. He made the mistake of playing the instru-
ment at midnight. Midnight as well as noon hours are commonly
regarded in Igbo culture as dreadful periods for the coming
out of both evil and good spirits of the dead ancestors,

including ghosts of the dead in general. As the legend goes:

> A great u̱bǫ-aka player was playing
> very late in the night so much that
> he forgot himself. He played so well
> that he carried his great skillful
> display very late into the midnight.
> As he was playing, he did not know
> that he was surrounded by the spirits
> who love to hear and watch great
> skills on the instrument. But when
> he suddenly stopped to go and sleep,
> the spirits grew annoyed for the dis-
> continuity and caused death on him.[17]

This folktale is possibly a deterrent to individuals who over-indulge in playing u̱bǫ-aka or other related instru- ments such as ǫja (flute), u̱bǫ-akwara (seven string harp) which are believed to possess the power of attracting spirits. Over-playing is generally attributed to the influence of evil spirits. There are also many stories of similar accounts where ime-ndeli (midnight) is replaced with mgbachi (noon hours) and the converse. As a result, playing u̱bǫ-aka at midnight or noon hour is frowned at by the elders, parents and umunna of the performer. It is a commonly held opinion within Nri traditional belief that over indulgence in performance can spoil one's brain through the activities of the evil spirits. In this connection, the elders always advise whoever overplays u̱bǫ-aka in the following Igbo words:

> Nnwa anyi jili nwayǫ
> maka u̱bǫ emebie gi isi.
>
> English translation:
>
> Our child be careful
> in case u̱bǫ spoils your head.[18]

Moreover, ụbọ-aka sometimes appears in the stories related to oral historic events in the migrations and movements of the ancestors of Nri. The following oral tradition is very illuminating:

> Nri with his group after surveying
> the land around Anambra river,
> proceeded on his way to the land
> named later after his brother,
> Amanuke who came back there and
> settled. Here Nri and his relatives
> worshipped the spirits of their
> forefathers through rituals and
> sacrifices with music of igba, ekwe
> and ogene, teaching, inspiring and
> comforting one another with ụbọ-aka,
> opu and ọja. After establishing
> the afọ Nri which still exists at
> Amanuke, Nri continued with his
> journey and arrived at Nkpume-
> enyilenyi which is the present
> Enugwu-ukwu town. Here he discovered
> to his annoyance that his only daughter
> Ofiọba was pregnant; thus, he rejected
> and abandoned her out of anger there
> and arrived at last in the area known
> today as Nri town from where he reigned
> over a large area in Igbo land.[19]

The above oral tradition throws further light on the role of ụbọ-aka and music in general, among Nri people. Ụbọ-aka is principally a communication medium along with other talking instruments with which they taught, inspired and comforted one another as they are still used today in Nri. Probably, Nri used the talking instruments to communicate messages, the mores and norms of the society to his relatives as they are among Nri people today. The instruments for sacrificial rituals are igba (drum), ekwe (wooden drum) and ogene (metal gong) which shows that ụbọ-aka has never been a ritual-instrument in Nri tradition despite taboos that surround it. Besides, this oral history shows that the musical instru-

ments have a long tradition in Nri.

Music in the Life of Nri People

Music plays important roles in the daily life of
Nri people. As a result, it is context sensitive in order
to be meaningful. The following description of the role of
music in Igbo culture applies also to Nri culture.

> Music, vocal or instrumental, plays
> a very large part at initiation
> ceremonies of youths to manhood or to
> the tribal mysteries. Dances and
> songs of a religious or ceremonious
> nature play a large part in religion
> where they constitute acts of worship
> or accompaniment to such acts. The
> extemporized words or songs, the swell
> of the music, rhythmic motions of
> dance and the gregarious feeling that
> every body is taking part in the same
> action.heighten the religious senti-
> ment. Other acts of a ritual nature,
> such as processions around the town
> before the actual burial processions
> are largely musical.
>
> (Echezona 1965:4).

In this connection, all that lies hidden in the
music of Nri are all the components of Nri culture which form
the cultural matrix that evolved from the deep well of the
traditional religious belief and practices. This explains
why music is closely associated with rituals.

Dance music is predominantly connected with rituals.
For women it is mainly vocal while for men, it is mostly
instrumental and a little vocal. The singing is generally
either antiphonal or responsorial which is very common among
women and girls. It is not restricted only to the singing
or dancing group; others can participate in the singing either
by nodding or clapping of hands when they are deeply involved.

This situation arises especially when the words of music is strongly sentimental and therefore usually appealing. It is necessary to observe that the source of enjoyment in vocal music is not so much the wording as the voice quality of the singers especially those of the soloists. A good voice is described as onu-ogene (the voice of a metal gong). With instrumental music, the case is different; the enjoyment lies more on the talking ability of the instrument especially in the case of solo instruments like ubo-aka, ubo-akwara, akpele (horn) and oja (flute), and how well the instruments are skillfully performed or combined in ensembles as well as fulfilling the desired social function.[20]

Dance is a cultural behaviour determined by the values, attitudes and belief of the people. For example, it has strong relationship with the mores, norms and religion of the people. There are dances strictly for women and men exclusively with further restrictions. Among women dances some are strictly for married women and the unmarried respectively: egwu-ndi-agbala or egwu-ndi-inyom (Agukwu or Akamkpisi or Agbadani, etc.), for married women; and egwu-umu-agboghobia (Agukwu or Akamkpisi or Obeagu, etc.) and egwu-ufie-akwali for the unmarried.[21] The same thing obtains in men's dances. For example, the abia dance is strictly for a married man with child; a married man without child must not dance to the music but can play in the ensemble if he is a good performer of any of the instruments. There are ritual dances (egwu-ozo) strictly

for the titled men, while the widows of the titled men

strictly dance the aja-ana dance of purification before the

gods. Masquerade dances are for men only; women must not

participate with the exception of the oldest woman in town

who is crowned the nne-mmọnwu (the mother of the masquerade).

Symbolism probably is also associated with some

dance movements. Each nuance, each little body movement, each

gesture of the arms may be interpreted, as signifying fertility,

the return of the ancestors, the flight of birds of perhaps

some natural phenomenon. However, evidence of symbolism is

inconclusive as noted, in an Igbo-dance play.[22]

> Discovering the specific symbolism of
> movement where it exists, can be very
> difficult. Most dance steps and other
> movements are not reported to have names
> ...Although the dances range from
> abstract symbolism to realistic mimicry,
> dramatic concern to comic relief, most
> of the movements probably symbolize
> fertility, potentiality, and instinct-
> ual energy. The symbolic portrayal of
> fertility is acknowledged but otherwise
> reports of symbolic meanings are few
> and fragmentary.
>
> (Hanna 1968: 21)

Dance music is a means of promoting mutual understanding,

social interaction and sociations among the people, group of

dancers and performers. It offers opportunity for training

in team spirit, exchange of ideas, get-together, knowing one

another's temperament, attitudes, likes and dislikes during

the organization, learning, demonstration and performance.

Public dances for the unmarried women provide opportunities

for men spectators to select brides or lovers; the women

themselves realize this hence they appear their best on such

occasions, and really dance and sing to the gallery in order

to attract and win a lover.

Dance is characterized by the following specific

social features: dances are generally done in groups rather

than individually; however, occasions for individual dances

occur when one emotionally dances to ubo-aka music, ubo-

akwara music, drumming, or ekpili music. But solo dances are

mostly performed by masquerades such as the akuebilisi, agboghọ-

mmọnwu, izaga and others; they are generally accompanied by

fairly large ensembles of six or more instrumentalists. Large

groups of dancers are preferred; groups numbering less than

seven dancers are rarely taken seriously. The usual formation

in dances is the circle. Thus dancers can move outwards, in-

wards, forwards or backwards without bumping into one another

or they may meet at the centre for special dramatic effects.

When the number of dancers is increased, spatial expansion

takes place without necessarily any reorganization of routines.

Some men's dances have been known to form into two rows, with

a leader in front who demonstrates each step before the whole

troupe joins in. Even in this formation each individual

dancer cuts out a circle of operation for himself. Age plays

a major part in dance groups. Most people in a dance group

usually belong to the same age-grade. In general, sex division

is the norm; men and women dance in their respective groups.

Young people may mix sexes in dances but in that case boys

generally lead and girls follow. Men's dance groups may not

have female members except in those rare cases where a woman
of distinction in the village may have taken some titles.
She may be a member of the group but under no circumstances
may she actually take part in dancing in public. In women's
groups however, there may be a man who is a full-fledged
member assisting with such things as administration,
discipline, and performing certain actions forbidden to women
by tradition such as evoking the spirit of ancestors to
protect the dancers from evil witch doctors and rain makers.

Folk songs play an important role in the community
because of their social functions. There are, for example,
occasional songs which are songs for special events such as
birth, religious worship, war, initiation, marriage and
funerals; incidental songs which are songs introduced
spontaneously during an action or duty, usually casual, such
as work songs, cradle songs and lullabies; and the recreat-
ional songs which are sung mainly for relaxation and enter-
tainment such as moonlight, folktale, masquerade, wrestling
songs, etc. In addition, there are music and songs socially
defined for the King, the royal family, various age grades,
for children, spinsters, heroes, married women, traditional
priests and titled men.

Mention must be made of the social functions of some
musical instruments. For example, a percussion instrument
called _ogene_ (metal gong) is used by priests or medicine men
to heal stammering; if a child is stammering or cannot speak
and communicate well, ogene is a means of making him speak well.

In this case, the child is presented to a shrine and given water out of the gong which produces clear tones when beaten. It is generally believed that constant drinking of water out of such a sonorous instrument before the shrine banishes stammering. Another important instrument is the drum which assumes a position of greatest social role. It constitutes the pivot around which the social life turns. Social occasions such as marriage, naming ceremonies, funerals, coronation, title-taking and initiation ceremonies must feature drumming. In this way, among the Nri people there are drums that talk, whisper, cry, dance, fight and love. Talking instruments, such as ubo-aka, ubo-akwara, akpele, odu-enyi, igba, oja, ufie, constitute the traditional communication media.

The status of the musician in the society is non-professional generally. It is believed that nobody can live by being a professional musician. Rather, it is taken as a social practice in which everybody participates. Performers play out of enjoyment, for socialization, and for specific occasions such as religious rituals, funerals, annual festivals, marriage ceremonies, wrestling matches, coronation, etc. On the other hand, good musicianship is recognized and accorded much respect as a special gift from the gods. A good drummer as well as a highly skilled ubo-aka or ubo-akwara performer are therefore recognized, respected and admired by many in the society. Musicianship is simply not an index of social rank.

Altogether, the music of Nri is controlled by Igbo
language because of the inherent tonal characteristics of
the language. This tonal inflection of the words or language
call to mind corresponding succession of musical tones which
organize themselves into patterns of speech and rhythm as
will be discussed later in the language of ụbọ-aka music.

Summary

This chapter discusses Nri people and their culture.
The discussion on the history of Nri is limited due to the
scarcity of written records. Oral traditions have limitations
because they give little or no indication of how long ago
these events took place. Nevertheless, they have much to
contribute in ordering thoughts and speculations on the
patterns of migration and the phenomena of cross-cultural
influence on the ancient culture of Nri. The recent Igbo-Ukwu
excavation, has revealed the antiquity of Eze Nri as already
discussed. Basden's hypothesis on the similarities between
the Igbo and the Israelites should not be taken as final but
rather as a base for further inquiry.

The social organization which operates within the
skeletal structure has much to contribute in understanding the
culture of the people. Music has close relationship with the
social structure in terms of its role in social events,
institutions and kingship.

The theological philosophy of Nri as a priestly cult
in Igbo culture, constitutes the pivot around which the entire

cultural matrix turns; a very important determinant as will be seen later. As a result, every aspect of Nri culture is based on the religious beliefs and practices.

Discussion on the folklore of ụbọ-aka, throws some light on the long history of the instrument in Nri tradition as one of the traditional instruments of ancestors. The instrument is principally a communication medium within the socio-cultural parameters.

Music in Nri is essentially composed of several components of Nri traditions. A study of the incidence of music shows that music-making is socially and culturally determined. It was noted how a variety of musical types are created for use in various recognized social and cultural situations. To the Nri, music is a reflection of their culture, and must not be performed out of context. In songs and talking instruments, linguistic influence is prevalent. Both the melody and rhythm are controlled by the outlines of the intonation and the relative duration of the syllables of verbal text for meaning. It is therefore, a fertile ground for anthropological, sociological, linguistic and ethnomusicological interdisciplinary studies.

The discussion here does not pretent to be exhaustive. It probably succeeds in introducing Nri people by presenting Nri culture in broad perspective and provides the sociocultural background needed in any ethnomusicological study of this nature.

Footnotes

1. Igbo-ukwu excavation was by Thurstan Shaw, and published
    in his Igbo-ukwu: An account of archaeological discov-
    eries in eastern Nigeria in 2 vols. 1970.

2. Exodus the second book in the Old Testament is the
    biblical account about how Moses led the Israelites out
    of their bondage in Egypt.

3. Eri is believed to be the common ancestor of Igala, Nri
    Nteje, Aguleri, Nsugbe, Igboariam or Onoja and Nteje
    peoples of Nigeria. This is based on oral tradition of
    Nri, Agala and Umeri cultures.

4. Sacred kingship referes to the religious kingdoms of
    Igala and Nri which are offices of high priesthood and
    divinity. The divinity of the kings is attained during
    their ritual burial at the coronation, and their believed
    subsequent transfiguration into spirits.

5. Mosaic Law refers to the Law of Moses as contained in
    the Old Testament.

6. Deuteronomy is the book of law in the Old Testament of
    Jewish religion which contains the Ten Commandments of
    God to the Jews under Moses; one of the five books of
    Moses.

7. Animism is native worship, and the belief that all kinds
    of organic life, even inanimate objects have souls which
    can be worshipped.

8. Ubru, Ibru and Uburu are names in Igbo culture alledged
    to have been a corruption of the word Hebrew which later
    led to the word Igbo. This is speculation.

9. Bronze roped vase was one of the precious objects found
    at the Igbo-ukwu excavation by Professor Shaw. It
    contained beautiful Igbo carvings dated ninth century
    A.D. (Shaw 1970).

10. Radio carbon dating is one of the scientific methods of
    dating excavated artifacts used mostly by archaeologists.
    Professor Thurstan Shaw used it in dating his findings
    in Igbo-ukwu excavation.

11. Benin and Ife bronze are one of the high works of tradi-
    tional art in Nigerian culture.

12. Gerontocray, means government by elders of a community
    based on age and birthright.

13. Nri hegemony refers to the kingdom of Nri and the extent of Igbo areas under Eze Nri (the King of Nri).

14. The right to the monarchy does not extend to the descendants of Namoke, one of the sons of Nri. Namoke is the progenitor of Akamkpisi village in Nri. They lost the right to be Eze Nri because when Namoke was Eze Nri, his people neglected and disregarded him to the extent that when he was about to die, he vowed that Eze Nri must never again come from Akamkpisi, and handed over to Agukwu village of Nri, the orb of leadership and kingship. Today, Nri sacred kingship is limited to the sub villages of Aguku area.

15. Egbo is a long wreath of palm fronds which the King of Nri, and his high priests use in settling disputes between warring villages and towns in Igbo land. The egbo is raised and thrown between the combatants as a symbol of cease fire.

16. This is an oral account of ubo-aka collected from the traditional elders of Agbadani, Nri by the author in 1972.

17. An ubo-aka legend in connection with the spirits was supplied by the traditional elders of Agukwu, Nri to the author.

18. This is a common advice to those who over indulge in ubo-aka performance within Nri tradition. It arose from the general belief that over playing can disrupt the common sense of the individual through the influence of bad spirits.

19. This oral history of migration was collected from the palace of Eze Nri by the author during fieldwork in 1971 as related by one of the priests.

20. Ubo-aka is a plucked idiophone with a gourd resonator; ubo-akwara is a plucked chordophone with seven wooden strings; akpele is a side-blown aerophone made out of a cow's horn or hare's hoof, oja is a notched wooden flute with about three holes, which is end-blown.

21. Egwu-ufie-akwali is the traditional dance of fertility at the initiation of girls into puberty.

22. Symbolism is the concept of symbol as something which stands for, represents, or serves as a tool for comprehending the referent. (Smith 1952: 13-14.)

CHAPTER III

ỤBỌ-AKA AS AN INSTRUMENT

A general view of the organology of ụbọ-aka is
presented with reference to physical and socio-cultural mani-
festations. The physical descriptions are based primarily on
the systems of Draeger and Mantle Hood.[1]

Discussion proceeds on the basis of Draeger's
descriptive framework as outlined in The Principle of a
Systematization of Musical Instruments (1948), and incorporates
four main divisions: physical characteristics, tone product-
ion, technique of playing and tuning.

In addition, a diagramatic representation of ụbọ-
aka with descriptions, is shown in Fig. 7 using Mantle Hood's
organogram as designed in his The Ethnomusicologist (1971).
The organogram makes it possible to include "not only the
history and description of instruments but also equally
important but neglected techniques of performance, musical
function, decoration and a variety of socio-cultural consid-
erations" (Hood 1971: 124). It combines the 'systematik' of
Sachs and Hornbostel, and the labanotation with all the
features associated with a musical instrument.[2] For example,
the four main divisions of the 'systematik' were expanded to
include the electrophone with the following representative
symbols: Idiophone = ☐ ; Membranophone = ☐ ; Chordophone
= ☐ ; Aerophone = ◯ ; and Electrophone = ◇ .

On the whole, the discussion covers the physical
characteristics, construction and tuning, playing technique
and the instrument in cultural perspective in terms of
history, distribution and generic names throughout black
Africa, the Caribbeans and Brazil.

Physical Characteristics

Ubo-aka is a plucked idiophone with a gourd
resonator; the diameter is not generally less than seven
inches although it varies with the natural size of gourd.
In this connection, there is no standard size. On top of
the gourd is fitted a round wooden lid with two openings on
either side. Two parallel wooden or metal bridge-rods are
placed at one end of the wooden lid on which eight evenly
spaced metal prongs of about one-fifth of an inch apart are
fitted. The prongs are held in position with either a metal
string or akwala (wooden string) extracted from the fibres
of a raphia palm. They are tied inbetween the two bridge-rods
to the wooden lid, and left free to vibrate at the other end.
The set of prongs while facing the player resembles the
letter "V" with a long stem on the right-hand side in such
a way that the longest prong is at the extreme right, the
shortest at the extreme left and the second to the longest
prong, about in the middle as shown in Plate 1.

The formal characteristics of the body to be set
into vibration are the eight flat metal prongs which are
longitudinal in shape with varying length and size in terms
of relationship to one another. Besides, there is no standard

length for each prong. At times the prongs are rusty but
the plucked tips are usually flattened and smooth because
of constant friction between the thumbs and the tips of
prongs. In this connection, the quality of the surface is
partly rusty, smooth and shiny.

The vibration pattern has been studied by Echezona
through accoustical analysis of the prongs in his Ibo Musical
Instrument in Ibo Culture 1963.[3] The findings show that the
pattern is based on transverse vibration of rods as shown in
Fig. 4.
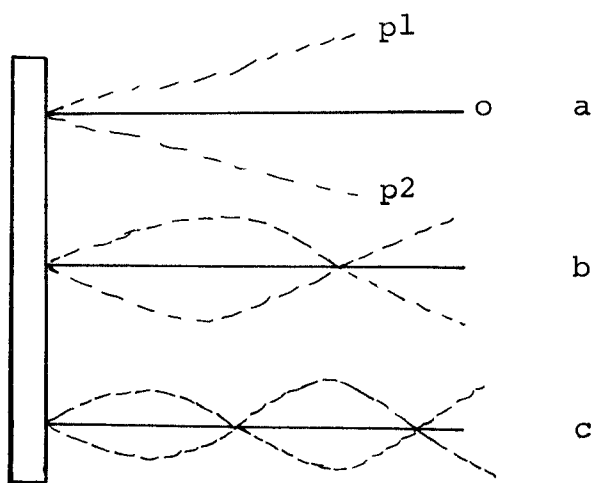
Fig. 4. THE PRINCIPLE OF TRANSVERSE VIBRATION OF RODS.

In Fig. 4A, the prong oscillates as a whole between
the dotted P^1 and P^2 upwards and downwards. The fixed end
forms a node while the free end in its unrestricted motion
becomes the center of a ventral segment.

The other node must therefore occur at
a distance of a half segment, or one-
third of the length of the vibrating
portion of the prong, below the free
end, the remainder of the prong forming
a whole segment (figure [4b]. Likewise
when the third partial arises, the
prong forms two and one-half ventral
segments, with the first node located

at one-fifth of the length from the
free end, while each of the entire
segments occupies two of the remain-
ing four-fifths (figure [4c]).

(Echezona 1963: 99).

These patterns of vibration are approximate since
they stricly apply to a cantilever section whereas the ubo-
aka prongs are sections clamped at one end and supported
about in the middle. As a result, these patterns may be
regarded as an approximate picture because the length of
prong between simply supported and clamped ends is small com-
pared to the full length.

The activators are the two thumbs with or without
the thumb nails. At times, the two fore fingers are used in
case of painful thumbs or for special dynamic effect of
softness. But the traditional activators are the two thumbs
hence the Europeans, on watching the playing technique, call
it 'thumb piano' (Berliner 1974: 90).

The assembly of the activators is based on voluntary
muscular co-ordination of the thumbs and to some extent on
the basis of the individual situation. For example, in the
case of wounded, painful or deformed thumbs, other fingers
can be trained to pluck the prongs.

In terms of shape, the activator is the natural thumb
shape which is knob-like. Thus the material of the activator
is either the skin-flesh of the human thumb or the calcium
carbonate of the finger nails when finger nails are grown for
the purpose. Plectrums have never been used but it is possible
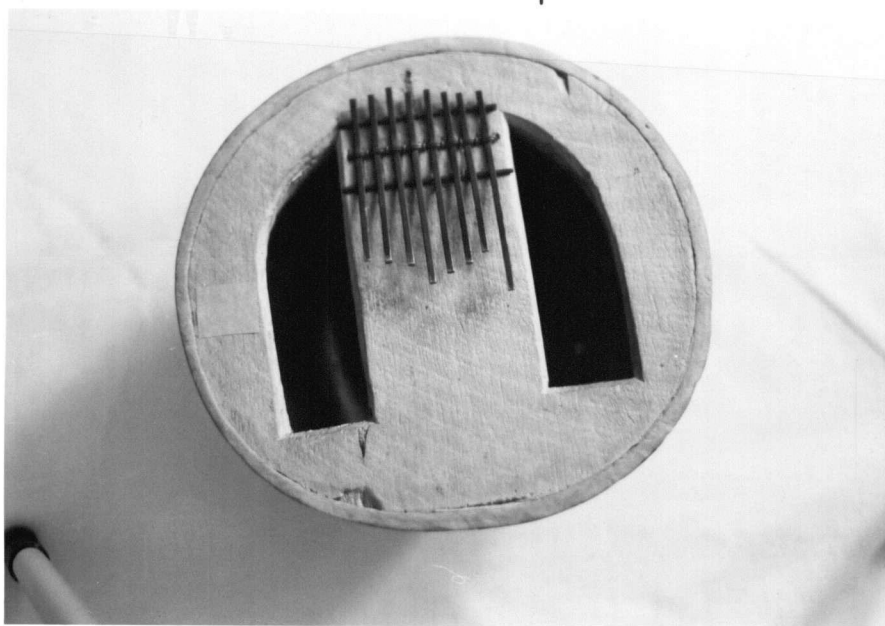
PLATE 3.   THE UBQ-AKA

that in the absence of grown thumb nails, special plectrums
can be designed for the thumbs as among the players of mbira
dza vadzimu of Shona people of Rhodesia (Berliner 1974: 101).[4]
The plectrum can be designed in such a way as to possess
fingernail-like projections in order to produce the twanging
effect of the nails. Altogether, the activator is dependent
on the player, and takes the form of a suddenly applied and
released impact load.

The resonator is made of ọba (gourd) and cut in such
a way to look like a bowl. The resultant sound comes from a
vibration of the resonator. In this way the resonator
magnifies the tones or increases the volume by serving as the
'sound carrier'. The bowl-like form of the resonator is shown
in Plate 2. It is very smooth and naturally brown in colour.
Sometimes, intricate traditional designs are carved or painted
on the resonator for aesthetic reasons. It is also in some
cases painted in spotted white and black colours which are
mostly the traditional colours for the spirits and the dead as
shown in Plate 3. The feature of the resonator is symbolic
of the stomach hence among Nri people, a smooth and well
rounded stomach especially in the case of a beautiful lady or
a pregnant woman, is described as afọ-ọba (the stomach of the
gourd) which is very even, smooth and rotund.

However, the origin of the shape cannot easily be
determined since it is not designed by technology. The
determinant is simply the natural shape and size of the gourd.
The material is cork-like, porous and light. It derves also
as the traditional life-buoy for swimmers in the lakes because

it is always afloat.

Tone Production

The mode of activation is by a combination of pluck-
ing, beating and rubbing on the keys. But is is principally
by plucking. The source of energy is man power utilized
through a hammer-like motor-action on the prongs; it is by
direct contact. This direct contact is not continuous as
it depends on the principles of touch and release without
mechanical power outside human control. The number of
activated sound bodies at the moment of tone production which
are in mutual dependence are several: the eight metal prongs
the gourd resonator, and in some cases, fixed rattles on the
body of the resonator or stored beads in the bowl of the
resonator. All these vibrate in sympathy whenever one or
more prongs are plucked. Therefore, the number of sound
bodies per player along with total number of sound bodies are
variable. The action of tone production comes from one person
who can only play singly because the ubọ-aka as defined by
society is a solo instrument.

The number of sounds possible simultaneously is not
fixed. At times, players can produce metalic sounds out of
the prongs and percussive effect when rhythms are beaten out
on the wooden lid with the sympathetic rattling of beads
attached to the resonator or left inside the gourd bowl. It
depends on the effect the performer wants. Further, a per-
former with sharp thumb nails normally produces twanging
effect most of the time while those playing with the tip of
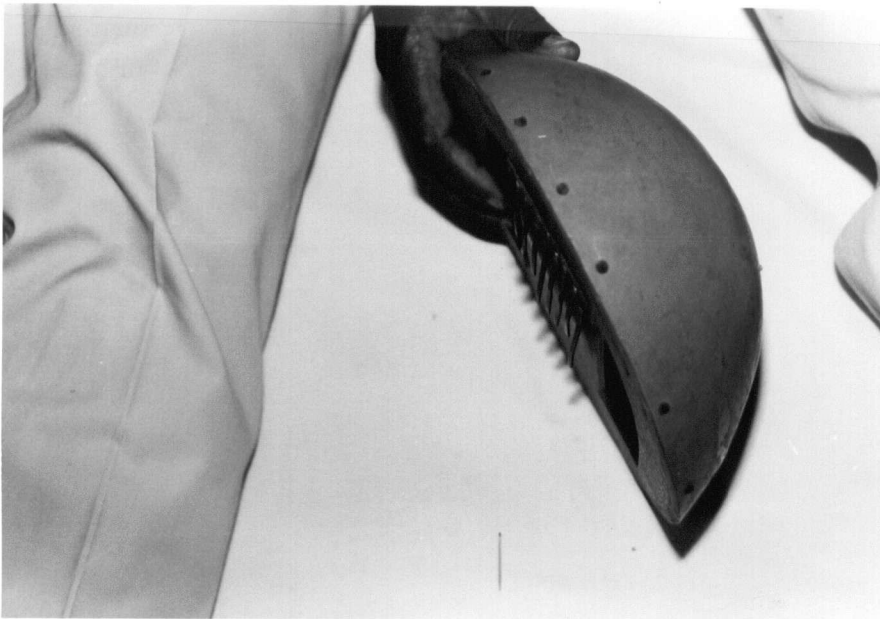
PLATE 4.   THE FEATURES OF THE RESONATOR

PLATE 5.   THE DECORATED ỤBỌ-AKA

the thumb produce round and lightly muted tones. On the other hand, a combination of plucking, beating and rubbing produces multiple sounds that resemble the effect of ensemble performance. In this connection, the number of simultaneous sounds is variable and composite. The accompanying voice is rare, but where there is a vocal solo, it is only the male solo voice with its range and tone colour that is heard.

The main determinant of musical flexibility in tone production, is the range of the musical parameters of the instrument. This is achieved by variation, combination, re-combination and exchange of keys of the musical instrument. The duration, dynamic range and intensity are variable, and therefore cannot easily be determined. In the case of duration, it depends most of the time on the length, the thickness and the flexibility of the vibrating substance. Thus the longer and lighter the prong when excited, the longer the duration of tone; but the shorter and thicker the prong becomes, the shorter the duration. Also the degree of intensity of vibration determines the span of duration.

Dynamic effect depends mostly on the nature of touch and the playing technique. For example, the piano dynamic effect can be achieved by soft playing techniques of both the left and right thumbs through relaxing the tension in the prong by degrees. When the finger nail is used, a twanging and piercing effect results but when the knob of the thumb plays, it is often soft and round in effect. Thus the degree of tension on the prongs controls the dynamic shading all the time.

Conversely, degrees of forte effect are achieved by increasing the tension step by step. In this way intensity varies with the energy of vibration whenever the activation is heavy. This leads always to high intensity which causes loudness, coarseness and reverbration. All these factors, in addition to frequent retuning of the keys, contribute to musical flexibility.

The range of melody is variable, depending partly on the selected tones that form the melody and the linguistic combination of tones. However, the range is always determined by the musical parameters of the set of prongs which vary with different tunings. For example, the ranges of the ụbọ-aka measured by Echezona and Darius Thieme showed marked difference. The measurement of the keys in cents is shown in Table IV as follows:

NOTE	CENTS	LENGTH IN INCHES
C'	1225	1.44
B	1100	1.5
A	928	1.57
G	695	1.7
F	490	1.8
E	398	1.86
D	205	1.95
C	15	2.1

(Echezọna 1963: 101)

Table IV.   THE MEASUREMENT OF ỤBỌ-AKA KEYS.

The range according to Echezọna's analysis suggests an octave of C in the 'note' column, and probably calculated

from the middle C. But a look at the 'cents' column disagrees
with such an assumption. For example, 15 cents is not commen-
surate with the value of middle C which is 4,800 cents on
the basis of Ellis' cent system (Sachs 1962: 24-25). On the
other hand, a note with 15 cents would be too low in pitch to
be audible. Nevertheless, where it is assumed that the low 'C'
refers to the middle 'C', the following logical deductions are
obtainable from the analysis:

Notes	Ellis' Cents	Difference	Echezona's Result
C'	= 1200	+ 25 =	1225
B	= 1100	=	1100
A	= 900	+ 28 =	928
G	= 700	- 5 =	695
F	= 500	- 10 =	490
E	= 400	- 2 =	398
D	= 200	+ 5 =	205
C = C_4	= 4800	+ 15 =	(4815)

Table V.   DEDUCTIONS FROM ECHEZONA'S ANALYSIS

On the other hand, Darius Thieme's findings are self
explanatory in the following statement:

> Another common Nigerian instrument of
> mbira family is the ubo-aka... the
> tuning is stepwise covering a span of
> an Augmented 7th roughly C# to B#.

>   (Thieme 1967: 45-46)

Thieme's account is (not as detailed as Echezona's)
with no explanation as to how he arrived at his conclusions.
However, the two analyses do agree on the stepwise tuning of

ụbọ-aka even though they disagree slightly on the range of an
octave. In this connection, there is no standardized range
of the set of keys especially in the light of different
tunings by different makers and individual performers. Thus
the disparity continues in the absence of standardization.

Registration of an instrument according to Draeger,
is determined by the production of the same pitch in different
timbres. This does not however apply to ụbọ-aka because there
is no variety in tibre when it has only one manual of keys
made of the same material. Such timbral difference could have
been possible if it had two or more manuals as in the case of
nyunga-nyunga mbira of the Shona people of Rhodesia (Kauffman
1970:82).

The tone colour depends on a number of factors: the
material of the vibrating prongs whether strips of iron, steel
or zinc; the thickness of the prong; the extent of smoothness
or roughness of the prong; the flexibility of the prong and
the voice quality of the tuner who tunes to imitate human
speech tones. In the light of all these combinations of factors
in each ụbọ-aka the tone colour is therefore variable.

Technique and Art of Playing

The instrument is held in both hands in a horizontal
position in such a way that the thumbs can comfortable pluck
the prongs. The other fingers are generally hooked behind the
wooden lid through the two holes in order to hold the instru-
ment. The gourd resonator is usually rested between the knees
or the laps while playing, and sometimes laid on the laps or

leant against something as well for extra support. Occasionally,

it can be held away from the rest of the body and played at

the same time. Performance can be done sitting or standing;

but sitting is preferred for good relaxation and concentration.

Beginners must know ·the· boundary between the left and

right thumbs as shown in Fig. 5.
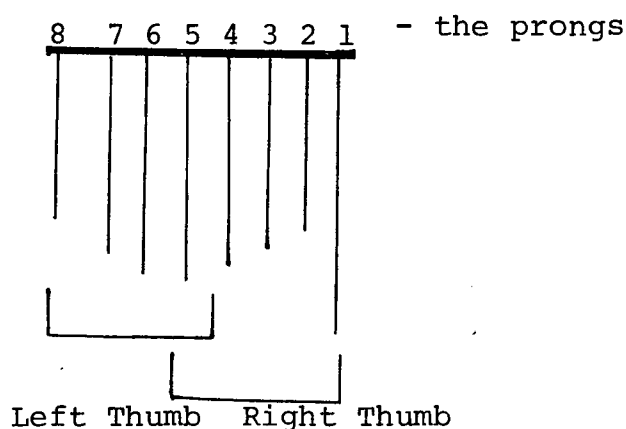
Fig.5. THE BOUNDARIES ON THE MANUAL

The fifth prong which is the second-longest about in the middle,

is common to both thumbs; thus, the left and the right thumbs

can play this in turns as it is not possible simultaneously.

The instrument is then played in any of the positions

already discussed with the left and right thumbs plucking the

notes in alternate rhythmic movements. It is clear aurally

that many tunes are simply played with alternating beats in

the left and right hands on the basic of a motor-action.

Repetition of rhythmic and melodic patterns is a common practice

which often characterizes the sounds. A continuous repetition

of a single tone is also a common feature.

When playing is accompanied with singing, the perfor-

mer picks his melody from the melodic patterns of the prongs

as well, thus the melodic combination of tones of the prongs dictates the vocal line. In short, the vocal parts sung to ụbọ-aka music are in disguise the melodic representations and adaptations of patterns heard and recognised in the ụbọ-aka part.

It is worth mentioning that the playing pattern can be repeated with different starting points and at different tempo, resulting in many different tunes. But in reality, these different tunes arise from a single melodic pattern of thumb movements. They sound like many different compositions but really are the same, only the starting notes differ from time to time. Andrew Tracey described this phenomena as 'kaleidophonic' in the following words:

> ... there are very different tunes contained in one song. A comparison springs to my mind with the kaleidoscope - the same bits of glass, looked at different ways can produce quite different pictures. So with this music which I call "kaleidophonic". (Tracey 1970:50)

Throughout, the thumbs pluck the prongs rhythmically in alternate movements. When the thumb plucks distinctly, it is described in Igbo language as itụ-ụbọ; when the tone is round, smooth and slightly muted, it is described as ibi-ụbọ; when the plucking is rough and heavy with the effect of coarseness in tone quality as a result of heavy pressure on the prongs, it is described as ntija-ụbọ which is bad playing. But occasionally, few sandy effects occur as a result of loose and rusty prongs. This effect can be created intentionally for a percussive dance-rhythm which corresponds to dance footings.

Another important technique of performance is when the player lays one of two of his fingers across the prongs

to mute the prongs while the thumbs pluck as shown in Plate 6.
This is described as <u>mbichi-ųbǫ</u>.

In addition, the fingers that have been passed in
between the soft wood and the calabash can be used to beat
out some rhythms simultaneously along with the usual plucking.
This technique is described as <u>iti-igba-nụbǫ</u> (drumming on ụbǫ-
aka). It is interesting that Berliner observed this drumming
technique among <u>mbira</u> players in Rhodesia (Berliner 1974: 65).

The personality of the performer is variable because
it is as conditional as it is psychological. For example, an
<u>ikolobia</u> (a young man) performer tunes and plays in a way that
suits the interest of the youths: more secular than spiritual.
But an <u>ǫzǫ</u> title-holder or <u>ndi-nze</u> who are the priests think
more about the spiritual and moral content of <u>ųbǫ-aka</u> music
when they play.

The Diagramatic Representation of <u>Ųbǫ-aka</u>

The visual representations on the organogram[5] include
the following details: the name of the instrument, socio-
cultural functions of the instrument, the external and the
internal shape of the instrument, the relationship between the
performer and the instrument, part of the instrument played,
part of the body that plays the instrument, owner of the instru-
ment, sex symbolism and associations, position of the performer
and the instrument, hardness scale (hs) of loudness, (Hs) of
quality, (Hs of density, (Hs) of technique, (Hs) of finishes,
(Hs) of motifs, (Hs) of values, (Hs) of pitch, etc. as shown
in Fig. 6.

