A STUDY OF THE DECORATIVE ARTS OF THE EBIRA

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ZARIA

1994

DECLARATION

I, SALIU, Ahmed Rufai Omeiza hereby declare that this dissertation has been written by me and is a record of my own research. It has not been presented in any previous application for a higher degree. All quotations are indicated by quotation marks or indentations and sources of information are specifically acknowledged by means of references.



SALIU, AHMED RUFAI OMEIZA

CERTIFICATION

This dissertation entitled A Study of the Decorative Arts of the Ebira by SALIU, Ahmed Rufai Omeiza meets the regulations governing the award of the Higher Degree of Doctor of philosophy (Art History) of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The research is therefore approved for its contribution to knowledge.

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DEDICATION

This Study is dedicated to my sister Mrs Habibat Isa (1946 - 1985) and to my daughter Miss Asipita Saliu who was born the very year I started the study.

Saliu, Ahmed Rufai Omeiza
1994

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE DECORATIVE ARTS OF THE EBIRA

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The main purpose of decorative arts is the designing and enhancement of a given space. It involves organising space, giving repetitive or geometric meaning to the space. Also, it is a universal practice which is found on different objects like potteries, shields, baskets, walls, ceilings, bags and bodies.

This study is an examination of continuity and change of the decorative arts of the Ebira who are found in Edo, Kogi, and Plateau States and the Federal Capital Territory. These arts are to be found in cloth, wall, body, furniture, pottery and metal decoration.

The specific objectives of the study are to: establish if the decorative arts of the Ebira have been influenced by their neighbours in terms of motif, style, and technique, determine the symbolic meanings of motifs used in the decorative arts and whether they relate to philosophical statements on the life of the people; identify the categories of the people that patronise the decorative arts; determine whether preference for any of the arts is influenced by religious beliefs; examine the changes that must have taken place in the decorative arts, and establish the causes and effects of such changes on the arts.

The objectives of the study were achieved through the application of descriptive, comparative,

categorization and analytical approaches. Added to these were the use of interview and photographs to collect data. Fieldwork approach was equally employed to collect data which covered the Ebira settlement areas of Plateau, Kogi, Edo States and the Federal Capital Territory. Visits were made to State Art Councils (Edo and Kwara), Edo and Kwara States' Libraries, University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University Libraries were also visited for literature on the subject, particularly on the Ebira.

The study revealed that the first important advance in the evolution of the decorative arts of Ebira was towards the early 19th century when the people had settled down, and there was already an establishment of contacts between the Ebira and other Nigerians. The development and changes in the decorative arts of the Ebira were variously affected by the art traditions of their neighbours. As from 1960 when Nigeria had her independence and subsequent global contact through modern education and professions, the influence on the arts of the Ebira became more obvious. The materials used for the arts, techniques, designs and functions of the arts, for instance, were influenced. The study equally revealed that the philosophy of life and death of the Ebira is expressed in their arts as found in the motifs and designs of body and cloth decorations. The socio-political activities and awareness of the Ebira respectively are equally promoted through their decorative arts. The study therefore recommended first that a comprehensive study of other forms of art of the Ebira be carried out; second, that the site where

a stone figure was located during the fieldwork for this study be excavated; and third, that a study on contemporary trend in the arts of the Ebira be carried out.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

BEAM: A long thick piece of wood which is a component part of a loom. It is usually at the upper and lower ends of a vertical loom.

CICATRIZATION: The process of healing or forming a scar: the state of being healed or cicatrized.

LOOM: A frame usually of wood on which thread is woven into cloth.

MOTIF: A subject or pattern forming the main base on which a work of art or design is made or from which the design is developed and which is often given a special meaning.

ORI: An Ebira word for the god of fertility and peace.

SCARIFICATION: The process of making small cuts on an area of the skin with a sharp knife.

TATTOO: The designs made on the skin by puncturing it with sharp and pointed object like needle and inserting indelible colour.

WARP: The length-wise threads being arranged on a loom for the purpose of weaving cloth.

WEFT: The threads that cross from side to side of a web at right angles to the warp threads with which they are interlaced.

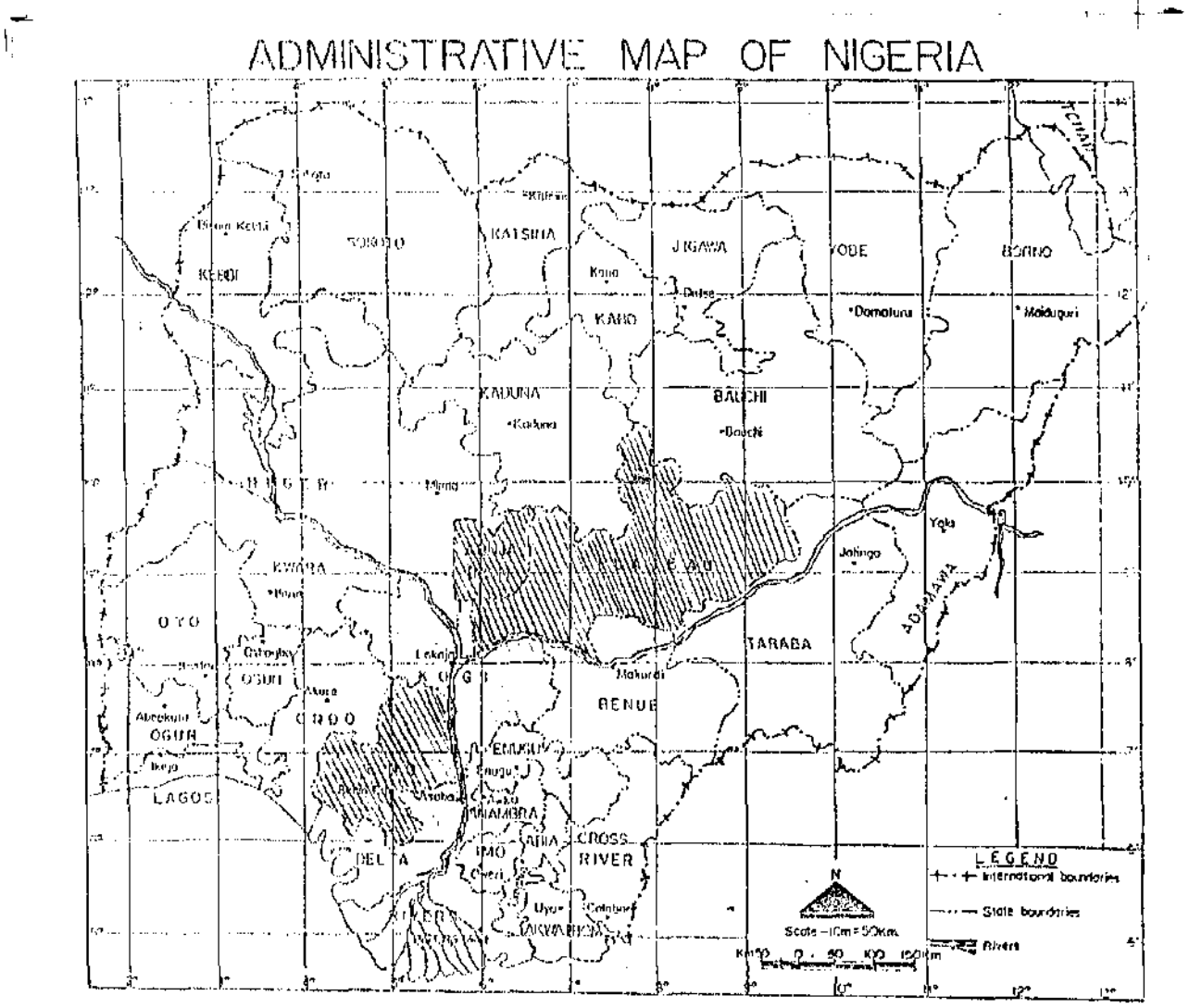


Fig.1: Map of Nigeria showing the study Areas. Courtesy of Urban and Regional Planning Department, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1992

EBIRA PEOPLE IN NIGERIA

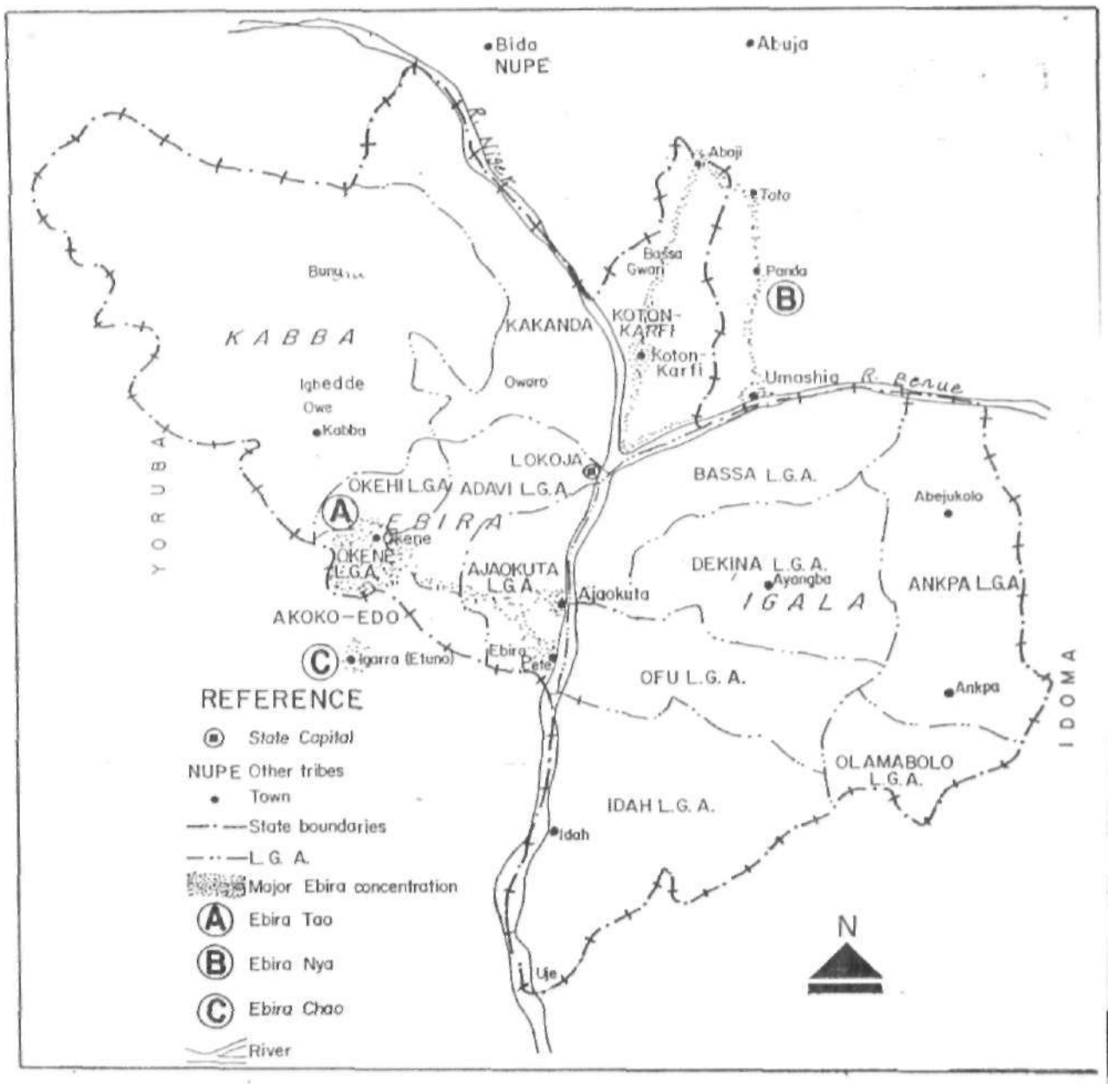


Fig.2: Major Ebira Settlement Areas in Nigeria.
From Ajayi, J.O. 1985)