PLATE 6. THE <u>MBICHI-ỤBỌ</u> (MUTING TECHNIQUE)
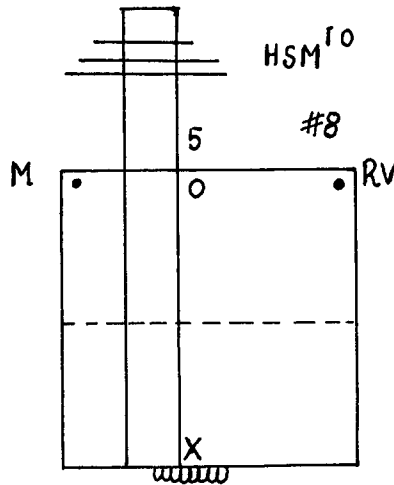
The square shape identifies the instru-
ment as an idiophone (Division I in the
Systematik), specifically a plucked
idiophone with a resonator. Description:
----= instrument played in horizontal
position; ꞷꞷꞷꞷ = instrument held between
player's hands; • • = instrument plucked
or played by the left and right thumb
(or hands); O = instrument played while
sitting; #8 = instrument has eight prongs
(or keys); HSM^{10} = material of the prongs
is metal; M = instrument played by male
only; RV = pitch is relative or variable;
5 = instrument body made of wood.

(Hood 1971: 144-174)

Fig. 6. THE APPLICATION OF HOOD'S ORGANOGRAM TO
UBQ-AKA

Construction and Tuning

The assemblage of materials for construction includes

the qba (a dry calabash or gourd), akwara (a wooden raffia

palm-string) or akwara-igwe (a metal string), metal strips

of either iron or steel, osisi-okwe ube or egbu (types of

soft white wood), nma (a knife), nkpisi (a long pointed metal

needle), anwilinwa (a sandy leaf -- a kind of natural sand

paper), two metal rods or wooden rods for the bridge, ntu

(metal nails).

Qba or agbugba (the gourd) which varies in diameter

can be cut longitudinally or latitudinally into two equal

halves. The seeds with the cellulose inside are all removed.

Then the cut-edge is smoothed with anwilinwa by rubbing the

sandy leaf several times against the edge to make it even.

A plank of okwe, egbu or akpu wood is constructed in such

a way to fit the top end of the calabash as shown in Fig. 7.
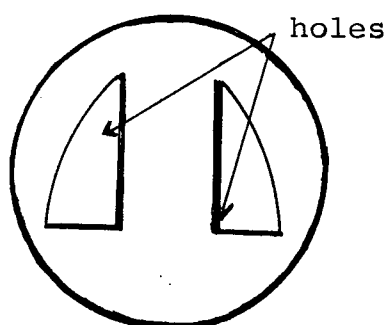
Fig. 7.   UBQ-AKA WOODEN LID.

The two semi-circular holes or openings are cut on opposite

sides of the soft wooden lid so that the fingers of the right

and left hands can fit well into them. On top of the fitted

white soft wood is a bridge constructed out of two short

parallel metal rods or wooden rods of about 2" - 3" long

laid horizontally about 1 1/4" apart. Between the two

parallel bridges are nine holes bored by a red-hot steel

needle usually prepared by the blacksmiths. Then on the

bridges are the eight metal prongs arranged in a vertical

position parallel to one   other and evenly spaced at approxi-

mately 1/4" apart. Through the nine bored holes, the eight

prongs are secured to the wooden lid and fixed to position

by tying them firmly with a piece of <u>akwara</u> (a wooden string)
or a metal string through the holes as shown in Fig. 8.

A = first bridge

B = fixed string

C = 2nd bridge
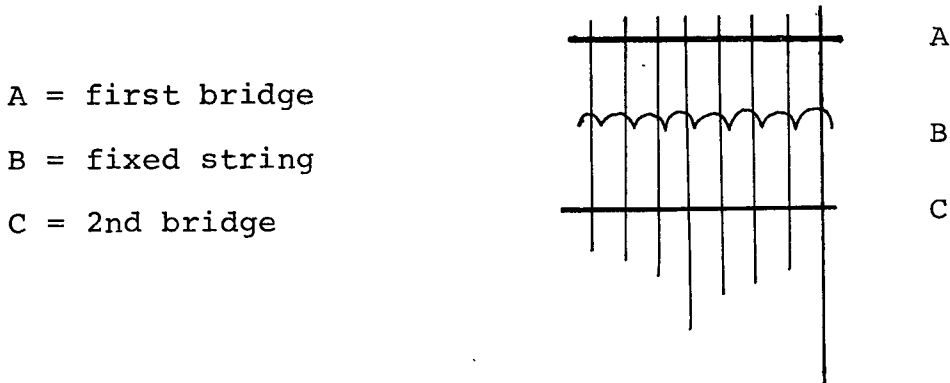
Fig. 8. THE FIXING OF THE PRONGS.

Echezona's description of this stage of construction
is also very illuminating:

> The pieces of metal (prongs) are fixed in
> in position by tying them with a piece
> of string through the holes. These
> strings are the types which are often
> found on a palm-wine tree <u>akwara</u>. Two
> pieces of metal about one-tenth of an
> inch in diameter are put across on
> either side of the string and under the
> pieces of metal. This raises the play-
> able part and gives it springness.
>
> (Echezona 1963: 95).

Thus the bridges help to raise the free end of the
prongs in a playing position. Today, the availability of
bicycle spokes, motor cycle spokes and the umbrella frames
saves the blacksmiths the trouble of cutting strips from
steel or iron. The right length of each prong can therefore
be cut out of these spokes, then flattened and used as the
prongs.

The lengths of the prongs produce variable pitches:

the longer the prong, the lower the pitch; the shorter the
prong, the higher the pitch. For example, the more each
prong is moved towards the semicircular openings, the lower
the pitch, and the more each prong is pushed backwards away
from the openings, the higher the pitch. Bearing this
principle in mind, the maker tunes the instrument to imitate
the tonal inflection of the human voice with the result that
the instrument can talk. We shall come to this later under
the linguistic determinant of the tones.

The tuning of ubǫ-aka prongs (in common with every
other musical instrument) can therefore be considered as
depending upon three practical physical factors: length,
weight and flexibility. Each one of these three affects the
pitch of the prong. The more of each quality, the deeper
the pitch: if a prong is either longer, heavier or more
flexible, it will be deeper in pitch and the converse is
also true (Andrew Tracey 1969: 96). Therefore, the ubǫ-aka
musicians tune their instruments in irregular order through
some system of their own which is usually linguistically
determined.

Two levels of tuning can be observed: the initial
tuning by the maker and the day-to-day tuning before perform-
ing. The maker's tuning begins with the making and the
arrangement of the prongs. Thus in the making, he bears in
mind the length, weight and flexibility of the prongs. The
entire sequence of making the prongs runs as follows. On the
wooden lid, the maker marks the positions, the boundaries and
the extent of the prongs. Then choosing a certain prong, he

cuts appropriate lengths of strips of iron, steel or wire.
As stated previously, sometimes the spokes of umbrella,
bicycle, motor cycles or the ordinary galvanized iron
lengths are used in making the prongs. With the help of a
heavy hammer, the wires are beaten flat to the approximate
thickness needed. The edges are then filed or ground to an
agreeable shape depending on the prong and the tone intended.
Besides,strips of prongs must be filed to make them smooth
and safe for plucking.

Tuning process proceeds along the following lines:
the prong is placed on the bridge-rods at the right playing
lengths as marked on the sound board, and played to assess
the tone. The exact tone may not result at this isolated
situation of activation. Chances of adjustment to the right
pitch are many. In this connection tuning can continue
by filing or grinding in the appropriate places namely, the
sides, the flat-top or the hinder ends in order to effect
changes in length, weight and flexibility. Adjustments
between high and low tones may continue until the right pitch
results. In some cases, the maker finds it difficult to get
the required tone because of either over filing or flattening
with the result that a new prong had to be beaten out for a
fresh start. To be on the safe side, it is much better when
a prong is sharper at the initial stage; there is almost no
limit to the extent of flattening a prong. When all the
prongs are arranged as shown in Fig. 8, the maker plays them
in relation to one another to determine whether they are in
tune or not. He can play one of his best songs on it, and

listen carefully to ascertain whether it sounds as usual in
line with his normal fingering. In this way, the wrong
prong can easily be detected for further adjustments until
the right pitch results in association. The laying out of
the maker's tuning is shown in Figure 9.

The performer's tuning is primarily linguistically
determined within the technological limitations of the instru-
ment. It is usually a daily tuning-up activity depending on
what the player wants to communicate. The statements he wants
to make through the prongs, determine the tuning arrangements.
However, there is no special tuning for certain songs which
is binding on the players. It is always personal and lingu-
istic. The tuning is mostly by shortening and lengthening
the prongs through forward and backward pushing until the
right pitch results. Occasionally, he readjusts the prongs
slightly for each succeeding tune in order to communicate
accurately, unless he simply wants to beat out some dance
rhythms without any intention to talk through the prongs.

The tuning technique of the Igbo u̱bo̱-aka is limited
when compared with the tuning devices in Angola, Cameroun
and Rhodesia where a method of lowering a tone is by adding
extra weight of a small amount of sticky wax on tips of the
prongs (Tracey 1969: 98). This method makes it possible
even to make all the prongs equal in length as on the big
Cameroon's timbili which is tuned by adding varying amounts
of wax (Tracey 1969: 98). In this connection, waxing saves
the trouble of hammering, filing and shortening the length,
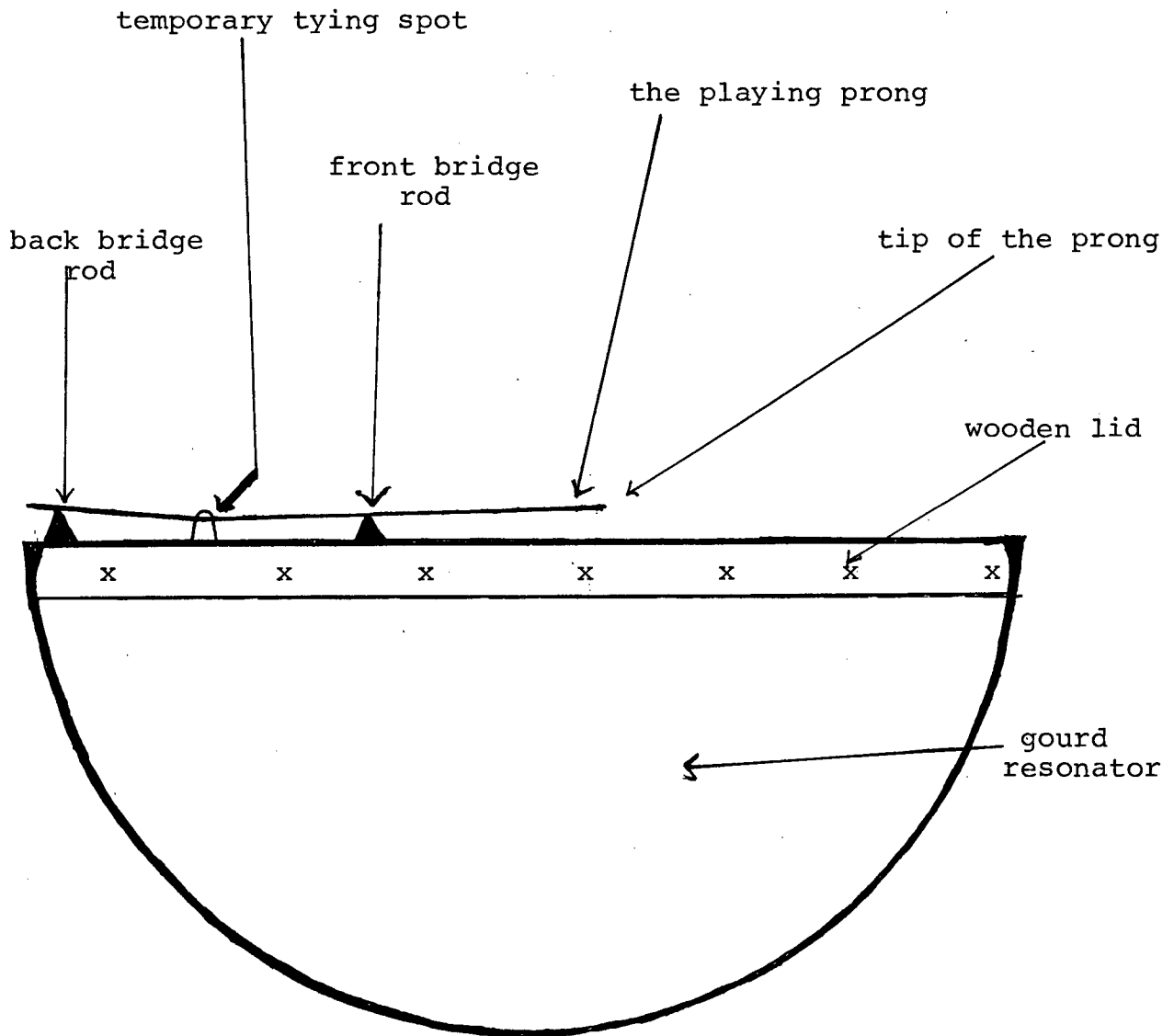
FIG. 9.   THE LAYING OUT OF MAKER'S TUNING

a device unknown to ụbọ-aka players in Igbo land. In conclus-
ion, there is no doubt that the makers and the players tune
on the basis of sound knowledge of physical and acoustical
principles which is latently functional.

The Distribution of Ụbọ-aka in Africa and Beyond

Ụbọ-aka-has a long history which cannot easily be
ascertained because of scarce written documents on the subject.
But archaelogical discoveries have thrown some light on this
matter. For example, excavations in Zimbabwe uncovered numerous
iron implements some of which resemble parts of mbira. The
finds were dated 9th to 10th century A.D. (Andrew Tracey 1970:1).
The description of ụbọ-aka under the name ambira appeared for
the first time in 1609, in father Jao dos Santos' Ethiopia
Oriental:

> These Kaffirs have another musical
> instrument also called Ambira...it
> is all made of iron instead of gourds
> being composed of narrow flat rods
> of iron about a palm in length tem-
> pered in the fire so that each has a
> different sound. There are only nine
> of these rods, placed in a row close
> together with the ends nailed to a
> piece of wood which is shaped like a
> bowl above which the other ends of
> the rods are suspended in the air.
> The Kaffirs play upon this instrument
> by striking the loose ends of the rods
> with their thumb nails which they
> allow to grow long for that purpose
> and they strike the keys as lightly
> as a good player strikes those of
> harpischord.
>
> (Theal 1901: 202).

The <u>ambira</u> of the Kaffirs of Mozambique in the light
of the above physical description, are close to Igbo <u>ubo̩</u>-<u>aka</u>
except the difference in the number of prongs: the eight and
nine metal prongs of the Igbo and the Kaffirs respectively.
The bowl-shaped wooden resonator is likely to be a gourd reson-
ator which naturally looks like a bowl. A description of
<u>ubo̩</u>-<u>aka</u> with a gourd resonator was contained in the first
published drawing of <u>mbira</u> in 1865 by David Livingstone
(Berliner 1974: 110). The account of his hearing <u>ubo̩</u>-<u>aka</u>
during his travels in Black Africa, runs as follows:

> ...David Livingstone heard it played
> by a native poet who had joined his
> party composing in honour of the white
> man and playing and singing whenever
> a halt is made.

(Theal 1901: 201).

In Niger delta areas of south-eastern Nigeria, the
Igbo slaves probably spread the <u>ubo̩</u>-<u>aka</u> to the inhabitants of
these regions and later to West Indies, the Carribeans and
Brazil. This view is shared by Echezo̩na in the following
statement:

> Ubo̩ was introduced to Niger Delta by
> the Ibo slaves who were taken there
> awaiting shipment to America. They
> still call the instrument ubo̩, despite
> the fact that they do not normally
> speak Igbo.

(Echezo̩na 1963: 90).

Among the Igbo people today, <u>ubo̩</u>-<u>aka</u> is known by
different names such as <u>ikpa</u> among Aba, Owerri and Okigwe areas;
<u>ubo̩</u>-<u>o̩ba</u> or <u>ubo̩</u>-<u>aka</u> among Nri, Nsukka, Udi, Onitsha, Enugu and

a large area of Igbo land; but ụbọ-aka is the most popular name

for the instrument.

In western Nigeria, two different types of ụbọ-aka

exist among the Yoruba people. They are called agidigbo and

molo with difference in organological structure. For example,

agidigbo has five metal prongs with a large wooden box resonator

while molo possesses five bamboo playing thongs with a decor-

ated gourd resonator of small size (Thieme 1967: 42-43).

Apart from its wide distribution in Congo and Rhodesia-

Mozambique areas (Kauffmann 1970: 74), it is also found in large

scale under different names in the following areas of the world:

the Congo square of New Orleans under the name, marimba-brett

(Cable 1886: 519); Cuba and Haita, where it is called marimba,

malimba or marimbula (Courlander 1942: 240); Java, with the

name kowangan (Kunst 1949: 431-2); Brazil, where it is called

marimbula (Thiermann 1971:: 90); the Carribean Lands where it

is popularly known as marimbula or marimbola (Thompson 1975:

140-148) etc. In addition, the Alur and other tribes of west

Nile claim that sanza reached them from Congo (Wachsmann

1953: 327).

The generic names for ụbọ-aka have been studied and

compiled by the following scholars: Gerhard Kubik in his

"Generic names for the mbira" (1974); Hugh Tracey in his "The

Mbira Class of African Instruments in Rhodesia" (1970); Andrew

Tracey's "The Original African Mbira" (1972); David Thiermann

in his "The Mbira in Brazil" (1971); Darius Thieme in his

"Three Yoruba Members of the _Mbira-Sanza_ family" (1967) etc.
A selected different names for ụbọ-aka in some parts of black
Africa and the world, is shown in Table VI.

There is no doubt that from the few examples in Table
VI, that ụbọ-aka under generic names, is a popular instrument in
black Africa and some other parts of the world already discussed.
Their socio-cultural roles and features may vary in most cases
due to adaptations to ecological limitations and cross-cultural
influence following migrations and social interaction. For a
clear perspective of the extent of distribution, a map showing
an approximated distribution of ụbọ-aka throughout black Africa
is provided in Fig. 10.[7]

Summary

The physical characteristics of ụbọ-aka is discussed
on the basis of Draeger's and Hood's organological systems.
These concepts provided the steps for ordering thoughts about
the physical and socio-cultural traits of the instrument, using
the nine descrptive categories and the organograph.

There is no doubt that the systems used in this chapter
helped in many ways. They provided the means of discussing
essential features of the instrument in details. Thus, they
have descriptive scope. The suitability of Draeger's system
lies in its scope for a comprehensive information on the
physical properties of an instrument which at the same time,
provides a useful guide for teaching and learning the features
along with extra-musical aspects. On the other hand, Hood's

GENERIC NAMES	COUNTRY	TRIBE/PEOPLE	NO. OF PRONGS	RESONATOR
Ụbọ-aka	Nigeria	Igbo	8	gourd
Ụbọ-ọba	"	"	"	"
Ikpa	"	"	"	"
Agidigbo	"	Yoruba	5	wooden box
Molo	"	"	"	gourd
Akembe	Uganda	Iteso/Lango	12	wooden box
Alikembe	"	Alur	8 - 12	" "
Sanza	"	Alur/Lango	8	" "
Chitata	Mozambique	Ashirima	7	board + gourd resonator
Kidongo	Congo	Logo	10 - 12	wooden box
Lukembe	Congo/Uganda	Bawo/Alur	10	" "
Malimba	Tanzania	Wagogo	22,23,32	large wooden box
Marimba	"	Wakisi	8	wooden box
Mbira	Rhodesia	the people	8 - 20	" "
	Gabon	" "	"	" "
	Angola	" "	"	" "
Marimbula	Haiti/Cuba)	" "	3 - 8	" "
	Brazil/) Carribeans)			
Kowangan	Indonesia	Javanese	5 - 8	hat-like bowl

TABLE VI.   DIFFERENT NAMES AND FEATURES OF ỤBỌ-AKA
IN SOME PARTS OF AFRICA AND WORLD[6]
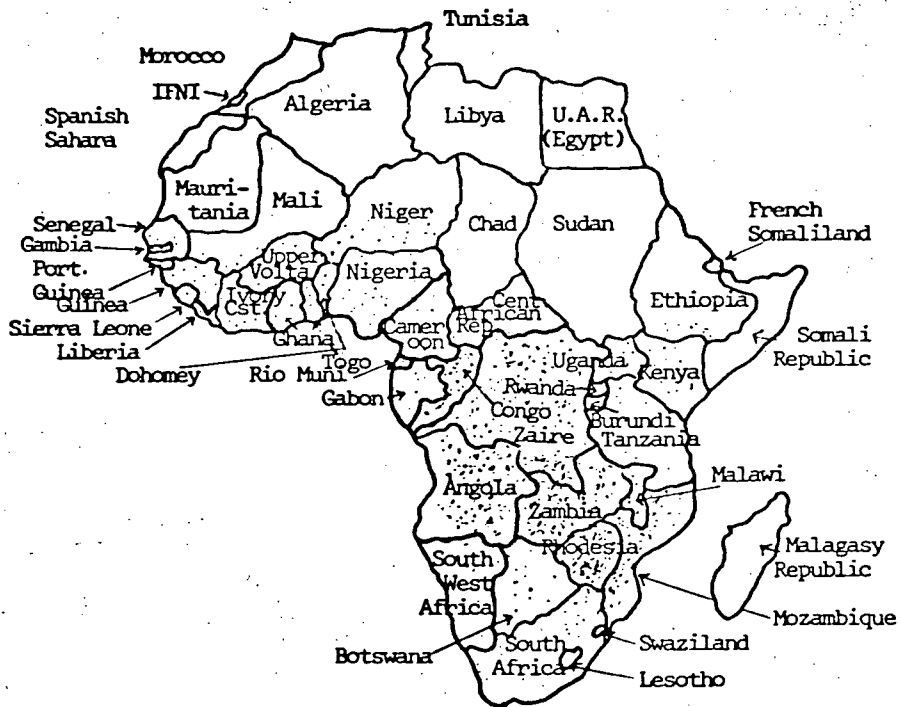
Fig. 10. THE APPROXIMATE DISTRIBUTION OF UBQ-AKA IN AFRICA
(Indicated with Black Dots)
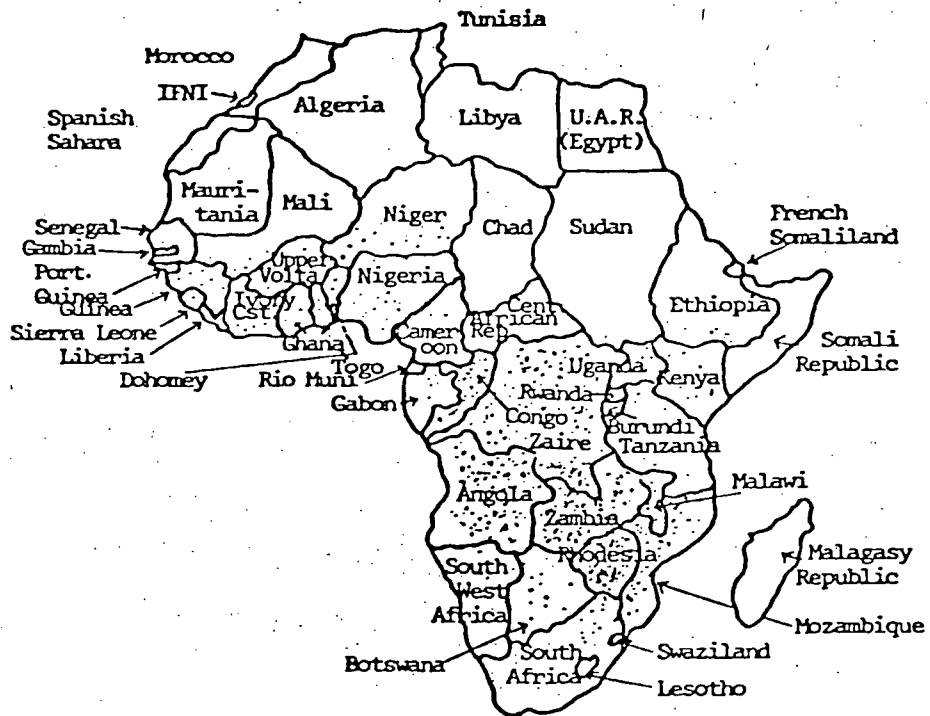
Fig. 10. THE APPROXIMATE DISTRIBUTION OF ỤBQ-AKA IN AFRICA
(Indicated with Black Dots)

Fig. 10. THE APPROXIMATE DISTRIBUTION OF ὐBQ-AKA IN AFRICA
(Indicated with Black Dots)

system is more adaptable to orderly classification and characterization on the basis of numerical category of the 'systematik'. It has also the advantage of economy of space, figuration and perspective. However, the limitations of the two systems cannot be denied. For example, Hood's system uses too many symbols which are not easily memorable for quick recognition and reference while Draeger's system poses a problem with the inclusion of performer's personality and condition which cannot always be ascertained. But since this study focuses on a single instrument, these problems do not arise because the principal objective is to provide a detailed physical and socio-cultural manifestations for a clear identity of the instrument. In this connection, a combination of the two systems meets the requirements for a detailed organological study of ubọ-aka.

The techniques of construction and tuning are not difficult provided the correct materials are available. Therefore, the maker has to consider ecological factors in terms of construction materials. Tuning, requires some knowledge of construction procedure, playing technique, aural perception and linguistic considerations for effective result.

In the playing technique, it has been shown that a number of factors have to be considered. For instance, competence in the organological knowledge of the instrument and knowledge of playing and fingering techniques are the prerequisites. Further, acquirement of skills for stylistic devices, treatment of tones and dynamics with a sense of rhythm, are factors for proficiency in performance.

The wide distribution of ụbọ-aka under different names and shapes,is evident in many parts of the world especially in Africa and the Carribeans. This resulted from migrations and cultural interactions of peoples in the past. Altogether, this instrument has been studied extensively by ethnomusicologists especially in several parts of Africa and the Caribbeans. Among Nri people, it is an instrument with long history and rich tradition.

Footnotes

1. Organology, is the science of physical description and the study of structures of musical instruments which has expanded to include the techniques of performance, musical function, decoration as distinct from construction and a variety of socio-cultural considerations (Hood 1971: 124). It is a term borrowed from the biological sciences where it refers to the study of physiological organs of plants and animals.

2. Systematik, is a classification system for musical instruments by Sachs and Hornbostel based on Dewey decimal system under the following four main divisions: 1. Idiophone, 2. Membranophone, 3. Chordophone, 4. Aerophones. The subdivisions are based only on those features which can be identified from the visible form of the instrument (Sachs and Hornbostel 1961: 10-12).

3. Ibo was an alternative spelling for 'Igbo' in the colonial days. It is an anglicized form of 'Igbo'. To-date, overwhelming majority of Igbo people prefer the form Igbo which is the indigenous form, in contradistinction to 'Ibo' which is wrong in the context of Igbo language.

4. Mbira dza vadzimu is the mbira of the ancestral spirits which is one of the many types of mbiras among the Shona people of Rhodesia. It is one of the oldest types of mbira among the people with hand-forged iron reeds and a board resonator.

5. Organogram is an organological system devised by Mantle Hood, an ethnomusicologist. This is a diagramatic representation of a musical instrument with physical and socio-cultural descriptions, categorized on the basis of the 'systematik'.

6. The generic names for ubǫ-aka in some parts of Africa and the world, is compiled from combined sources of publications by the following ethnomusicologists: Darius Thieme (1967), David Thiermann (1971), Kunst (1949), Andrew Tracey (1972), Hugh Tracey (1970), Gerhard Kubik (1974), Paul Berliner (1974), Thompson (1975), etc.

7. The distribution map of ubǫ-aka or mbira is from Berliner's thesis: The Soul of Mbira: An Ethnography of the Mbira Among the Shona People of Rhodesia, 1974, Ph.D. disseration in music, Wesleyan University. p.52.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL ROLE OF UBỌ-AKA MUSIC

Ubọ-aka music is primarily a communication medium
because the eight prongs of the instrument are linguistically
tuned to imitate the rise and fall of human speech tone as
defined by Igbo tonal language. As a result, the music of
ubọ-aka is used to convey information including that of
current happenings, moral instruction, praise, proverbial
and idiomatic expressions, religious, funeral and marriage
statements, as well as being part of age grade activities
such as wake-keeping, nightwatching and various recreational
activities. In addition, ubọ-aka music is used for sociali-
zation. In the following discussion, selected poetic song
texts of music examples for each social category are pro-
vided with brief explanations.

The line of inquiry in this chapter proceeds from
the determinants of socio-cultural roles including types of
social functions, learning to play the ubọ-aka, musicianship
and social status, social interaction among the players and
the audience with discussion on the contemporary situation.

Ubọ-aka Socio-cultural Determinant

Igbo Tonal Language

The primary determinant of ubọ-aka music as a
communication medium is linguistic because of the tonal char-
acteristics of Igbo Language which control the tuning. This
tonal inflection of the words or language call to mind

corresponding successions of musical tones which organize
themselves into patterns of speech and rhythm. Thus as a
tonal language, the relative pitch at which a syllable is
uttered affects the meaning. A word may have one meaning if
uttered at a relatively low pitch, another meaning, if uttered
at a relatively high pitch, and with possibly more meanings
depending on the levels of inflections. For example, the
following Igbo words illustrate the effect of tonal charac-
teristics depending on how the syllables are raised and
lowered with accentuation resulting in multi-meanings:

ákwà (high-low tone-band) = cloth

àkwá (low-high tone-band) = egg

ákwá (high-high tone-band)= crying, weeping or
                                      mourning

àkwà (low-low tone-band) = a bed

éze (high-mid tone-band) = tooth, teeth

ézè (high-low tone-band) - King

ísí (high-high tone-band)= head

ísì (high-low tone-band) = smell

ìsì (low-low tone-band) = blindness.

As a result, the meaning of an Igbo word depends to
a large extent, on the descending or ascending linguistic
intonation hence, if a word is to be intelligible, the
individual syllables cannot be sung arbitrarily high or low.
This is quite unlike the practice "in European language where
we expect a co-ordination of speech accent and musical accent
in song but we do not expect the melody or song to follow the

intonation of speech" (List 1963: 16). The apparent corre-
lation between the melodic contour and the rising, falling
and stepping speech tones, will be discussed in detail in
the analysis of music examples.

As a result of this linguistic characteristics of
the tuning of the instrument, the players usually go about
the town collecting current news which they compose into ubo-
aka music. "Then in the evenings when people come back from
work and are perhaps sitting around enjoying their palm wine"
in the moonlight or resting at the obu (the patrilocal guest-
room and temple), the performers "extemporize both the music
and the words telling people such news as they have gathered."
In those times, there were no traditional newspapers or radios
as in the contemporary situation. So, it is well-known that
if people hear faint strains of ubo-aka music in the evenings,
"they drift nearer so as to hear the latest news," moral
instructions, and proverbial and idiomatic expressions which
people can decipher from the musical statements of ubo-aka.
Thus, an ubo-aka player is a traditional poet who composes his
poems out of current events, past incidents, stories, sayings
and belief within the parameters of his social environment
(Echezona 1963: 106).

Aesthetics

The basic meaning of aesthetics involves a close
relationship to 'sense perception' based on a society's under-
standing of its creative, artistic or skillful processes which
involves morphological, psychological and cultural assessments
(Kauffmann 1969: 507-8). In this connection, the study of the

Igbo concept of aesthetics in ubo-aka music can start with an
investigation of the nature of sense perception. For example,
the meaning of various Igbo sense verbs is very illuminating:
ifu means to see, metu means to touch, dee-nile means to taste,
isi means to smell, and nu means to hear. The whole concept
is based on the fact that there is little that belongs to one
sense alone; movement can be seen, heard and touched.
Although the ubo-aka players say that feeling is more important
to them than hearing, the listeners maintain that their hearing
is more important. Also, there are Igbo words for describing
a work of art. For example, ikwa-nka is used to describe a
beautiful decorated object, a well-told story, or a highly
skilled music performance such as a display of virtuosity on
the ubo-aka. Such a highly skilled creator, performer or
artist is called onye-nka. Creativity is based on doing the
"extra-ordinary" so that in ubo-aka music, the ikwa-nka or
ima-mma of it depends on the impression of ikwa-nka in all
manifestations in extra-ordinary playing skill, beautiful
designs on the ubo-aka, musical suitability for the occasion
and successful fulfillment of the socio-cultural function.
As well, the over-all impression of the performer: facial
expression, appearance, the touch of the thumbs on the prongs,
and other communicative relations established by various kinds
of signals, symbols, and techniques are all significant in
achieving the aesthetic satisfaction as defined by the society's
musical taste and appreciation.

Age and Sex

Only men are allowed to play this instrument because
of its socio-cultural role of talking in the public. This is
so because only men, as determined by the patrilineal nature
of the social organization, are allowed to advise and teach
the public or inform the community of news in the open.
Women are not allowed to play the ụbọ-aka for many reasons as
defined by the society. It is believed that ụbọ-aka can make
a woman sensuous by exposing her to many lovers because of the
attractive power of the instrument. Secondly, it can cause
a woman to wander from place to place in search of news which
may lead to waywardness and disregard to the domestic role
of women in the society. Women are expected to be at home at
the right time and to look after their children and family.
They are not supposed to teach or comment publicly on social
issues which is a male role and which is one of the functions
of ụbọ-aka music from time to time. In addition, there is
a belief that a woman can be carried away and be exposed to
the influence of evil spirits which may cause barreness and
misfortune or even lead to unfaithfulness. In extreme cases,
women may not be allowed to touch the instrument, especially
one inherited from a sacred dead ancestor and which can be
used as a spiritual medium. As a result, women have never
played the ụbọ-aka in Nri culture.

On the other hand, children irrespective of sex who
have not passed the age of puberty, are not allowed to play

the instrument. Playing ụbọ-aka is believed capable of spoil-
ing their brains through the influence of evil spirits and can
draw them away from homes, thereby exposing them to bad company.
This situation is always to be avoided because children as de-
fined by the mores and norms of the society are supposed to
remain close to their parents for both domestic work and moral
instruction.

On the whole, women and children can only listen to
the music or dance to it. A woman can only dance and listen
to the music when she is through with her domestic work in the
evenings or during the festivals of general rejoicing such as
ọnwa-asatọ (the festival of the eighth month) or igụ-arọ
(counting the year).

Ụbọ-aka Music and Socialization

The meaning of the term 'socialization' has been
controversial among anthropologists. For example, some under-
stand it to mean "the process by which culture is transmitted
from one generation to another"; or how a younger person
attains adulthood and the experiences of his or her society,
age-grade and sex. People like Kluckholm understand it to
mean 'culturalization' (1935) while Herskovits suggested
'enculturation' (1948) (Whiting 1968: 545). However, for our
discussion, we can (by deductive reasoning) use it as a process
by which culture is formally or informally learned or trans-
mitted beginning with the early education of the child through
manhood.

Therefore the early socialization through the ubọ-aka music is effected through transmission of musical oral tradition to the child from the early stage of child rearing by the mother, the baby-sitter, and the community at large. In this process the words, tones, vocabularies, the musical style and the rhythmic concept of the society is inculcated into the child. The mother, the baby nurse, or a relative achieves this by taking the child to a place where the ubọ-aka is played in the evenings. The taking of the infant to the performance is often not so much for the education of the child as it is for the delight and entertainment of the adult who takes him to the spot. But the child learns first by assimilation until a time when he can learn through practice and active participupation. Thus, at the stage of participation in the music such as by dancing to the tempo of ubọ-aka music, he is able to learn the rhythmic concepts, stylistic devices and form structures of ubọ-aka music gradually without formal instruction. Even some mothers who dance to the ubọ-aka music, carry their infants within ubọ-aka musical environment within which the infant grows gradually in the knowledge of the tone-colour, the rhythmic concepts, melodic structure, tempo, and stylistic structure of ubọ-aka music.

As the child grows with the knowledge of the Igbo language, he is better able to understand the language of ubọ-aka and thereby begins to learn the mores and norms of the society. For example, much of what the writer knows about the technique of performance had been inculcated to him during childhood by watching the players' performances and

listening to the ụbọ-aka music. Thus the writer grew with

the music and could recognize the tone-colour of ụbọ-aka from

a distance. The adults, on the other hand, learn a lot about

the mores and norms of the society through listening to the

information, story-telling, proverbial and idiomatic state-

ments conveyed through the language of ụbọ-aka music. Thus

the society's folkways are transmitted orally from one genera-

tion to another.

The pivot of the relationship of ụbọ-aka music with

the social organization lies on the role of ụbọ-aka as a

symbol of masculinity and manhood which are both patrilineally

defined and determined. This phenomenon of ụbọ-aka is parallel

to the two dominant themes of social organization among Nri

people: the umunna and the ikwunne concepts which are based

on the principles of localized patrilineage with emphasis on

masculinity over feminity.

The patrilineal nature of the social organization

determines where the instrument can be performed. For example,

the ụbọ-aka player as defined by the social law may perform

only in his umunna or ikunne within areas defined by the

system of patrilineage. As a result the player may only perform

at the obu (father's temple, guestroom) but never inside the

nkpuke (mother's house). The performer can also perform in

the mbala (open place) which is neutral or at the obu-Eze

(King's palace) or at the age-grade assembly or during the ọzọ-

title ceremony (the men's title of honour and high social status)

but never at the girls' initiation ceremony or the female age-

grade meeting, etc. Even during social ceremonies such as

marriage or funeral, the performer sits within the area of the males and never within the area of the females.

On the whole, what constitutes good, well accepted ubo-aka music is determined primarily by its fulfillment of its linguistic abilities: the ability to talk and communicate clearly in Igbo language, in addition to fulfilling all the socio-cultural and aesthetic roles at the right time and at the right place as defined by the society.

Further, the walking pace, dance rhythm and rhythmic sense of the performer affect the tempo, style and form of each social category of ubo-aka music. In this connection, the correlation of the music with its role or function is to a certain extent dependent on the performer's interpretation and expression. For example, the funeral music is always slow and moody in order to generate the feeling of sympathy; marriage music is always lively with leaping and joyful rhythm with several repetitions of the same melodic ideas from time to time; religious music is very calm and reverent and proceeds at a moderately slow tempo; praise music is very energetic, lively, fast and noble while the proverbial and idiomatic expressions are full of repetitions of the same melodic pattern in order to perpetuate the message.

Social Function and Activities

The social function of ubo-aka music can be well understood in relation to its meaning to the folks who make and enjoy the music. There is no absolute conception of the music as such; it is always connected with words and, therefore, it

is an expression of different moods and situations. Secondly, ubǫ-aka music can be looked at in terms of its psychological aspects insofar as it acts as a stimulus to action and re-action among Nri people. Thus it seems imperative that before a person can understand the music, he or she must understand the context of performance as defined by the society.

Thus in Nri tradition, the categorization of the social functions of ubǫ-aka music can be studied under the following headings: religion, information, ethics, marriage, funeral, praise, proverbs and age-grade activities.

Religion

Religious music normally refers to the gods of the land or the spirit world as a means of praying to the ancestors or calling for the intervention of the gods to counteract evil in the society. Sometimes, it refers to ritual ceremonies or hidden evils and conspiracy among the people. This type of music can be played by any pious individual in the society who may be a man with traditional titles. The poetic text of music Example 1 is very illuminating.

Example 1. NIRU IYIO (Before the god of oath)

Igbo Language	English translation
Niru iyio	Before the god of oath) 4 times
Kejebe ejebe	Let us immediately go)
Niru itao	Before the revealing-diviner of secrets
Kejebe ejebe	Let us immediately go
Niru mmǫ	Before the spirit
Kejebe ejebe	Let us immediately go
Niru alusi	Before the god (the metaphysical forces)

Kejebe ejebe	Let us immediately go
Kejebe ejebe	Let us immediately go
Alu eme	Evil happened
Niru Alusi	Before the god
Kejebe ejebe	Let us immediately go.[2]

The above ubọ-aka music is about a religious oath-taking ritual which would take place the next day during which accusers stand facing the iyi or alusi (the god of oath) before the officiating priest to take the oath against an accusation of having stolen a goat in the neighbourhood which everybody is denying. It is believed that the thief will be killed through metaphysical forces if he takes the oath by false pretence.

Current Events

This includes statements or comments on local news which relate to daily incidents that involve individuals or groups in the society. For instance, the text of music Example 7 is as follows:

Example 7.   ALU KA OMELU (He has done evil)

Igbo Language	English translation
Alu ka ome n'e n'uwa	He has done evil in the world
Alu ka ome	He has done evil
Ọfu ife	He will see something
Alu ka ome	He has done evil
Ọ lua ana	He has defiled the land
Alu ka omelu zobe ya	He has done evil and is hiding it.

The above ubọ-aka music refers to the evil done by a member of the community who committed adultery awith his neighbour's wife which is an abomination in the community. As

the information goes on through the ụbọ-aka music, the hearers

begin asking one another who did this evil in the midst of

which the name is released. This generates further discussion

and gossip about the individual beyond the evil he has done

and stimulates a re-examination of his character and past

deeds.

Ethics

Good behaviour and high moral values are stressed in

the society through various communication media. Thus

individuals with good character and high moral standards are

worthy of respect and emulation. In this connection, moral

instruction begins with the training of a child in order to

produce well-behaved individuals in the society. The follow-

ing text of music example 17 is clear.

Example 17.   EZIGBO NWA (The good child)

Igbo language	English translation
Ezigbo nwa ka ụbọ n'akpọ	A good child is called by the instrument (three times)
Ejegwo egwu na eke	We have danced at eke market square
Ezigbo nwa ka ụbọ n'akpo	A good child is called by the instrument
Anyi ejegwo egwu na nkwọ	We have danced at nkwọ market day
Ezigbo nwa ka ụbọ n'akpọ	A good child is called by the instrument
Ka ọbala anyi na gi	Let the child be useful to us
Okwa n'anyi n'ekwu	We are the people talking
Ezigbo nwa ka ụbọ n'akpọ	A good child is called by the instrument.

The ethical value of this text lies in teaching the children who usually love to listen to ụbọ-aka music that it is only when a child is well behaved that he or she is useful to the community. Indirectly, the text reminds mothers who come in the evenings to listen to ụbọ-aka music of their responsibility in raising well-behaved children for the good of the society.

Marriage and Funeral

Often, ụbọ-aka music includes statements that refer to courtship, faithfulness, obedience, joyful experiences and expectations in married life. For example, the text of music Example 23, represents love and expectations in married life.

Igbo language	English translation
Nee obim nuwa	Look at my heart in this world
Nee obim	Look at my heart
Ibu obim nuwa	You are my heart in this world
Ego di nuno	Money is at home
Ji di nuno	Yam is at home
Ngotelu gi akwa	I will provide you with clothing.

It is a courtship song which can lead to marriage with the approval of the parents of the intended couple. In addition, the poetic text shows the economic security and guarantee expected of the man who wants to marry. This is necessary because the suitor is expected to be economically viable, among other requirements, in order to qualify for marriage.

Ụbọ-aka music is normally not a part of funeral ceremony proper, instead, it is simply a way of expressing

sympathy to the bereaved who may be personal friends of the performer. Sometimes individuals use ụbọ-aka music in mourning for their loved ones who passed away. The text of music Example 13 expressed sympathy for the bereaved.

Example 13.   IFU IFE ỌNWU NEME
(You see what death does)

Igbo language	English translation	
Ifu ife ọnwu n'eme	You see what death does	
n'eme n'uwa	What it does in the world	
Ifu ife ọnwu n'eme n'uwa	You see what death does)	
Dibe na omerago	Take heart for it has happened)	) twice
Ife ọnwu n'eme	What death does	
Ife ọnwu n'eme, do	What death does, be consoled.	

This is to console and express sympathy to the bereaved family. In some cases the ụbọ-aka player plays with tears rolling down his cheeks in order to effect the psychological and emotional content. The weeping player is very much appreciated and respected in the society.

Praise and Proverbs

Praise songs are composed purposely for making the society aware of the great deeds or noble roles of heroes in the community. Most of the times, praise songs are politically determined in order to promote the popularity of the hero. In the majority of cases, such compositions have been in honour of rich men of high social status. The poor have never been praised in songs as the rich have been. Of course, it

is usually the poor person who composes in praise of the rich.
The text of Example 27, is in praise of the King.

Example 27. ODOGWU N'AGHA (The great in war).

Igbo Language	English translation
Eze n'ulu onum	The King listen to my voice
Odogwu n'agha	You the great in war
Eze okwa gi na edozi obodo	The King you are the repairer of the community
Eze okwa gi na edozili anyi okwu	The King you are the one who settles disputes for us
Odogwu n'agha	The great in war
Eze ogbu efi ogalanya	The King, you the killer of cows, the rich
Odogwu n'agha	The great in war
Eze Igwe ka ana	The King, the sky that is higher than the land
Eze okwa gi n'achi ayi	The King, you are the one who rules us
Odogwu n'agha	The great in war

This is a praise song for the Eze-Nri (the King of
Nri), in which the noble, social and political role of the
King is epitomized by the ubo-aka player. Odogwu n'agha (i.e.,
the great in war) is metaphorically stated referring to the
social evils in the society which the King fights, and not to
warfare because the King, by tradition, does not go to war,
neither does he encourage war; instead, he settles disputes
among other peoples and towns within Nri hegemony. This music
is specifically for the King and must be performed in the King's
palace only during visits by the musician or on special
festival occasions such as igu-aro festival (counting the year)
or at the onwa-asato festival (the feast of the eighth month)
usually celebrated at the King's palace.

Proverbs or sayings are brief statements that are characterized by wisdom and deep meaning. The meanings are usually of moral and ethical values) and are didactic in nature. In Nri tradition, constant use of proverbs is a sign of experience, old age and wisdom. For example, <u>kaabia kaabia nalu awọ epu n'ọdu</u> (i.e., postponing, postponing prevented a toad from having a tail). This is usually an advice to those who are fond of postponing their decisions or actions; it is generally believed that indecision or postponement can hinder a person from achieving what he could have achieved had he acted promptly. The text of Example 21 is very educative.

Example 21. ỌKU RUA NWATA (When fire burns a child)

<u>Igbo Language</u>   <u>English translation</u>

Ọku rua nwata   When fire burns a child
nke izizi   the first time,
Ọ malu ife.   he knows something.

This song has an ethical value of warning us to learn from experience and advises us not to suffer the same misfortune twice.

Age-grade Activity

This includes music for wake-keeping, night guard, recreation or relaxation. Traditionally, the age-grades are called occasionally to keep watch over precious assets of the community such as building materials, farms or barns of yam, etc. In this connection, the text of Example 29 is for night-watch.

Example 29. ǪDU ONYE N'AGA (Who is passing?)

Igbo Language	English translation
Ǫdu onye n'aga-u	Who is passing?
Ǫkwa moto n'aga-u	Is it motor that is passing
Ayi n'aga-u	We are the people passing
Ǫkwa mmonwu n'aga-u	It is the masquerade that is passing
Ndi n'aga-u	Who are the people passing?
Ǫkwa anyi n'aga-u	We are the people passing
Ǫgbǫ anyi n'aga-u	It is our age-grade that is passing

The night-watch music is not a very serious music.
Its purpose is to help keep awake the night-watchman through-
out the night while guarding precious things such as the
barn of yams, flock of sheep or goats, or a rich farm with
ripe-crops, etc. Also the sound of the music is an indicator
to the thief that somebody is watching and thus discourages
him from stealing.

Musicianship and Social Status

Learning the Ubǫ-aka

Some ubǫ-aka players believe that the spirits teach
them how to play through dreams. While a man is playing the
ubǫ-aka in a dream, a spirit may appear to him as an instructor
and may tell the learner which note to play at the right time.
Or, if the spirit is not directing the learner while he is
playing, the spirit may be playing the ubǫ-aka himself in the
dream, while the learner watches his fingers attentively.
During nightdreams the spirit is believed to be able to teach a
man various fingering techniques, styles, variations, ornament-
ations and improvisatory techniques with the result that the

learner upon waking up from sleep can begin to practise what
the spirit had taught him in the dream. The spirit can appear
as an old man, probably the ancestor with only visible hands
playing the ụbọ-aka. However, this teaching experience through
dreams is not generally believed except when it relates to the
experience of a highly skilled performer whose special aptitude
is attributed to the gods or the ancestral spirits.

In most cases, the players achieve their mastery of
the instrument through direct and indirect teaching situations.
In addition, some players attribute their skill to the help or
influence of an ancestor who is highly skilled in ụbọ-aka per-
formance. As a result, whenever a player plays exactly like
any of his ancestors or dead relatives, the old men believe it
is hereditary or in extreme cases that the ancestor or the dead
relative is re-incarnated in the player.

Indirect teaching is a popular way of learning how
to play the ụbọ-aka in which the novice learns informally by
observing and imitating the techniques of other good players
of the instrument. Here the socialization process (already dis-
cussed) plays a vital part, such as in early life an infant is
bounced on the back of its mother when she dances or listens
to ụbọ-aka music with the result that the child grows up with
the basic concept of the rhythmic and melodic movements, and
aural perception which goad him on to seek to play the ụbọ-aka
when he grows. Direct teaching is also possible between father
and son, other relatives or friends within one's umunna or ikwunne;
in the case of friends it is possible to get a teacher within

the community. The teaching is by demonstration and direct instruction based on rote learning. The learner watches the finger movements in every instance of demonstration and tries to reproduce the fingering patterns phrase by phrase after the teacher; when the sections are mastered, the learner begins to combine the sections into a whole piece.

With the exception of close friends and relatives, the relationship between a teacher and his student is economically determined and payment may be made by doing some manual labour for the teacher for each lesson. However, this direct teaching situation is very rare. Most performers learn by indirect teaching (watching and memorizing the fingering techniques of various performers) and then going home to practise on their own ubọ-aka.

Among Nri people, music making gnerally is not recognized as a profession. It is conceived as an appendage to one's occupation or profession. Everybody is expected to know how to play one traditional instrument very well, or know how to sing. On the other hand, virtuosity or a highly skilled performance is recognized and respected at the right time and at the right place. This is why playing the ubọ-aka in the hours of morning and afternoons is forbidden because they are hours of work either in the farms or in any other meaningful occupation. It has no economic value to the performers except in the case of the makers of the instrument who combine the making with carpentry, blacksmithing and basketry as a means of livelihood.

As a result, the ụbọ-aka players perform publicly
only in the evenings especially during the moonlight when the
community (including themselves) must have returned from their
farm work or other occupational duties to relax and listen.

The social status of every individual in the society
is determined primarily by one's occupation, profession, special
skill and character. But as far as skill in music performance
is concerned, the importance of individual performers in the
society is limited to the time and the situation of performance.
Too much playing of ụbọ-aka is frowned at by the elders for fear
it might render the performer useless economically in the society.
As a result, such a suspected performer is always kept under the
eagle eyes of the elders of his umunna to control the excess.
If it turns out that over-playing is disturbing one's meaningful
occupation, the elders of the umunna can seize the instrument or
in some extreme cases, destroy the instrument and place a taboo
on the individual concerned. This situation is attributed to the
influence of Ekwensu (the evil spirit) on the individual to dis-
turb his occupation and render him useless.

Social Interaction Among Ụbọ-Aka Players

There is no organized competition among the ụbọ-aka
players but the feedback from the listeners engenders competition
among isolated ụbọ-aka players. For example, the listeners in
the presence of one performer can be discussing the great skill
in style, variation and improvisation of another performer whom
they visited the previous night. At times, the performers dis-
guise themselves in the crowd to listen and memorize another's

technique of performance. In some cases performers send their wives or children to watch others play to comment on the standards when they return.

The ụbọ-aka being a solo instrument, is not played in an ensemble. No two ụbọ-aka players play together. The only possible occasion when the players can come together to hear one another directly is at the King's palace, marriage or funeral ceremonies where they organize themselves to play in turns. But even these exceptions are not intended in the spirit of competition although the tendency for rivalry cannot be ruled out altogether. There is no unhealthy rivalry.

Non-Native Influences

The root of the contemporary situation stems from early cultural contact with the Europeans which generated social change. For example, as early as 1441, the Portuguese arrived in Nigeria and traded with the Ọba of Benin (King of Benin) whom the Eze-Nri according to oral tradition crowned. At this time the first negro slaves were also brought to Portugal. (Lane 1956: 19). Through this early trade relationship, the Spanish guitar along with other European goods such as bells, clothing, etc. were introduced later in Nigeria. This Spanish guitar captured the interest of many traditional ụbọ-aka and ụbọ-akwara players with the result that most of them bought the guitar and practised both from time to time. Gradually, some of the players turned to guitar playing, abandoning some indigenous musical instruments. Nevertheless, many people continued with the playing of ụbọ-aka, ụbọ-akwara

drums and other native instruments in Igbo land.

The first entry of a Briton into Nigeria was recorded in 1823 (Lane 1956: 20). But between 1800-1900, British colonists arrived in Nigeria and confronted existing traditional kingdoms such as kingdoms of Benin, Ife, Oyo, Onitsha, Nri, Opopo in the south, and in the north the emirates or kingdoms of Bornu, Kano, Katsina, Daura, Sokoto, Zaria, etc., mostly through trade and missionary activities (Crowther 1966: 120-131). This was a period of mainly peasant agriculture, trade, inter-tribal wars and conquest, with the practice of indigenous religion side by side with the Islamized north and the Christianized south (Damachi 1972: 22-24). However, it was not until 1830 that Europeans discovered the course of the lower Niger River which helped them to know the interior of Nigeria (Isichei 1973: 18). This paved the way for the establishment of Christian Missions in Nigeria; the C.M.S. Mission was established in Igbo land 1857 (Ilogu 1974: 56) and in 1885, the first Roman Catholic Church was established in Igbo land by the Holy Ghost Fathers (Isichei 1973: 144-147).

It was within the first decade of this century that British administrators took control of Igbo land through an imposed system of direct administration[3] (Uchendu 1965: 46). Under this system, Eze-Nri in 1911 was ordered to abolish all the codes and rules of 'abomination and avoidance' which bound all villages and towns in Nri sphere of influence (Thomas 1914: 2). The system of direct administration was by the establishment

of all-purpose native courts which derive their revenue from indirect taxation. The native court areas were administered by British district commissioners with the help of hand-picked warrant chiefs who represented each village group. "The traditional rulers seldom passed this test and so were, for the most part, left out" (Nwabueze 1963: 70). In those days, Eze Nri was subjected to the administration of Awka Native Court area.

Under the colonial umbrella, Christianity flourished at a fast pace throughout Igbo land. During this colonial era, the Christian Missions in their bid to win converts condemned and discouraged every aspect of the traditional religion as paganistic, heathenic and primitive. As a result, the entire Igbo culture which is founded on rituals was badly affected. All the instruments of Igbo traditional music were labelled primitive and devilish. This resulted in many converts dis-associating themselves from the traditional culture (Ilogu 1974: 56-75). In place of the native musical instruments such as ubo-aka, igba (drums, opu (horns), oja (flutes), etc., the church introduced Western instruments such as the organ and accordian with Western hymns and tunes for worship. With the introduction of the Mission schools, they established the Western musical concepts and controlled the public education under the protection of colonial government. However, they did not win converts by force. The upholders of the traditional religion such as the priestly cult of Nri continued with the traditional folkways which include traditional musical practise

despite the influence of Christianity. This accounts for the

survival of what remains of Nri traditional music to-date. In

Nri to-day, there are the following Christian Churches: Ang-

lican Church, Roman Catholic Church, Apostolic Church, Sabbath

Church and some spiritual and healing prayer houses with large

followings.

Contemporary Situation

Though the Federal Government of Nigeria encourages

the revival of indigenous culture through the ministeries of

culture, information and education, yet the contemporary situation

is that of neglect and gradual displacement of traditional culture

by Western civilization. In the field of music for instance, the

functions of talking instruments such as ubo-aka, ubo-akwara,

akpele and oja are being replaced by services of the modern mass

media: the radio which broadcasts in both Igbo and English

languages with much variety of music for the audience; television

programs; newspapers with wider coverage of news, internal and

external; and by European equivalents of sparse music education

in a few schools where music is taught. As a result, the elite

as well as present-day youths look down on the traditional

musical instruments. They are out of touch with the indigenous

music and have lost the rich folklore associated with most of the

musical instruments.

In addition, urbanization and industrialization caused

the mass exodus of youths from villages to the cities for

schooling and employment. This has disorganized to some extent

the folkways which train the youths through active participation

in their umunna daily communal life--the traditional social
environment under which the mores and norms of the people are
learnt (Mobogunje 1968: 124-130). The following statement on
the effect of British administration on Igbo culture is an eye-
opener to one of the root causes of the contemporary situation:

> Again, what is not realized as it should
> be is that Native law and custom received
> its death blow when the British Administra-
> tion became operative in Ibo country.
>
> (Basden 1966B: XIII)

However, in Nri to-day, there is the Odinani Museum,
a branch of the Institute of African Studies, University of
Ibadan, Nigeria, where numerous Nri cultural artifacts are pre-
served and displayed. Nevertheless, there are still many Nri
people most of whom are already advanced in age, who practise
the traditions under Eze Nri. To-day, the elite prefer listening
to the organ, accordian or the guitar rather than listening to
ubo-aka. They also feel it is primitive and very degrading for
them to play such a little instrument. Instead, they would like
to buy the ubo-aka as a decorative piece which is usually hung
on the walls or displayed in a show-case in sitting rooms. They
regard the traditional ubo-aka players as primitive people who
have refused to change with time.

Summary

There is no doubt that ubo-aka is an important tra-
ditional musical instrument with rich and varied tradition of
its own among Nri people of eastern Nigeria. Its socio-cultural
role is very illuminating as a medium of communication. A study

of the incidence of ụbọ-aka music in terms of its role shows
how a variety of musical types are created for use in various
recognized social and cultural situations.

To Nri people, ụbọ-aka music is a symbol of their
culture. The linguistic determinant on which the music primarily
rests, is indispensable as both the melody and rhythm are con-
trolled by the outlines of the intonation and the relative dur-
ation of the syllables of the verbal text in order to reflect
the meaning. Because of the cultural matrix behind the music,
we can see why the concept of extramusical content is of para-
mount importance in the sociology of ụbọ-aka music.

Unfortunately, to date, ụbọ-aka music is not written;
much of what is still performed today is retained through oral
transmission. No study on the music of Nri people has been done
except the fieldwork and the resulting study by the present author
himself. This outstanding lack of written documents and articles
on ụbọ-aka music has limited the discussion to the writer's per-
sonal experience and research in the field.

It must be pointed out that ụbọ-aka musical tradition,
at present, is facing the prospect of domination and total dis-
placement by external influence in the face of social change
through the vehicle of Christian religion, Western methods and
concepts, urbanization, industrialization and modern educational
systems which are Western-oriented. This may result in a total
loss of its rich traditional oral literature and concepts if
nothing is done.

Footnotes

1. Details of tonal organization of Igbo language are pro-
    vided in Appendix I of the thesis.

2. Details of music examples and texts with reference to
    names of performers, collector, date collected, place
    of performance and tape number are provided collectively
    under the documentation of tapes and music examples.

3. British administration refers to the British colonial
    Government of Nigeria from 1900 - 1960 after which
    Nigeria won independence on October 1, 1960.

CHAPTER V

TRANSCRIPTIONS AND ANALYSES

In this study, the transcriptions and analyses of ubo̩-aka music are closely interwoven. The transcriptional methodology was conceived on the basis of a hypothetical analysis of the music which resulted in the invention of a new system of notation. Prof. Liang's 'graphic space notation' that is most suitable for ubo̩-aka music. The 'graphic space notation' is shown in Fig. 11.

Transcriptional Methodology

With reference to Fig. 11, the scale-mode of each ubo̩-aka composition is arranged vertically (on the left side) according to pitch levels with the 'highest pitch' on top and 'the lowest' below.

The 'Western' staff notation with treble clef may be placed in some cases above the graphic space notation for notating the vocal parts that occasionally accompany the ubo̩-aka music. On the other hand, where there is no vocal accompaniment, it is only the 'graphic space notation' score that is used with a column on top for ubo̩-aka language.

Since there is no standardized pitch for ubo̩-aka music, assigning any particular pitch for each of the music would amount to false representation. For example, in ubo̩-aka musical tradition, a performer can play one piece of music in different keys following the flexible adjustment of the keys

FIG. 11   LIANG'S GRAPHIC SPACE NOTATION
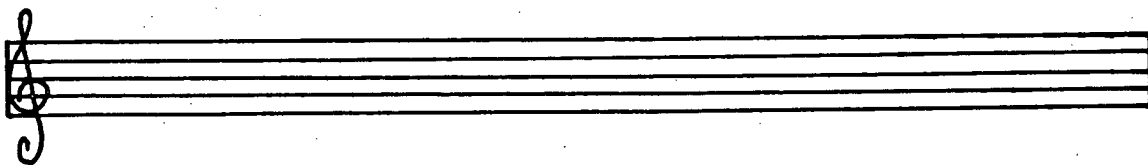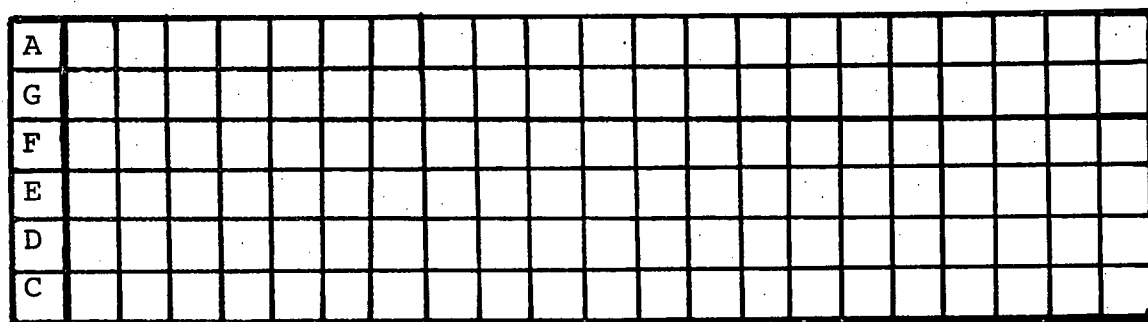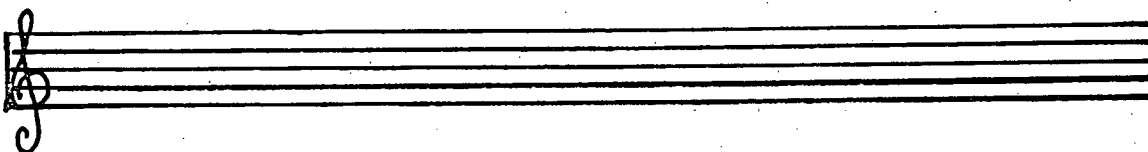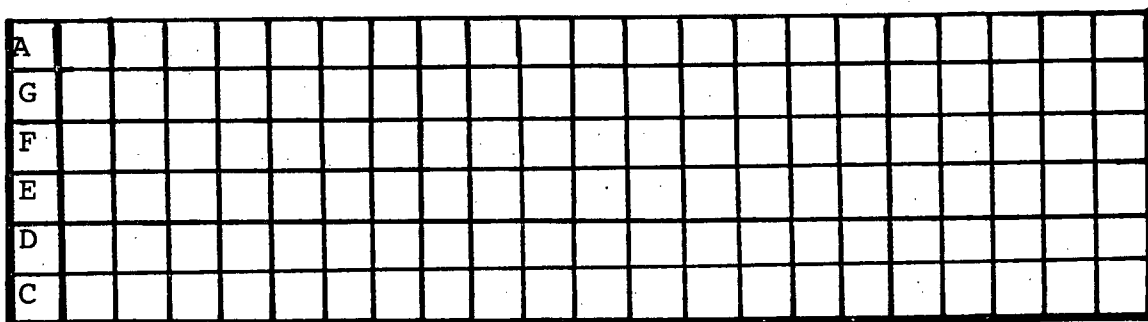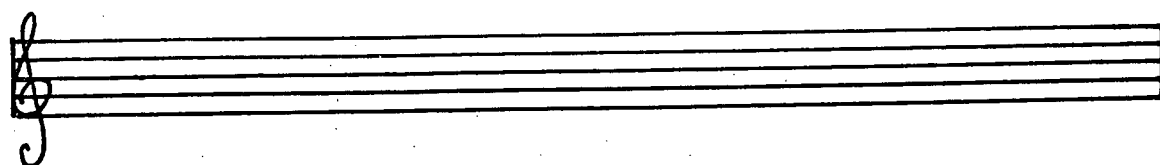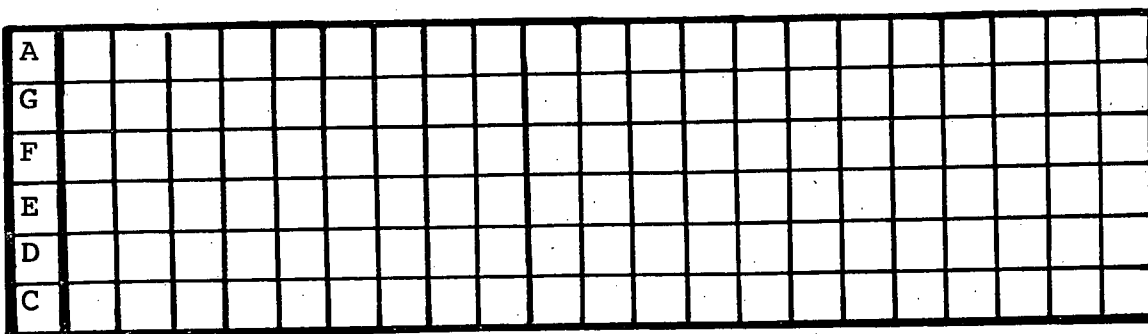
from time to time. This lack of standardization is more apparent when two or more different performers play the same piece respectively on individual ubo-aka since there is no ensemble play of ubo-aka in Nri culture. Even the intervalic range of tones (which is expected to be within the same range) may vary slightly because of the bands of the speech tones in the linguistic strucure of Igbo tonal language. As a result, all 'Do's' are transcribed based on the common pitch of C in terms of solemization as follows:
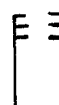
do	C'
ti	B
la	A
sol	G
fa	F
mi	E
re	D
do	C
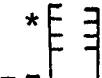
On the whole, this C- based transposition is valuable for easy reading, quick reference and comparative studies.

In addition, there is no use of bar-lines throughout the notation because there is no concept of fixed positions for accented and unaccented tones in ubo-aka music. Thus accentuation occurs almost at will for special effect, to produce a dance rhythm or percussive dynamics, etc. Secondly, the length of a piece is not timed because ubo-aka music is

not socially confined to any specified time-duration, rather
the sole determinant for piece duration is that of fulfill-
ing the social function of each song type. The performer and
the participating audience determine from time to time how
long a piece will last. At times, the performer determines
this time span arbitrarily based on personal satisfaction,
stamina or artistic decision. The audience can sometimes
urge the performer to continue a particularly popular piece.
Likewise, a dancer can prolong his or her ubo-aka dance,
forcing the performer to prolong a piece against his will
until justice is done to the dance. Thus all these factors
combine to make the duration of any particular piece incon-
sistent.

The following diacritical markings are used when-
ever applicable to the transcriptions:

⬜	-	rest.
🔲	-	note and beat played by the right thumb.
🔲	-	note and beat played by the left thumb.
⬇	-	lowered tone (approximately a semitone) when placed above a note.
⬆	-	raised tone (approximately a semitone) when placed above a note.
⊗	-	indefinite pitch played by the left thumb.
⊗	-	indefinite pitch played by the right thumb.
‖	-	repeat once.
⊏⊐	-	play three times between the poles.

- play four times between the poles.

- play five times between the poles.

- end of a piece.

- accentuation.

- muted note played by the left thumb.

- muted note played by right thumb.

- long rest in the vocal part.

- placed below a tone, indicates the positions of dance steps or footings.

* The repeat signs typify the traditional system of counting in singles using sticks, fingers or cowries most of the time. Thus the number of times can increase corresponding to the number of strokes on either sides of the poles.

Analytical Methodology

In Chapter IV of this study, the analysis of ubọ-aka music started with the socio-cultural groupings under the following eight categories:

NO.	CATEGORIES	REP. SYMBOL
1.	Religion	R
2.	Information	F
3.	Death	D
4.	Ethics	E
5.	Sayings	S
6.	Marriage	M
7.	Praise	P
8.	Age-grade Activities	A

These socially defined categories raise the following questions to be answered by the results and conclusions

of the analysis:

1. Do these socio-cultural groupings possess musical characteristics that are peculiar to them respectively?

2. To what extent are these groupings confined to the limitations of their musical parameters?

3. What are the factors that enable the composer or the performer to select certain tone complexes that are used in the groupings?

4. Are there stylistic differences and similarities among the groupings? If so, what are they and what are the determinants?

Bearing these questions in mind, the primary objective of this analysis is therefore to find out (1) whether or not the socio-cultural roles of each of the song types determine, influence or control the sonic structure, and (2) what are the factors that lie behind the scores. Altogether, each category of ubo-aka music will be analyzed on the basis of the following procedures:

1. Analysis of the musical parameters.

2. Linguistic analysis.

3. Functional analysis.

Musical Parameters

The analysis of the musical parameters focuses on the melodic contour typology using whenever possible Kolinski's

classification of melodic structures on the basis of pen-
dulums and flexures (1965: 98-99) which are applicable to
graphic contour analysis. By this, all the possible types of
melodic contour in ubo-aka music can be identified and grouped
for each of the socio-cultural categories. A tonal analysis
will be made for each socio-cultural category in order to
determine the scales in use, pitch distribution and dominant
tones and typical scales for each category. For example, the
'Tonal Analysis' for religious music will be presented in the
following format:

THE FREQUENCY OF TONE OCCURRENCE

PIECE NO.	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	SCALE—MODE
R1									
R2									
R3									
R4									
TOTAL									

Linguistic Analysis

        Linguistic analysis is important because ubo-aka
music is linguistically determined. The following analytical
considerations are examined and discussed:

1.   Possible speech tone combinations and their correlation
      with melodic contour movement are graphed or matched
      as follows:

MELODIC
PITCH
LEVEL

SPEECH TONE
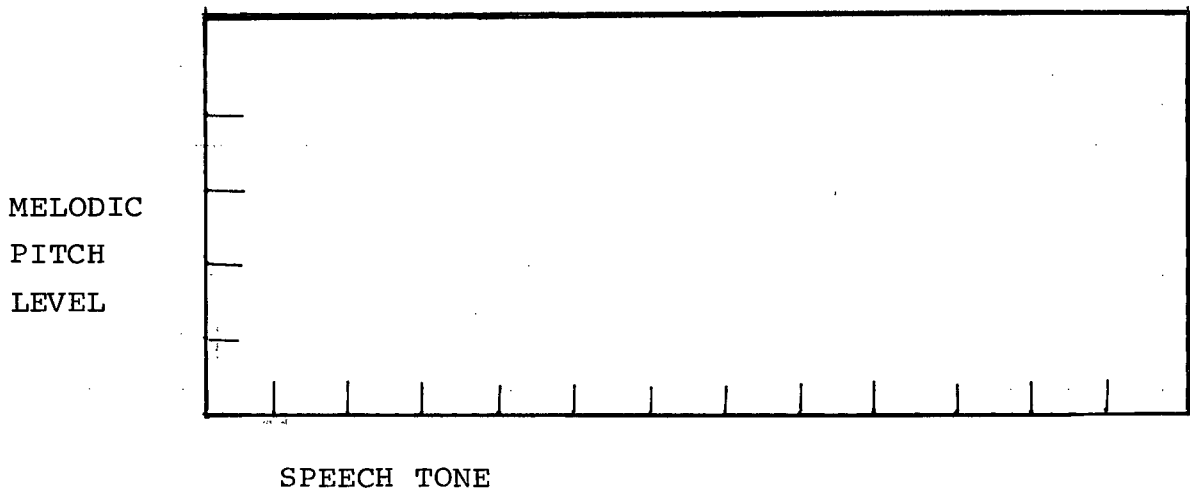
2.   The relationships between linguistic and rhythmic

structures.

Functional Analysis

The tables for the socio-cultural specifications are

provided in order to understand the context of performance

and function of each category of ubo-aka music.

Althgether, the 30 pieces to be analyzed are

grouped under the eight socio-cultural roles. These selected

30 pieces out of the available 35 compositions are the most

representative and typical of ubọ-aka musical repertoire in

terms of their important roles, formal structure, prevalence

and meaning in Nri tradition. These cateogries of musical

types will be discussed under the analytical procedure as

outlined in the proposed methodology. The conclusions and

subsequent comparative study of the categories, will be based

on the results of the findings. In addition, notes on the

music, performers and collectors are provided in Appendix II
corresponding to the numbers of the music examples and tapes
for easy reference. The transcriptions are provided in
Appendix IV.

The analysis proceeds from the religious songs to
the music for Age-grade activity. In terms of importance,
the religious music is the most important of all the categories
because religious associations with rituals constitute the
pivot around which the entire system of Nri culture revolves.

Religious Music

    R1   Niru Iyio (Before the god of oath)   Example 1.

    R2   O Chi Anọm N'ọnwu   Example 2.
            (My ancestral spirit, I am in death)

    R3   Iga Adi (You will live)   Example 3.

    R4   Iga Adi Ndu Di Enu   Example 4.
            (You will live and be great)

These four religious songs are important because
they jointly reflect the items of worship, belief, prayers
and blessings that constitute the dominant traits in the
theological philosophy of Nri people. The first two refer
to the gods and the faith Nri people have in them as sole
protectors; the last two reflect prayers and blessings which
a holy or spiritual father bestows on the faithful and well-
behaved sons of the land. The major characteristic melodic
contours that are featured in these four religious songs are
shown in Fig. 12.