EBIRA TAO: TOWNS AND VILLAGES

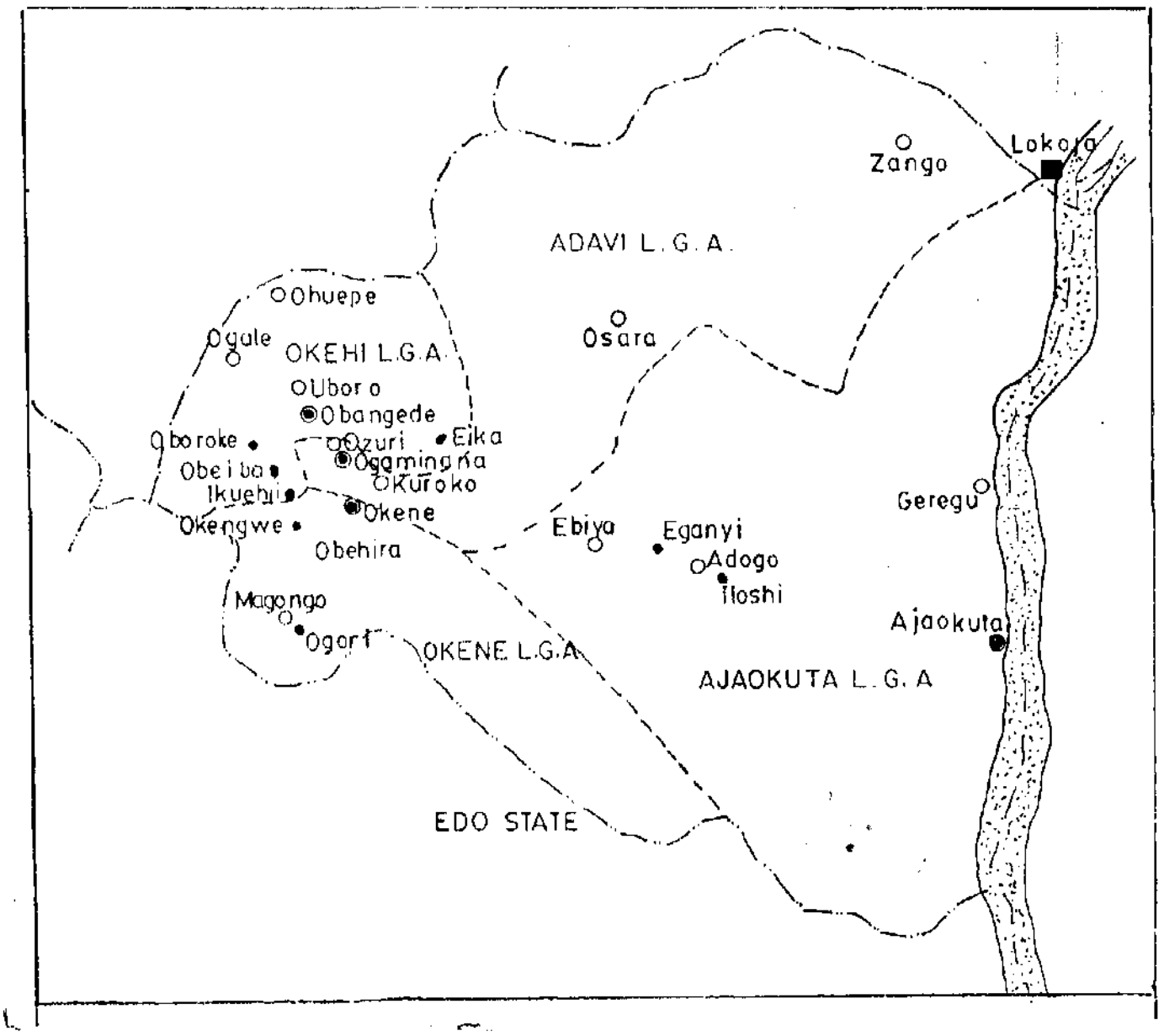


Fig.3: Ebira Tao: Towns and Villages. Taken from 'Okene Complex, Volume Three: Master Plans 1974-[illegible]. Daral-Landasah Consultants (Shair and Par[illegible]) Ilorin, Beirut, London, 1977.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background to the Study

It follows an approach to the decorative arts of the Ebira as a vital visual art genre to be studied in their social context, that it is necessary to know the historical and ethnographic background of the areas in which the study was made.

The Ebira are found about 150km around the confluence of the rivers Niger and Benue in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. They are specifically found in Plateau, Kogi and Edo States, and the Federal Capital Territory (see figs 1 and 2).

Ebira (a derivation from Bira) is a shortened form of `Anebira' (the people of Ebira). According to Temple (1965:155), Ibrahim (1968:8) and Ohiare (1988:23), Bira is the name of a settlement founded by the Ju:kuns who were ancestors of the Ebira in the Gongola valley. The people began to bear the name `Anebira' (descendants of Bira) after they had evacuated Bira and settled in the middle of Benue valley by the beginning of the 19th century, and eventually settled in their present geographical locations.

Broadly speaking therefore, there are three major groups of the Ebira in Nigeria. These are: (1) the Ebira of Adavi, Ajaokuta, Okehi and Okene Local Government Areas of Kogi State, who shall be referred to as Ebira Tao in this study; (2) the Ebira of Igu and Opanda (found in Kogi and Plateau States and the Federal Capital Territory), collectively known and addressed as Ebira-Koto, but who shall be referred to as Ebira Nya throughout this study; and (3) the Ebira group found in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State, who shall be similarly referred to in this study as Ebira Chao.*

*Notes start on Page 192

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The Ebira Tao group occupy the valley plains, stretching about 14 kilometres from Iruvusechi (Ihima) in the extreme west to Okene in the east (see fig.3). Other settlements are found in the Eika and Adavi valley to the north-east, while the farthest settlement area is Ajaokuta, east of Okene (Muhammed, 1986:33). The immediate neighbours of Ebira Tao are the Yoruba speaking Akoko, Owe, Igbedde and Aworo to the West and north-west: to the south and south-west are the various Akoko-Edo peoples of Edo State (Ibrahim, op cit, and Lamb and Holmes, 1980:223). The Ebira Nya are found from the immediate north of the Niger-Benue confluence, especially on both banks of the Benue, down stream on the Niger to Etobe (see fig.2). The Ebira Nya share boundary with the Igala, Bassa-Komo and Basa-Nge to the south, the Nasarawa, Hausa, Fulani, Gwari, Agatu and Afo (Idoma) to the east, and to the west and north-west with the Nupe (kakanda or Ishana, kupa, and Legan), and the Hausa of Abuja and the koro.

The Ebira Chao are bounded in the south by Sasaro, in the north by Wgboshi and Somorika, in the north-west by Uneme Nekhwa, in the west by Okpe and Idogun, and in the east by Enwa. The Ebira Chao have no linguistic affinity with any other ethnic group in Edo State. Rather they share the same language and other cultural affinities with both Ebira Tao and Ebira Nya. These affinities, according to Amune (1983:6), strengthen the thesis that the three groups being studied are members of the same family who migrated from one point (Bradbury, 1957:112-113; Lamb and Holmes, op cit: 223; and Amune, op. cit: 6).

*Notes start from page 195

Farming is the major occupation of the majority of the Ebira, though mainly on a subsistence scale. Fishing seems to rank next to agriculture among the Ebira. In addition to food production, the Ebira practice different types of art

as avocation. Such arts practised include cloth weaving, blacksmithing, mat making, pottery, wood and metal works. The art works are produced to meet the various needs of the people. A study of the decorative arts of the people is therefore focused in this study with particular attention to the types of decorative arts, the motifs employed, and the functions of the arts produced by the people. This is done with a view to developing the arts to meet both utilitarian and aesthetic needs of contemporary clients.

Decorative art is an activity which arises from complex requirements in which scale and quality vary according to how strongly any cultural group feels the need to express the requirements (Barnet, 1980:65). Decorative art, usually, but not always non-representational, is for design reasons and enhancement of a given surface (Vansina, 1984:116). Vasina further states that decoration can be used to provide a frame to enclose space, or to separate spaces as in architecture. It could be used to organise space, either by covering the space with a patterned web, giving repetitive or geometric meaning to space, or by using isolated motifs as focal points regularly distributed over an empty space. Vansina (op.cit) also stressed that decorative art is universal, and that all African cultures use it from the rim of potteries to the most varied surfaces such as shields, bags, baskets, bodies, walls and ceilings.

Decorative art is also seen as the result from the simple urge to improve the appearance of things, to achieve designs that are pleasing to the eye, to enrich both utilitarian and religious objects with familiar patterns and symbols which are meaningful to the artist and his people (Jefferson, 1974:8). Writing on some aspects of the cattle Fulani ornamentations, Akiga (1972 140) states that "...in decorating her body, a Fulani woman aims at making

hereself look more beautiful and attractive.., "Akiga further states that some women decorate themselves heavily with ornaments in order to portray their wealth or that of their families. Decoration as a concept, implies conscious effort on the part of the artist to order his materials into a type of design which will be pleasing to the eye (Denyer, 1982:102). Such a design may also have some magical or religious significance. Thus, decorative art is done on houses, cloths, potteries; metal objects, leather works, calabashes, baskets and human bodies. In each case the
decorations could be varied, elaborate and fascinating, and are done for various functions. Trowell (1970:45) and Fatuyi (1975:165) state, for instance, that house/wall decoration in Africa may range from simple geometric/ symbolic scratching to highly sophisticated and disciplined use of decoration.

Fatuyi (op.cit) states that most shrine and traditional wall decorations are connected with legends, mythology, beauty and religious beliefs of the Isho people. Trowell (1970:46) however observes that beside the magico-religious functions of wall decoration, it is important to note that man is essentially a creator, and he naturally tends to delight in his creation and the strive after beauty for its own sake. Walz (1975:168) also agrees with Fatuyi and Trowell that the decorated wall may have both utilitarian and spiritual functions. House decoration generally may be to beautify the surface wall. However, there are some other motivations for the decorations. The use of China plates to decorate house surfaces in some African communities, for instance, is to ward off the glare of the evil eye (Walz, op.cit:168).

Pots are also decorated according to tastes and functions in many parts of Africa. Like the wall

decoration, representational and non-representational motifs are used to decorate pots. Fagg (1984:29), Trowell (1970:45), Jefferson (1974:122), Cardew (1971:94) and Connah (1981:154) highlight different types of decoration made on pots, and the various techniques employed to achieve the decorations in different parts of Africa. Fagg (op.cit:28) reports that beside the terra-cotta figurines excavated at Taruga (Nigeria), the most interesting finds were the pottery flat-bottomed dishes. Some of the pottery ware were decorated with rim-top grooves, and almost all have an elaborately decorated under-face, indicating that they were meant to be appreciated when not in use (Fagg, op.cit:29).

The art of body decoration is of high prominence in Africa. It is common to the human race, and to women especially, to attempt to enhance the natural beauty of the body with some form of decoration. Amoung many people, the decoration is confined to costumes or hair styles or to painting the face or finger, but the Africans carry the art considerably further (Trowell, 1970:45). According to her, the most usual form of the decoration on different parts of the body is cicatrization. Among the Tiv, Yoruba, Nupe and Igala, this form of body decoration is prominent. The most highly developed schemes of body decoration among these people are made for aesthetic purposes, meant to give visual and tactile pleasure to young people in their more intimate personal relationship, Jefferson (1974:122). Keil(1979:62)and Aboderin (1984:8)support the aesthetic purpose of body decoration.