FIG. 12   THE MAIN MELODIC CONTOUR TYPOLOGY PREVALENT
IN FOUR UBQ-AKA RELIGIOUS MUSIC
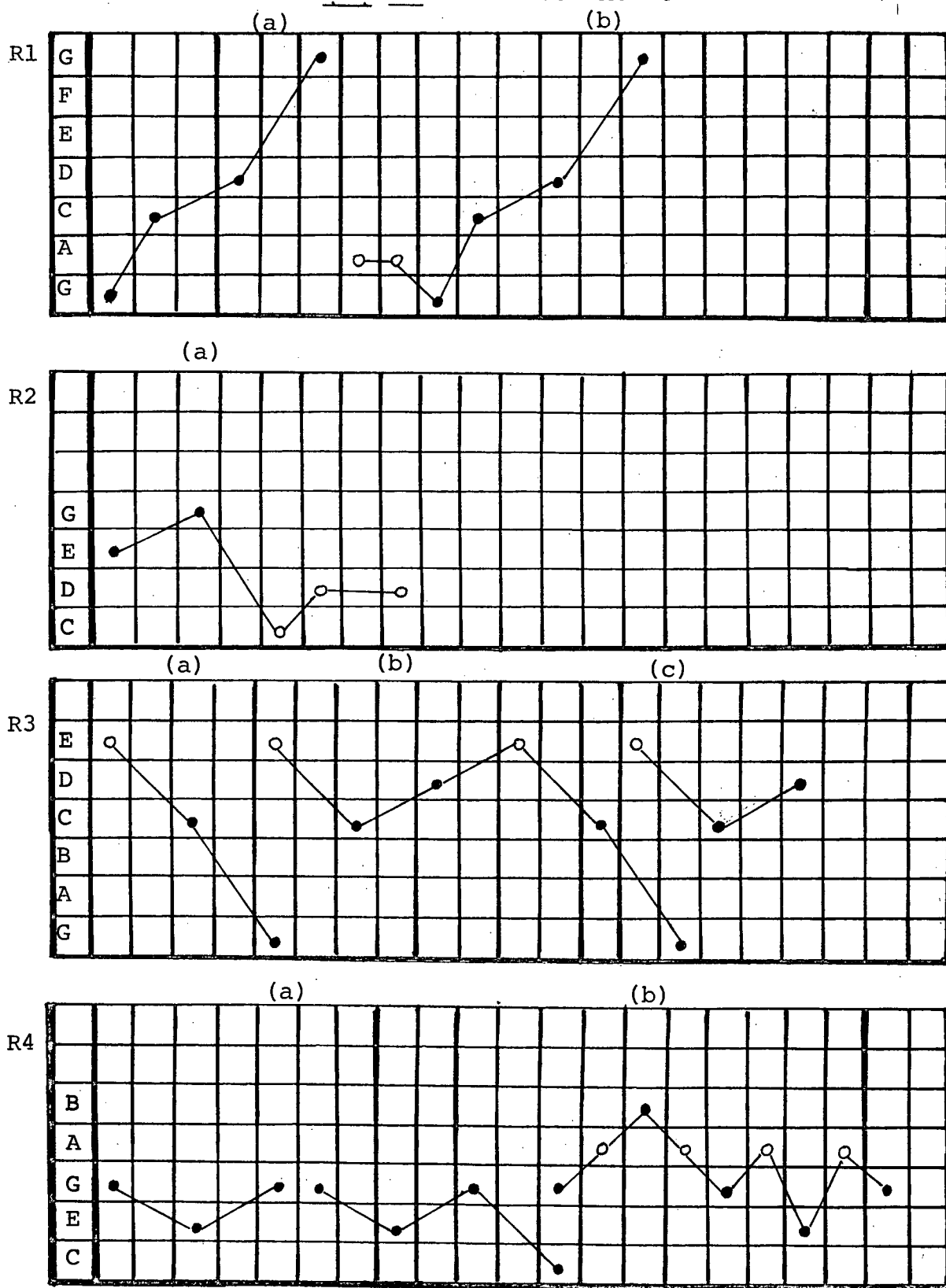
OBSERVATIONS OF THE MELODIC CONTOUR OF FOUR RELIGIOUS SONGS

PIECE NO.	CONTOUR TYPOLOGY	DESCRIPTIONS
R1	(a)	Standing + rising contour of four tones
	(b)	Static + falling + rising contour of six tones
R2	(a)	Rising + falling + rising + static contour of five tones.
R3	(a)	Downward vertical movement of three tones.
	(b)	Falling + rising + falling contour of six tones.
	(c)	Concave contour movement of three tones.
R4	(a)	Equidistant concave movement of three tones
	(b)	Falling + rising + falling contour of four tones
	(c)	Long zigzag contour movement of nine tones.

A close study of the four religious songs shows the following deductions:

1. There is no definite direction of melodic movement that is characteristic of the religious music; clusters of tones range from three to nine.

2. Gravitation is towards 'G' in R1, 'C' in R2, 'G' in R3 and 'G' in R4.

3. The determinant for the directions of the melodic contours is not yet known.

4. The intervalic structure includes: major 2nds, minor 3rds, major 3rds, perfect 4ths, perfect 5ths.

The analysis of the frequency of tone occurrence which will help us determine the major tones and the scale-modes prevalent in religious music, is as follows:

PIECE NO.	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	SCALE - MODE
R1	86	83	–	–	162	161	–	4 - tone scale
R2	35	66	37	–	39	–	–	4 - " "
R3	133	25	170	–	53	76	–	5 - " "
R4	28	–	65	–	168	94	–	4 - " "
TOTAL	282	174	272	–	422	331	–	

A look at the frequency of tone occurrence shows (1) that the most frequently used tone is 'G', followed by 'A' and 'C' resulting in C, G, A tones as the peg-tones on which ụbọ-aka religious music hangs, and (2) that the scale-mode in use ranges from four to five tones.

Linguistic Analysis

The possible speech tone combinations and their correlations with melodic contour movement are evident in the

relationship between the melodic contour typology and speech tones associated with them as shown in Fig. 13.

With reference to Fig. 13, the relationships between the linguistic and rhythmic structures are as follows in quaver bit value:

Melodic Rhythm - R2

o - chia - nọm n'ọ- nwu

Speech Rhythm

Melodic Rhythm - R3

l - ga - di tue mu - go

Speech Rhythm

l - ga- di tụ'e m'u-go

In summary, it is the linguistic characteristics of ubọ-aka keys that control and determine the direction of the melodic contour movement since the correct tonal inflections of the words correlate with the melodic contour typology in Fig. 13. The only exception to this rule is the melodic accompaniment pattern in R1 which has no linguistic meaning associated with the vocal part; the instrumental part simply provides rhythmic and dance footing accompaniment. Further with reference to the rhythms of melody in R2 and R3, it is not always the speech rhythm controls the melody since there is agreement in R2 but not in R3 in terms of beat duration.

FIG. 13. CORRELATION BETWEEN MELODIC CONTOUR
MOVEMENT AND SPEECH TONES
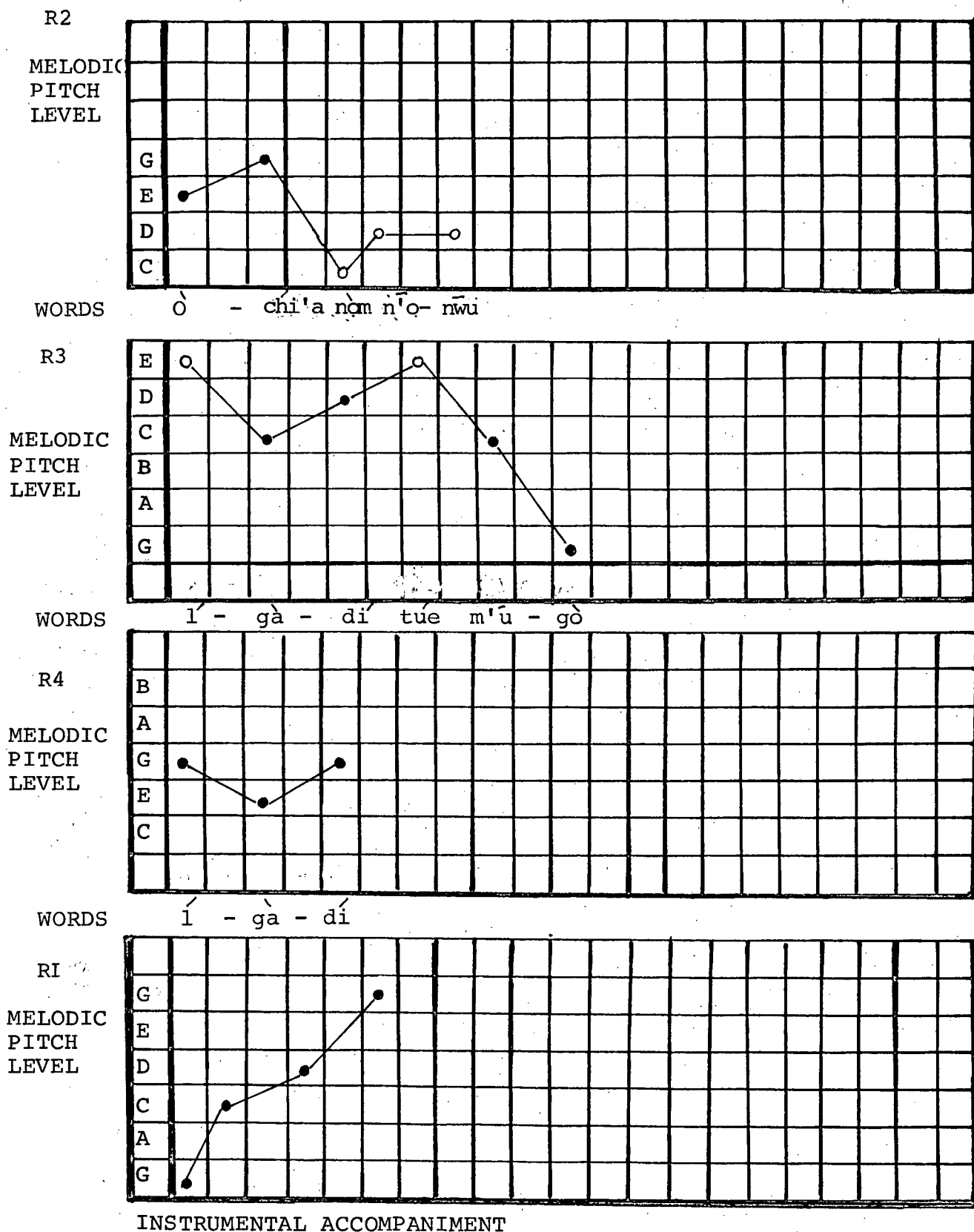
Functional Analysis

Finally, the functional analysis reflects the specifications of the socio-cultural role and the characteristics of religious music as defined by the society as shown in Table VII.

Passing on Information

F1   Eke Elue (The eke market day has arrived)   Example 5

F2   Ife Neme Nuwa (Things happen in this world)   Example 6

F3   Alu Ka Omelu (He has done evil)   Example 7

F4   Onye-Ori (The thief)   Example 8

The above pieces of ubo-aka music are about four areas of public concern in Nri tradition. F1 reminds the community of the approach of eke market day which is of both commercial and ritual interest to Nri people. For example, the evening and the morning hours prior to eke day, are generally when the peasant community harvest fruits and vegetables or gather some of their live-stock for sale in the market. Priests on the other hand, perform special rituals to the gods because eke is the first day of the 'native week of four days' in Igbo land. There is no concept of a written calendar in the traditional society. As a result, the community is reminded of or informed about important dates or days by means of spoken dialogue, public announcements or through talking instruments such as ubo-akwara, ubo-aka, drums, etc. F2 is simply a reflection on events that happen in this world. This reflection

TABLE VII   FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS MUSIC

PIECE NO.	ETHNOGRAPHICAL SPECIFICATION	RECIPIENT	SOCIAL STATUS OF PERFORMER	SOCIAL NORM	EXPECTATIONS	ECONOMIC VALUE	PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE
R1	Heralding the ceremony of oathtaking	Meant for the accusers	Commoner & belong- ing to the accused group	No dist- ortion of the news, no accus- ing fing- ers or mention of names	Severe punish- ment by the gods to a pre- tender who takes the oath	-	Indefinite and variable .
R2	Personal suffering	The performer	Indefinite	Honesty & sincerity	Help from the gods resulting in relief	-	Private meditat- ion
R3	Father-son relationship	Beloved son	Variable	Faithful- ness, humility, truthful- ness virtues	Blessings from the gods & the ancestors + security to the receiver	-	Private medita- tion
R4	"	"	"	"	Protections from the gods	Fortune & wealth	" "

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is never in isolation but in association with any remarkable

event that is current in the society. For example the ubo-

aka player usually has some spectacular event that recently

happened in the community or in adjoining towns which he wants

to pass on to the people around him or the community. At

times, the event may be in connection with a quarrel between

brothers or husband and wife which either led to permanent

separation, strained relationship or in extreme cases to

bloodshed or death. Details of the event as in this situation,

are not always embodied in the music, but through indirect

reference, ubo-aka music can stimulate discussion on the

incident during which the exact location and the victims of

the incident are clearly known. The F3 as already discussed

under the socio-cultural role, is an information on a man who

committed adultery with his neighbour's wife which is an

abomination in Nri culture. F4 is about a thief in the

community who stole his neighbour's goat and was caught. It

is a common practice to inform the society about such wrong

doing. In this connection, people who have been associated

with stealing are always derided and kept under communal

surveilance. In extreme cases, people avoid marrying into

such families for fear of contaminating their lineage.

The major characteristic melodic contours featured

in the four pieces of information are shown in Fig. 14.

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FIG. 14   MAJOR CHARACTERISTIC MELODIC CONTOUR TYPOLOGY
          IN FOUR UBQ-AKA INFORMATION PIECES

FIG. 14   CONTD

F3

(d)

(a)

F4

(b)
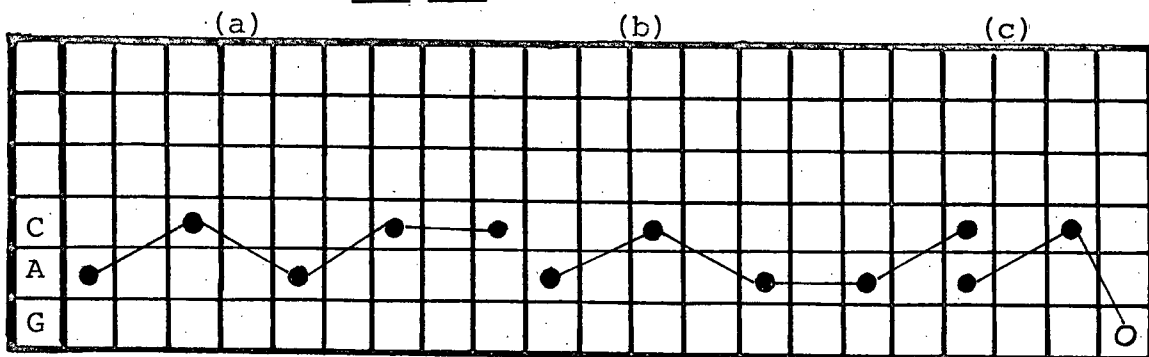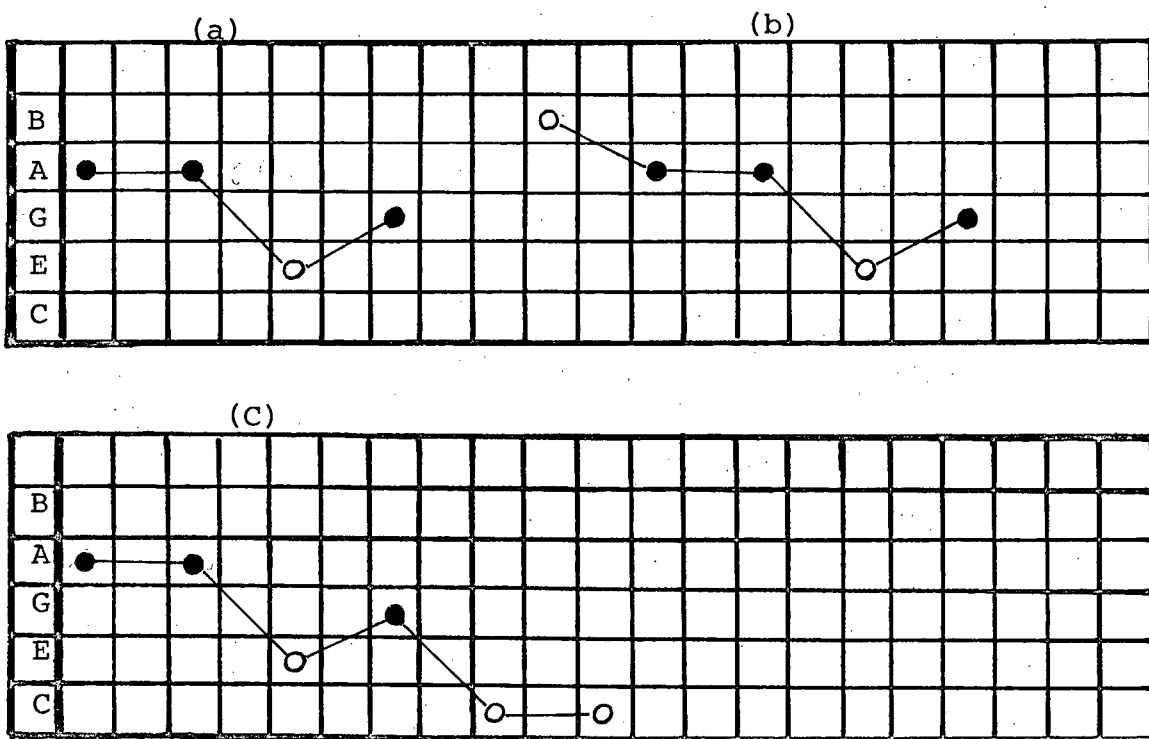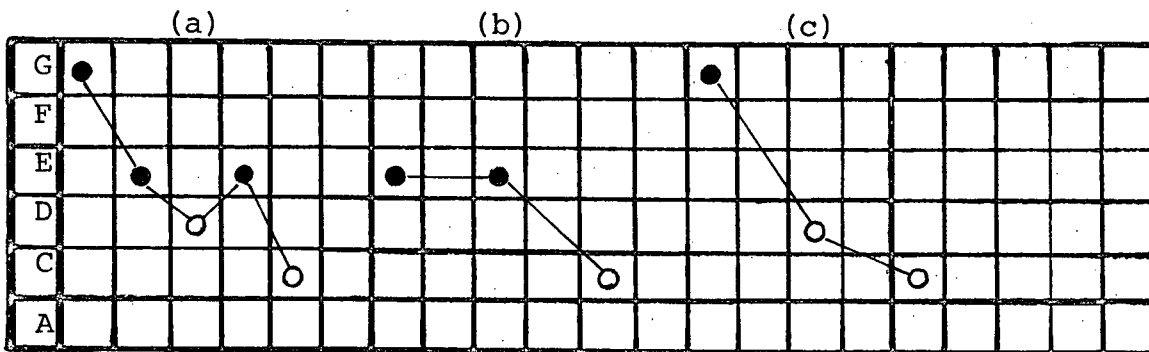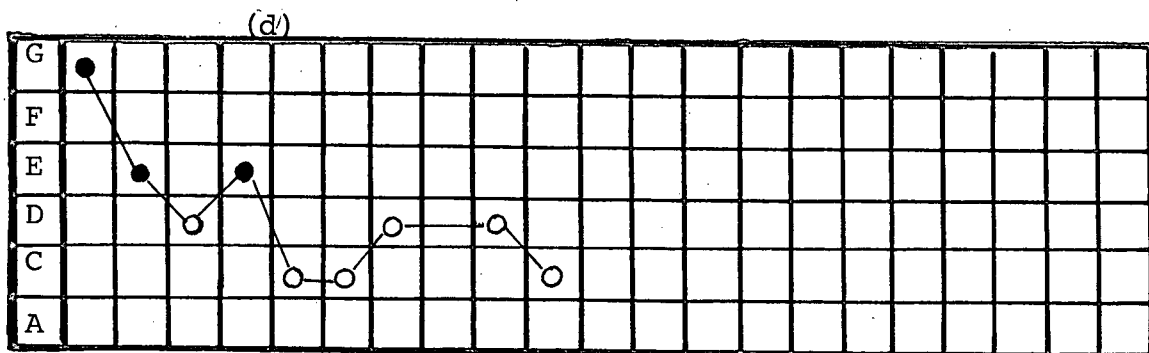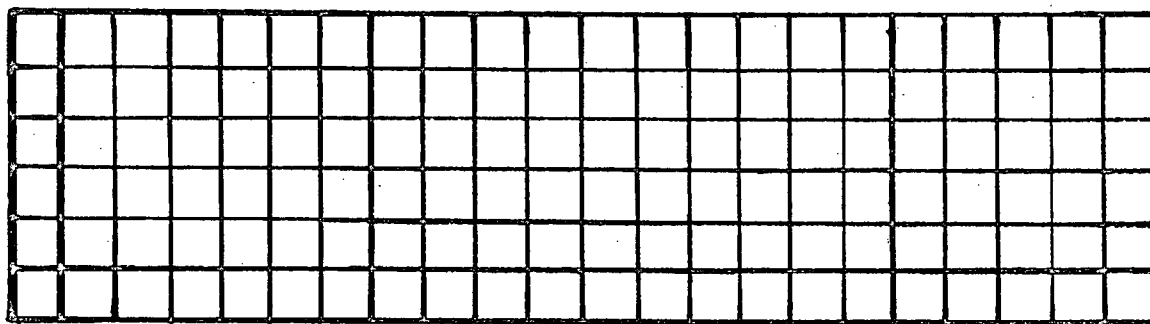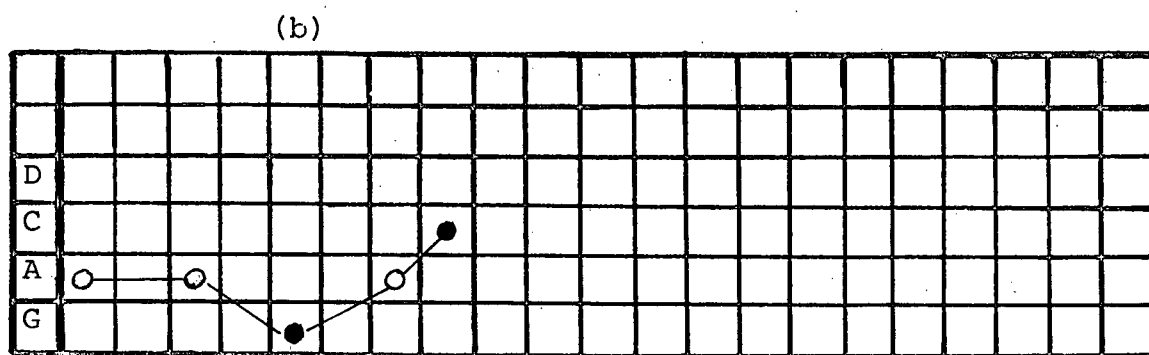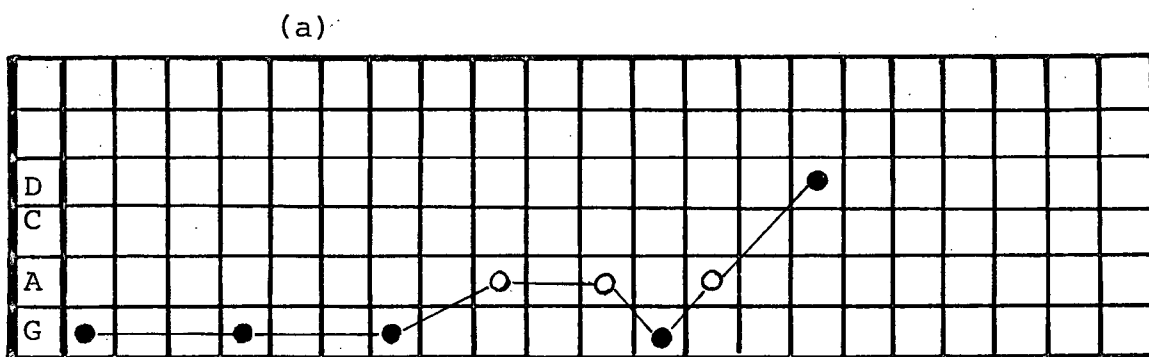
OBSERVATIONS ON THE FOUR INFORMATION PIECES

REFERENCE NO.	CONTOUR TYPOLOGY	DESCRIPTIONS
F 1	(a)	Rising, falling, rising + static contour of five tones.
	(b)	Rising, falling, static + rising contour of five tones.
	(c)	Rising and falling contour of three tones.
F 2	(a)	Static, falling + rising contour of four tones.
	(b)	Falling, static, falling + rising contour of five tones.
	(c)	Static, falling, rising, falling + static of six tones.
F 3	(a)	Falling, rising, falling contour of five tones.
	(b)	Static + falling contour of three tones.
	(c)	Extended falling contour of three tones.
	(d)	Falling, rising, falling, static, rising, static + falling contour of nine tones.
F 4	(a)	Long static, rising, static, falling + vertical rising contour of eight tones.
	(b)	Static, falling + rising contour of five tones.

Altogether, the melodic contours of the information

pieces show the following deductions:

1. All the pieces employ the rising, falling and

static contour movements.

2.   There is gravitation towards the tonal centre:
     C in F1(a), A in F2, C in F3, and A in F4.

3.   The determinant for the direction of the con-
     tours is not yet known.

4.   The intervalic structure includes: major 2nds,
     minor 3rds, major 3rds.

The analysis of the frequency of tone occurrence is
as follows:

PIECE NO.	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	SCALE - MODE
F1	50	–	–	–	8	50	–	3 - tone scale
F2	25	–	46	–	27	91	8	5 - tone "
F3	44	47	52	–	47	8	–	5 - tone "
F4	11	13	–	–	119	117	–	4 - tone scale
TOTAL	130	60	98	–	201	266	8	

On the whole, the most frequently used tone is 'A',
followed by 'G' and C. The least tone of occurrence is B used
only in F2. 'F' is not used at all. The scale-mode in use
ranged from 3-5 tone scale-mode with five-tone scale dominating.

With reference to linguistic analysis, the possible
speech tone combinations and their correlations with melodic
contour movement are evident in Fig. 15. The correlations are
undisputed when the words are pronounced following strictly,
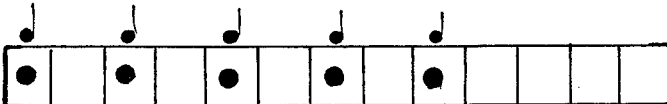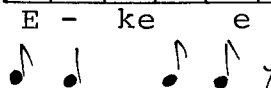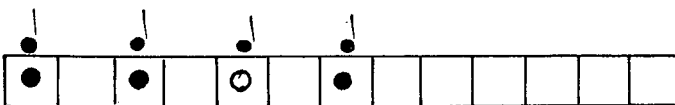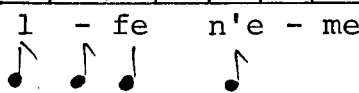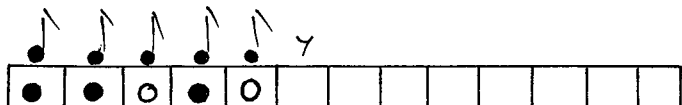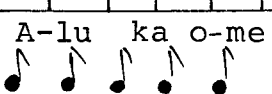
FIG. 15   CORRELATION BETWEEN MELODIC CONTOUR MOVEMENT
           AND SPEECH TONES IN INFORMATION PIECES

F1

PITCH LEVEL

C
A
G

WORDS: È – ké   è – lú – gó

F2

PITCH LEVEL

B
A
G
E
C

WORDS: l – fé   nè   mé   l – fé   nè – mé   n'u – wà

F3

G
F
E
D
C
A

WORDS: A–lū kà ó–mè

F4

D
C
A
G

WORDS: O' –ny'ó –rì'ọ –kwāgì
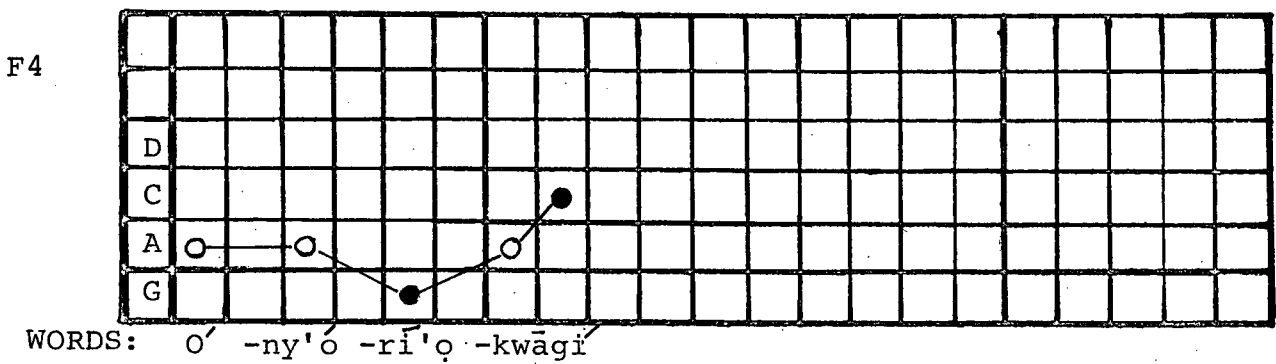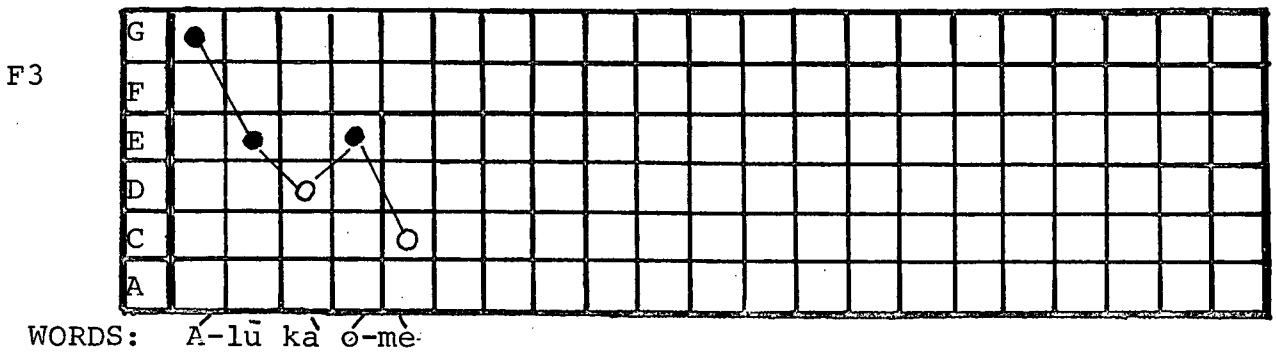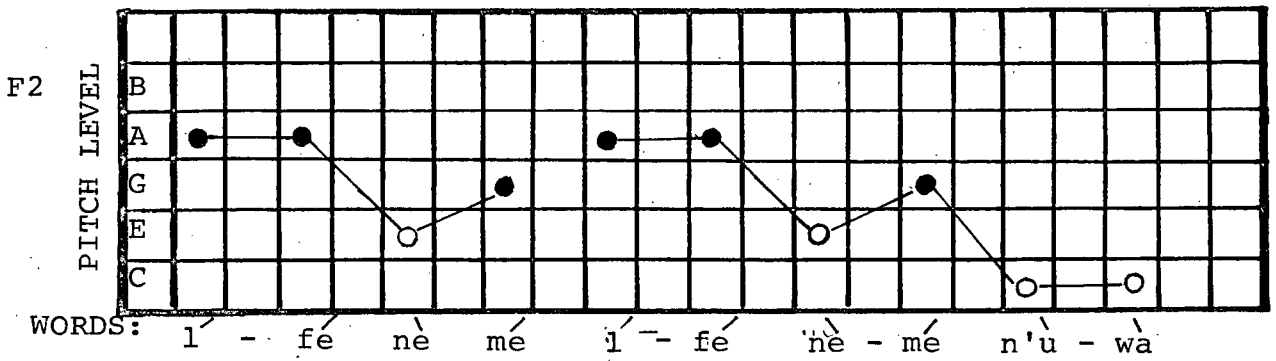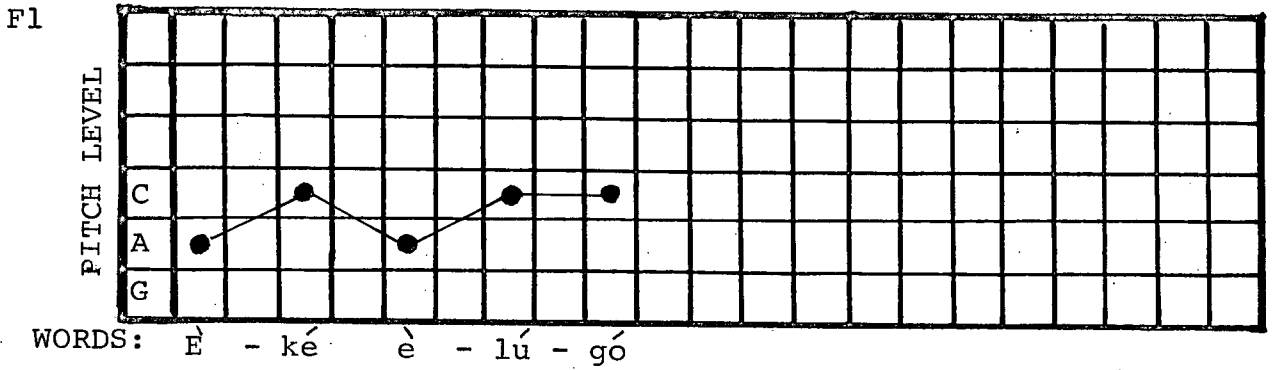
the rise and fall of the melodic movements that are directly above the Igbo words. In this way, any person who is reading Igbo language for the first time can pronounce the words correctly by following the melodic contour.

In addition, using the quaver value, the relationships between the rhythmic structure and linguistic rhythm in Fig. 15 are as follows:

The descriptions of the socio-cultural roles and the characteristics of the "information music" are tabulated in the analysis of functions as shown in Table VIII.

Altogether, it is the linguistic structure of the Igbo tonal language that governs the direction of the melodic rhythm in terms of note value. For example, the melodic and linguistic rhythms of in F1 and F2 differ in the duration of note value comparatively while in F3, there is exact agreement

TABLE VIII　　FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION MUSIC

PIECE NO.	ETHNOGRAPHICAL SPECIFICATION	RECIPIENT	SOCIAL STATUS OF PERFORMER	SOCIAL NORM	EXPECTATIONS	ECONOMIC VALUE	PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE
F1	Heralding the eke market day	Nri people	Commoner	Truth & reliability	Getting the community prepared	-	Evening prior to eke market day
F2	Reflections on current evil deeds in the society	The community	Traditional priest	Truth, no accusing fingers or falsehood	Getting the community correctly informed of the evil and to make them hate such evil deeds	-	Evening hours preferably in the moonlight time or during an important social gathering
F3	Getting the community informed of an evil deed	The community	Commoner	Truth and reliability	Denouncement of such evil by the community	-	Evening hours
F4	Introducing the thief to the community	The community	Commoner	Truth and reliability without bias	Getting the thief punished, hated and despised by the community	-	Evening hours

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between the rhythms of words and melody. In this connection, the rhythmic patterns of the musical parameter do not always conform to the rhythm of words.

Death Music

D1	Ọnwu Amarọ Dike	Example 9
	(Death does not know the great)	
D2	Ọna Nmọ	Example 10
	(He has gone to the spirit world)	
D3	Alu Eme Muo	Example 11
	(Evil has happened to me)	
D4	Ewu Nwannem, Kamalu Ife Melunu	Example 12
	(Oh, my brother let us know what happened)	
D5	Ifụ Ife Ọnwu N'eme	Example 13
	(You see what death does)	

D1 is funeral music which philosophizes on the greatness of death, particularly the death of a hero in the community. It is of a didactic nature, teaching people that death is no respecter of persons and that however great we are, death does not descriminate, and will come when it will. This music is a personification of death. D2 is most of the time a personal reflection or lamentation on the death of a dear one, probably one's brother, sister, son, daughter, wife or parent. It is usually very meaningful when played immediately after burial in line with Nri theological philosophy of the dead in the spirit world. D3 is normally a personal lamentation over the death of a dear one, suggesting that evil or misfortune has happened to whomever lost his or her loved one. D4 is in connection with a rumour about the death of a

loved one which is yet unconfirmed hence the inquisitiveness
involved in trying to find out whether the rumour is true or
false. D5 is as already discussed under the socio-cultural
role is a reflection on the evil deed of death especially in
connection with a premature death, the death of a newly
married couple or when ones only son dies or in cases of many
deaths in one particular family within a short period of time.
In such situations, death is personified as a wicked force.
All these pieces of ubo-aka music represent the cardinal
concept, attitude and belief about death in Nri tradition.
The melodic contour typology of the five pieces of death
music is shown in Fig. 16.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FIVE PIECES OF DEATH MUSIC

PIECE NO.	CONTOUR TYPOLOGY	DESCRIPTIONS
D1	(a)	Static, falling, static + falling contour of six tones.
	(b)	Static, falling + rising + falling contour of six tones.
D2	(a)	Vertical downward movement of three tones.
	(b)	Vertical downward movement of four tones.
D3	(a)	Long falling + rising + static contour of six tones.
	(b)	Falling + static + falling + extended falling + long rising + static contour of eight tones.
	(c)	Long falling + rising + static contour of seven tones.

FIG. 16   THE CHARACTERISTIC MELODIC CONTOUR TYPOLOGY
          OF DEATH MUSIC
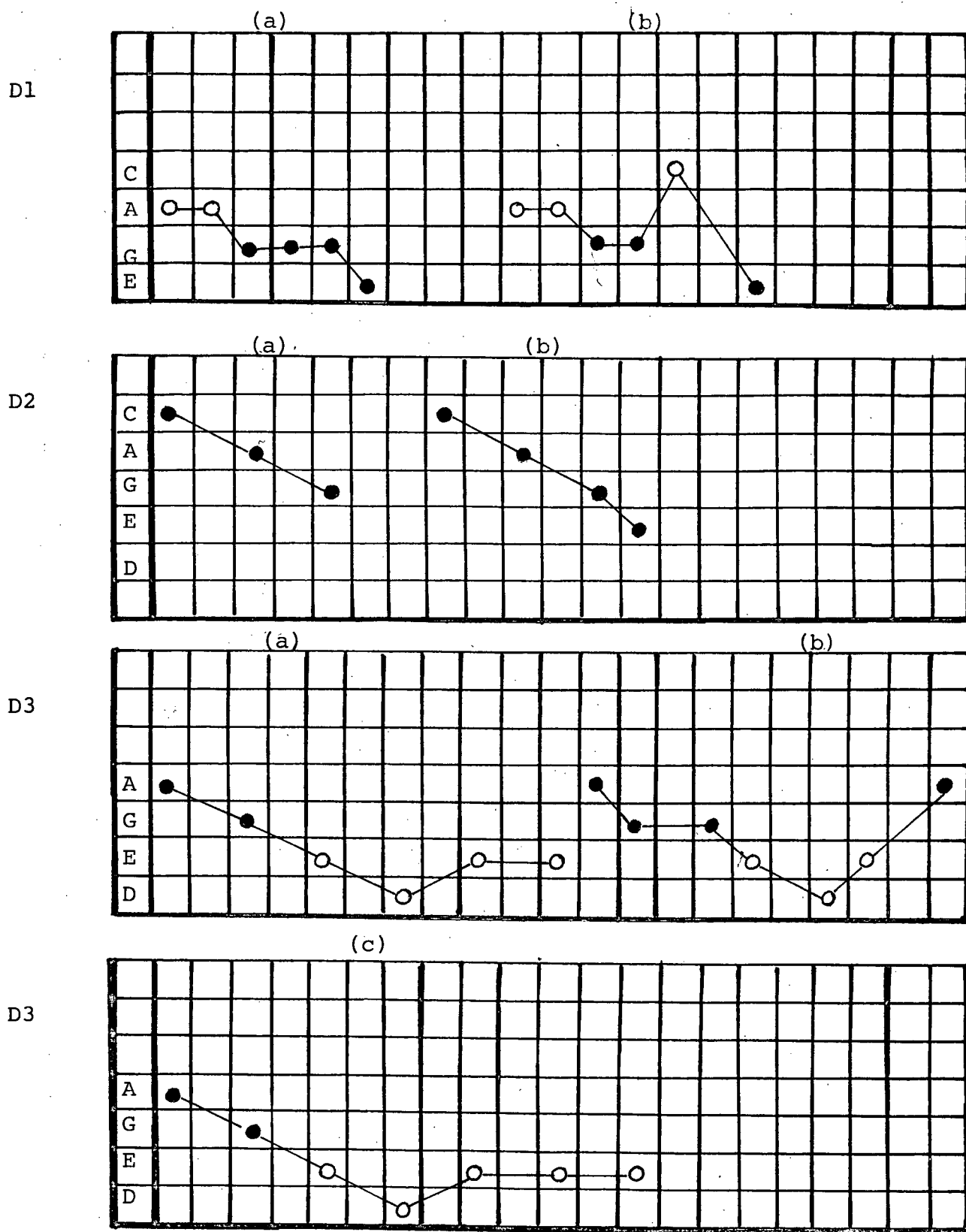
FIG. 16   CONTD
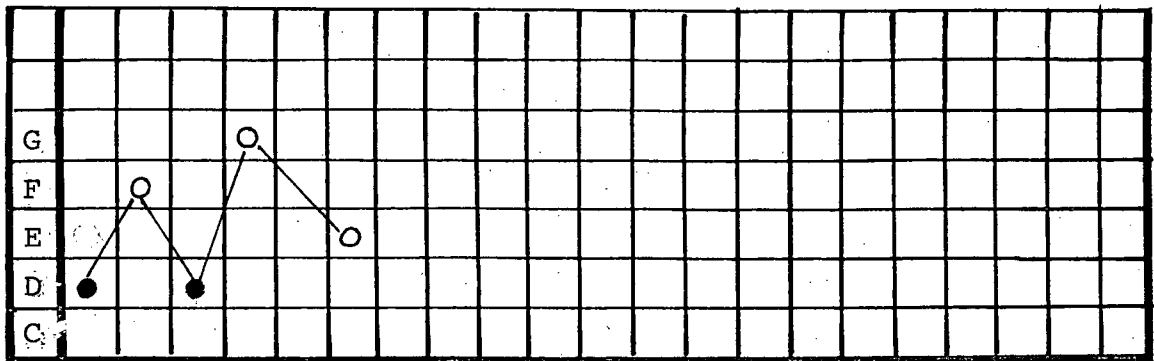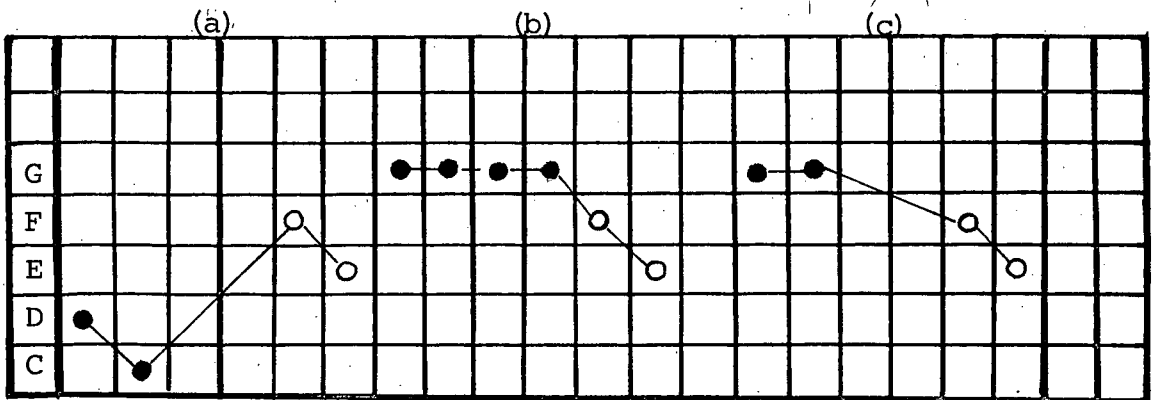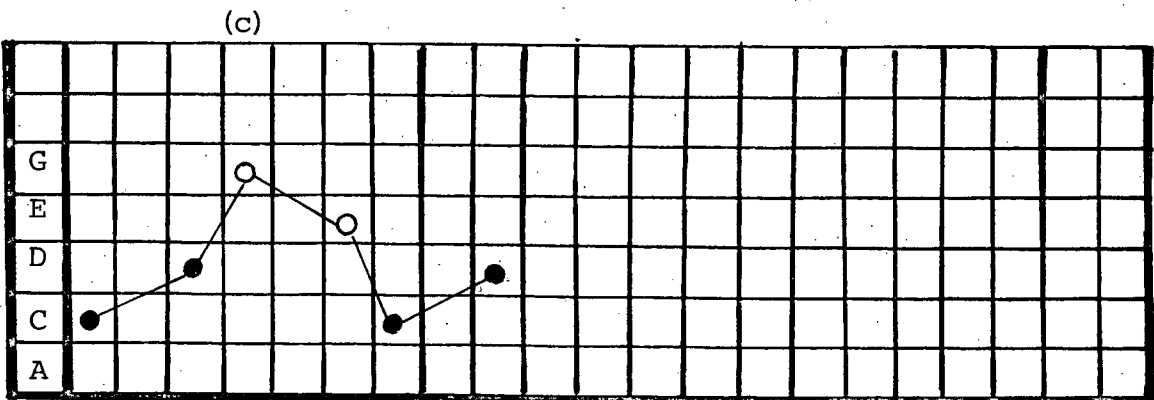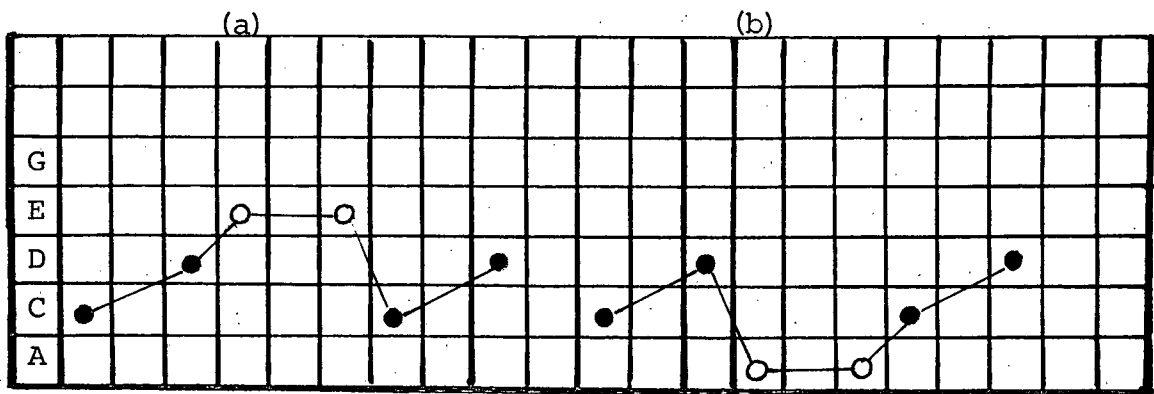
OBSERVATIONS ON DEATH MUSIC CONTD.

PIECE NO.	CONTOUR TYPOLOGY	DESCRIPTION
D4	(a)	Short falling + long rising + short falling contour of four tones.
	(b)	Long static + falling contour of six tones.
	(c)	Short static + long falling + extended short falling contour of four tones.
	(d)	Rising + falling + rising + falling zig-zag contour of five tones.
D5	(a)	Rising + extended rise + static + falling + rising contour of six tones.
	(b)	Rising + falling + static + rising contour of six tones.
	(c)	Rising + rising + falling + falling + rising contour of six tones.

The melodic contours of the "death music" show the following characteristics:

1. All the examples employ the rising, falling, and static contour movement with the exception of D2 which has only the descending melodic contour movement. The clusters of tones range from three to eight tones.

2. There is gravitation towards 'E' in D1, 'G' in D2, 'A' in D3, 'E' in D4, 'C' in D5.

3. The intervalic structure includes: minor 2nds, major 2nds, minor 3rds, perfect 4ths and minor 6ths.

The frequency of tone occurrence is as follows:

PIECE NO.	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	SCALE - MODE
D1	9	–	23	–	59	46	–	4 - tone scale
D2	91	88	11	–	101	91	–	5 - " "
D3	59	58	–	–	44	164	–	4 - " "
D4	43	32	82	67	90	–	–	5 - " "
D5	64	57	50	–	8	9	–	5 - tone scale
TOTAL	266	235	166	67	302	310	–	

The most frequently used tone is A, followed by G, C and D while the least frequently used tone, is F. Further, the scale-mode ranges from four to five tone scale.

The relationships between the melodic contour movement and the tonal inflections of the words are shown in Fig. 17. When the words are read against the melodic contour typology, they follow and retain their linguistic tonal characteristics for meaning as defined by Igbo tonal language.

Further, a comparison of the rhythms of ụbọ-aka melody and the words is provided below for a close study:

Rhythm of Melody - D1

Ọ-nwu'a-ma-rọ- di-ke
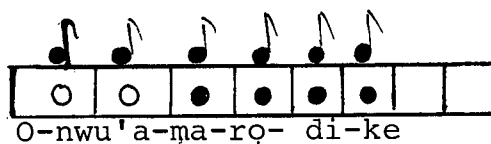
Rhythm of the spoken words

Ọ-nwu'a-ma-rọ di-ke
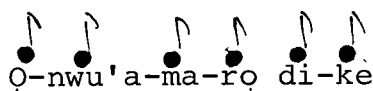
Rhythm of Melody - D2

Rhythm of words

Ọ-na'm - mọ

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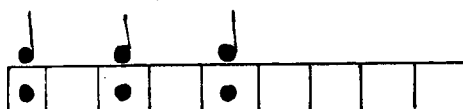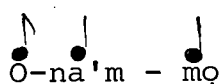
FIG. 17   THE MELODIC CONTOUR AND SPEECH TONE
CORRELATIONS IN DEATH MUSIC

FIG. 17   CONTD

(c)

D5


WORDS: Di - bē n'o - me ra - go
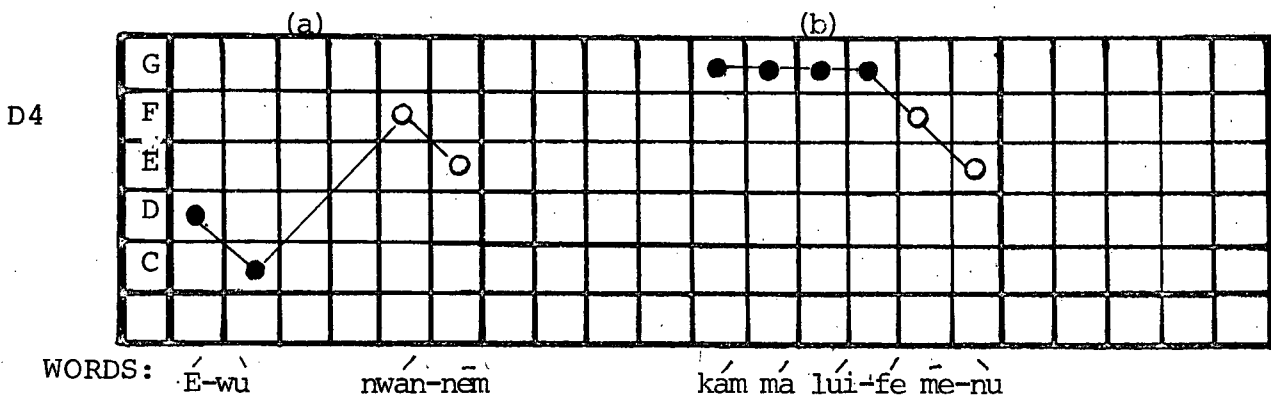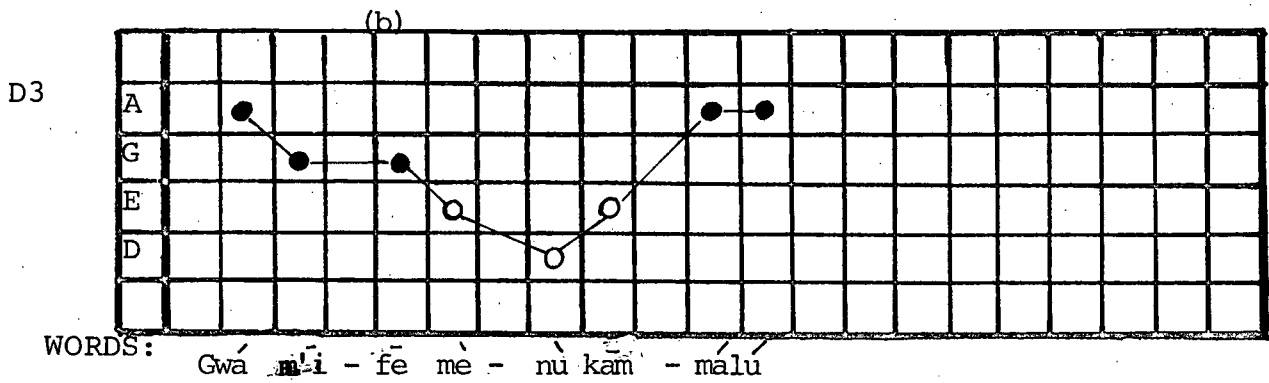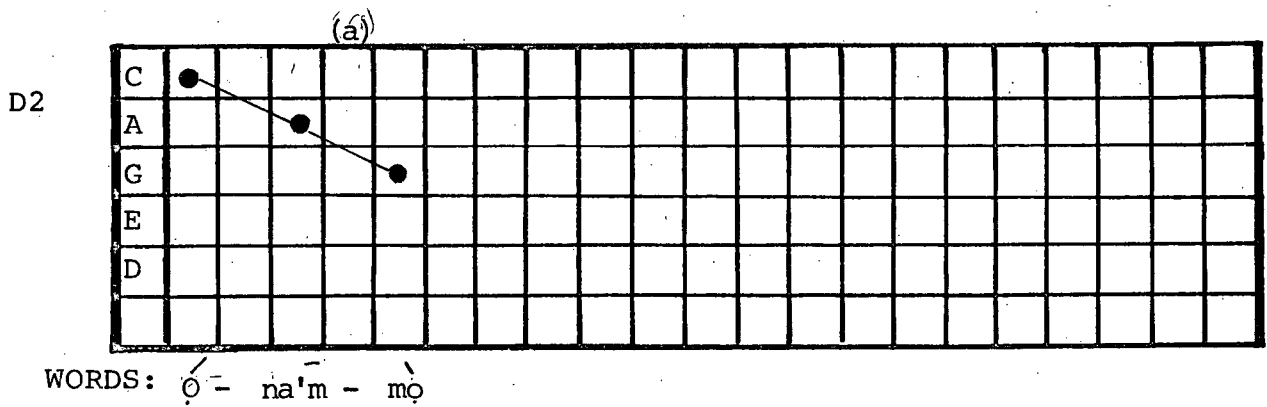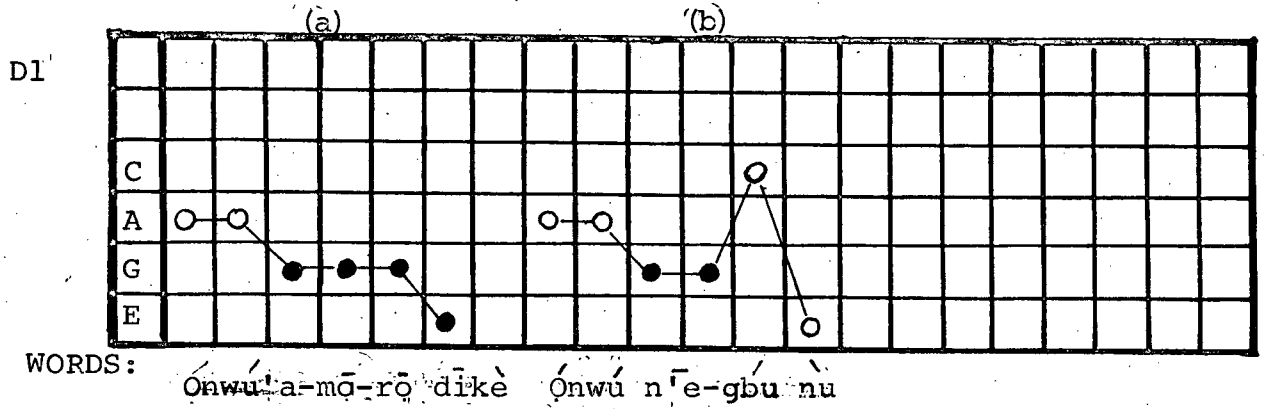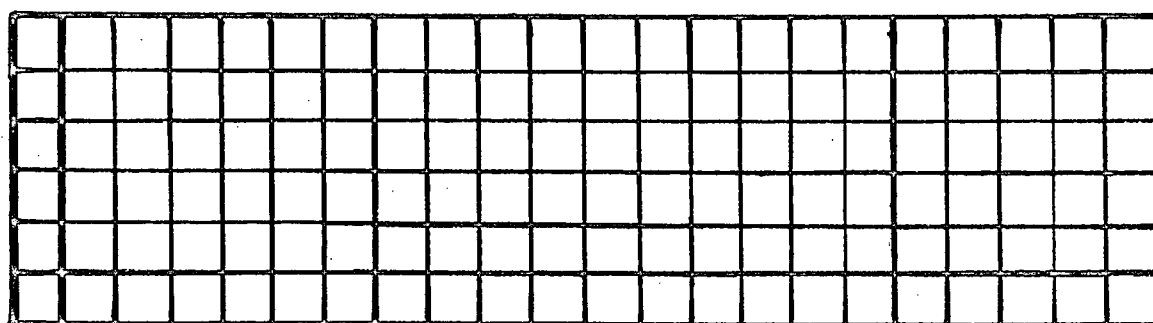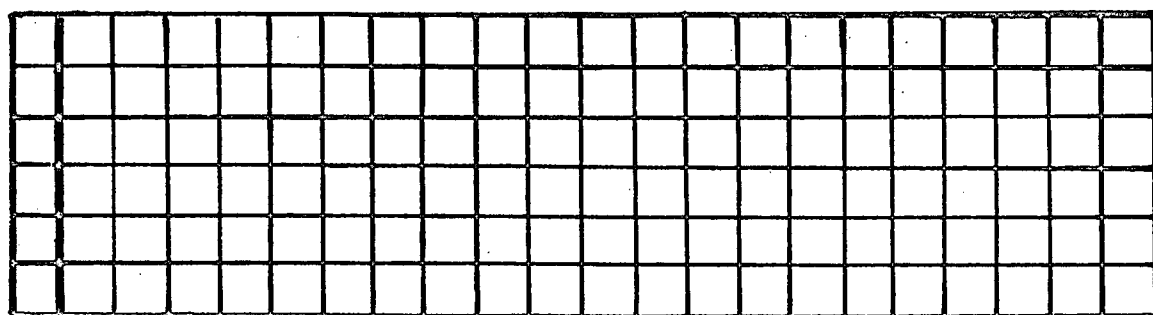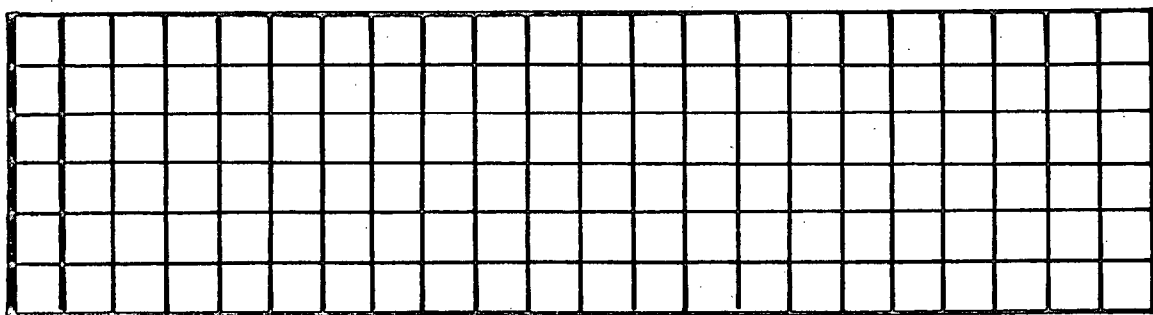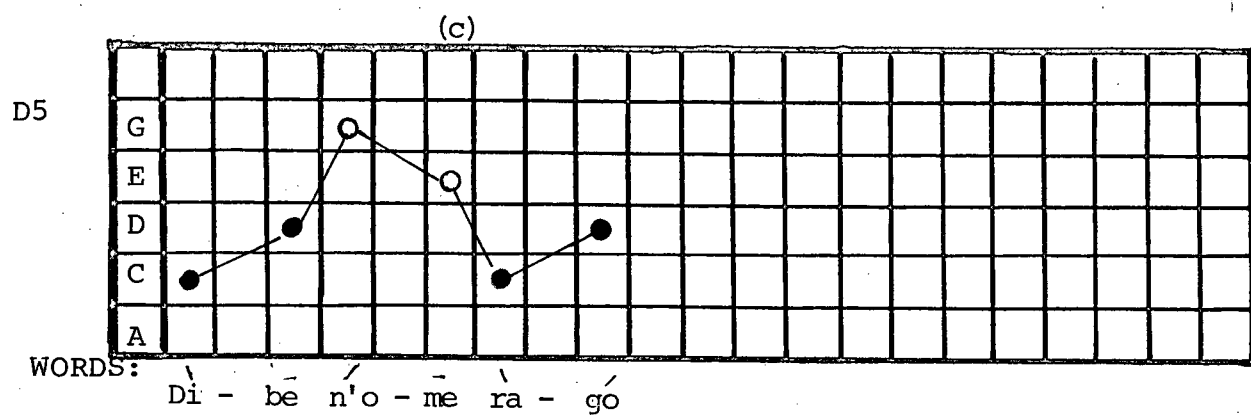
TABLE IX.   FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF DEATH MUSIC

PIECE NO.	ETHNOGRAPHICAL SPECIFICATION	RECIPIENT	SOCIAL STATUS OF PERFORMER	SOCIAL NORM	EXPECTATIONS	ECONOMIC VALUE	PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE
D1	Teaching the power of death	The mourning community	Variable	Not to be performed outside funerals	Accepting the power of death as a necessary end	-	During funerals
D2	Speculations on death and the spirit world	The mourning community	Variable	Only for funerals	Wishing the dead a peaceful rest	-	" "
D3	Personal lamentation	The bereaved and mourning community	Variable	Sincerity and no pretence	Sympathy	-	" "
D4	Inquiry about rumours of death	Neighbours of the performer	Variable	Not to be performed in the funeral ceremony	Validation of funeral rumour	-	Variable
D5	A reflection on the evils of death	The mourning community	Variable	To be performed in connection with death only	Understanding the evils and powers of death	-	During funerals

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Rhythm of Melody - D3
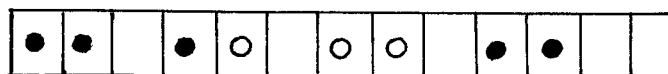
Gwa m'i = fe- me‵ - nŭ ka'm ma-lu

Rhythm of words

Gwa mi- - fe me-lu- nu

Rhythm of Melody - D4
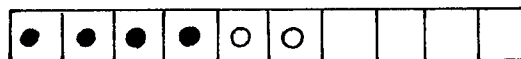
Ka̋m —ma lu̇i-fe me-nŭ

Rhythm of words
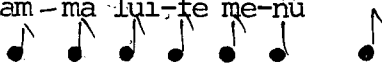
Ka mu ma lui-fe me- - nu

Altogether, the tonal inflections of the words control the directions of the melodic contour as shown in Fig. 17. But the correlation between the rhythmic pattern of melody and the words is variable. For example, the rhythms of word and melody melody correlate exactly in D1(a) while in the D2, D3 and D4, there are deviations in terms of duration of beat.

Ethics

E1   Nwakaego Atulu Ime   Example 14
     (Nwakaego is pregnant)

E2   Agadi Nwanyi   Example 15
     (Old woman)

E3   Di Nwe Ụno   Example 16
     (The husband that owns the house)

E4   Ezigbo Nwa Ka Ụbọ N'akpọ   Example 17
     (It is the good child that the thumb piano calls)

E1 is a music of humiliation to a young girl by name Nwakaego (child is greater than money) who got pregnant outside marriage. A situation such as this, brings shame and disgrace not only to the victim but also her parents and relatives. This ụbọ-aka music rediculos the girl, pointing out

that whenever she is reminded of her premarital sex and

pregnancy, she weeps. E2 is a lamentation on the wickedness

of an old woman who caused enimity between a son and his wife.

This is a rare situation in Nri culture because old men and

women are expected to be holy, kind, generous and peaceful.

Occasionally a situation like this can arise where there is

hatred and maltreatment in a family. This ụbọ-aka music

denouces such evil situation especially in connection with

an old woman. Ethically, this music is reminding the aged not

to backslide into hatred and wickedness against the wives of

their sons. E3 is teaching about the high sense of responsi-

bility expected of fathers or husbands in their families in

connection with looking after the welfare of their families.

Here is an example of a man who left his family for a long

time without adequate arrangement for feeding and maintaining

his household. Such a person is always an object of ridicule

before his age-grade and the entire community. E4 is ethic-

ally, extolling the good behaviour of a good child which

encourages good behaviour and manners in children, sons and

daughters.

The major characteristic melodic contours of the

ethical music is shown in Fig. 18.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE MELODIC CONTOUR TYPOLOGY

PIECE NO.	CONTOUR TYPOLOGY	DESCRIPTION
E1	(a)	Descending + rising + falling + rising + falling contour of eight tones.

FIG. 18.   MAIN MELODIC CONTOUR CHARACTERISTICS IN
           ETHICAL MUSIC
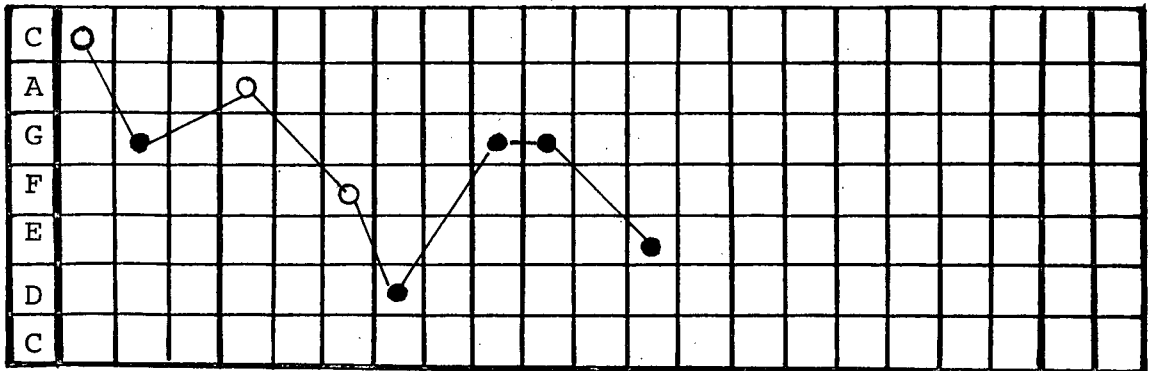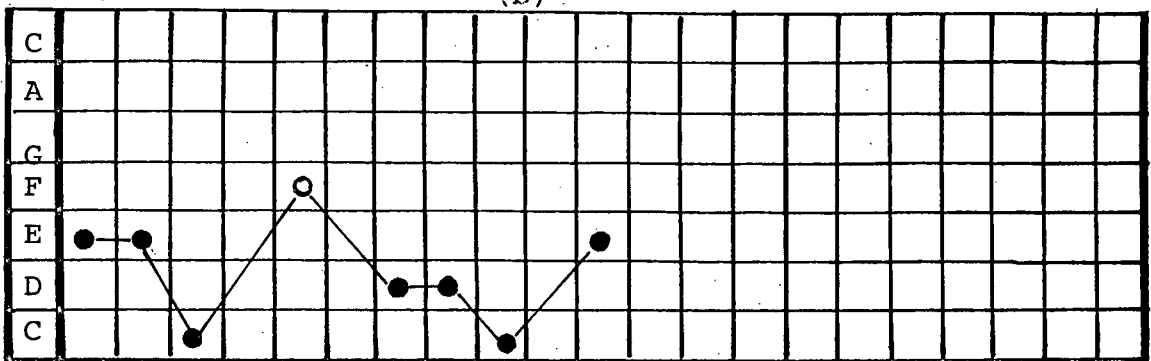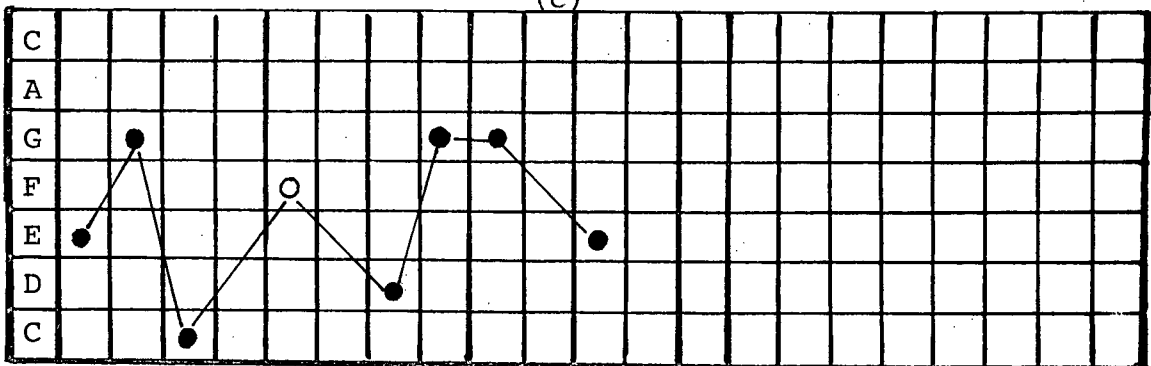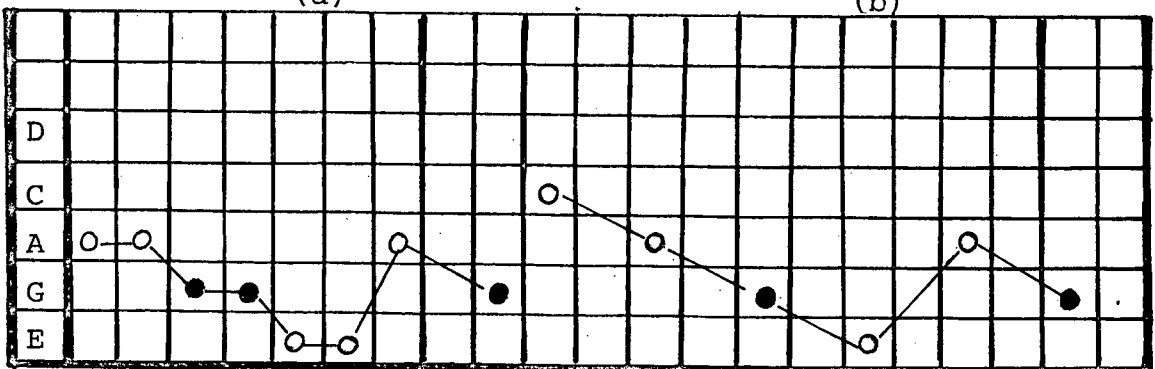
FIG. 18   CONTD.
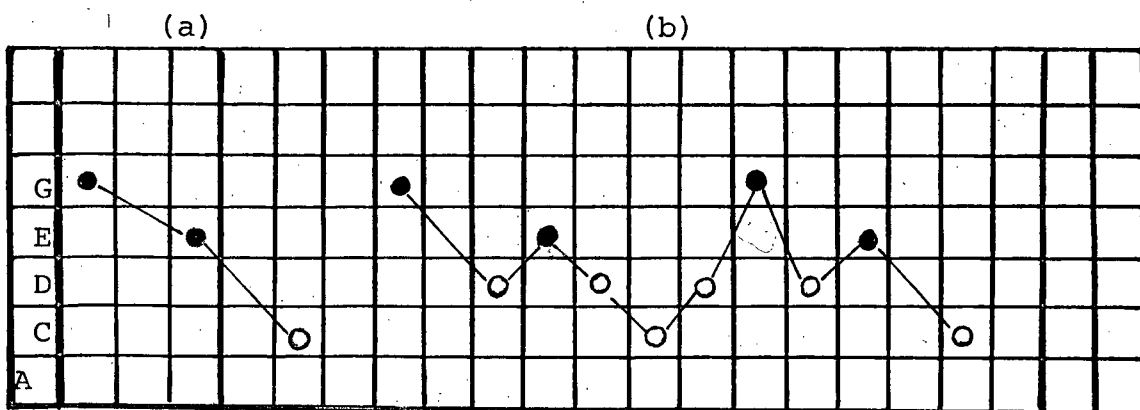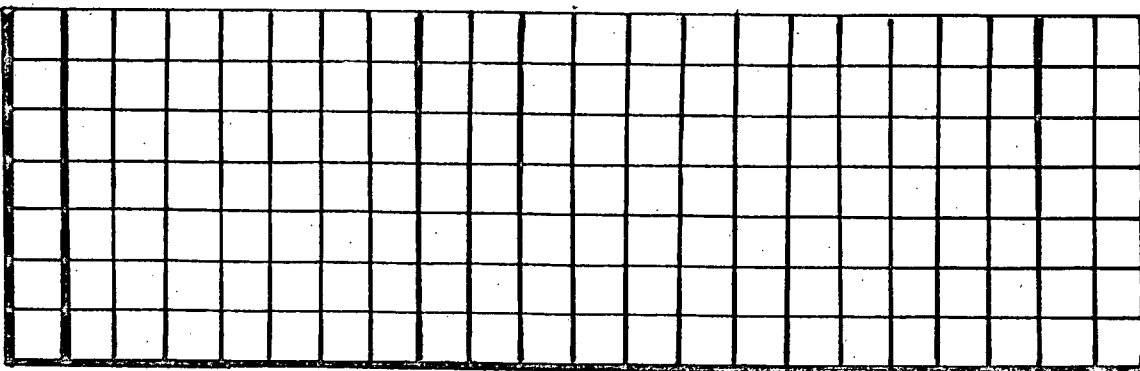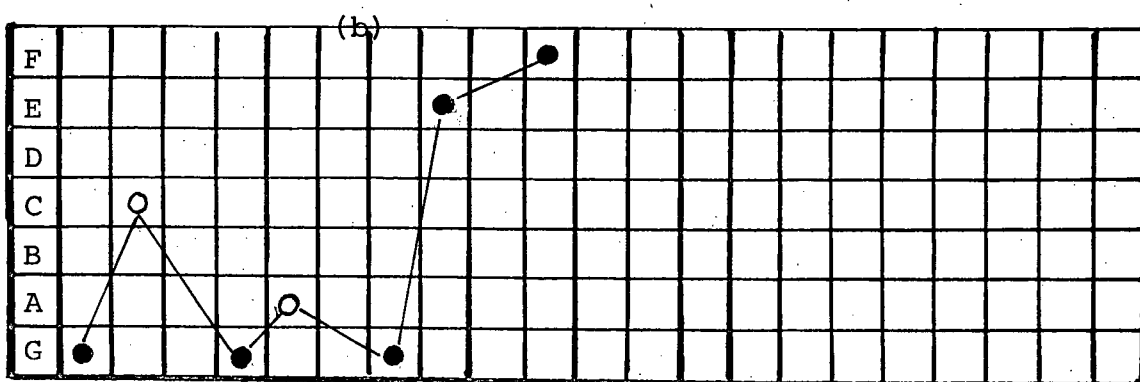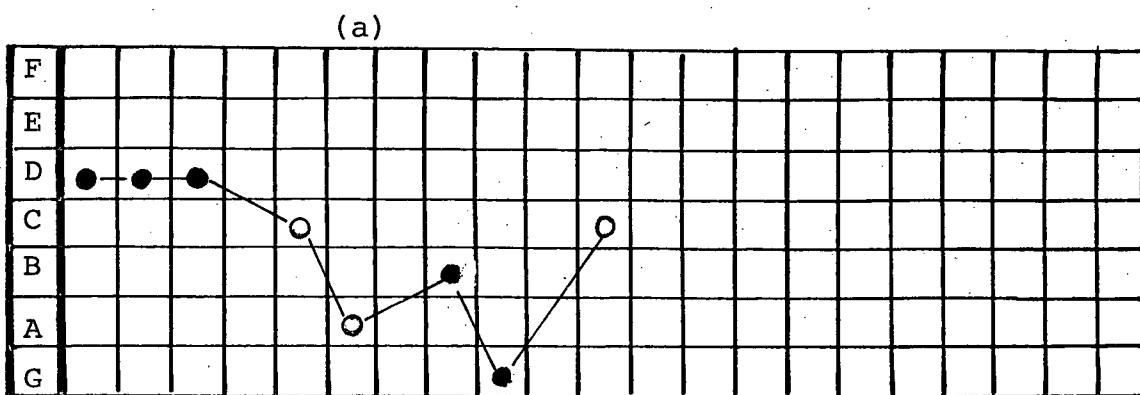
OBSERVATIONS ON THE MELODIC CONTOUR TYPOLOGY   CONTD.