So far, a general attempt has been made to examine what decorative art is to people of different ethnic backgrounds in Africa in relation to types, motifs and

functions of the decorative arts. The purpose of the present study is to examine what types of decorative arts exist among the Ebira and the relationship between the arts and the people in their social, religious, political and technological set up.

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

Few scholars have examined the decorative arts of the Ebira. Some of these are: Willett (1971:207-209) and Leuzinger (1972:206) who mention the use of mask in the traditional festival of one group of the Ebira. Others include Adepegba (1976:27) who reports that the facial marks of the Ebira are for identification purposes above anything else; Murnane (1976:14-16.) whose main concern is the fate of Okene cloth weavers with textile industries springing up in Nigeria; and Lamb and Holmes (1980:17 -22) who present a general survey of cloth weaving among the Ebira, emphasising the technical manipulation of the art. Such studies could not do much at establishing a common basis of the arts of the people for instance. None of the studies is an indepth investigation of the relevance of motifs used for the pattern - designs to the general life of the Ebira.

Beside Lamb and Holmes (op.cit:17 - 25), no study of the decorative arts of the Ebira was a comparative analysis of decorative arts of the people in relation to decorative arts of their neighbouring ethnic groups. It is important, for instance, to examine if there is any possible relationship between the arts of the Ebira and their Igala and Yagba neighbours for likely similarities and influences over one another. A close observation, however, reveals some similarities in body marking of some neighbouring ethnic groups to the Ebira. For example, among the Nupe, the Yagba group of the yoruba, the Igala, the Basa and the Hausa, many people have three broad straight facial markings converging at the corners of the mouth from the

cheek, which are similar to the Ebira Nya facial markings known as Esa eteta. It is important, therefore, to establish whether or not this similarity has any cultural and historical linkage, or a mere coincidence. Similarly, it is essential to examine the motifs used on the decorative arts of these geographically related people, with a view to establishing the extent to which one ethnic group influences the other and vice versa.

From both oral and written documents, the Ebira have a migrational link with the Igala in the 18th to early 19th centuries. It is necessary, therefore, to examine whether or not the facial markings mentioned could be an assimilated practice of the Ebira Nya from the Igala or it is an influence of Ebira Nya art on the Igala. The Igala share a common boundary with the Ebira Tao via Idah and Ayangba, yet the facial markings in question are not found among the latter. It is equally important, therefore, to uncover the reason(s) behind the absence of this type of facial markings among the other two groups of the Ebira (Ebira Tao and Ebira Chao) along with whom the Ebira Nya migrated through Idah (Igalaland) to their present places of settlement. It is also considered vital to find out the arts that are common to the Igala and the Ebira. It is equally important to establish the period and place of production of the decorative arts of the Ebira. This is to help establish the diversity of the arts, whether or not the practice of the arts is limited to particular places. In addition, it is necessary to know if the artists evolved the arts themselves at their present places of habitation or the ideas got to them through other artists' works. Also vital to know are the ideas which the decorative arts of the Ebira convey, whether the art works convey ethnic, national or universal message. Similarly, it is necessary to establish whether the materials used by the artists in

the three different geographical locations are local to the areas or they are foreign-oriented.

The past and present functions of the decorative arts of the Ebira will help to establish the extent to which difference in geographical places of habitation of the people affects the types and changes in the functions of their art woks. For instance, it is necessary to establish if the functions of the art works are still the same as they were before migration, or the cultural values of the pleople's present neighbours have brought changes in the functions of the art works. Similarly, it is crucial to establish the meanings and values attached to the decorative arts by the Ebira on the one hand and their neighbours on the other. That is, the study is to establish the kinds of meanings and values which the people attach to their art works, whether their religious beliefs (Islam, Christianity and traditional religion) or the cultural influence of the people's neighbours have affected positively or negatively the meanings and values of the art works. For instance, it is necessary to know if the religious beliefs, social, political and economic influences affect the production and patronage of all or some of the decorative arts of the Ebira.

1.3 The Conceptual Framework:

An art work has little value if it is not relevant to the society in which it is produced. An art work should be able to serve the socio-economic, cultural and religious needs of a society. Writing on Senufo Potters, Spindel (1989:66) for instance, goes beyond a study of process and shows how technology reflects other patterns of culture. Spindel supports the point raised by Picton that a technology is part of that culture (Spindel, op.cit:67). Similarly, Vansina (1984:154) states that the relationships between the visual arts need to be explored properly. He

states, for instance, that body decoration can be related to textile arts, masking or painting which seem to be quite closely related.

Evidently, the arts in the traditional Ebira Societies might have had direct relevance to the people. The arts could be a means through which the people expressed their wishes and desires, fulfilled their religious commitments and satisfied their social tastes. This study is, therefore, focused on the pattern or continuity and change of the decorative arts of the Ebira.

1.4 Objectives of the Study:

The main objective of this study is to examine the various types of the decorative arts of the Ebira. The specific objectives are to:

a) establish if the decorative arts of the Ebira have been influenced by their neighbours in terms of motif, style, and technique;
b) determine the symbolic meanings of motifs used in the decorative arts and whether they relate to philosophical statements on the life of the people;
c) identify the categories of the Ebira that patronise the decorative arts, and whether preference for any of the arts is influenced by religious beliefs, economic status or political system of the people;
d) examine the changes that must have taken place in the decorative arts, and establish the causes and effects of such changes on the arts.

1.5 Basic Assumptions:

The following assumptions are made for this study:

a) The decorative arts of the Ebira are not the same because of different environments of the people.
b) Political, social and religious changes in the country have affected the decorative arts of the Ebira.

c) The decorative arts of the Ebira have earned national and international recognition in terms of patronage.

d) The decorative arts of the Ebira have social functions more than anything else.

1.6 Justification for the Study

Investigations reveal that studies have been carried out on some aspects of the arts of the Ebira. As already mentioned under 1.2 above, such studies have not attempted an analytical documentation of the decorative arts within certain period in history. As observed by Vansina (1984:1)

> ...not only have students of African Art Limited themselves to a portion of the continent but they have been primarily concerned with the aesthetic appeal of sculpture and a description of the uses and functions of the objects...the historical evolvement of the art forms...has not been a subject of sustained research, and other kinds of art have received scanty attention...

Agreeing with Vansina(op.cit.) therefore, this study focuses on the types, origin, motifs, meanings and changes of the decorative arts of the Ebira with a view to providing a valuable research information. It will bring to light among other facts the philosophical and cultural significance of the arts of the people. This might further add to the existing understanding of traditional Nigerian art and culture in particular and African art and culture in general. The study will reveal the symbolic statements that the art make, thus rendering the arts as essential functional components of the societies being studied. It is also hoped that the findings might reflect the artistic contribution of the Ebira to Nigerian art culture and history from which inferences could be drawn to embellish modern art practice in Nigeria.

1.7 Scope of the Study:

The decorative arts of three major groups of the Ebira are the focus of this study. These groups are the Ebira Tao in Okene, Okehi, Ajaokuta and Adavi Local Government Areas of Kogi State; the Panda of Toto and Umaisha in Plateau State, the Panda of Abaji in the Federal Capital Territory, the Panda of Koton Karfe in Kogi State (Ebira Nya) and the Ebira Chao in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State.

Ebira communities are found in some other parts of Nigeria. For instance, there are people of Ebira origin who settle in and around Bida, Abuja emirates and in Wushishi. These, according to Ibrahim (1968:6) are mostly the descendants of the victims of the Jihad-aftermath raids of the second half of the 19th century, who probably, decided to remain where they have taken refuge rather than return home after the British advent. Similarly, the Adana and Agbaulu clans of Agatu in Idomaland of Benue State are Ebira, though their mother tongue is agatu. Further-more, it is on record that between 1911 and 1920 there was an increased number of the Ebira visiting the Yoruba country, some of who eventually settled there permanently, forming Ebira community - mostly farmers (Ohiare, 1977:12). Such communities can be found in Ado-Ekiti, Ondo, Ikare, Akure and Owo (all in Ondo State) and Ibadan (Oyo State) where encouraging alternative farming exists. In view of this diffusion of the Ebira, this study is restricted to the three major groups of Ebira living in their traditional geographical locations, and these are the Ebira Tao, Ebira Nya and Ebira Chao.

While concentrating on a limited area and making a thorough study rather than touching every aspect of the apparent nature of Ebira settlement, efforts are made to look into the general features of the decorative arts of

the various neighbouring ethnic groups to Ebira in order to clarify local variations in the arts. In addition, the study is limited to the decorative arts of the Ebira, establishing the types, motifs, and functions of the arts. The study also concentrates on the development and changes that might have taken place in the production of the decorative arts, whether such development and changes come as a result of ethnic, national or universal cohesion. The study is further focused on the effects of any identified change on the arts as it relates to the general life of the Ebira.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction:

Studies have been conducted on different forms of decorative art in different parts of Africa. In these studies, the purpose(s) of the decorative art, that is, the functions, styles, motifs and their meanings, and materials employed to execute the art work are discussed. A review of some of these general studies, therefore, is done here along the lines of styles, motif, meaning, function and techniques for the purpose of knowing the state of the subject and the different approaches employed by the scholars.

2.2 General Review:

2.2.1 Form and Type of Decorative Art:

From the general description and analysis of decorative art by different scholars, it can be summarised that decorative art concerns itself with improving the appearance of things, achieving designs that are pleasing to the eye, enriching both utilitarian and religious objects with patterns and symbols which are meaningful to the artist and his community (Jefferson, 1974:8). It, therefore, means that decorative art can be in the form of wall, body, textile cloth, furniture and pottery decorations. As much as possible, studies on these forms of decorative art are reviewed.

2.2.2 Wall Decoration:

In his discussion on how Africans decorate the walls of their houses, Jefferson (1974:122) states that the artist generally works free-hand, spontaneously following his creative inspiration. He states further that in many areas it is customary to

decorate both the interior and exterior walls of the home. Walz (1975:168) remarks that the art of decorating houses is a phenomenon known throughout Africa, occurring in literal terms the length and breadth of the continent - from Morocco to Zulu-land, from Hausa and Igbo territories to Mozambique. Walz adds that the decoration may range from simple geometric or symbolic scratching on house walls, as in Egypt, to highly sophisticated and disciplined use of decorations, often accompanied by a pattern dressing of the wall surface itself, as in Hausa-land and Lower Nubia. Walz also discussed the types of decoration commonly done on wall surfaces. These are elaborately painted designs on either side of door ways, geometric mould of representational figure decoration about the lintel and the often adornment of wall surface with China plates and lids of soup earthen vessel, usually arranged in a triangular pattern.

Trowell (1970:46), in her discussion of how walls are decorated in Africa, reports that the earliest wall decoration was in painting form, which was done in earth colours together with sooth and vegetable dyes. She adds that as in all forms of decorative art, two trends are always at work. These are the one towards naturalism and the other towards stylization and symbolism. Similarly, Ojo (1968:26), writing on the traditional Yoruba architecture, remarks that the murals are brilliantly coloured by using local materials such as charcoal, indigo, clay, and snail shells. Ojo further states that some of the murals are combination of wall sculpture of slight relief and wall painting. Furthermore, Rohrmann (1974:35) writes that in most cases in South Africa, the surface of the house (wall) is covered with a layer of plaster composed of cow dung and clay. The

design is then engraved or painted over the dung-clay plaster.