PIECE NO.	CONTOUR TYPOLOGY	DESCRIPTION
	(b)	Static + falling + rising + falling + static + falling + rising contour of eight tones.
	(c)	Rising + falling + rising + falling + rising + static + falling contour of eight tones.
E2	(a)	Static + falling + static + falling + static + rising + falling contour of eight tones.
	(b)	Long descent + rising + falling contour of six tones.
E3	(a)	Falling + falling contour of three tones.
	(b)	Falling + rising + falling + rising + falling + rising + falling contour of ten tones.
E4	(a)	Static + falling + rising + falling + rising contour of eight tones.
	(b)	Rising + falling + rising + falling + vertical long rise + extended rising contour of seven tones

The melodic contours of the ethical music show the following deductions:

1.   All the pieces employ the rising, falling, and static contour movements of three to ten clusters.

2.   There is gravitation towards 'C' in E1, 'E' in E2, 'C' in E3 and 'G' in E4.

3.   The intervalic structure includes: major 2nds, minor 3rds, major 3rds, perfect 4ths, perfect 5ths.
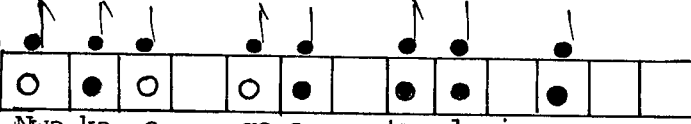
The analysis of frequency of tone occurrence is as follows:

PIECE NO.	C	D	E	F	F	A	B	C	SCALE MODE
E1	19	31	44	24	42	9	-	10	7 - tone scale
E2	32	6	48	-	83	87	-	-	5 - "
E3	100	148	100	-	98	9	-	-	5 - "
E4	23	35	4	4	11	13	5	-	
TOTAL	174	220	196	28	234	118	5	10	

On the whole, the most frequently used tone is G, followed by D, C, E, A and F with 'B' as the least frequently used tone. In addition, the scale-mode ranges from five to seven-tone scale.
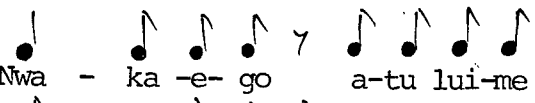
The examples of relationships between the melodic movement and the tonal inflections of the words in ethical music are shown in Fig. 19. In addition, the relationships between the melodic and linguistic rhythm are shown below:

Melodic Rhythm - E1(a)
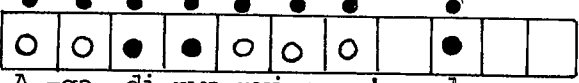
Nwa-ka-e - go a - tu lu-i-me

Speech Rhythm

Nwa - ka -e- go a-tu lui-me

Melodic Rhythm E2(a)

A -ga-di nwa-nyi e-me'a - lu

Speech Rhythm

A- ga-di nwa-nyi e-me'a - lu

FIG. 19.   THE CORRELATION BETWEEN MELODIC CONTOUR
          AND WORDS IN ETHICAL MUSIC

E1

(a)

WORDS: Nwá-kà é – gò à tú-lúi – me

(b)

WORDS: Mgbe mú yà gwá yáo-bé-bé'a– kwa

E2

(a)   (b)

WORDS: A– gà-di nwa-nyi e meà – lú   o´ – meù – lú   na   be – yà

E3

(a)

WORDS: Di – nwé'u – no

FIG. 19 CONTD.

E4

(a)
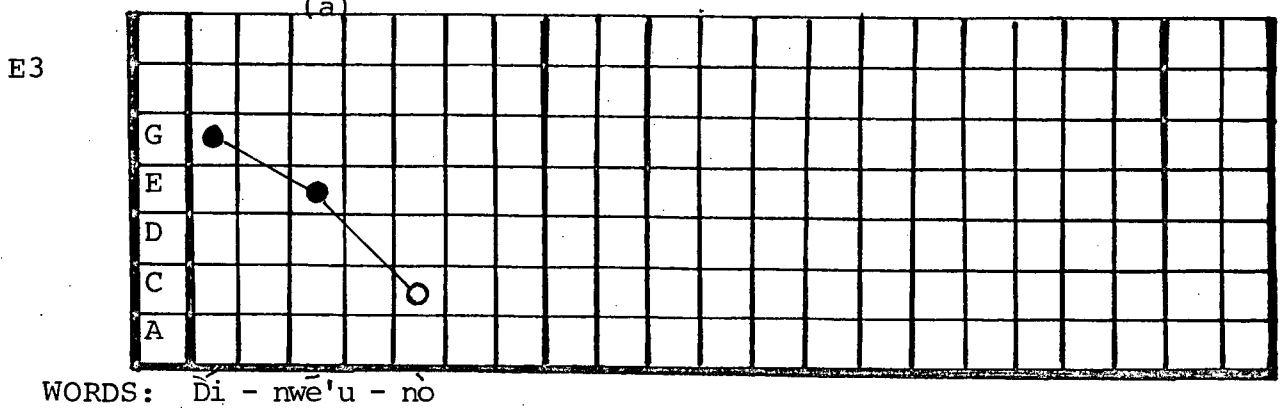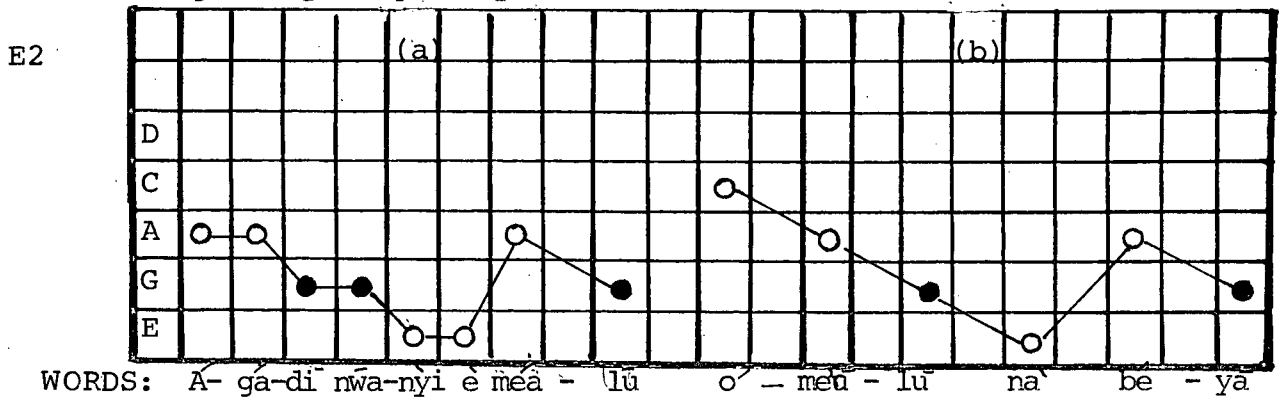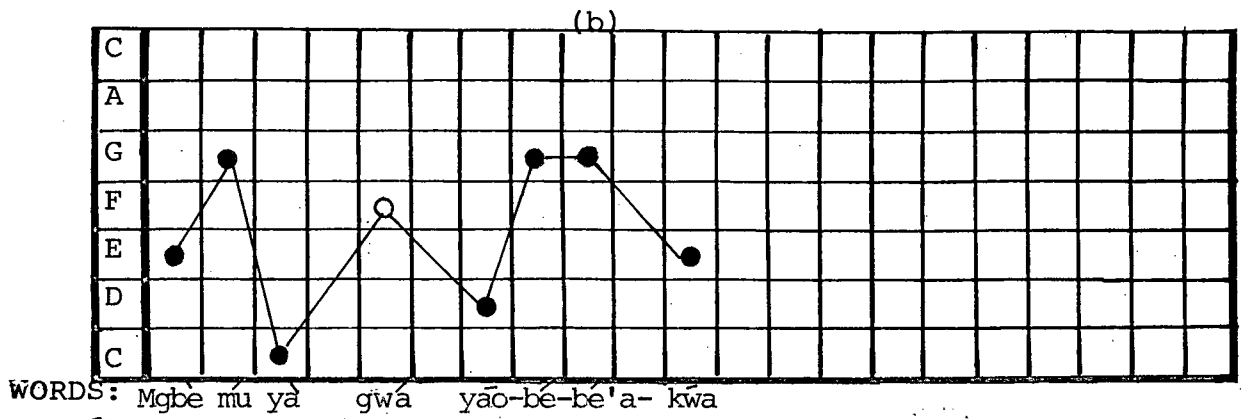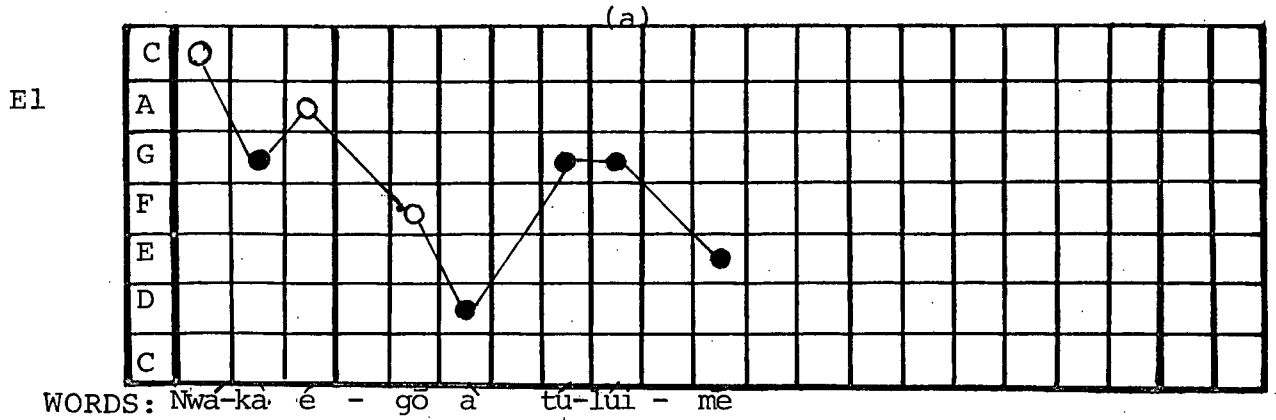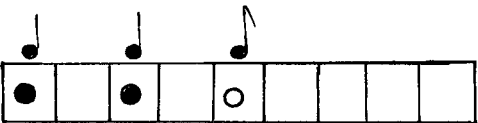
E- zi gbó nwā k'ù - bó n'a- kpó
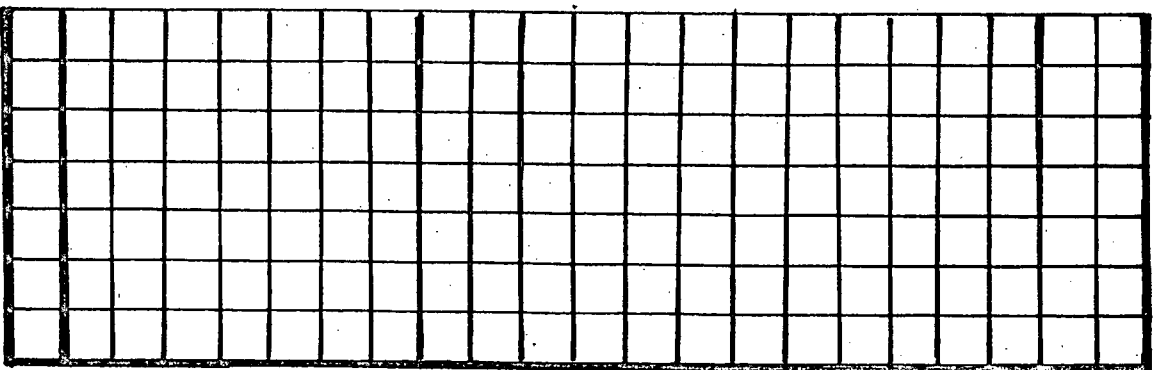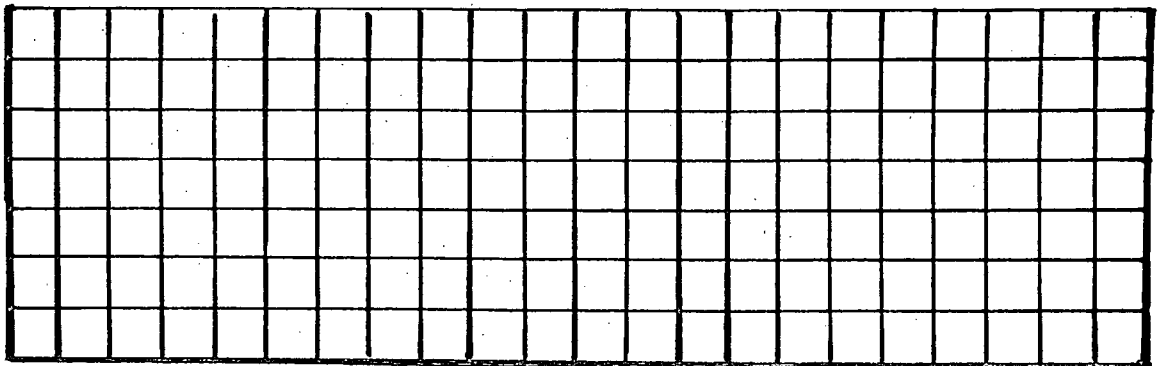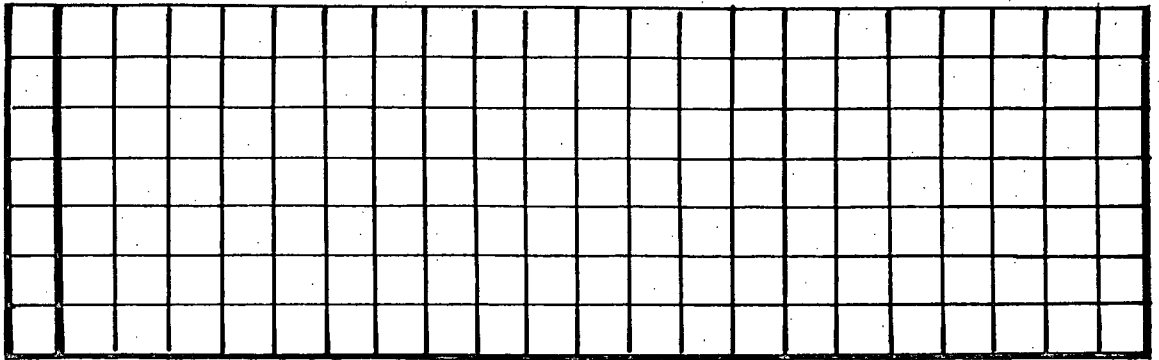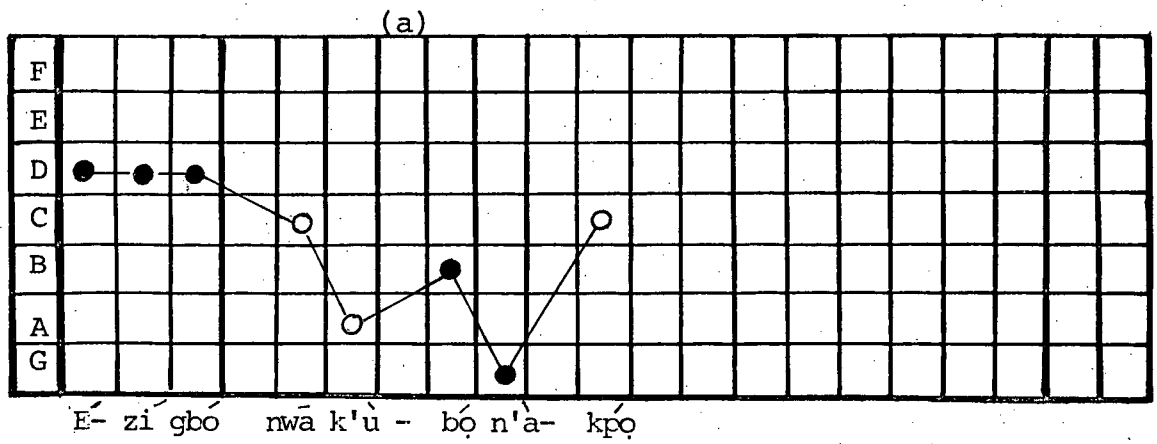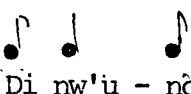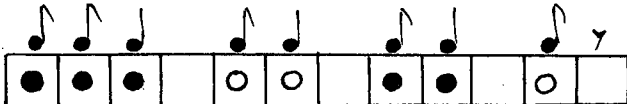
Melodic Rhythm - E3(a)

Di nw'u -- nọ

Speech Rhythm
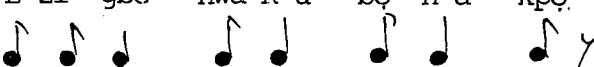
Di nw'u - nọ

Melodic Rhythm - E4(a)

E-zi gbo nwa K'u - bọ n'a- kpọ

Speech Rhythm

A careful study of the melodic contour and the rhythmic structure of the ethical music, shows that the tonal inflections of Igbo language control the outline of the melody. This is evident when the Igbo words are read against the melodic movements in Fig. 19, and found to be following the rise and fall of the tonal characteristics of the words while serving as a guide to the correct pronunciations of the words. Further, the rhythms of melody and speech do not always agree. For example in E1(a) and E3(a) the melodic and speech rhythms differ in duration and rhythmic structure while in E2(a) and E4(a) there is agreement between the rhythms of words and melody. The functional analysis is shown in Table X.

Sayings

S1   Enenie Nwa Ite Ọgbanyualugi Ọku   Example 18
      (If a small pot is neglected, it can
        extinguish your fire)

S2   Ebe Onye Bi Ka Ọna Awachi   Example 19
      (It is where one lives that one mends)

S3   Kabia, Kabia Nalu Awọ Ya Epuna Ọdụdụ   Example 20
      (Postponing, postponing prevented a
        toad from having a tail)

TABLE X. FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF ETHICAL MUSIC

PIECE NO.	ETHNOGRAPHICAL SPECIFICATION	RECIPIENT	SOCIAL STATUS OF PERFORMER	SOCIAL NORM	EXPECTATIONS	ECONOMIC VALUE	PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE
E1	Anti-premarital sex relation	The un-married folks	Variable	Certainty	Chastity	Population control	Variable but mostly in the evenings
E2	Evil deed	The community	Variable	"	Deterrent and peace in families	-	Evening hours
E3	Husband's responsibility	The community	Variable	Must be within the mores and norms of the society	Increase in family love, peace and responsibil-ity	-	Evening hours
E4	Good behaviour and a careful child rearing	"	"	"	Good citizens and good behaviour	-	"

S4   Oku Rua Nwata Nke Izizi Omalu Ife   Example 21
      (When fire burns a child the first
      time, he learns something)

These sayings or proverbs are didactic in nature, intended for admonition and for teaching truth. Speaking Igbo language without proverbs is a mark of inexperience and in-proficiency so much that such difficiency is sometimes likened to eating without salt. On the other hand, when one uses proverbs in speech, he is highly respected as one of the sages. These proverbs are most useful in making diplomatic state-ments and are almost indispensable in that sense throughout Igbo land. The melodic contour movements of the four prover-bial music are shown in Fig. 20.

OBSERVATIONS OF THE MELODIC CONTOUR OF PROVERBIAL MUSIC

PIECE NO.	CONTOUR TYPOLOGY	DESCRIPTIONS
S1	(a)	Static + falling + static + falling + static contour of seven tones.
	(b)	Rising + long static + falling + long static contour of eight tones.
S2	(a)	Long static + falling + rising + falling + rising contour of eight tones.
S3	(a)	Rising + static + falling + rising + static + falling + static + rising + falling + rising + falling + static + falling + static + falling + static contour of fifteen tones.
S4	(a)	Long static + falling + rising + falling + static + rising + static + falling contour of thirteen tones.

The deductions from the melodic contours of the pro-verbial music are as follows:

FIG. 20   THE MELODIC CONTOUR MOVEMENTS OF THE
           PROVERBIAL MUSIC
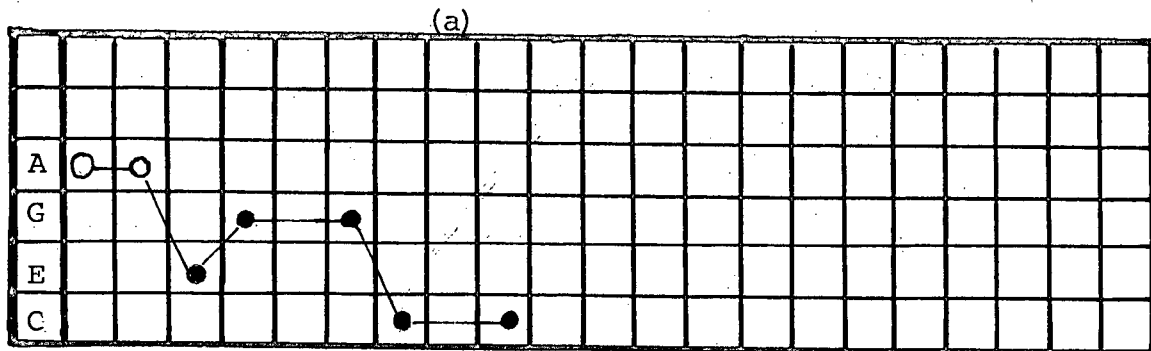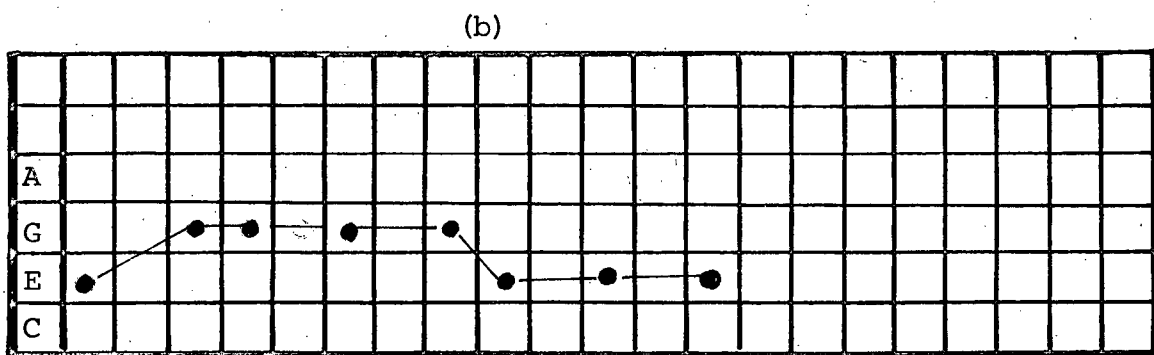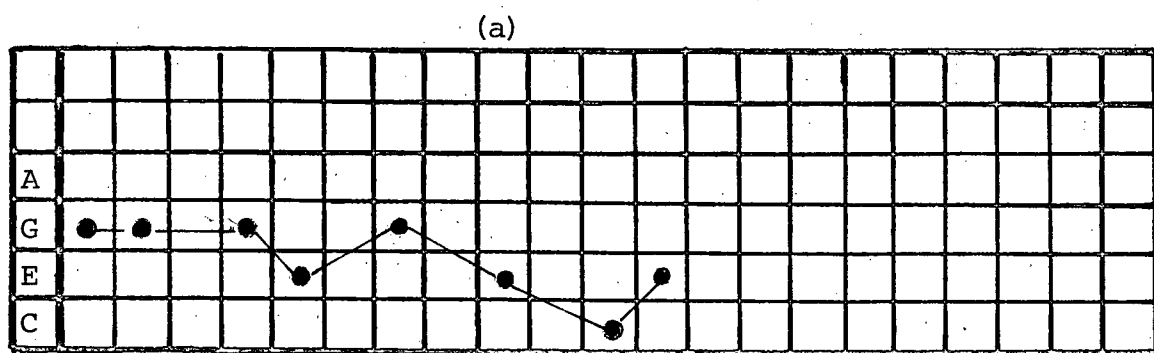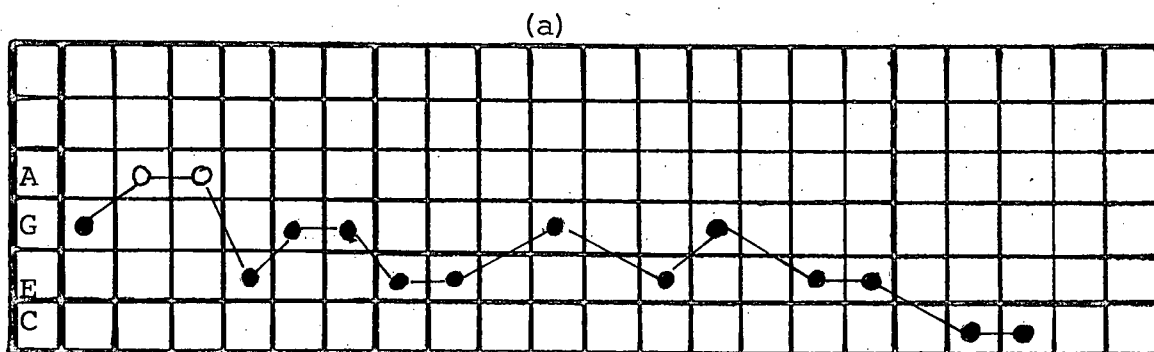
1. The rising + falling + static contour movements
   are common characteristics with clusters of
   tones ranging from seven to fifteen tones.

2. There is gravitation towards 'C' in S1(a), 'E'
   in S1(b), 'C' in S2, 'C' in S3, 'C' in S4.

3. Intervalic structures includes: minor thirds,
   major thirds, perfect 4ths, perfect 5ths.

   The frequency of tone occurrence in proverbial
music is as follows:

FREQUENCY OF TONE OCCURRENCE

PIECE NO.	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	SCALE - MODE
S1	10	–	49	–	68	18	–	4 - tone scale
S2	16	–	46	–	60	4	–	4 - " "
S3	5	–	60	–	57	36	–	4 - " "
S4	13	–	63	–	48	45	–	4 - " "
TOTAL	44	–	218	–	233	103	–	

Altogether, the most frequently used tone is G,
followed by E, A and C. The scale—mode is four-tone scale.
This is the first time there is a common scale-mode in a musical
type.

The relationships between the melodic contour typo-
logy and speech tones are shown in Fig. 21.

The relationships between the rhythms of melody and
speech are as follows:

FIG. 21   THE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE MELODIC CONTOUR
          AND SPEECH TONES IN PROVERBIAL MUSIC
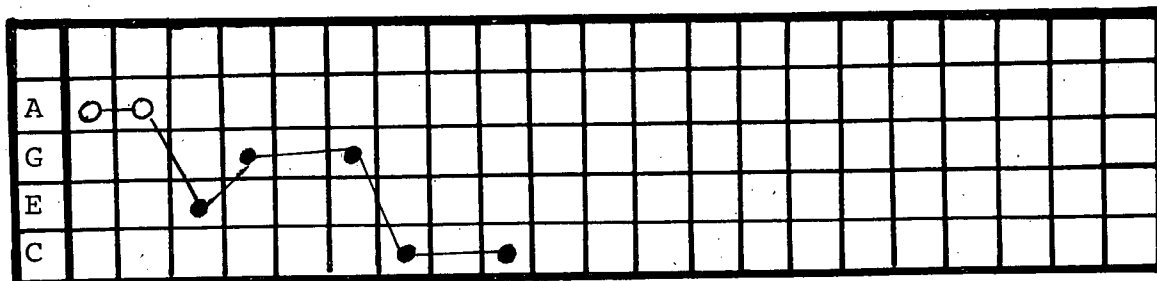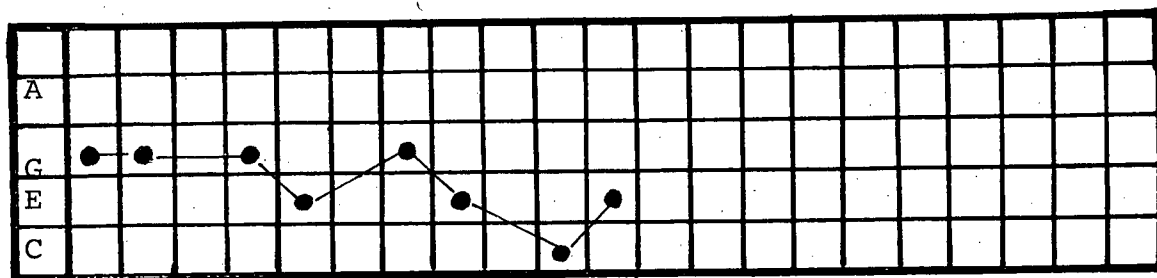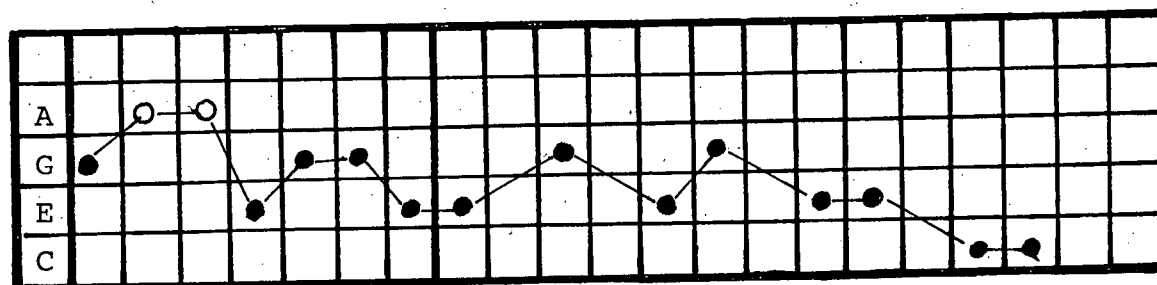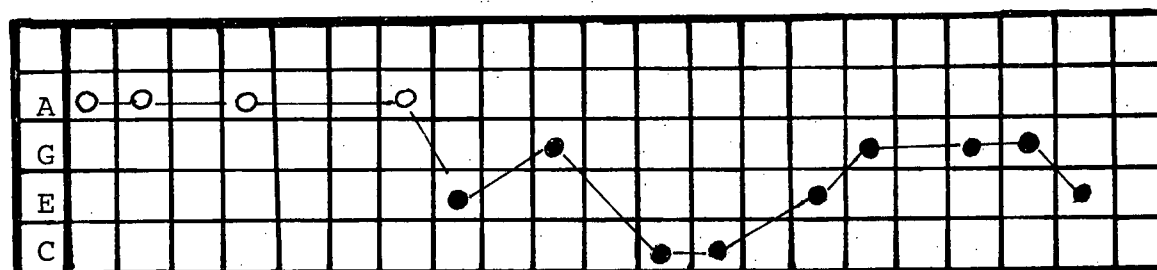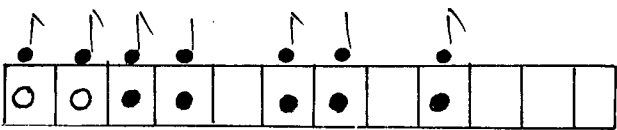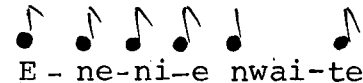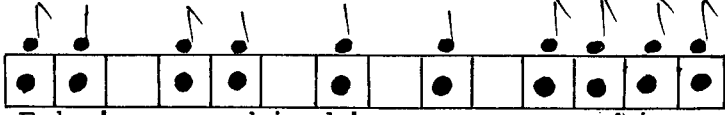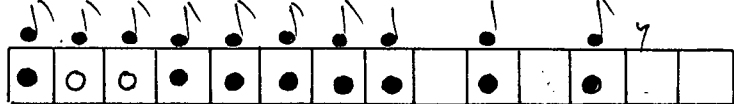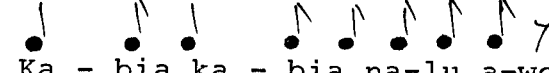
Melodic Rhythm - S1(a)

Speech Rhythm

E- ne-ni-e   nwa-i - te

E - ne-ni-e nwai-te

Melodic Rhythm - S2(a)

Speech Rhythm

E-be'o- nye bi k'o - na - wa-chi

Melodic Rhythm - S3(a)

Speech Rhythm

Ka - bia ka - bia na-lu-a-wo

On the whole, the melodic contour typology of the
proverbial music is linguistically determined because it
follows strictly the tonal inflections of the words. Further,
the rhythms of words and melody do not always agree. For
example, there is marked difference in the duration of bit
value between the melodic and speech rhythms in S1(a) and
S3(a) while there is clear agreement in S2(a). The analysis
of the socio-cultural function is provided in Table XI.

Marriage Music

M1	Agbogho Ya Anu Di (A girl should marry)	Example 22
M2	Nee Obim (Here is my heart)	Example 23
M3	Mgboye Enwee Di (Mgboye has got a husband)	Example 24

TABLE XI　　　　　.FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF MUSICAL SAYINGS

PIECE NO.	ETHNOGRAPHICAL SPECIFICATION	RECIPIENT	SOCIAL STATUS OF PERFORMER	SOCIAL NORM	EXPECTATIONS	ECONOMIC VALUE	PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE	
S1	Advice on pre-caution	Community	Variable	Correct usage	Understanding and precaution	Flexible	Evening hours	
S2	A lesson on responsibility.	"	"	"	High sense of responsibility	"	"	"
S3	A lesson on decision making	"	"	"	Prompt decisions	"	"	"
S4	Advice on pre-caution	"	"	"	Precaution	"	"	"

In Nri culture, marriage is the best way by which a woman validates her social status. The three examples here are about concepts of marriage in Nri tradition. M1, reminds girls that they owe it as a duty to get married. M2 is about affection and promises in courtship which leads to marriage and M3 is joyful music about a girl by name Mgboye who recently got married, pointing out that for a woman to get a husband is good in this world. The melodic contour typology of marriage music is shown in Fig. 22.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE MELODIC CONTOURS OF MARRIAGE MUSIC

PIECE NO.	CONTOUR TYPOLOGY	DESCRIPTION
M1	(a)	Zig-zag melodic contour of six tones.
	(b)	Rising + falling + static + rising + falling contour of six tones.
M2	(a)	Descending + rising + falling + rising + Static contour of eight tones.
	(b)	Falling + rising + falling contour of five tones.
M3	(a)	Rising + falling + static + rising + falling contour of six tones.
	(b)	Static + falling + rising + falling + static contour of seven tones.

Deductions from the melodic movements of marriage music are as follows:

1. All the pieces employ the rising + falling + static contour movements of six to eight tone clusters.

FIG. 22   EXAMPLES OF MELODIC CONTOUR TYPOLOGY
            IN MARRIAGE MUSIC
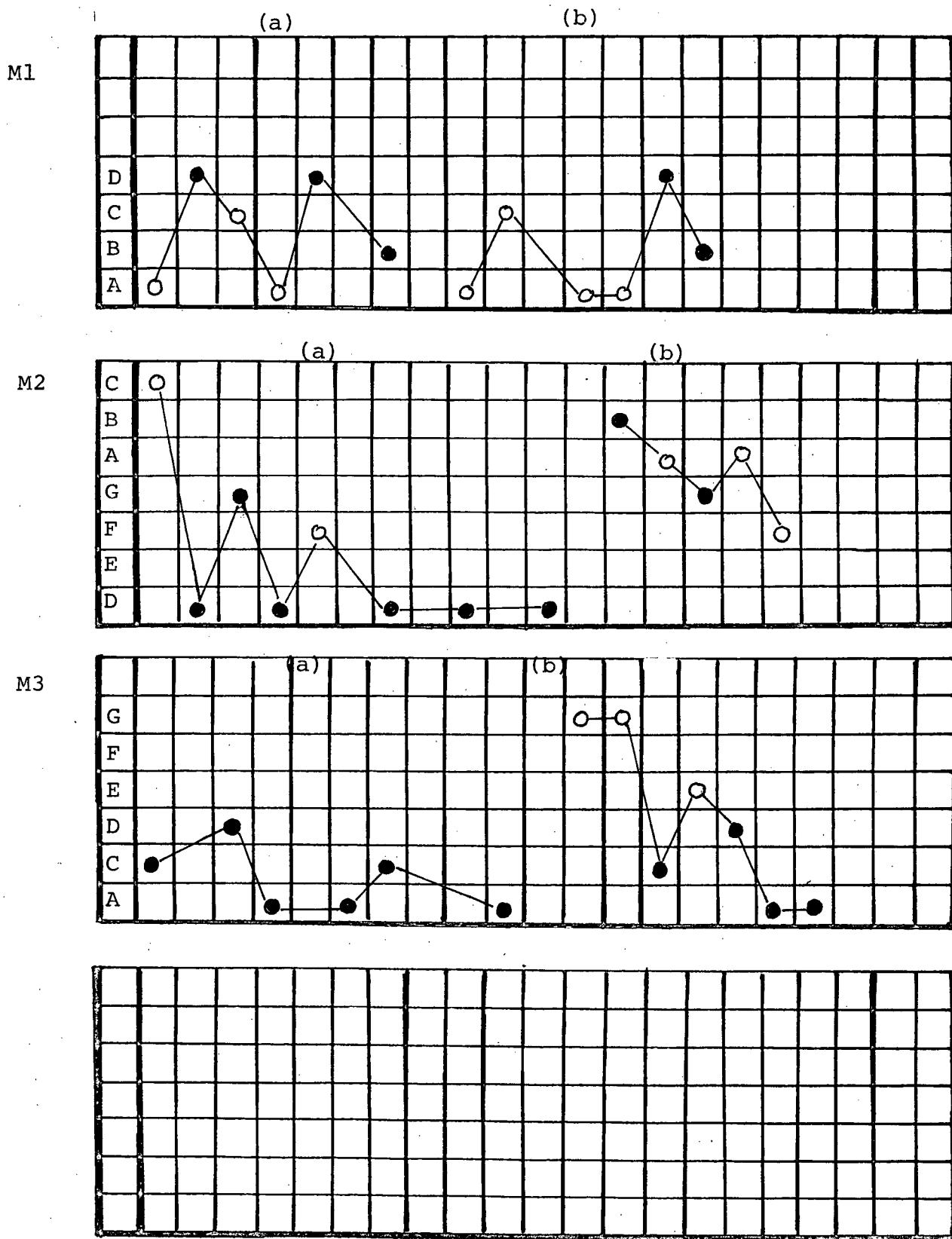
2. There is gravitation towards 'A' in M1, 'D'

in M2 and 'A' in M3.