Rohrmann also explains that due to the frequent exposure of the surface of the dwelling to heavy rains and wind, the walls must be re-plastered and redecorated as many as five times a year. This results in a constant change and variety of designs, as the same motif is seldomly used twice. Rohrmann further writes that in the mountainous areas of Lesotho, there are two types of traditional forms of decoration the most common type being 'furrow' design, frequently found on the plastered area around the door-way of stone houses, or over the whole surface if the house is completely plastered. The other traditional type of decoration in South Africa is a mosaic style, created out of different coloured stones (Rohrmann, op.cit). The plaster in this case, is used as a mortar while the stones are embedded in it. Among the Basotho and Matabele decoration on the house consists of borders running around the front of the dwelling, with the designs frequently being modelled in relief. The reliefs are created by making coils from plaster, using them to form various figures on the wall. When the plaster is completely dried the design is painted in conformity with the surface, either with natural pigments or commercial colours, while the space not covered with the paint relief configurations is usually decorated with 'furrow' designs.

2.2.3 Motifs and their Meanings in Wall Decoration:

Various motifs are used to decorate walls in Africa. These motifs can be generally grouped into two - representational motifs comprising of flowers, date palms, camels, crocodiles, lions, fish, scorpions, birds and human palms (Walz, 1975:170). In addition to

these motifs, are more modern objects like aeroplanes, rail road trains, cars, tooth brushes, tea kettles etc, which are found on houses of the lower Nubians. Amoung the non-representational motifs used in wall decoration among the lower Nubians, are zigzag lines, concentric circles, China plates and dish lids (Walz, op.cit.).

Discussion why motifs are used in Lower Nubian wall decoration, Walz (op.cit.) remarks that though house decoration in Africa is done primarily to beautify the surface wall, there are some other noticeable motivations for the decorations. He gives an example of China plates, which he observes are widely used in Africa, though of particular popularity in Muslim communities. He reports that the shiny surfaces of the plates were capable of warding off the glare of the evil eye, preventing it from entering the house. He further adds that painted house decorations were equally said to serve the dual function of expressing status and religious belief.

Supporting the dual function of motifs used in wall decoration in Africa, Fatuyi (1972:18) states that most shrine and traditional wall decorations are connected with legends, mythology, religious beliefs, and beauty. Fatuyi adds that in Owo and its environs traditional wall decorations are significant for the symbolism in the themes depicted, and he further remarks that Owo shrine paintings and traditional wall decorations also
served two purposes. These are the religious aspect which involves a lot of magic with craft, and mythologies that have connections with the soul and spirit.

Like the spiritual function of plate motifs in Nubian wall decoration, Fatuyi (op.cit.) notes that one of the reasons why paintings and decorations were done on shrines was to aid the ancestors in their task of warding off evils from the vicinity, and that in time of epidemics the decorations and paintings help in appeasing angry deities. Thus, symbolic images (motifs) with religious significance on the walls of houses are regarded as a sign of protection against epidemics. Such motifs include the eye, birds and feathers. The eye symbolises the power of vision, that is, it stands for the ever - present watchfulness of the supernatural forces, the presence of the sacred gods as guardian and protector from evils. As for the bird motif, he reports that it signifies the messenger through which sacrificial and ritual offerings for appease-ment to the gods and goddesses are sent while the feather motif, stands for the 'whirlwind spirit'. Fatuyi remarks that it is believed in Owo and its environs that certain feathers would facilitate the transportation of sacrificial offerings to the departed ancestors.

Discussing how walls are decorated in some parts of Africa, Jefferson (1974:180) informs that the Hausa of Niger engrave or cast in high relief their clay facades with verses from the Koran which are intricately designed to match the surrounding geometric forms. In most cases the geometric forms are made by the women, while the men borrow motifs from traditional beliefs and legends. Trowell (1970:124), unlike the authors already cited, emphasises the non-magico-religious function of wall decoration in Africa. For instance, she remarks that whether the designs (motifs) have some magico-religious functions, the essentially creative tendency

of man should be recognised, which he naturally tends to delight in his creation and to strive after beauty for its own sake.

However, Ojo (1968:38), in his discussion on traditional Yoruba architecture, highlights the mythological interpretations of motifs used in the palace decoration. Ojo states that murals (wall paintings) feature prominently among the touches given to the architecture of the palaces. He then adds that animals and objects connected with the Oba are often depicted. Such animals include elephants, Ostriches, and lions, which signify majesty, while monkeys and snakes symbolise wisdom.

Expressing a similar view with Trowell (1979:46), Rohrmann (1974:38) stresses the decorative value, more than any thing else, of wall decoration in South Africa. He remarks, for instance, that most of the designs on house walls in South Africa are done by young unmarried women for the purpose of making their homes more attractive and impressive to prospective suitors. Denyer (1982:102) also agrees with the dual functions of wall decoration. She notes that decoration on the house wall is of considerable psychological significance, and that it tends to occur at points of potential social stress. She gives the examples of chiefs' houses, temples, shrines and club houses which are a power focus for the community, and almost invariably highly decorated. Denyer (op.cit) further discusses how change in decorative pattern could result. She opines that a change in decorative pattern could be made more simply, and therefore states that it is easier to postulate influences from other cultures. She argues that such cross-cultural

influences could have diffused fairly easily when trading or travelling took place.

2.2.4 Cloth Decoration:

General review of works on Textiles for this study is limited to cloth-weaving. The researcher is aware of other aspects of textiles like printing, embroidery, dyeing, and applique being practised in Africa. However, the clothweaving aspect is more relevant to this study as found from the pilot study of this work.

Cloth weaving is widely practised in Africa. The art, has a long history of origin and it is practised by both male and female on horizontal treadle looms and simple vertical looms respectively (Trowell, 1970 and Lamb and Holmes, 1980). According to Jefferson (1974:75), African cloth weavers have developed various techniques for producing long strips of cloth which are sewn together to form large pieces. Jefferson also reports that the method of weaving cloth must have grown out of the more elaborate technique of plaiting mats.

Handwoven cloths in Africa have varied patterns made on them. Patterns are the arrangement of ideas based on abstract of organic forms to create decorative designs in order to add beauty to a piece of artistic creation such as a piece of fabric. These include patterns which are produced by the arrangement of different coloured threads in the warp or weft, or both. In this case, the coloured threads in the warp will result in longitudinal stripes, while in the weft, transverse stripes will be produced (Trowell, 1970:58). Trowell further remarks that pattern of this kind may be in the form of a check. More complicated

forms of pattern-weaving are achieved by allowing certain threads to pass over one or more than one thread in either warp or weft (Trowell, op.cit). In this method, the pattern is practically invisible on the opposite side.

Supporting this view on the methods of producing patterns, Lamb and Holmes (1980:206) notice that some ways of introducing designs in Nigerian hand woven cloths are based on warp arrangement, while some others are based on the weft, either by varying the colour of weft threads or by the use of extra threads which need to extend right across the web. Lamb and Holmes further remark that patterns made by use of weft can become extremely complex in practice, but in principle they are all variations of the basic weaving process.

Lamb and Holmes (op.cit.) further comment that the basic ground pattern in Yoruba weaving, which is achieved by warp colour alignments, is very similar to that used, for example, by the Nupe, the Fon in the Republic of Benin, the Ewe and Asante in Ghana and the Mossi in Burkina Faso. Lamb and Holmes, however, conclude that the Yoruba use three main methods of patterning which serve to distinguish their weaving enough from that of other peoples mentioned. These are: The use of holes; the use of inlay floats which appear on one side only of the fabric; and the distinctive use of **ikat**.

Generally, Lamb and Holmes (op.cit.) are of the view that hand woven cloths in Africa were initially meant for the needs of family members, yet the weavers felt that the surface of the woven cloths should be decorated with patterns. Hence, since cloth weaving

started in Africa, different forms of decoration have been featuring on the hand woven cloths. These result from either the arrangement of coloured threads during the process of weaving or from carefully picked patterns with the use of additional threads of the same or different texture from those of main cloth. These patterns are not written by the weavers before the actual weaving process. The patterns are kept in the memory and executed when the need arises (Trowell, 1970:60).

Discussing the Igbo looms and their mechanism, Okeke (1985:33) remarks that patterning is generally absent except for some cloths with white and blue stripes which are in accordance with the warping order. The only popular patterns found in the Abakaliki weaving zone, Okeke adds, take the form of stripes which are achieved mainly in the order of colouring arrangement of the warp threads.

In traditional cloth weaving in Africa various types of motifs are used to produce patterns on the cloth. These motifs are most often geometrical - ranging from broad stripes to delicate diagonal and zig-zag lines. Other forms include solid triangles and lozenge shapes, while in some cloths more or less stylised human or animal forms can be found (Trowell, op.cit). Lamb and Holmes (op.cit) add to these motifs, by stating that the Yoruba weavers use other motifs which are named after proverbs and sayings. Yet other motifs have names which are chosen by the weavers. They give examples of such motifs as 'sugar', 'green', 'keep right', and 'cold money'. Words and even whole sentences are also other forms of motifs found on the hand woven cloths of the Yoruba (lamb and Holmes, op.cit.).

Agreeing with Trowell (op.cit), Lamb and Holmes (op.cit) note that it is a common sight to find the Nigerian hand woven cloths containing representational pictures, animals, fish, birds as interesting and fascinating motifs. Lamb and Holmes remark that the literary and pictorial elements in Yoruba weaving are of great interest in that they are by no means characteristic of the West African narrow strip weaving complex as a whole where, possibly because of the influence of Islam, design tends to be abstract. The authors further remark that pictures of animals used to be common in the designs of the Djerma of Niger, but are no longer so. They are, however, very common in the weaving of the Manjaca and Papel motifs in Guinea-Bissau and Senegal. Lamb and Holmes (op. cit.) quickly add that a strong European influence, leading to pictures of steam ships and even portraits of Heads of State as motifs, is noticed.

2.2.5 Motifs and Their Meaning In Cloth Decoration

Aremu (1982:7-8) highlights that symbols and motifs commonly associated with kijipa cloths are governed by the old traditional beliefs. Aremu further explains that the interpretations of these symbols and motifs are supposed to please the weavers' deity. The deity is never represented physically on kijipa cloth, instead, carved motifs like wall-gecko and cricket, are used as symbols.

Aremu (op. cit) also adds that the patterns used by the Yoruba craftsmen and women in general are no natural patterns or objects, they are representational interpretations of the motifs in abstract form. To understand the exact meanings of these motifs and what they actually stand for, the origin of the symbols must be seen interms of their traditional usefulness.

As for colour symbolism in Yoruba traditional cloth weaving, Aremu (op. cit.:19) identifies two main types of kijipa, the creamy white and the blue-black types. He further explains that whenever a combination of blue and white yarns are used to form a symmetrical pattern, the weft across it is mainly dark blue, which is meant to cool down the warp face, thus making the whole woven patterned cloths attractive. In addition, Aremu explains that the white kijipa signifies purity, and the symbol of all that is clean and holy. The blue-black colour on the other hand signifies 'peace'. Because of this some interpreters call the blue-black kijipa cloth 'peace' or 'comfort'. Such interpretation must have originated from the cool and sweet colour of the cloth which traditionally surrounded every user with comfort and happiness (Aremu op. cit.:9).