3. Intervalic structure includes: major 2nds,

minor 3rds, major 3rds, perfect 4ths,

perfect 5ths, and minor 7ths.

THE FREQUENCY OF TONE OCCURRENCE IN MARRIAGE MUSIC

PIECE NO	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	SCALE - MODE
M1	8	29	-	-	-	19	8	4 - tone scale
M2	17	88	-	23	28	11	5	6 - " "
M3	33	18	6	-	33	45	-	5 - tone scale
TOTAL	48	135	6	23	61	75	13	

In summary, the most frequently used tone is D follow-
ed procedurally by A, G, C, F, B and E, with the scale-mode
ranging from four to six tones.

The relationships between the melodic movements and
the speech tones are shown in Fig. 23. This is followed by
the relationship between the rhythms of melody and speech.

Melodic Rhythm - M1(a)

A-gbo-gho ya-nu di

Speech Rhythm

A-gbo-gho ya-nu-di

Melodic Rhythm - M2(a)

l-bu o- bi mu na u - wa

Speech Rhythm

l-bu o-bi mu. n'u- wa

FIG. 23   THE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN MELODIC CONTOUR
           AND SPEECH TONES IN MARRIAGE MUSIC

M1

(a)
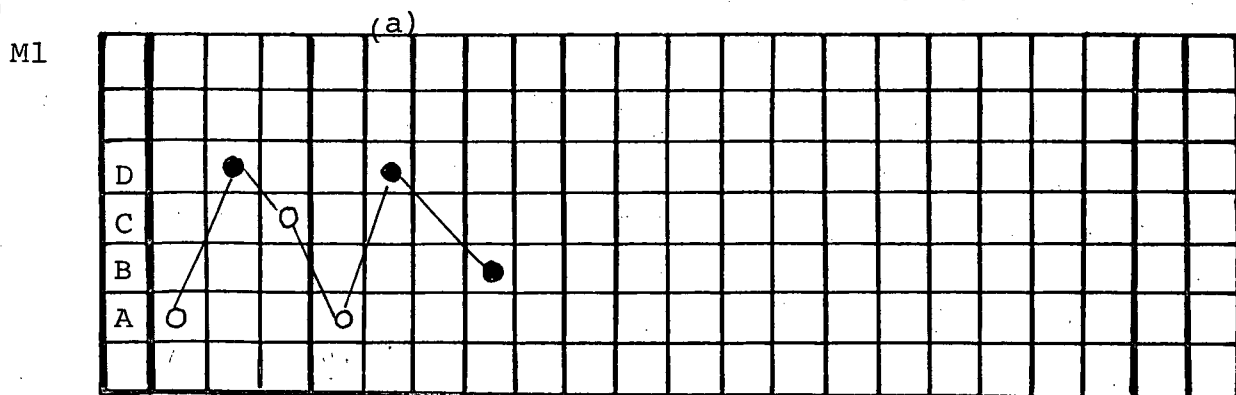
WORDS: Àgbọ̀ghọ̄ ̀yanú - dī

M2

(a)

WORDS: ̀l ̀bu ́o- ̀bi ́mu ̀na ̄ u - wà

M3
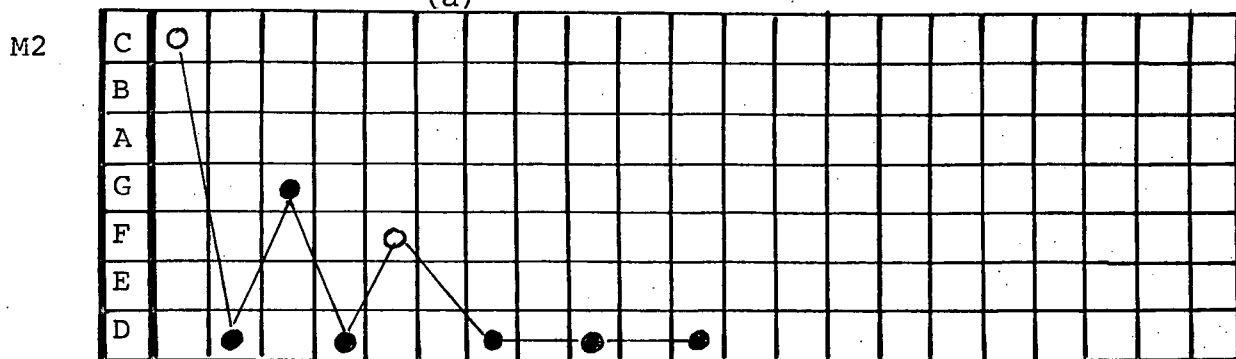
(a)
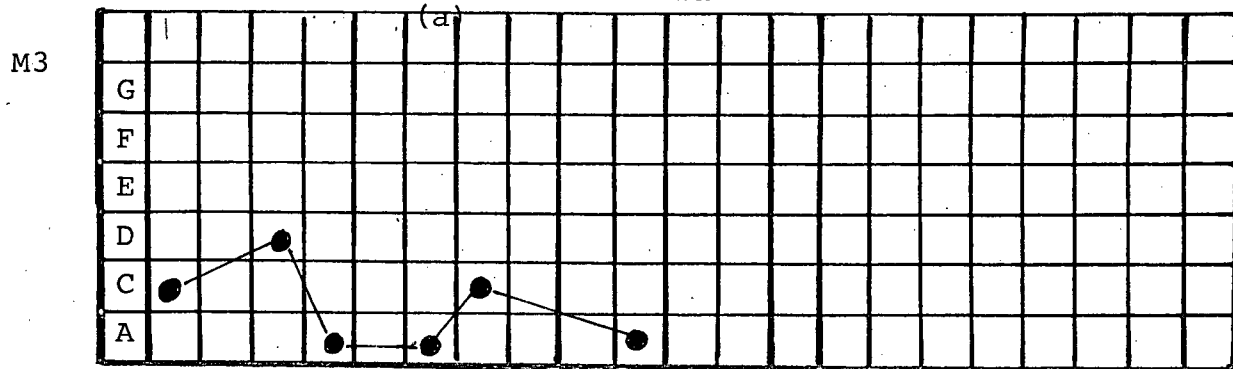
WORDS: M̄ gbó -   yèanua - dī
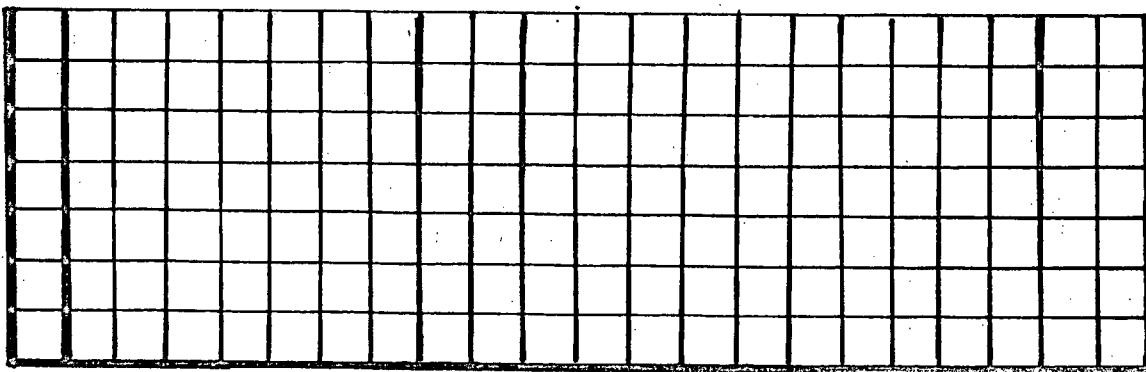
Melodic Rhythm - M3(a)

M - gbo - y'a nu'a- di

Speech Rhythm

M - gbo - ya- nu'a-di

Altogether, the melodic contour typology of the marriage music is linguistically determined as it follows the rise and fall of the speech tones but the rhythms of melody and words do not agree especially in M2(a) and M3(a) when the rhythms are compared. In the case of M1(a) there is partial agreement in the first four beats but disagrees from the fifth beat onwards.

Praise Music

P1   Nwokafǫ Nwa Aguomu Odogwu   Example 25
     (Nwokafǫ, the son of Aguomu, the great)

P2   Nweke Dike Ana   Example 26
     (Nweke the great of the land)

P3   Odogwu Na Agha   Example 27
     (The great in war)

P1 is praise in honour of a one-time great native doctor by name Nwokafǫ who could perform great feats in his days. It is a common story that at his death, it was hard to convince people that he was dead because of his great mystic powers. P2 is in praise of a traditional rain-maker by name Nweke Itulu very much feared and respected for his powers in causing rain. This position earned him a lot of hatred because even when he is not responsible, people accuse him of causing rain to spoil their social function. P3 is a praise music for the king for his greatness in fighting against

TABLE XII.   FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF MARRIAGE MUSIC

PIECE NO.	ETHNOGRAPHICAL SPECIFICATION	RECIPIENT	SOCIAL STATUS OF PERFORMER	SOCIAL NORM	EXPECTATIONS	ECONOMIC VALUE	PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE
M1	Essence of marriage for girls	The spinsters	Variable	-	Good behaviour by girls in order to qualify for marriage	-	Evenings or during festivals
M2	Courtship and assurance of economic security in marriage	"	"	Sincerity	Parents approval	-	Evenings
M3	The joy in having a husband	"	"	High respect for the married ones	Best wishes for the married for raising a family of their own	Partnership in labour, occupation and life	Evenings

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social evils throughout Igbo land. Therefore, this music
should not be taken for praising his greatness in warfare
for Eze Nri by tradition had never been a warrior but rather
he is a peace maker and the spiritual potentate in Igbo
land. The main characteristic melodic contour typology of
praise music is shown in Fig. 24.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE MELODIC CONTOURS OF PRAISE MUSIC

PIECE NO.	CONTOUR TYPOLOGY	DESCRIPTION
P1	(a)	Static + falling + rising + falling + rising + static contour of eight tones.
	(b)	Rising + falling + rising + static + falling contour of seven tones.
P2	(a)	Falling + rising + falling contour of five tones.
	(b)	Descending contour of four tones.
	(c)	Static + falling contour of five tones.
P3	(a)	Falling + static + rising + falling + rising + falling + static + rising + falling contour of ten tones.
	(b)	Rising + falling + rising + falling + static + rising + falling contour of ten tones.

Altogether, the melodic contour typology of praise
music shows the following deductions:

1. The rising, falling and static contour move-
    ments are common to all the pieces with
    clusters of tones ranging from four to ten
    tones.

FIG. 24   THE CHARACTERISTIC MELODIC CONTOUR
           TYPOLOGY IN PRAISE MUSIC

FIG. 24   CONTD.   (a)

2.   There is gravitation towards 'C' in P1, 'C'
     in P2, and 'C' in P3.

3.   The intervalic structure includes: major 2nds,
     minor 3rds, major 3rds, perfect 4ths and
     perfect 5ths.

THE FREQUENCY OF TONE OCCURRENCE IN PRAISE MUSIC

PIECE NO.	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C'	SCALE - MODE
P1	37	58	5	2	17	-	-	-	5 - tone scale
P2	18	-	37	3	37	23	-	-	5 - " "
P3	52	203	-	50	209	17	-	6	6 - tone scale
TOTAL	107	258	42	55	263	40	-	6	

In summary, the most frequently used tone in praise
music is G, followed procedurally by D, C, F, E and A with a
range of five to six tone-scale.

The correlation between the melodic contour movement
and speech tones in praise music, is shown in Fig. 25. Further
the relationships between the rhythms of melody and words are
shown below for comparison:

Melodic Rhythm - P1(a)

Nwo - ka - fo   nw'a- guo - m'o - do-gwu

Speech Rhythm

Nwo - ka - fo nw'a-guo   m'o - do gwu

Melodic Rhythm - P2(a)

Nwe - ke di - ke'a - na

Speech Rhythm

Nwe - ke di-ke'a- na

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FIG. 25   THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE MELODIC CONTOUR
           AND SPEECH TONES IN PRAISE MUSIC

(a)

P1

WORDS: NwO - K'á - fọ nwa - gu'ọ - mô - dó-gwú

(b)

P1

WORDS: Ji - de ki -ji ni- run- mọ

(a)

P2

WORDS: Nwe - ke di - ke'a - na

(b)

WORDS: Di - ke ji'o - ge

FIG. 25   CONTD.

(a)

P3

WORDS: É-zè   nù-lú'o - num   Ézè   yà dí'n - dù
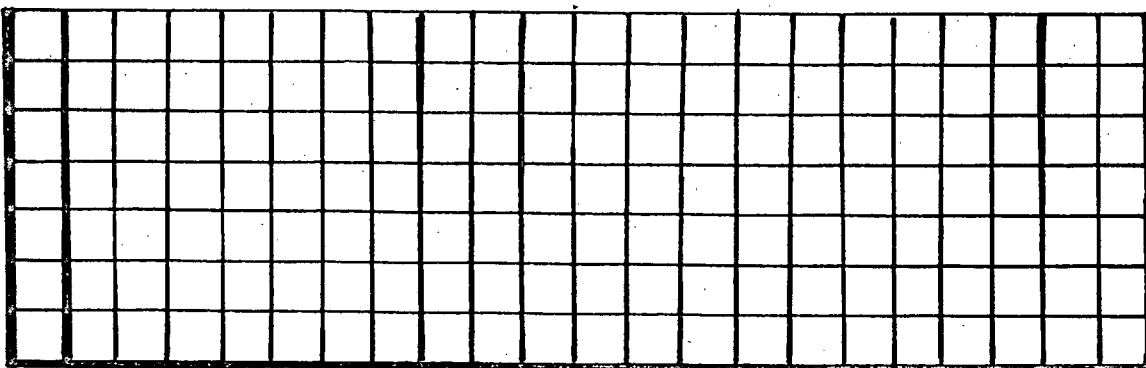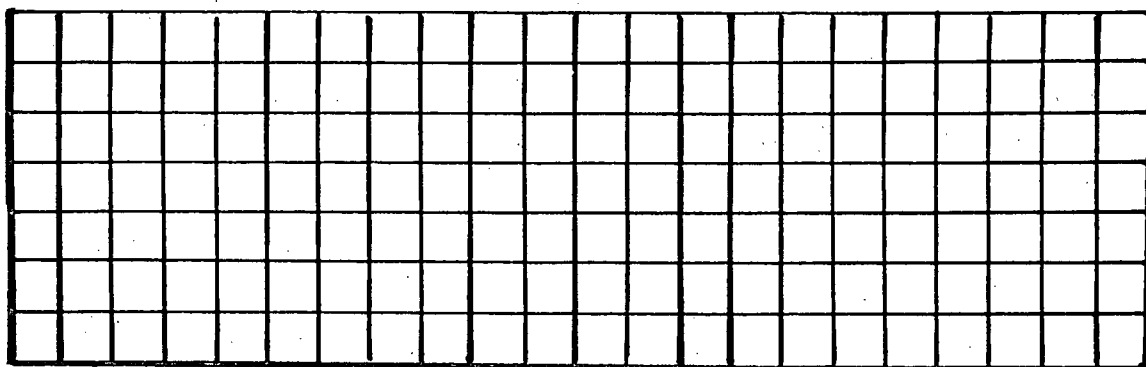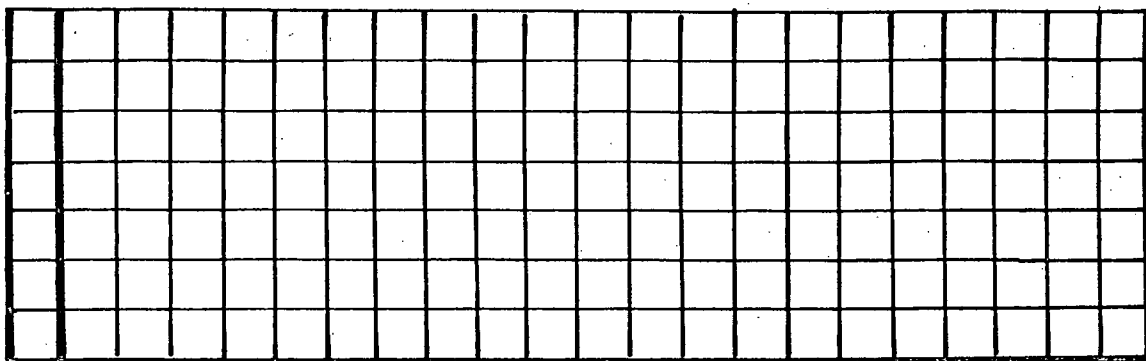
Melodic Rhythm = P3(a)

Speech Rhythm

E- ze   n'u luo - num   E ze   ya din- du

On the whole, it is the tonal inflections of the

Igbo words that control the melodic contour movement in praise

music. In addition, the rhythms of melody and words do not

always agree as shown in the examples P1(a) and P2(a) where

there is disagreement in the duration of beat, while in example

P3(a) there is perfect agreement between the rhythms of the two.

Further, the analysis of the functions of praise music is

shown in Table XIII.

Music for Age-grade Activity

A1	Ọgbọ Anyi, Ọgbọ Odogwu	Example 28
	(Our Age-grade, the age-grade of the great)	
A2	Ọdu Onye Naga?	Example 29
	(Who is passing?)	
A3	Uyawu! Yawu! Itolugo	Example 30
	(Hey! Have you reached the growth)	

These three pieces of music reflect important aspects

of the concept of age-grade in Nri tradition. A1 expresses

the greatness of an age-grade in the Society because the phil-

osophy behind the formation of age-groups encourages and

expects great achievement and a high sense of responsibility

among members of the same age in order to validate their use-

fulness, respect and recognition in the community. A2 is a

night watch-man's music as already discussed under the socio-

TABLE XIII   FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF PRAISE MUSIC

PIECE NO.	ETHNOGRAPHICAL SPECIFICATION	RECIPIENT	SOCIAL STATUS OF PERFORMER	SOCIAL NORM	EXPECTATIONS	ECONOMIC VALUE	PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE
P1	The praise of hero	The hero and the community	Variable	To be merited by the hero	Acceptance and respect for the hero and encouragement to be hero in one's occupation or profession	High standards and perfection in occupations or professions	Evenings or festivals
P2	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
P3	Specially for the King's praise	The King & Royal family and community	"	Noble and reverent	High respect and obedience to the King	-	Evenings and festivals

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FIG. 26   CHARACTERISTIC MELODIC CONTOUR TYPOLOGY
FOR AGE-GRADE MUSIC
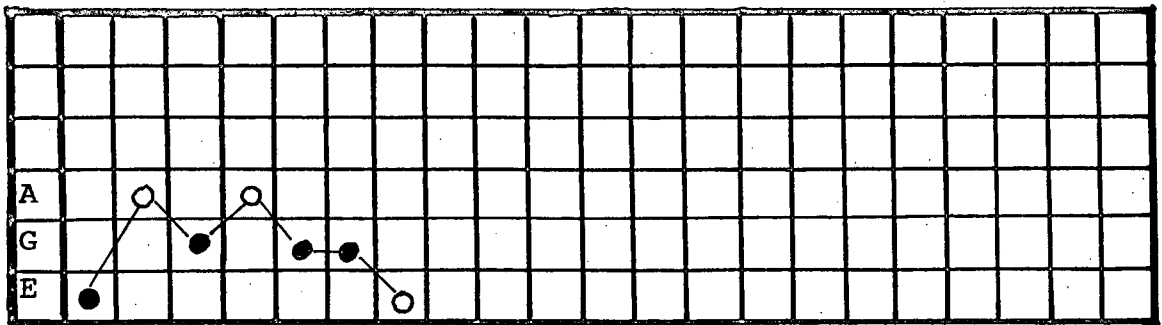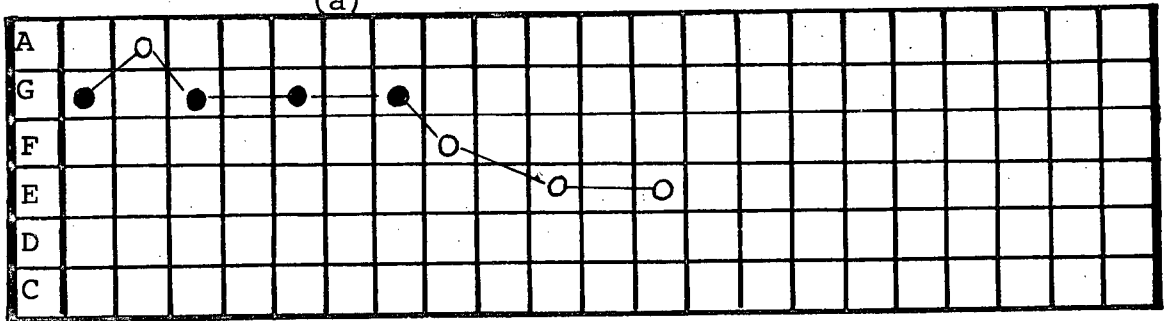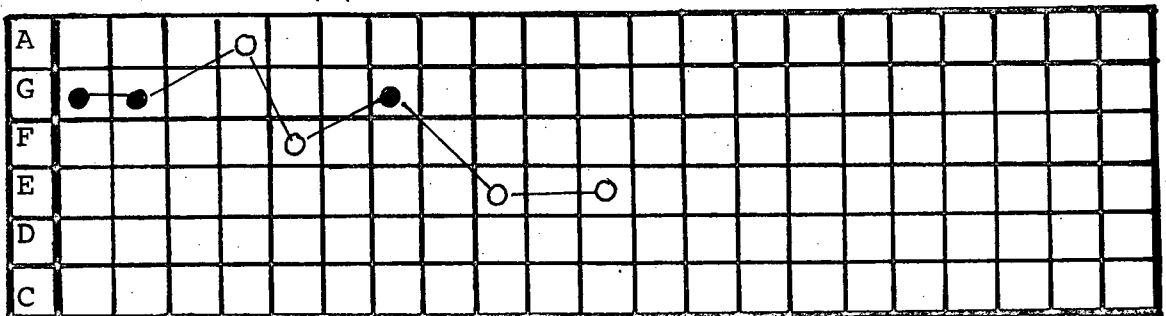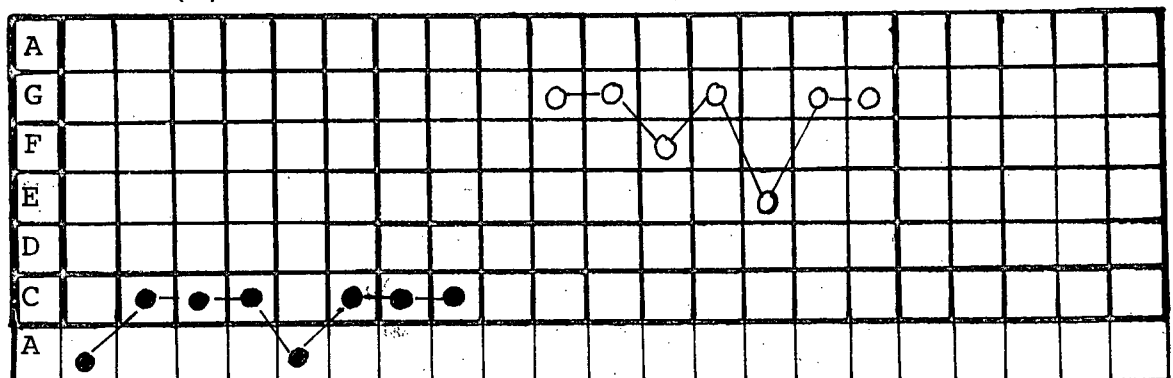
cultural role. A3 reflects challenging questions which age-grade members occasionally ask one another to test qualifications and ability for certain feats in wrestling, masquerading, daily occupation or marriage plans and title-taking. In some cases, this challenging music can be directed to non members of the age-grade or to the growing youths to hurry and qualify for membership and other masculine feats and activities in the society.

The major characteristic melodic contour typology of age-grade music is in Fig. 26 for observation.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE MELODIC CONTOUR TYPOLOGY OF AGE-GRADE MUSIC

PIECE NO.	CONTOUR TYPOLOGY	DESCRIPTION
A1	(a)	Rising + falling + rising + falling + static + falling contour of seven tones.
A2	(a)	Rising + falling + static + falling + static contour of eight tones.
	(b)	Static + rising + falling + rising + falling + static contour of seven tones.
A3	(a)	Rising + static + falling + rising + static contour of eight tones.
	(b)	Static + falling + rising + falling + rising + static contour of seven tones.

On the whole, deductions from the melodic contour movements show the following characteristics:

1. The rising + falling + static contour movement is a common characteristic to all the age-grade music with a range of clusters of

2. There is gravitation towards 'E' in Al,

'E' in A2(a), 'E' in A2(b), 'C' in A3(a)

and G in A3(b).

3. The intervalic structure includes the follow-

ing: major 2nds, minor 3rds, major 3rds

and perfect 4ths.

The analysis of the frequency of tone occurrence

is as follows:
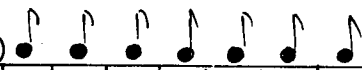
FREQUENCY OF TONE OCCURRENCE IN AGE GRADE MUSIC

PIECE NO.	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	SCALE - MODE
Al	–	–	23	–	60	24	–	3 - tone scale
A2	2	3	42	9	85	41	–	6 - " "
A3	204	30	12	42	56	10 68	–	6 - tone scale
TOTAL	206	33	77	51	201	141	–	

Deductions from the frequency of tone occurrence show

that the most frequently used tone is 'C' followed procedurally

by G, A, E, F with 'D' as the least in use. Altogether, the

scale-mode ranges from 3 - 6 tone scale. The relationships

between the melodic contour movement and the speech tones are

shown in Fig. 27. In addition, the relationships between the

rhythms of melody and speech are shown below:

FIG. 27   THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MELODIC MOVEMENT
           AND THE SPEECH TONES IN AGE-GRADE MUSIC

(a)

A1

WORDS: Ọ̀ gbọ́a-nyị́ọ-gbọ-đo-gwū-o

(b)

A2

WORDS: Ọ-đuo - nye nà - gá   ū - ʼū

A3

l - tó-lú -go l- t0-lu-gó
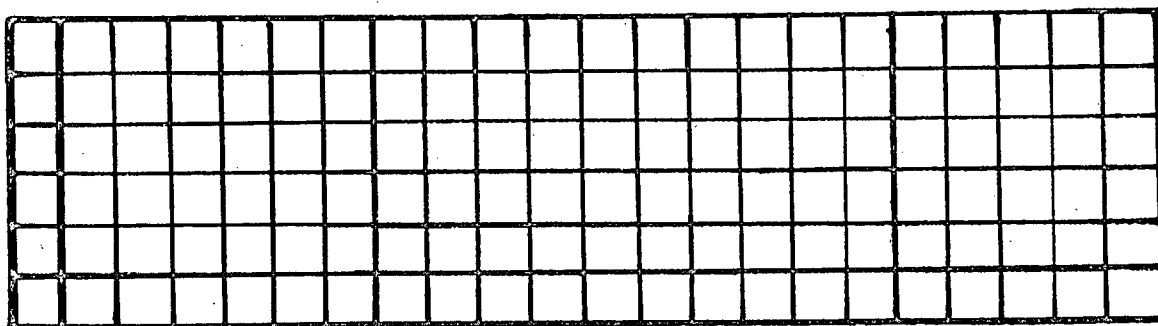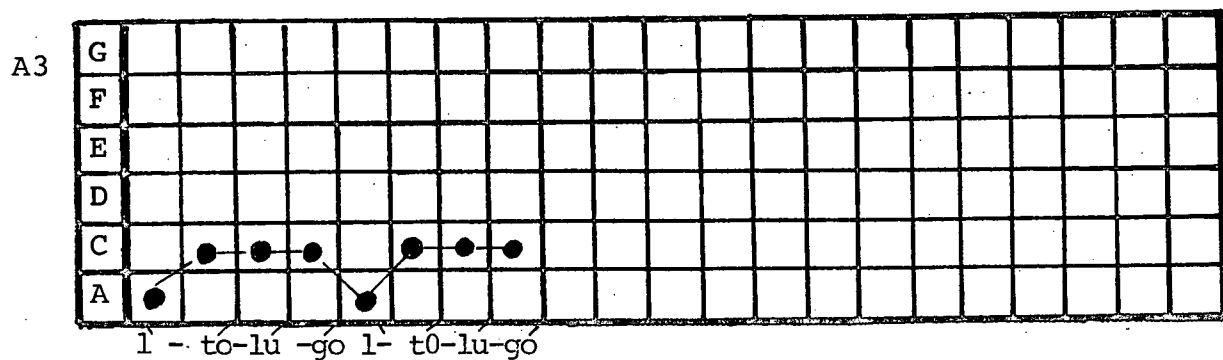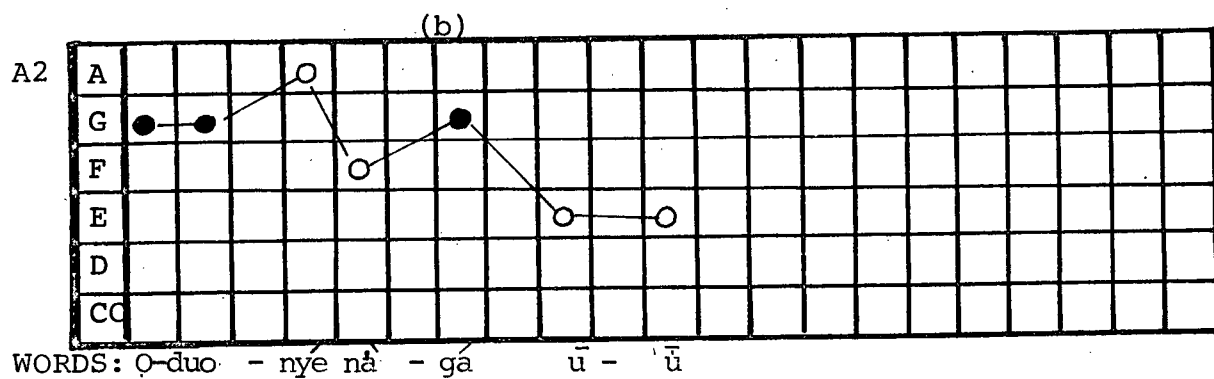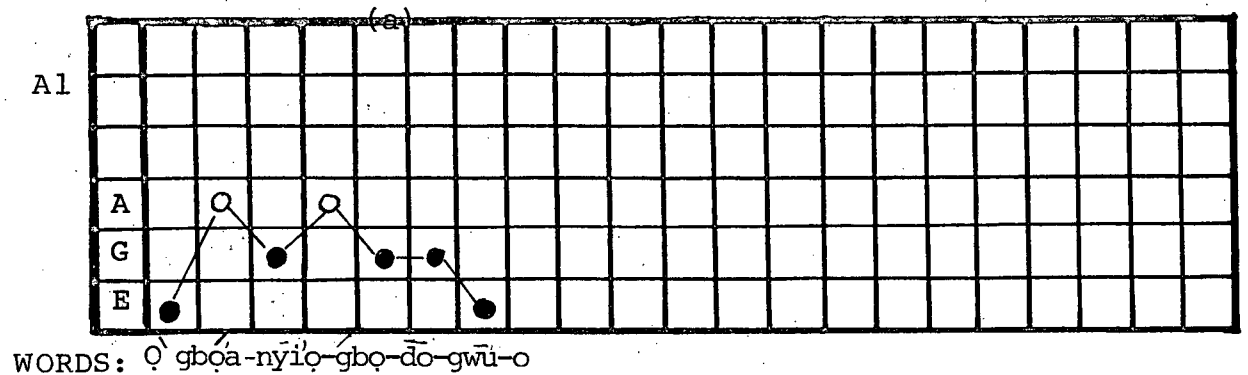
Melodic Rhythm - A1(a)

Speech Rhythm

Ọ-gbọ-nyi-ọ-gbọ-do-gwu-ọ.

Melodic Rhythm - A2(a)

Speech Rhythm

Ọ-duo - nye na - ga   u - u

Ọ-du'o nye na - ga   u

Melodic Rhythm - A3(a)

Speech Rhythm

l-to - lu-go   l-to-lu go

On the whole, the melodic contour typology of age-grade music is linguistically determined as they follow the rise and fall of the tonal inflections in Igbo words. The relationships between the rhythms of melody and speech tones show exact agreement in all the three examples: A1, A2, and A3 for the first time. The analysis of function is shown in Table XIV.

TABLE XIV   FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF AGE-GRADE MUSIC

PIECE NO.	ETHNOGRAPHICAL SPECIFICATION	RECIPIENT	SOCIAL STATUS OF PERFORMER	SOCIAL NORM	EXPECTATIONS	ECONOMIC VALUE	PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE
A1	To increase the morale of the age-grade	Members of the group and community	Variable	Occasional perfor- mance	Increase in the morale of the group	Corpora- tions	Age grade meetings or during festivals and ceremonies
A2	Night watch- fulness	the	Variable	Personal	Warding off sleep and scaring thieves away	Maintenance of security	Night hours
A3	Challenge on maturity in age	The con- cerned individ- uals	Variable	Members within the same age-grade most of the time	Showing maturity	Encourages hard work	Evenings or during age-grade meetings

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The investigation into the implications of findings
in this study, attempts to answer the pertinent questions
raised at the beginning of the analytical discourse; espec-
ially the question on whether the socio-cultural groupings
of ubọ-aka music possess musical characteristics that are
peculiar to them respectively.

In the analysis of the musical parameters with
reference to the melodic contour typology, frequency of tone
occurrence and intervalic relationships, the findings show
that all the socio-cultural categories, despite their different
roles in the society have a lot in common in terms of musical
characteristics. For example, there is a characteristic
employment of descending, ascending and static melodic contour
typology common to all the musical types. This common charac-
teristic is also evident in the intervalic structures,
frequency of tone occurrence and in the use of combinations
of scale-mode. Also in terms of stylistic organization of
tones, repetition of melodic figures and rhythmic patterns
are common features which are very clear in the scores.

In terms of the scalar structure there are combina-
tions of scale-modes among the socio-cultural groupings with
the exception of the proverbial music that confined itself
only to four-tone scale mode in all the examples. The use of
this particular mode on the contrary, is not peculiar to

proverbial music. For example, 75% of the religious music used four-tone scale, 25% of the 'information music' is in four-tone scale while 40% of the death music bases also on this mode. With the exception of praise, age-grade and ethical music which did not use the scale, a total of 36.6% of the entire repertoir employed the four-tone scale-mode. Moreover, the combinations of the four-tone structure is not uniform to all the socio-cultural groupings. It is only in the proverbial music that combinations remain consistent of C, E, G, A. In the same way, five-tone scale-mode is common to the religious, information, death, ethical, marriage and praise musical types and also represents 36.6% of the entire repertoire. On the other hand, three-tone scale mode is peculiar to information music and the age-grade music representing 6.6% of the entire repertoire. Further, the six-tone scale-mode is common to age-grade and marriage music only constituting 13.3% of the whole repertoire. The only scale-mode that is peculiar to a musical type is the seven-tone scale in ethical music which constitutes 3.3% of the whole repertoire, and 50% of the ethical music alone, but this is not enough to jump into conclusion that ubo-aka ethical music is the only type that uses seven-tone scale-mode in Nri culture because of the limitations in the numbers of examples. In addition, intervalic structures such as minor 2nd, major 2nd, minor 3rd, major 3rd, perfect 4th and 5th are common characteristics in majority of cases. The only two peculiar

intervals are the minor 6th in death music and minor 7th in marriage music. Nevertheless what these socio-cultural groupings share in common is greater than their differences in terms of sonic frame-work alone. In view of this, the structures of the sonic order alone in these groupings are not sufficient to classify or departmentalize them.