Okeke (1985:33), writing on the weaving tradition in Igboland, states that among cloth weavers and cloth users in Nsukka zone, the primary objective of patterning is to enhance the aesthetic appearance of the cloth. He also informs that the mofits are generally inspired from utilitarian objects and forms based on human, animal, reptile and plant life from ordinary life. Okeke observes that the Nsukka weavers name patterns on their cloths after the actual objects on which the mofits are based. Some of the patterns, according to Okeke, are symbolic but generally they are based on familiar house-hold objects, reptiles, and things within the locality.

Okeke (op. cit.:37-39) finally discusses some of the popular patterns found on Nsukka cloths. These are ogwu azu (fish skeleton) which according to Okeke, depicts prestige; ije agwo (snake movement) which signifies arrogance, grace and movement. Okeke

explains that the general idea of snake is symbolised by the zig-zag pattern on the ọjị cloth. Other popular pattern motifs found on Nsukka cloths include odude (stool), the pattern of which symbolises royalty; okpukpe (shaving stick), symbolising skill and craftsmanship; ngwere (lizard) which Okeke explains as symbolising innocence; and ute (mat) motif which symbolises solidarity between couples or among families.

Hand woven cloths in Africa are variously utilised, ranging from social, religious to political purposes. The uses of the cloths are in most cases determined by type, according to patterns/mofits and colour symbolism. Among the Yoruba, Lamb and Holmes (1980:213) report that the cloths are divided into three major categories. These are cloths of prestige value; cloths used for rites and ceremonies; and cloths worn for daily use. Lamb and Holmes further explain that cloths of prestige value are of three major groups - sanyan, which is associated with special robes for many traditional ceremonies and functions, and their weaving definitely implies status; and alaari, a material for garments for chiefs which are worn when being visited in their homes.

The ritual and ceremonious usage of hand woven cloths among the Yoruba is further noted by Lamb and Holmes (op. cit.:220) when they state that cloths used for rites and ceremonies are the aso alaro group. One use of alaro cloth is in the marriage arrangement ritual, where the prospective groom or his family is required to give the bride-to-be at least three cloths, which are made up from a selection of aso alaro patterns. When strips of these patterns are sewn together they make up a marriage cloth. For about a

month after the wedding the bride will be seen out and about wearing this most attractive cloth. In addition, a bridegroom will also wear an aso alaro at the wedding ceremony (Lamb and Holmes, op. cit.). They also inform that age-set ceremonies and funerals provide another occasions for the wearing of aso alaro cloths.

Finally, Lamb and Holmes (op. cit.) observe that the third major category of hand woven cloth usage among the Yoruba concerns daily use or for social gather-ings. An example of such cloth type is the aso-ebi style.

Sharing the same view with Lamb and Holmes (op. cit) on the spiritual functions of hand-woven cloths among the Yoruba, Aremu (1982: 5-6) discusses the multipurpose spiritual usage of kijipa cloth. Aremu notes that kijipa is extensively used particularly in domestic, religious as well as funerary contexts. The cloth, according to Aremu, is often prescribed by balalawo and cult priests of childless women who often have miscarriages and those who give birth to abikuomo (the wandering spirits of children given
to the prank of entering into pregnant women and being born only to die for the sheer relish of mischief). The kijipa cloth, therefore, is believed to prevent the abiku-omo from being taken away by the other evil spirits.

Other traditional uses of kijipa cloth among the Yoruba, according to Aremu (op. cit:6), include egungun costumes which are worn during their annual festivals to appease the deities, to bring children to the barren, happiness and loving kindness to people in general. In addition kijipa is also used for rituals

that involve requests of various kinds of blessing, including protection from sickness and death, prosperity and victory over enemies. Maidens about to marry also make use of kijipa on the prescription of an oracle so as to have a happy married life. Aremu (op. cit.:9) observes that it is also generally believed among the Yoruba that whoever covers his or herself with kijipa cloth is indirectly protecting himself or herself from the power of evil, illness, disease, misfortunes or accidents, and other calamities and catastrophies.

Besides the socio-religious usage of handwoven cloths in Africa, there are other purposes for which the cloths are utilised. Discussing the type and functions of handwoven cloths in Ghana, Jefferson (1974:75) remarks that although kente was originally produced for clothing, today it is common to find the cloth being used for wall hangs, palace mats, bell pulls, and for other decorative purposes.

The traditional handwoven cloth in Africa, and Nigeria in particular has experienced one form of influence or the other. The influence is mostly noticed in the materials (threads) used and pattern motifs rather than the technique of weaving. Lamb and Holmes (1980: 218) and Okeke (1985: 40-45) observe some of these influences. In their study of Nigerian weaving, Lamb and Holmes (op. cit) observe that fashion in Nigeria is constantly calling into existence new patterns; and both old and new patterns are covered by an elaborate system of names. They also remark that some of the patterns are names after leading personalities of the political world. They cite an example of their experience in Ilorin by stating that in 1979 they found both 'a Murtala

Mohammed and Obasanjo' patterns. Lamb and Holmes further add that the use of English letters would be seen to be a fairly recent innovation in the decoration tradition of handwoven Nigerian cloths. This use of letter motif is linked to influence of modern Western education.

In his contribution to influences on handwoven cloths in Nigeria, Okeke (1985: 40-45) notes, that unlike the Nsukka patterns, the present Aniocha patterns are derived not only from local motifs but also from external influences. He supports this submission by stating that among the Aniocha is elili Gowon (Gowon's stripe). This pattern, according to Okeke, refers generally to stripes on the emblems of soldiers rank. Okeke explains further that the elili Gowon pattern was influenced by the 1966/67 Nigerian civil war when soldiers and their families became the greatest patronisers of the traditional cloth weavers.

2.2.6 Pottery Decoration:

Pottery in Africa is an ancient art which is widely practised in different parts of the continent. The origins of the art are obscure, and differences in ethnic techniques are probably due as much to the different kinds of clay as to the variations in cultural patterns (Jefferson, 1974: 170). There are several basic techniques of making pots in Africa as there are various types of pottery.

In a collection of pottery in Ethiopia, Hecht (1970: 48) notes that there are many pots of different sizes and shapes which are produced by the Wollega of Ethiopia. Some of these pots, according to Hecht, are gani which is used only for preparing alcoholic beverages; okote - used for carrying water, which is usually of medium size; docho, for carrying water;

arso - small dish-like pot which is used for burning incense; jabana, used for making coffee; and tawa, a vessel which varies in size and is usually employed for supplying water when cooking, washing hands or doing hand work such as pottery.

Newman (1974: 124), in his study of pottery in Weija (Ghana), acknowledges the multipurpose functions of pottery wares. He states that the pottery wares in Weija are for cooking, bathing, burial, as oil lamps, food storage, for dyeing fabric and burning sweet-smelling herbs. Jefferson (1974: 170) and Newman (op. cit.) agree with Fagg and Picton (1970: 79) that African pottery wares have a lot of socio-religious functions. They however lay emphasis on the religious function of pottery wares in Ghana. For instance, Fagg and Picton observe that the sacred pots in Ghana are all elaborated by sculptured ornament to a greater or lesser degree. In this category of pottery wares of the people, Fagg and Picton (op. cit.: 81) remark that the abusua kuruwa and mogye-mogye pots are the most important in Ashanti. They further explain that the abusua kuruwa, which is a family drinking pot, is made for ceremonies which follow the burial of a deceased Ashanti. All the blood relatives of the deceased shave off their hair and put it inside the pot which is then deposited together with cooking pots and utensils, and sacrificial food at the burial ground (Fagg and Picton, op. cit). The mogye-Mogye pots, on the other hand, are used to contain the wine which is poured out as libation over the golden stool of Ashanti. They finally note that the decorative patterns on the pots resemble Ashanti gold-work designs.

The ceremonial pottery wares of various shapes, colours, textures and styles among the Igbo are also observed by Fagg and Picton. They state, for example, that ceremonial double vessel of Awka or Aguleri of Igbo territory contain food in one while wine is kept in the other. The ornamentation of the pot is remarkable in that, it forms a bearded, though highly stylised, human face under each bowl. Fagg and Picton (op. cit.) further report that the decorated pots with a series of figures from Western Ibo were made for the cult of ifijioku, the yam spirit, at Osisa. The pots are placed as ornaments in out-door shrines dedicated to the yam spirit. Fagg and Picton note that the figures on the pots represent family heads and attendants. They finally observe that the Igbo perforated pots at the base are used for straining or filtering; sometimes they are used as friction drums which when held taut and rubbed, produce terrifying noises. In addition, the domestic usage of pottery wares among the Ekoi is as well noted by Fagg and Picton. They state, for instance, that the large perforated pots among the Ekoi are produced either for drying meat or for washing farm produce such as cassava or locust beans.

Traditional African pottery wares are decorated with various patterns which are skilfully executed through various techniques. Trowell (1970: 65) for instance, notes that on African pots are pattern forms which are scratched or impressed with roulettes of wood or of plaited reed. She also states that other forms of decorative patterns are made on pots with stamps which are made of natural objects such as corn cobs, shells and seeds.

Connah (1981: 100-156) gives a more detailed view of decorated pots in the Lake Chad region of Nigeria. In his excavation report on Daima sites of the region, Connah discusses the various types of decoration on the excavated pottery wares. He observes for instance, that amongst the more common decorations of Daima I pottery were those achieved through comb-stamping, corn-drawing, grooving and ridging, wiping and smoothing, plaited cord roulettes, and mat impressions. Connah adds that in some cases, the pottery in Daima I were decorated by comb-stamping, grooving, applied bosses and pellets; yet some others were decorated by twisted cord roulette, cordon, and punctate impressions.

The evolution of pottery tradition of Daima people, as it relates to the technique and type of decoration on the pots is also noticed in Connah's report. He observes, for example that:

> ...the burial traditions of Daima II appear not to have changed from those of Daima I but in the case of the pottery there are signs of both continuity and change... The real difference between the two consisted of a number of new attributes that appeared in Daima II. ... The most significant of these was a range of twisted cord roulettes which become common ... Decoration with punctate impressions and with cordons also became important (p.154).

For the excavation of Daima III, Connah noticed a further evolution in pottery decoration. He remarks that in addition to the existing decorative pattern already mentioned, was the carved roulette type (chevrons).

Gardi (1969: 38) and Hecht (1970: 40), in their studies of pottery in Africa, notice the simple yet very fascinating patterns made on pots. Gardi (op. cit.), states that African women potters have a sure

sense of form, and thus feel the need to decorate their pots and jars. He explains that the potters execute this by scratching in simple linear ornamentation or by pressing in patterns with dices. Gardi also adds that the women potters roll string-like braids of chip-carved wood over the still-soft surface of the vessel to achieve nice looking decoration. Hecht (op. cit.) in her own observation states that all the decorations on pottery wares are made with the fingers and with straws. The decoration, consist of parallel lines, either perpendicular or horizontal. In addition to this type of pottery decoration, Hecht notices another kind of decoration in the Wllega (Ethiopia pots which is a ring of bulging spots made all round a pot.

Igwilo (1983: 35-38), in his study of traditional pottery among the Igbo of Nigeria, briefly comments on the type of designs and motifs found on decorated pots. Igwilo remarks that designs and motifs used in most decorations of Igbo pottery are often based on the traditional 'Uli' design. He adds that the designs and motifs are incorporated with geometric patterns and some animals and plants, typical of such animals being lizards, snakes, birds and fish.

2.2.7 Body Decoration

Body decoration, as discussed by many scholars, comprises body painting, tattooing, scarification, hair decoration and body adornment. These forms of body decoration are made on the body in various ways. Studies on the subject took into consideration among others, the origin, types, aesthetics and functions of body decoration.

In his study of Ethnic Art of the Forest and Savanna Regions of Africa, Barnert (1980: 162) makes some remarks on body decoration of the people. Barnert states that scarification, a form of body decoration in Africa, is produced by deep cuts in the skin to which the ashes of certain plants are applied to prevent the wounds from healing over without leaving a scar. According to Barnert, this process is for the purpose of achieving striking and prominent scars which will remain visible for the rest of the wearer's life. In effecting scarification, Barnert notices variations ranging from simple straight lines to often highly imaginative patterns.

Aboderin (1984: 8) highlights the types of body markings. He states that the decorative body markings are either in the forms of tattoo, body painting or ear perforation. Aboderin explains further that the tattoo decoration are permanent forms of decorative body markings, while body paintings are temporary. For any of these forms of body decoration among the Ogbomoso, abstract, representational graphic and interlacing patterns are used (Aboderin, op.cit.: 15).

The motifs of designs which are used in body decoration among the Ibibio are derived from objects which surround the people (Umoetuk, 1985: 36). Some of the motifs are inspired by plants, utilitarian objects, animal and human activities, while some others are inspired by the action of nature. In addition to body painting and body marking, that is tattoo and scarification, hair dressing is a cherished art in Ibibio culture (Umoetuk, op. cit.).

Wilson (1977; 101) remarks that scarification, body paintings, and tattoos have been used, and in many cases are still being used as a means of personal expression - to express group identity or for self adornment with popular decorative motifs. Wilson also notes that the use of tattoos as body decoration is widespread and can be found in many different countries. Wilson adds that, along with other traditional expressions of culture, tattoos relate specific design concepts and an aesthetic appreciation unique to each group that uses them.

Wilson (op. cit.: 110) further remarks that tattooing is most common in the North West, North Central and the North East of Nigeria. He further explains that among the Fulbe, the facial designs vary from clan to clan, but that there is a great amount of overlapping and sharing of these designs. The use of any of these designs is more a matter of mode than strict adherence to inherited custom (Wilson, op. cit.). Discussing the motifs used in body decorations among the Fulbe in Zaria, Wilson (op. cit.: 116) states that many times scorpions and lizards are incorporated into geometrical designs. He also specifically mentions lizards as a popular motif to decorate the sides of the neck on both men and women. Wilson, however, does not explain the symbolic importance or the role of the so cherished lizard and scorpion motifs in the people's culture. Similarly, Akiga (1973: 140) states that the Fulani people tattoo their body with various kinds of motifs, ranging from valuable objects to letters (alphabets). Akiga adds that sometimes the Fulani decorates his/her body with the names of the loved one or his/her personal name.

Jefferson (1974:120), contributing to possible motivation for body decoration, remarks that painting and staining the body may have resulted from the simple impulse to beautify the body. He further adds that among the Tiv, the geometric or animal patterns/designs are made on various parts of the body, solely for decorative purposes. The men have designs on their chests and occasionally on their arms, while the women decorate their backs and legs. Trowell (1970: 45), in her own contribution, notes that the human race generally, and especially women, tend to enhance natural beauty by one form of decoration or the other. This urge to beautify a surface, according to Trowell, is confined to costume or hairstyle, or to painting prominent parts like the face or finger nails, but that the Africans carry the art considerably further. Trowell explains this by stating that in Africa many ethnic groups ornament their faces and bodies with delicate and, at times, intricate patterns which are painted with vegetable juice. Trowell finally remarks that the most usual form of decoration among the Africans is cicatrization.

Bohannan (1962: 150), in his study of Tiv body decoration, classifies the types of decoration according to their usage by the people. Cicatrization, for instance, is associated with age, ethnic identity and personal attractiveness. This is because the three variables have their specific type of cicatrization. Bohannan further explains that the association of cicatrization with age is clearly seen by the correlation of different styles of scarification with generations. The older generation (people of 45 years and above) are marked about the eyes with round poke dot scars known as abaji. The nail scars (akusa),

which are single marks cut in by a nail, used to be associated with youth, while the latest fashion is a sort of razor tattooing of complicated animal or geometrical patterns.

Bohannan (op. cit.) further states the parts of the body on which the Tiv put marks. These parts are the forehead, checks, temples, neck, shoulders, back and arms. The women, in addition, have their calves and the stomach scarified. Bohannan adds that fat calves are greatly admired among the Tiv, for fine geometric scarification is put on them to enhance the beauty of the woman. Finally Bohannan (op. cit.) remarks that body painting is especially popular in the southern part of Tiv community, which is mostly confined to the faces or arms. The patterns used in the body painting, are those found in scarification generally, but that very lovely curvilinear designs are added. The latter are worn for ornamentation, celebrations like marriage, or for ritual purposes.
de Negri (1960: 191) and Jefferson (1974: 106) write on the types and design arrangement of hair decoration in Africa, Jefferson, for instance, states that African hair style includes pleating, plaiting, top-knotting, and intricate decoration with clay, grass, string, and cloth. He further adds that many of the hair arrangements in West and Central Africa are of the same design, but that the Yoruba women of Nigeria use the greatest variety of styles. This view is also held by de Negri (op. cit.) when she remarks that among the Yoruba, hair styles have their identification names. Such names are koroba, in which the hair is divided down the centre of the head. deNegri further notes that married Yoruba women usually choose a style in which the hair is divided into squares all over the head, and from each the hair is gathered into

tight braids. She concludes that with the spread of modern thoughts and ideas, and changes in professional roles, the African women may not have the time for elaborate traditional hair dressing, and that this may lead to a total loss of the art.

2.2.8 Motifs And Their Meanings In Body Decoration:

Wilson (1977), Barnert (1980), Umoetuk (1985), Aboderin (1984), Uzochukwu (1987) and some other writers, highlight the meanings of motifs used in body decoration among Africans. They also give the various general and specific significance or purposes of body decoration in Africa. Among these purposes are identification, protection, decoration or aesthetics, and communicative symbolism.

In her discussion of the purpose of body decoration in Africa, Trowell (op. cit.) remarks that the most highly developed schemes of body decoration are made for aesthetic purposes, which are to give visual and tactical pleasure to young people in their more intimate personal relationship. Akiga (op. cit.) supports this aesthetic purpose of body decoration when she notes that the Fulani woman decorates her body with the sole aim of making herself look more beautiful and attractive. Akiga further adds that some Fulani women decorate themselves heavily with ornaments for an additional purpose of portraying their wealth or that of their various families.

The multipurpose significance of body decoration among Africans is noted by Wilson (op. cit.) in her study of tattoos among the pastoral Fulbe in Zaria. Wilson states that the body decoration is always utilitarian either in a purely decorative sense, a

magical sense or for identification purposes. Wilson further adds that very often the decorations may well serve all or at least, a combination of some of these functions. Wilson cites an example of facial tattoos among the pastoral Fulbe, the popularity of which is an indication that many pastoral Fulbe still feel the need and pride of indicating their origins and participating in customs that are peculiar to them. Wilson further explains that tattooing among pastoral Fulbe young men and women is an indication to one's peers of the fortitude and self control that are very rudimentary to the ideal of their traditional initiation rites and ceremonies. Wilson further adds that the occasion of tattooing itself affords a time when most of the subject's friends are present to see a demonstration of bravery, courage, and patience.

Agreeing with Trowell (1970) and Akiga (1973), Keil (1979) remarks that the ultimate purpose of all scarification among the Tiv is to make themselves more attractive. Keil explains further than the two authors, saying that the after-effect of scarification can present clues to a history of personal action, more specifically, of male - female interaction. keli also notes that the mudfish design motifs scarified on the belly of a woman promote fertility. That the scars which are tender for some years after they are effected, are erotogenic, and a woman who has them will demand more sexual attention that one without them, hence she is more likely to have children.

In the study of body decoration among people of different cultural backgrounds, Ebin (1979: 13) sees body decoration generally in terms of how man demonstrates his identity as a member of society by

permanent forms of decoration; adornment as a means to mark social status and to denote various forms of achievement; as a means to display wealth and to convey power. All these are variously done in accordance with cultural requirements or directives of the different cultural groups. An example of status symbolism of body decoration is found among the Bopoto women of Central Africa, who wear raised scars made at different times to signify the stages of their development. Similarly, to conform with the practices of their age group, Ebin further notes that young Nuba men have their hair shaved carefully and whitened one side of their faces.

Further, among the Nuba of Sudan, a girl is given some marks on the face and abdomen at the on set of puberty. A further set will be added on the back right down to the waist region after the weaning of her first child. This later marking, is to signify the woman's return from the seclusion of childbirth, while the protruding scars so achieved are considered to enhance the woman's sexual appeal (Ebin, op. cit.).

Ebin (o. cit: 24), in addition, discusses the ceremonial content of body decoration. She remarks that in the same way by which the appearance of the individual participant is intrinsic to the rite or its performance, so the adornments worn are vital to the ritual theme. Among the Mount Hageners in New Guinea, Ebin remarks that body decoration makes statements about the nature of a particular occasion. In time of war for example, their body painting, facial designs and the accessories which they display, all transmit the same distinct message of fierceness and aggressive power.

Ebin (op. cit.: 38) further discusses the social implication of body decoration. She remarks for instance, that the Ekoi of Nigeria believe that the scarified designs on their bodies will serve them as money on their journey to the place of the dead. Such associations, according to Ebin, are by no means universal. The flamboyant body painting practised by the Nuba of the Sudan, continues Ebin, aims only to enhance the body, not to obscure it or to distract attention, from its form by any symbolic content. She explains that when a Nuba man paints a giraffe on his back he is not expressing a desire to take on the qualities of that animal; he wants only to complement his own form with the creature's (giraffe) elegant shapes. Ebin concludes by stating that the decorated body is valued as an aesthetic object, and the designs which he applies are only a means to that end.

Barnert (op. cit) equally agrees that scarified patterns among some ethnic groups are identification marks, but adds that the markings on some women which are often concentrated around the genital areas, have a considerable value. Barnert further notes that it is not inconceivable that the medicine - man might put some medicinal substances into the scarified areas to provide long-term protection against certain diseases or poisons. Barnert summaries that they can also in part be a substitute for clothing.

Aboderin (op. cit: 8) notes that the body markings can be classified as identificatory, decorative, religious, medicinal, circumcisional, and exisional. Aboderin further explains that while the identificatory marks are for the purpose of various lineage group's identification in Ogbomoso town, and

the decorative ones are made for the general purpose to adding more beauty to the bearer, the religious body marking are put on the body for the purpose of worshipping the Yoruba deities. Aboderin (op. cit.) for example, explains that the medicinal body markings among the Ogbomoso are used purely for treating people and for prevention of sickness and attacks by evil forces.

On the social aspect of body marking among the Yoruba, Aboderin (op. cit.) remarks that the women of Ogbomoso use the body marking to attract men and vice versa due to their (markings) aesthetic visual effects. Aboderin states that decorative body markings are used to express affection or deep love. Some have been employed to show sympathy in certain cases. Aboderin concludes by remarking that the decorative body markings employed in Ogbomoso are purely secular arts, thus they do not have any religious function. He adds also that body marking in Ogbomoso does not differentiate between the rich and the poor, but between the literates and illiterates in the society. This means it is the illiterate in Ogbomoso who patronises the traditional decorative body markings. Aboderin however, does not advance reasons for this type of situation.

Umoetuk (1985) agrees with Trowell (1970), Akiga (1973) and Aboderin (1984) that motifs applied to the body are to emphasise and enhance rather than hide the wearer's face. trunk, arms and legs or the whole body as the case may be. Umoetuk then remarks that a small round dot at a spot on the face or body among the Ibibio is regarded as a mark and summary of beauty. A dot is regarded as the only perfect mark to indicate

and summarise beauty in the art of body decoration in Ibibio culture.