Throughout the analysis of the socio-cultural groupings, the deductions from a total of 35 examples of relationships between the melodic contour typology and the speech tones, show that all the examples of melodic contour movements are linguistically determined as they follow the rise and fall of Igbo tonal language for expression and meaning. Even the tones to which others gravitate should not be conceived as an isolated tonal centre in a modal structure but rather as centres of linguistic themes which are the cardinal words. For example, in R4(a), the mode is 'Do' mode and not 'Sol' mode but the gravitation of the melodic contour movements tends to 'G' which carries the major word (or words) in the text: Iga-adi (You will live). Other examples include the following: Fig. 15: 'C' in F(a) containing 'Eke" which is the linguistic theme; Fig. 17: 'G' in D2(a) contains the speech theme"mmǫ"(the land of the dead) etc. On the other hand, it can fall on the tonal centre proper just as it can fall on any tone on the basis of the important verbal message that revolves around or on it as in Fig. 12: R2(a) where the gravitation is towards 'C' which is coincidentally the tonal

centre "a nọm n'ọnwu" (I am in death). In this way the
gravitations are linguistically motivated. In addition, the
findings show that there is relationship between the rhythms
of melody and speech either in part or in full (or not at
all) as the case may be. Thus the deductions out of twenty-
five examples of melodic and speech rhythm groupings, show
that 40% agreed in rhythmic pattern while the rest disagreed.
It is therefore not always that rhythms of melody and speech
agree and yet the words can be understood clearly which shows
that the deviations whenever they occur are not far removed
to effect distortion.

Although there is flexibility in the structure of
the musical parameters as already discussed, lack of standard-
ization in tuning of the keys of the instrument contributes to
the inconsistency and changes in sonic framework.

On the whole, deductions show that the musical
parameters can change but not the socio-cultural roles and
all that constitute the extramusical content by which the
musical types are socially defined and identified especially
in the light of the specifications on the analysis of function.

While this study does not claim to be exhaustive,
it probably contributed to a better understanding and appreci-
ation of ụbọ-aka musical tradition in Nri culture, and serves
as a basis for further ethnomusicological inquiry into the
musical parameters, linguistic content and the socio-cultural
perspective especially in the context of the musical cultures
of Nigeria, Africa and the Caribbeans.

It is felt that some of the areas not treated in this investigation but which could be the principal interest of future investigations are evolution, history, compositional technique, theory and melographic analysis of ụbọ-aka music. The author hopes that this work will be of use to investigators concerned with further studies on the Igbo ụbọ-aka and will enrich its potential for African music education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

IGBO TONAL ORGANIZATION

THE ORTHOGRAPHY

The official orthography uses the Roman letters with diacritic marks in addition to combinations of some specific letters for special tonal effects. (Refer to the Igbo Alphabet below.)

IGBO ALPHABET:

a	b	gb	d	e	f	g	gh	h	i	j	k	kp
l	m	n	o	ọ	p	r	s	sh	t	u	ụ	v
w	y	z	gw	kw	nw	ny.						

VOWELS	ENGLISH EQUIVALENT	IGBO
a	hat	ala (land)
e	net	nne (mother)
i	meet	ji (yam)
ị	sit	ita (oracle)
o	bold	obodo (town)
u	food	une (musical bow)
ụ	mug	ụmụ (children)
ọ	hot	oyo (shaker)

CONSONANTS

The sound is the same as in English: b, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, y, z, in addition to the following combinations ch, gw, gb, gh, kw, nw, ny, and n (as in n)

For example:

ch	as in church
kw	as in Quarker
gh	as in hugh
nw	as in nwanyi (woman)
kp	as in akpa (bag)
gb	as in egbe (gun)

In addition "kp" sounds open-explosive

"gb" sounds mute-explosive.

TONAL INFLECTION

Igbo Language is tonal which depends on the rise and fall in pitch of various syllables in a word for meaning. For example, the bi-syllabic morpheme: "1-gwe" has three different meanings depending on the tonal inflection:

í gwe	=	(high - mid tone)	sky
í gwè	=	(high - low tone)	iron
ì gwè	=	(low - low tone)	multitude, many

Further example:

Ézè	=	(high - low)	King
Éze	=	(high - mid)	teeth, etc.

On the whole, there are three tones in Igbo Language namely

1. High Tone (indicated by the Acute Accent ´)

2. Low Tone (indicated by the Grave Accent `)

3. Mid Tone (or Step Tone) (blank or indicated by a dash above).

The High and the Low tones can be either preceeded
or followed by each other, but the mid tone or the step stone
usually follows the high tone from which it steps down. These
three levels of tones are not fixed; they are better conceived
as bands of tones to accommodate pitch approximations by
different speakers.

APPENDIX II

NOTES ON TAPE RECORDING

Tape 1:A, No. 1, Ref. No. R1   (Example 1)

Title:	N'iru Iyio
Place:	Agbadana-Nri
Performer:	Okoye Akpagu
Collected by:	Clement Ezegbe
Date:	September, 1970

Tape 1:A, No. 2, Ref. No. R2   (Example 2)

Title:	O Chi Anọm Nọnwu
Place:	Obeagu-Nri
Performer:	Isaiah Okeke
Collected by:	Clement Ezegbe
Date:	November 10, 1966

Tape 1:A, No. 3, Ref. No. R3   (Example 3)

Title:	Iga Adi
Place:	Uruọji-Nri
Performer:	Muokwe Ichoku
Collected by:	Clement Ezegbe
Date:	January 3, 1970

Tape 1:A, No. 4, Ref. No. R4   (Example 4)

Title:	Iga Adi Ndu Di Enu
Place:	Agbadana-Nri
Performer:	Okoye Akpagu
Collected by:	Clement Ezegbe
Date:	September, 1970

Tape 1:B, No. 1, Ref. No. F1   (Example 5)

Title:	Eke Elue
Place:	Agbadana-Nri
Performer:	Ayika Ejiaka
Collected by:	Clement Ezegbe
Date:	June 4, 1968

Tape 1:B, No. 2, Ref. No. F2   (Example 6)

Title:	Ife Ne'me N'uwa
Place:	Agbadana-Nri
Performer:	Ayika Ejiaka
Collected by:	Clement Ezegbe
Date:	June 4, 1968

Tape 1:B, No. 3, Ref. No. F3   (Example 7)

    Title: Alu Ka Omelu
    Place: Uruọji-Nri
    Performer: Nwangene Obed Echeta
    Collected by: Clement Ezegbe
    Date: July 15, 1972

Tape 1:B, No. 4, Ref. No. F4   (Example 8)

    Title: Onye-ori
    Place: Agbadana-Nri
    Performer: Okoye Akpagu
    Collected by: Clement Ezegbe
    Date: September, 1970

Tape 2:A, No. 1, Ref. No. D1   (Example 9)

    Title: Ọnwu Amarọ Dike
    Place: Obeagu-Nri
    Performer: Abel Okeke Okafọ
    Collected by: Levi Ọji
    Date: March 14, 1977

Tape 2:A, No. 2, Ref. No. D2   (Example 10)

    Title: Ọna Mmọ
    Place: Diodo (Akamkpisi)-Nri
    Performer: John Agbatalu
    Collected by: Levi Ọji
    Date: February 16, 1977

Tape 2:A, No. 3, Ref. No. D3   (Example 11)

    Title: Alu Eme Muọ
    Place: Uruọji-Nri
    Performer: Nwangene Obed Echeta
    Collected by: Clement Ezegbe
    Date: July 15, 1972

Tape 2:A, No. 4, Ref. No. D4   (Example 12)

    Title: Ewu Nwannem Kamalu Ife Melunu
    Place: Agbadana
    Performer: Ọnwura Nwokike
    Collected by: Clement Ezegbe
    Date: July 6, 1975

Tape 2:A, No. 5, Ref. No. D5   (Example 13)

    Title: Ifu Ife Ọnwu Neme
    Place: Uruọji-Nri
    Performer: Muokwe Icheoku
    Collected by: Clement Ezegbe
    Date: January, 1970

Tape 2:B, No. 1, Ref. No. El   (Example 14)

    Title: Nwakaego Atulu Ime
    Place: Agbadana-Nri
    Performer: Nweke Nwaku
    Collected by: Gwamniru Ezegbe
    Date: February, 1977

Tape 2:B, No. 2, Ref. No. E2   (Example 15)

    Title: Agadi Nwanyi
    Place: Uruọji-Nri
    Performer: Muokwe Icheoku
    Collected by: Clement Ezegbe
    Date: January 3, 1970

Tape 2:B, No. 3, Ref. No. D3   (Example 16)

    Title: Di Nwe Unọ
    Place: Agbadana-Nri
    Performer: Ayika Ejiaka
    Collected by: Clement Ezegbe
    Date: June 4, 1968

Tape 2:B, No. 4, Ref. No. E4   (Example 17)

    Title: Ezigbo Nwa Ka Ụbọ Nakpọ
    Place: Agbadana-Nri
    Performer: Nweke Nwaku
    Collected by: Gwamniru Ezegbe
    Date: February, 1977

Tape 3:A, No. 1, Ref. No. S1   (Example 18)

    Title: Enenie Nwa Ite Ọgbanyualugi Ọku
    Place: Obeagu-Nri
    Performer: Isaiah Okeke
    Collected by: Clement Ezegbe
    Date: November 10, 1966

Tape 3:A, No. 2, Ref. No. S2   (Example 19)

    Title: Ebe Onye Bi Ka Ọna Awachi
    Place: Obeagu-Nri
    Performer: Isaiah Okeke
    Collected by: Clement Ezegbe
    Date: November 10, 1966

Tape 3:A, No. 3, Ref. No. S3   (Example 20)

    Title: Kabia, Kabia N'alu Awọ Ya Epuna Odudu
    Place: Obeagu-Nri
    Performer: Abel Okeke Okafọ
    Collected by: Levi Ojị
    Date: March, 1977

Tape 3:A, No. 4, Ref. No. S4   (Example 21)

    Title: Ǫku Rua Nwata Nke Izizi Ǫmalu Ife
    Place: Uruǫji-Nri
    Performer: Muokwe Icheoku
    Collected by: Clement Ezegbe
    Date: January 3, 1970

Tape 3:B, No. 1, Ref. No. M1   (Example 22)

    Title: Agbogho Ya Nu Di
    Place: Agbadana-Nri
    Performer: Nweke Nwaku
    Collected by: Gwamniru Ezegbe
    Date: February, 1977

Tape 3:B, No. 2, Ref. No. M2   (Example 23)

    Title: Nee Obim
    Place: Agbadana-Nri
    Performer: Ayika Ejiaka
    Collected by: Clement Ezegbe
    Date: June 4, 1968

Tape 3:B, No. 3, Ref. No. M3   (Example 24)

    Title: Mgboye Enwee Di
    Place: Agbadana-Nri
    Performer: Okoye Akpagu
    Collected by: Clement Ezegbe
    Date: August 15, 1971

Tape 4:A, No. 1, Ref. No. P1   (Example 25)

    Title: Nwokafǫ Nwa Aguomu Odogwu
    Place: Agbadana-Nri
    Performer: Okoye Akpagu
    Collected by: Clement Ezegbe
    Date: August 15, 1971

Tape 4:A, No. 2, Ref. No. P2   (Example 26)

    Title: Nweke Dike Ana
    Place: Uruǫji-Nri
    Performer: Nwangene Obed Echeta
    Collected by: Clement Ezegbe
    Date: July 5, 1972

Tape 4:A, No. 3, Ref. No. P3   (Example 27)

    Title: Odogwu Nagha
    Place: Agbadana-Nri
    Performer: Ayika Ejiaka
    Collected by: Clement Ezegbe
    Date: January, 1969

Tape 4:B, No. 1, Ref. No. A1   (Example 28)

    Title: Ọgbọ Anyi Ọgbọ Odogwu
    Place: Uruọji-Nri
    Performer: Gabriel Obidike
    Collected by: Levi Oji
    Date: March 14, 1977

Tape 4:B, No. 2, Ref. No. A2   (Example 29)

    Title: Ọdu Onye Naga?
    Place: Agbadana-Nri
    Performers: (1) Nicholas Okechukwu Mmankọ (ubọ-aka)
                        (2) Benedict Ezegbe (voice)
    Collected by: Levi Oji
    Date: March 14, 1977

Tape 4:B, No. 2, Ref. No. A3   (Example 30)

    Title: Uyawu! Uyawu! Itolugo
    Place: Agbadana-Nri
    Performer: Nicholas Okechukwu Mmankọ
    Collected by: Levi Oji
    Date: March, 1977

APPENDIX III

SOME ADDITIONAL TEXTS

R3   <u>Iga - Adi</u>

Iga adi	You will live
Iga adi tue mu ugo	You will live and adorn me with eagle feathers
Iga adi ka nka uwa	You will live and attain old age of the world
Iga adi n'e nwe ife	You will live and be possessing things

F4   <u>Onye ori</u>

Onye ori okwa gi n'ezu eghu anyi	You thief you are the one that steals our goats
Onye-ori okwa gi n'ezu efi anyi	You thief, you are the one that steals our cow
Onye-ori nga ka ka iga ejelili	You thief you must go to prison
Onye-ori okwa gi n'egwu ji anya	You thief you are the one that harvests our yams
Onye-ori nga ka iga ejelili.	You thief you must go to prison.

D1   <u>Onwu Amaro Dike</u>

Onwu amaro dike	Death does not know the brave
Onwu na egbunu	Death kills
Onwu amaro dike.	Death does not know the brave.

E1   <u>Nwakaego Atulu Ime</u>

Nwakaego atulu ime	Nwakaego is pregnant
Mgbe mu ya agwa ya obebe akwa	When she is told, she cries
Ife na eme n'enu uwa ta	Things happen in this world today

	Nwakaego Kpachalu anya.	Nwakaego, be careful.
M3	**Mgboye Enwe Di**	
	Mgboye enwe di	Mgboye has got a husband
	Mgboye anua di	Mgboye is married
	Di ọma di mma n'uwa.	A good husband is good in this world.
P1	**Nwokafọ Nwa Aguomu Odogwu**	
	Nwokafọ nwa Aguomu odogwu	Nwokafọ, the son of Aguomu, the great
	Jide ka iji	Hold fast to your behaviour
	Niru mmọ.	Beforetthe ancestral spirits.
P2	**Nweke Dike Ana**	
	Nweke dike ana	Nweke, the great of the land
	Nweke dike ji oge	Nweke, the great that holds the time
	Nweke, ike na ali ọji	Nweke, the power that climbs the iroko tree
	Nweke gi jide ka iji.	Nweke, hold on to your behaviour.
A1	**Ọgbọ Anyi Ọgbọ Adogwu**	
	Ọgbọ anyi, ọgbọ odogwu	Our age-grade is the great age-grade
	Ọgbọ anyi ọgbọ netu ego	Our age grade is the age-grade that gives money
	Ọgbọ anyi ogbo n'enwe ego.	Our age-grade is the age-grade that has money.

THE TRANSCRIPTIONS

R1 N'iru Iyio Example 1

VOICE
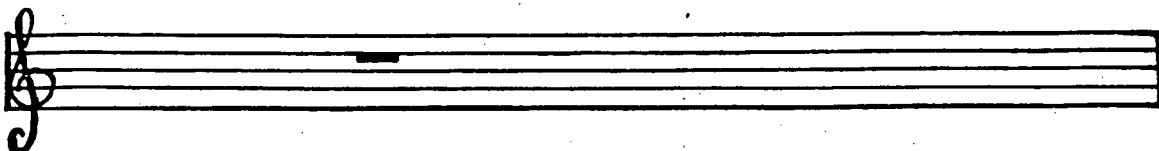
LANGUAGE

UBO-
AKA

R1 Contd.

Ni- rui — yio   ke-je-

be je-be   n'i-rui — yio

R1 Contd.

ke-je-be je-be   ni-rui - yio

ke-je-be je-be   ni - rui i-tao   ke-

R1 Contd.

je - be   je - be   n'i — ruñ-mo

ke - je - be je - be   n'i — rua-lu-si   ke - je - be

R1 Contd.

je-be

n'i- rui-yio

ke-je-be je-be

n'i-rua- lu-si

ke-je-be je-be

R 1 Contd.

na-lu e-me   nu-rui-

-yio   ke-je-be je-be   ke-je-be je-be

R1 Contd.

n'i-rui — yio   ke-je-be je-

be -- a-lu e-me   ke-je-be je-be   n'i-

Rl Contd.

LANG: O - chia-nom no - nwu O - chia - nom no- nwu

O - chi o-ma.   O - chia— nom no - nwu

R2 Contd.

LANG:

o- chi - nwekwei-fe nyemu

R3 Iga Adi Example 3

R3   contd.

1 — ga

— di n'e — nwei — fe

R3   contd.

I‗ qa   di ‗ n‗ du

R3   contd.

I - ga - di kaǹ - ka na u- wa

R4   Iga Adi Ndu Di Enu   Example 4

LANG: I— ga - din - du I — ga - di

di — e - nu ne

nwei-fe

R4 Contd.

R4 Contd.

R4 Contd

F1   Eke Elue   Example 5

LANG E - ke   e - Lue

C
A
G
X

E - ke   e - lu - go

C
A
G
X

E - ke o - bo   do'e - we

C
A
G
X

Fl Contd.

E - Keh-ri   E- Keh

-ri   E- Keh-ri   E— Keh-ri   E— Keh-ri

E— Keh-ri

F2 Ife N'eme N'uwa Example 6

F2 Contd.

F2 Contd.

F2 Contd.

F3   Alu Ka Omelu   Example 7

LANG: A-lu ka o-me n'e- n'u'- wa   A-lu ka o-me   o- fu'i-

fe   A-lu ka o-me   o- lu'a -na

A-lu ka o-me-lu zo- be   yao

F3 Contd.

O – ŋyeo – riọ – kwa

F4 Contd.

gi ne - zue- ghu a - nyi   O - nyeo-

rio- kwa gi ne- zue- fi a- nyi   O-

nyeo- ri n- ga kai- ge - je- li- li

F4 Contd.

O - nyeb - riọ - kwa gị n'e - zue - ghu a - nyi

O - nyeo - riọ - kwa - gị n'e - gwu ji

a - nyi   O - nyeo - ri n - ga kaị - ge je -

F4 Contd.

li-li   O — nye'o- rio   n-ga   kai-

ge - je-li-li

F4 Contd.

D1 Onwu Amaro Dike Example 9

LANG: Onwúa·maro di-ke o nwu na e-gbunu o-nwúa·ma·ro di-ke

O-nwu na e-gbunu o-nwúa·ma·ro di-ke

O-nwu·a·maro di-ke o nwu na e-gbunu o-nwúa·ma·ro di-ke

D2   Ona Mmo   Example 10

D2 Contd.

D3   Alu Eme Mu   Example 11

LANG: A - lue - me mu n'i - ru Gwa muï - fe me - au

Gwa muï - fe me -

nu kam ma-lu

D3 contd.

A- lu'e

- me - mu ko- di - ba, k'o - di - ba - o

D4   Ewu Nwannem Ka malu Ife Melunu   Example]2

D4 contd.

O - zo e - me - nuo

D4 contd.

E-wu   nwan-nem   o-di e-gwu nwan nem

o-di e-gwu nwan-nem   E-wu   nwan-nem

D5   Ifu Ife Onwu N'eme   Example]3

LANG: I— fùi-feò -nwu n'e - me

I— fùi fèò- nwu n'e- me — nu

D5 Contd.

Di - be n'o - me - ra - gwo

ne - me n'u - wa n'e - me

D5 Contd.

I- fe o - nwu na e-me

D5 contd.

Di - be'o.

— E - won - do

LANG: Nwa — kae — go a - tu-lu i — me o mgbe mu ya qwa yo-be-bea

kwa I - fe n'e — me n'e-n'u-wa ta,

El contd.

LANG:-ʃe n'e - me 1-ʃe n'e - me Nwa - ka'e - go kpaʧhaluʋ̄ —

ŋya

El contd.

C A G F E D C

C A G F E D C

E2   Agadi Nwanyi   Example 15

LANG:

A-ga-di nwanyi e-me'a - lu

O - me'a- lu - na - be - ya

E2   contd.

A-ga-dinwanyi e-mea- lúi-fu-go

E2   contd.

E3 Di Nwe Unọ Example]6

LANG: Dị nwelị - nọ O - ọe ji ọi gwu i - ọba - pu n'u - nọ

G E D C A (grid)

O - ọe ji ọi gwu i - n'ọkwa n'u - nọ

G E D C A (grid)

G E D C A (grid)

G E D C A (grid)

E3 Contd.

E3 Contd.

F4   Ezigbo Nwa Ka Ụbọ N'akpọ   Example]7

LANG: E-zi-gbo nwaku-bọ n'a-kpọ E-zi-gbo nwa

E-zinwáe-je gwoe-gwu nè-.ke

k'ọ

-ba-l'a-nyi na-gi

E4 Contd.

LANG:

A -nyiè – ie gw'e – gwu n'e-

ke

Q – kwan'a – nyi n'e – kwu

S1   Enenie Nwa Ite Ogbanyualugi Oku   Example 18

LANG: E-nenie nwa i- te o - gbanyu- a - lu gi Q-

- ku

LANG: E-beọ- nyè-bi kaọ- na- wachi, e-beọ - nyèbi kaọ - na

wachi. ka ọ — di na ọ — na- wachi

S3   Kabia Kabia   Example 20

LANG: ka – bia ka – bia na-lu   a – wa e   'puna'a – du-du

ka – bia ka – bia nalu   a – wa e – we n'o-ge

bu ma – du   ka – bia, ka – bia

LANG: O.ku rua ŋwata̱n – keï– zɪ-zɪ o-ma- lu i- fe

S4 Contd.

M3   Mgboye Enweė Di   Example 24

M3 contd.

M3 contd.

M2   Nee Obim   Example 23

LANG: Nee o-bi mu na u- wa nee o bi mu n'u

― wa E- go di n'u-no

M2 contd.

LANG:

A bu mu di

gio   n'u - wa

M1 Agbogho Ya Nu Di Example 22
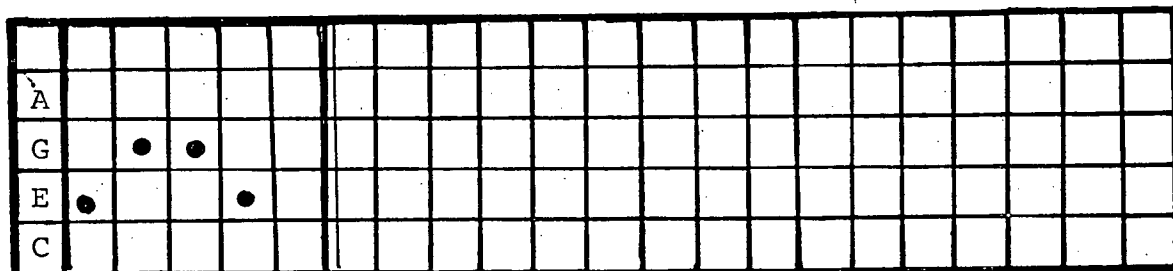
Pl   Nwokafo Nwa Aguomu Odogwu   Example 25

LANG: Nwo - ka - fo ṅwa - guò - muò - do - gwu

Ji de Ki-ji nu- ruṅ- mo

Pl contd.

P2 Nweke Dike Ana Example 26

LANG: Nwe – ke Di – ke a – na Nwe – ke Di – ke a – na

Di – ke ji'o – ge Nwe – ke i – ke

na – li'o – ii

P2 contd.

Gi ji-de Ki-

jio Nwe- ke

P2 contd.

P3   Odogwu N'agha   Example 27

P3 Contd.

E-ze n'u-luo numo------- o-do-gwu

P3 Contd.

ǹa- gha   E- ʒe ŕúluo - ńu -mo —

O - do-gwu ǹa- gha

P3 Contd.

P3 Contd.

E-ze   o-gaue - fio -   o-ga-la-nya

o-dogwuna - gha   E-ze

P3 Contd.

P3 Contd.

P3 Contd.

P3 Contd.

E-ze - nu luo-

nu mo - nu nu   O dogwu na- gha

P3 Contd.

E-ze'o- gbue-fio o-gala-nya

E-ze'o- kwa

P3 Contd.

gi ńé – je lu a-nyi ō-zi

E-ze'ọ-kwagi ńa   chi a-yio

P3 Contd.

E-ze'o kwagi n'e do-zi-li a nyi o-kwu O-

do-gwuna-gha   E- ze'o -

P3 Contd.

I-gwe kao   a-nao   O-dogwun'a-gha

E-ze'o   I-gwe kao   ana

P3 Contd.

O- do-gwu n'a- gha
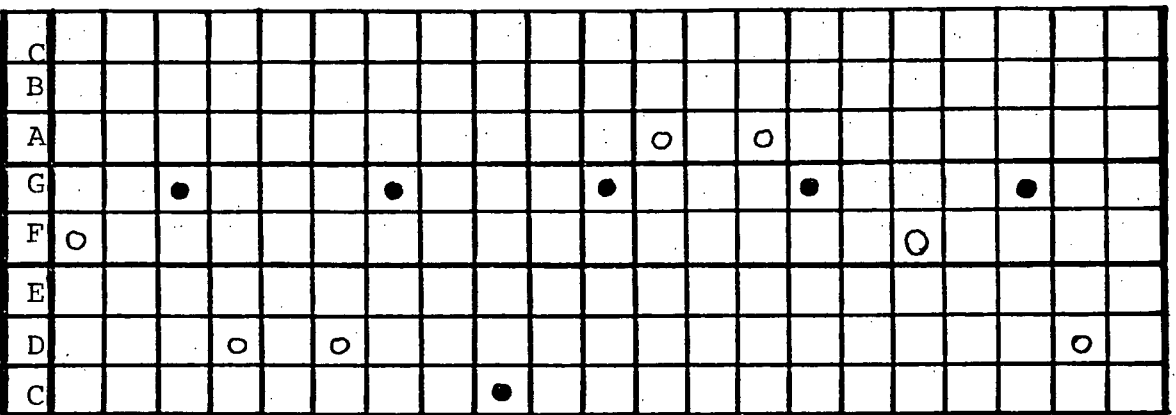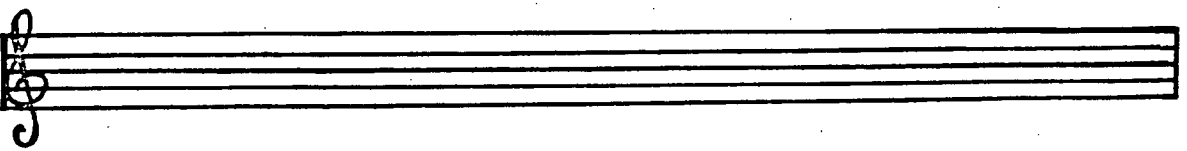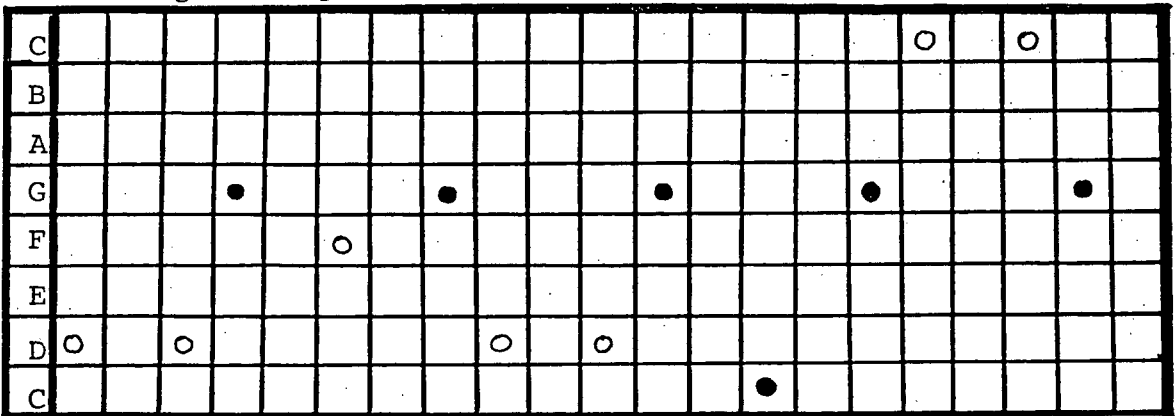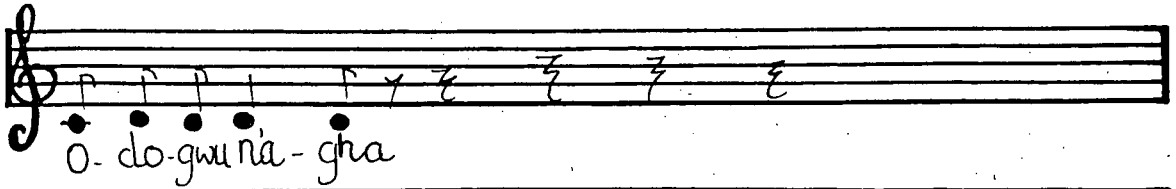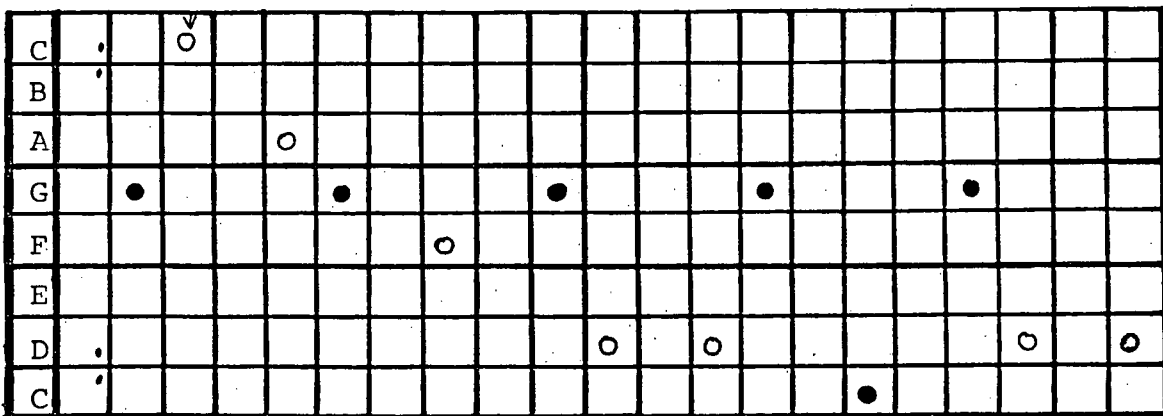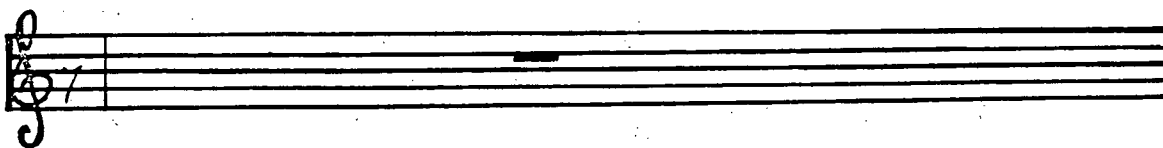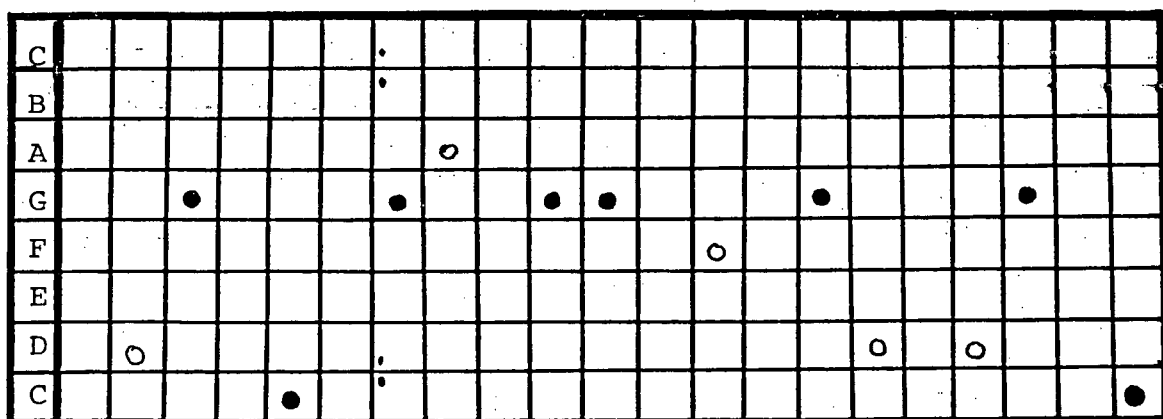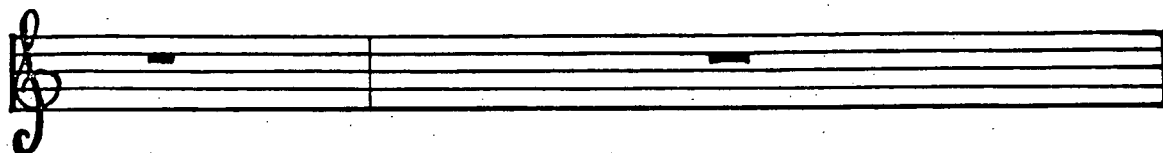
P3 Contd.

P3 Contd.

P3 Contd.
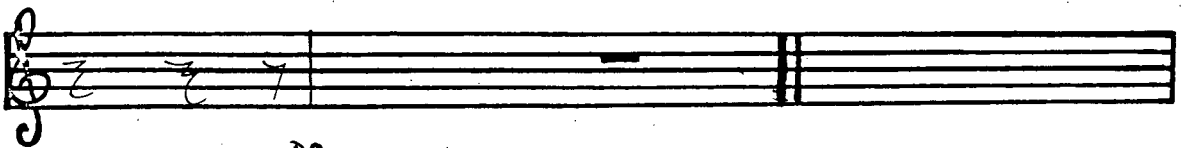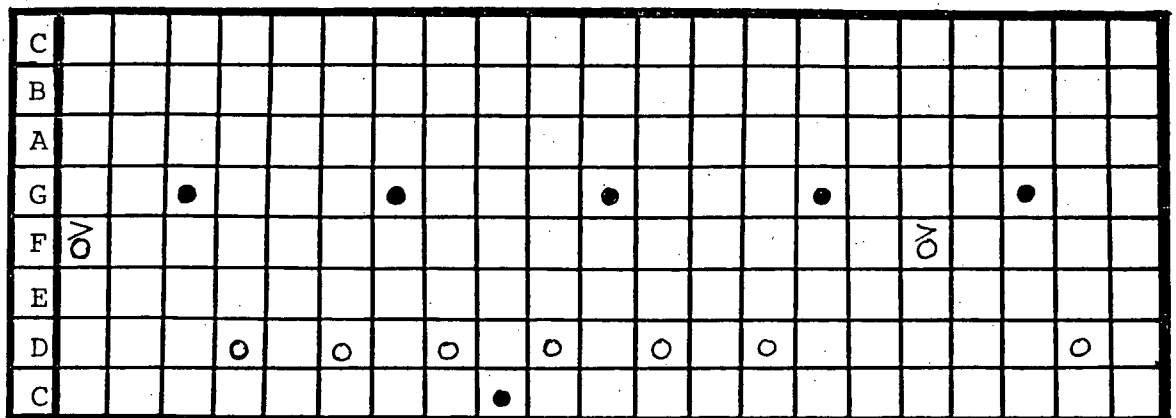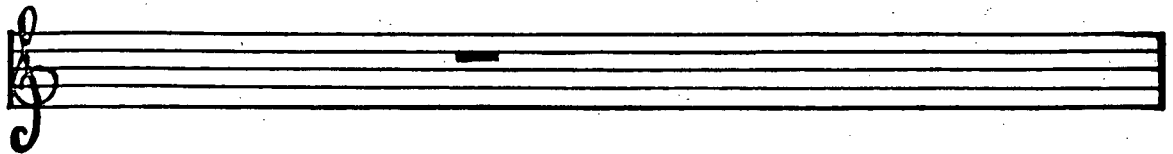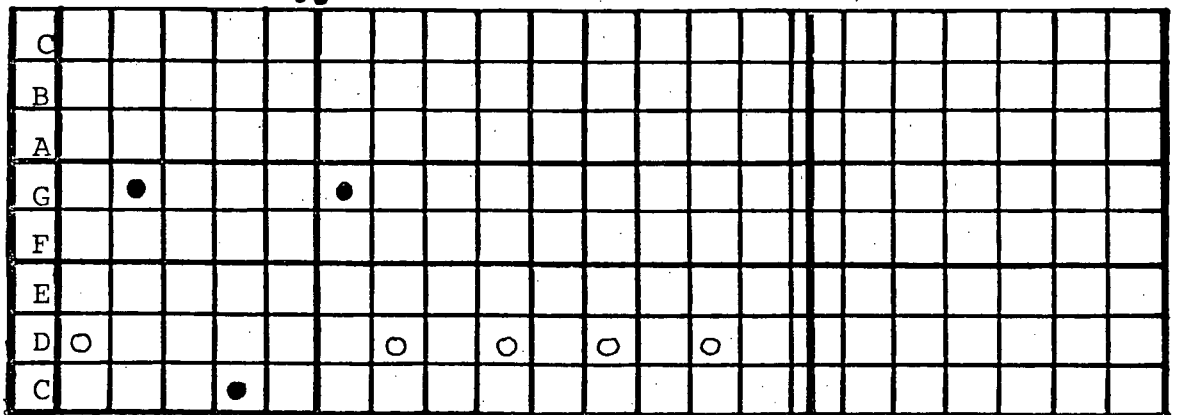
A1   Ọgbọ Anyi, Ọgbọ Odogwu   Example 28

LANG: Ọ gbọ'a nyi ọ gbọ̀-do gwu Ọgbọ'a nyi ọ gbọ̀-do gwu

A2   Odu Onye Naga?   Example 29

A2 Contd.

A2 Contd.

A-nyi na-ga u

o-kwam-mo-nwun'-ga u

n-di na-ga u o-kwa

A2 Contd.

nyi na – ga u

ke-duŋ di n'a – ga u   ọ-gbọ a-nyi na

ga - u   Ọ-gbọa

A2 Contd.

nyi ná —ga ú

A3 Uyawu Yawu' Itolugo Example 30

LANG: I to·lu·go I to·lu·go I ruanyi na ñuli kwa

A3 Contd.