Beside the social significance of body markings among the Ibibio, Umoetuk notes that there are ceremonial and ritual marks such as 'X' which are applied on the forehead, wrists and ankles. According to Umoetuk, such marks symbolise mediation. Umoetuk gives an example of untended hair worn by a married woman which may indicate death of the husband, child or relation. The symbolic content of body marking among the Ibibio is further highlighted when Umoetuk states that decorative designs and motifs are the alphabets of form, content, and style as dictated by the Ibibio traditional society. Therefore, body painting, like other aspects of body art in Ibibio culture, is regarded as a form of dress, which is emphasised to promote the wearer. The body painting takes many forms. An odung painting, for instance, is necessitated by either participation in cultural festivals such as ekong ceremonies or rituals with marriage, child birth, coming-of-age at puberty, and death. Sometimes it is used to symbolise transient status in a secret cult such as Ekpe.

The use of ndom during festivals may similarly symbolise well-being and purity. In addition, the ndom is a symbol of desire for good fortune and a sign of innocence. It can also symbolise happiness and success (Umoetuk, 1985: 38). In summary, Umoetuk remarks that apart from the symbolic representations of colours, the whole concept of body art in Ibibio culture which involves painting and decoration in the traditional manner, defines the aesthetic sensibilities of the people. He adds that though there are some body marks made on the chest, neck, wrists and toes which are

symbolic and believed to have magical powers to ward off evil spirits and possible dangers, these are secondary to the principal reason of beauty in Ibibio culture.

In his study of facial scarification among the Igbo, Uzochukwu (1987: 43) highlights the social and ritual significance of the facial mark which he calls ichi or nshi. According to Uzochukwu the ichi or nshi face mark was meant for the Eze Nshi men, marked on them after their coronation. Uzochukwu adds that initially ichi had a sort of ritual significance such as the conferment of the ozo title, one of the highest titles aspired to by the Igbo. Uzochukwu further remarks that the significance of ichi was not limited to the ritual aspect of the Igbo life, but that any one in the society who could afford and who met the requirements could be marked with ichi. Such person, for instance, should be free from any social stigma. That is, the person should neither be an outcast nor a slave, he should hail from a responsible family and should not be morally depraved. Similarly, a young man about to engage in marriage had to undergo the test of having ichi marked on his face, for it pains at the time of marking. Concluding, Uzochukwu remarks that the practitioners of this form of body decoration see it (ichi) as a sign of beauty comparable to other bodily marks, which the Igbo have some yearning for, but more highly cherished as a result of its permanent nature and its ritual and social significance.

Faris' study of Nuba personal Art (1972: 26) examines the function of body decoration among the Nubian which cuts across the marking of age group status, patrician section membership, physiological condition and state, and ritual status, Faris further explains that females who do not have an elaborate age

organisation like males, also begin a series of body scarification at the age of nine or ten, which are rather closely related to physiological changes. The first of these is a series of scars which are out on either side of the abdomen below the navel-joining above the naval and continuing to a point between the breasts. These scars are made at the first signs of puberty as the breasts begin to fill out. The second set takes place after the start of menses, while the final scarring is made after the weaning of the first child. Despite the age status and physiological state significance of body marking among the Nubian, Faris notes that the chief sactions upholding the scarring tradition centre on beauty. He cites an nstance that if a woman dies without having being scarred, a spirit scarrer will do the job before she could enter after-life. The demands for beauty, therefore, appear to be more persuasive than supernatural sanctions (Faris, op. cit.).

2.3 Specific Review:

A review of available literature on the subject (the decorative arts of the Ebira) is done here for the purpose of exposing to the researcher the extent of research work already done on the subject. Such documentary evidences will guide the researcher, at least, on what to look for on the field. The specific literary sources will also help to cross check the relevance of the general revived sources to the study.

2.3.1 Pottery Decoration:

Literature on pottery of the Ebira available to the researcher is scarce. One of such few literary information is a catalogue on Nigerian pottery which was compiled by Sylvia Leith-Ross (1970: 118). Her work features mainly the techniques of pottery in

Nigeria. In addition, the types and use of pots of some ethnic groups in Nigeria are mentioned briefly and shown in plates. It is along this line that Leith-Ross mentions two types of pots found among the Ebira Tao. These are water jar, which she refers to as 'Unoko' (Leith-Ross, op.sit: plate 256). Among the Ebira Tao, 'Unoko' is the general name for pot irrespective of the type and its function. Thus, the correct name for pottery water jar is 'Uke' (Aramotu, 1989)[2].

The second type of pot of the Ebira Tao mentioned by Leith-Ross is cooking pot, which she calls 'Unokepe'. Again, Leith-Ross does not specify the type of cooking pot she is referring to. From plate 257, Page 118 of the said catalogue, the cooking pot shown is for stew or soup. In the whole, Leith-Ross is silent on the aesthetics of the pots mentioned and shown in plates. Inspite of its shortcomings Leith-Ross's piece of information can not be discarded. The work throws some light on typology of pottery art of the Ebira.

Sule (1985:50)[3], reports that the Ihima pottery is rich artistically.[4] He further remarks that without the use of modern ceramic throwing wheel, the pot makers have produced well shaped water jars, delicately made with beautiful design. Sule then mentions some of what he refers to as the "chief products" which are bowls, beer mugs, jugs, and water coolers.

Discussing the impact of Art and Craft of the Ebira in Nigeria's economy, Saliu (1988:6) remarks that pottery is predominantly practised by women from Ihima district in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi

State however, products from the art are widely used in Ebira land (Ebira Tao). These include pots for water storage, fetching water, cooking, frying gari and beancakes, and for smoking fish and meat. Saliu further says that despite the presence of aluminium and other modern ceramic wares in the market, many homes still go for the traditional pots to store their drinking water in place of the costly refrigerator, which only few people can afford.

Omenesa (1986: 5-6) supports the view of Sule (op. cit.) that Ihima people are known for their pottery in Ebiraland (Ebira Tao). Ihima women have for many years kept alive the unbroken tradition of hand-making pots. Omenesa further mentions the major uses of the pots which are cooking, fetching and storing of water and farm produce.

Like the first author mentioned above, the other last three writers did not treat the artistic qualities or characteristics of pottery in Ebiraland. Their main focus seems to be on the functions of the traditional pottery wares. However, the authors have revealed the types and functions of pottery wares among the Ebira.

2.3.2 Cloth Decoration:

Literature on cloth decoration among the Ebira are fairy available, an attention which other forms of decorative art of the people hardly enjoyed. Amount these are three published works and some unpublished post-graduate degree dissertations, which give some amount of information on the subject. There are other unpublished works which merely mention some aspects of cloth weaving of the people, mainly to illustrate some information.

Lamb and Holmes (1980) focus on clothweaving among some selected ethnic groups in Nigeria, and the three groups of Ebira being studies are included. Lamb and Holmes pay more attention to materials used and techniques employed to produce cloth, types of cloths produced, and functions of the cloths among the Ebira. The authors remark that "... Among the Igbira (sic) in Okene, the major change to factory made cotton seems to have taken place only some twenty years ago ..." They further note that by 1979, factory made cotton could be used for both warp and weft, or as the warp in conjunction with a hand spun weft. After about thirteen (13) years that the remark was made, more especially that the traditional cotton is no longer produced by the people, and abundant availability of factory spun threads in assorted qualities the situation must have changed or improved.

On pattern creation, Lamb and Holmes note that a variety of techniques can be used. Some of these, involve the use of supplementary heddles. Particularly interesting in this context are some Okene cloths[5] usually white, which have very delicate raised warp patterns. They go on to enumerate different textures that could result from the variety of patterns. They also note that "New designs or modifications of old ones, are constantly being evolved." Lamb and Holmes however do not give any fundamental reasons why the types of patterns were created. In addition, they do not mention what must have motivated the new designs or the modification of the old ones. For instance, it is interesting to know whether the social, cultural and religious taste of the people are responsible for the evolvement or modification. It looks as if the technical skill of the weaver and the aesthetics of

the cloth, are the focal points of Lamb and Holmes in their work.

The types of cloth produced by Ebira Tao and Ebira Chao are observed by Lamb and Holmes (op. cit.) when they state that:

> While Okene and Igara are the home of Ebira speaking people, as weaving centres they have developed along rather different paths ... Okene is the centre for the production of a wide range of bright new cloths reflecting contemporary fashion ... the major claim to fame of Igara, however, is in its production of baby ties ... (p. 244).

It is normally expected that for a people with similar culture, the mode of practising their art should be almost the same. Lamb and Holmes have not clarified why this assumed phenomenon in cloth weaving of the Ebira Tao and Ebira Chao does not exist. Such explanation or clarification should have informed the readers the likely factors that must have brought about the difference in weaving specialities.

Further, lamb and Holmes mention three categories of cloths which the Ebira Tao use specifically for the burial of elderly dead people. These are 'Ita ogede', used only in the burial of men of rank or wealth; 'Ita Okueta', used in the burial of elderly women, and 'Ala', also used for burials, which they say, was particularly appreciated by the Muslims of the area, because of the white appearance of the cloth. They further mention some other uses of handwoven cloth among the people, which they say include ceremonies and rituals. An example of such ceremonies, according to the authors, is marriage, for which specially designed cloths are woven and presented to a bride by the groom on a wedding day[5]. Lamb and Holmes, however, do not give example of ritual activities in which woven cloth was used by the people.

Lamb and Holmes (op. cit.) further remark that the traditional method of transmitting skills from mother to daughter down the generations still functioned among the Ebira. Before the 1980 date of publication of Lamb and Holmes' book, this situation had started changing. While Lamb and Holmes are correct that daughters learn how to weave cloth from their mothers informally, it is on record that formal method of transmitting skill of cloth weaving has been in existence since the early 1970s in Primary Schools in Ebira Tao[7].

Lamb and Holmes try to identify the parts of the vertical loom used by the Ebira Tao, using the language of the people (op. cit: 224-225). This is successfully done with an exception of 'tenter' which the authors write as 'outa' instead of 'uwta', and 'shuttle, as 'upichi' instead of 'upechi'.

Among the Ebira Nya, who Lamb and Holmes prefer to identify as the northern Igbira (sic), the use of factory cotton is noted (op. cit.: 217). They also remark that the people rank their cloths in importance. For instance, the people's 'iktapura' is next to 'dunna'. the latter being a marriage cloth. Unfortunately, Lamb and Holmes do not give any further details on the motifs and meanings of 'iktapura' cloth.

The second published literature related to Ebira cloth is Sieber's 'African Textile and Decorative Arts' (1972). Sieber discusses the type of loom used by Ebira Tao women, which he says is the common type used by women in West Africa. He further discusses the warping, which he notes, determines the overall length of a woven cloth. Sieber (op. cit.) however, has an

oversight of colour arrangement of a sample woven cloth from Ebira Tao discussed in the book. The inclusion of this would have thrown some light on the decorative qualities of the woven cloth. Sieber (op. cit.) does not leave out the fame of hand woven cloth in Nigeria when he remarks that: "spectacular and at time gaudy brocaded women's weaves have been developed in two places: Okene and Akwete, both are quite famous for high fashion cloth that have become popular, expensive and prestige costume ..." (page 170). Sieber further writes that among the Ebira Tao and Ebira Chao, the women have produced a characteristic type of cloth that has become a major prestige throughout much of Nigeria. A photographed sample, collected by Kay L. McGlanchlin of Los Angeles, with which Sieber illustrates his point, is unfortunately not discussed aesthetically. All that he does in this regard, is the recognition of the use of supplementary wefts in a contrasting thread. In Sieber's book a photographed sample of a brocade of silk supplementary weft threads over green, yellow, and blue stripes is presented as illustration of his discussion. The sample which was collected by Kate P. Kent, has geometric, linear and abstract motifs used for the decoration. Sieber, however, is silent over these aesthetic characteristics of
the cloth woven by an Ebira Tao woman. Unlike Lamb and Holmes (1980), Seiber (1972) does not extend his discussion to cloth weaving of the third group of the Ebira, the Ebira Nya.

Plumer (1970) presents very brief outline of cloth weaving among the Ebira Tao. Here the foreign type of fibre (Silk), the type of loom used for the weaving, the sex of the weavers, and one of the techniques of creating patterns on the cloth, which is

techniques of creating patterns on the cloth, which is the inlay techniques, are mentioned. Plumer does not give any detailed discussion of the features of cloth weaving among the Ebira Tao.

Eicher (1976) makes a general survey of cloth weaving in Nigeria in one chapter of her book. She discusses the two types of looms used in Nigeria, and these are the vertical and horizontal looms. In the book, Eicher (op. cit.)

discusses the historical background of vertical loom in Nigeria by trying to establish its possible origin. Like Murnane (1976) and Ohiare (1989), Eicher recognises the Congo basin and North Africa hypothesis. Eicher even adds other likely sources of origin of Vertical Loom in Nigeria, which she traces to Syria and the Palestine area. Further the variation of the vertical loom, size wise, according to geographical location is observed by Eicher, a phenomenon she says does not affect the basic apparatus of the loom. The variation in size of the loom, however, affects the width and length of the woven cloth. For instance, Eicher remarks that: 'In the Igbira (sic) town of Okene and the Nupe town of Bida, the width is often sixty-two cm wide by approximately 180cm long". Eicher presents two examples of narrow and wide vertical looms used by the Ebira and Akwete weavers respectively (op. cit fig. 41a and b, page 50) to illustrate the variation discussed above.

Eicher therefore discusses the processes of warping the loom and the actual cloth weaving including pattern creation. For pattern creation,

Ohiare (1989: 12) supports Eicher that the inlay technique, is also produced in the northern part of Nigeria in Bida, Yola, Lokoja and Okene." Eicher (1976: 52) discusses Akwete clothweaving in a more detailed manner. In doing so, the motifs used on the cloths are analysed. For instance, she writes that:

> ... The tortoise motif ... was formerly used only by royalty; the ebe or cross, was formerly produced on fabric specified for use on religious occasions, times of stress, or on the battle field. Another explanation for the use of the tortoise as a motif was that the tortoise is the hero of many Ibo fables (p. 53).

Eicher (op. cit.) gives examples of the functions of woven cloths according to types among the Yoruba. She does not give the same treatment to Ebira Tao handwoven cloths. Eicher ends this section of her book by discussing how Nigerian weavers adapt their designs and resources to changing situations and demands. She notes that:

> In Owo, for example, a woman's weave pattern was designed and named 'Keep Right' at the time the traffic pattern was changed from left hand to right hand drive. In Akwete and Okene traditional cloths were once made of cotton warp and weft with cotton inlay yarns for the designs. Gradually lustrous rayon yarns become widely used for the inlay to produce rich contrast of colour and texture for dress occasions (pp. 53 and 54).

The 1976 date when Eicher made the above remarks is over a decade now, thus it is most probable that the gradual changes in the use of yarns must have extended to other aspects of the art.

Murnane (1976) makes a thorough investigation into the cloth-weaving of the Ebira Tao, which she

refers to as 'Okene Cloth'. Murnane first tries to address her study to the impact of industrialisation on the traditional art of cloth weaving among Ebira Tao women. She is mainly concerned here with the future of the cloth weavers as Nigeria goes technologically oriented, since the weavers employ manual means of production.

Murnane (op. cit.) discusses the technique employed for the weaving and creation of patterns on cloths. The source or sources of the patterns, and the inspiration for the creation of the patterns, are not discussed by Murnane. The author casually mentions the fashion function of the cloth when she writes: "Throughout Nigeria, cloths fashioned from Okene cloth are prestigious and in high demand." Further, the historical background of the vertical loom in Nigeria is treated in the chapter two of Murnane's study. She does this by presenting two theories on how vertical loom must have travelled to Nigeria. These theories are: The Egyptian loom is considered as the prototype for the one used in

Nigeria by women today, while the second theory is stated as claiming the Congo River Basic area as a place of origin of the Nigerian vertical loom. These two theories, according to Murnane, are not conclusive evidence for the answer to the question of the origin of weaving in Nigeria.

Murnane (op. cit.) discusses the weaving process in the production of an Okene Cloth. The discussion focuses on the essential tools for weaving, the putting up of loom, the warping process, and the actual weaving. The author illustrates her study with

seventeen (178) woven samples and three plates, containing drafted patterns and colour arrangements. Murnane does not give any highlight of the cultural significance of the patterns and colour combinations she discusses.

Murnane takes time to discuss the methods of instruction among the Okene cloth weavers. While reporting that: "There is no formal training for young Okene (Ebira Tao) girls; they learn by observation", Murnane however, observes that the learning of the contemporary cloth weaving among the Ebira Tao is now formal. For instance, she writes that: "Since Okene weaving has been recognised as a special and profitable talent, it is now part of the curriculum in Primary and Secondary Schools in the area. There, the girls can perfect their weaving abilities as well as sewing" (p. 99). On the whole, the technique of weaving, more than any other aspect of cloth weaving among the Ebira Tao, is the main concern of Murnane in her study.

The second unpublished study which relates to the decorative arts of the Ebira is Saliu's study of ' 'Okene Cloth: Its position in the Contemporary Cloth Weaving in Nigeria' (1984). Saliu gives a brief historical background of the Ebira Tao and their cloth weaving. In the history of the cloth weaving, he states the very earliest fibre used by the people in weaving. He goes further to highlight the development of other subsequent forms of fibre, which he treats side by side with the development of weaving. He reports for instance, that despite the existence of traditional informal method of learning cloth weaving among the Ebira Tao, the formal method, where Primary School girls are taught the art, is also prominent.

Like Murnane (op. cit), Saliu (op. cit) discusses the weaving processes, starting from the ginning of cotton (the removal of cotton-seeds from cotton) to the final weaving process. Saliu (op. cit.) further discusses different types of woven cloths by Ebira Tao women, which he classifies according to pattern designs. Here he takes care to make aesthetic analysis of each type of the cloth. Saliu (op. cit.) further discusses the social, and domestic functions of the woven cloths. While both men and women dresses, masquerade costumes, and upholstery are classified under the social functions of the woven cloths, Saliu classifies woven cloths being used to decorate living rooms under domestic functions.

In an illustrated study, Saliu (1984) never attempts the philosophical analysis of the woven cloths in terms of the motifs used. In addition, the study is narrowed to only one aspect of the decorative arts of the people (cloth weaving). Besides, the study focuses on one of the three major settlements of the Ebira.

Abdulkadir (1987: 20) first presents the influence of Ebira Tao's cultural regalia and domestics of their cloth weaving industry. For instance, she states that of all the norms of the Ebira Tao, the one that has the greatest influence on the weaving industry is the system of marriage. That there is an average of three to four wives per an Ebira Tao man, the latter's capability or earning power not withstanding. Because of this situation, every woman with or without the western education has financial responsibilities, and the major source of meeting up with the expectation is cloth weaving.

Abdulkadir (op. cit.) further writes that the cultural activities that influence the weaving industry of the people include festivals, the most important of which are Echeaner[3] and

Ekuechi[9]. The object of the festivals, the masquerades, make use of special types of cloth which are hand woven. Another aspect of the people's cultural life, is burial ceremonies which call for the use of hand woven cloth (Okene cloth). Here Abdulkadir gives an example of specially woven burial cloth called Itaokuta.

On the influence of religion on the weaving industry of the Ebira Tao, Abdulkadir states that there are special cultural and religious requirements, which could not be met with the machine made cloths. Thus, particular outfits were used for different offerings which demanded different colours. Abdulkadir in addition, write that "... male children had to wear a combination of black and white cloths for their first few weeks on earth". All these and a host of others were
demands which the weaving industry had to meet (Abdulkadir, op. cit.). Further, Abdulkadir remarks that marriages, which are causes for joy, patronise the Ebira Tao handwoven cloths when she writes: "Marriage contract requires specific number of handwoven cloths as presents to the bride by the groom's family".

Commenting on the economic significance of the weaving industry of the Ebira Tao, Abdulkadir remarks that though the process of weaving is laborious and time consuming, the women are still able to meet up their responsibilities, which may include paying of children's School fees. It is because of this economic value of the industry, that hardly does one get a house in Ebira Tao without a loom. Abdulkadir further observes that it is unheard of that an Ebira woman cannot weave cloth. Even though the profits are not much, some households depend entirely on weaving for survival. Abdulkadir, therefore, suggests that for such people whose standards of living depend on rate of turn out, it is necessary to introduce a technology which will be higher than the traditional technology which is easy to operate and cheap to afford. This will increase the speed and result in a higher turn out (Abdulkadir, op. cit.).

Abdulkadir illustrates her study with various well designed samples of the hand-woven cloth by Ebira Tao weavers. The patterns of the designs, which Abdulkadir merely describes as complex, comprise geometric, abstract and wording motifs which are used decoratively with good colour combinations. As for the evolution of the loom, Abdulkadir remarks that: "... there has been very little improvement on the method of production. The first deviation was introduced by Alhaji Yusuf Utohu,[10] the owner of Okene Weaving Centre" (page 23). She then highlights the advantages and disadvantages of the introduced treadle loom by Alhaji Yusuf Utohu. All in all, the advantages of the treadle loom seem to outweigh the disadvantages, and Abdulkadir, therefore, concludes that the treadle loom could be used in the training unit for beginners who would operate her suggested jackard and balanced looms.

Ada's 'The Contemporary Non-Motorised Looms and their Weaving Design in the Nigerian Army' (1985), is yet another unpublished study that has relevance to this study. Ada writes that Okene Weaving Centre was set up after the middle of the 1960s by Alhaji Yusuf Utohu. He further explains that the workshop extended and offered training services to interested groups and individuals in and around Okene. Ada goes to remark that some of the products of the Centre included curtains (door blinds), bed sheets, wrappers, pillowslips/cases, uniforms for Schools, Colleges and Hospitals, floor cover and Army Corps belts. The customers of the products included some units of the Nigerian Army, United African Company Limited, Leventis Stores, Kingsways, and Foreign Embassies like the Indian, American, and British (Ada, op.cit.: 58).

Remarking on the wide patronage of Ebira Tao handwoven cloths, Isa (1974: 45) remarks that: "... quite recently, Okene cloth has become the latest in fashion design in Nigeria and in other neighbouring African countries. Even during the Second World War, thousands of Okene Calico (Uba) were bought for use as

World War, thousands of Okene Calico (Uba) were bought for use as blankets for the soldiers." Discussing the architectural exposition of Ebira Tao culture, Sule (1985: 35) similarly remarks that this could be noticed in their renowned cloth weaving with a lot of artistic styles, competing favourably in international markets.

Ohiare (1989: 4) highlights the background history of cloth production among the Ebira, which he states is not known. He however writes that the art is antique for, early travellers like Barth who was in Kano in 1950 observed the competitiveness of 'Igbira Cloth' in relation to Kano cloth. Ohiare later discusses the raw materials for cloth weaving among the Ebira Tao, which he says include cotton, silk and bast fibres. He takes time to discuss the processing of the traditional cotton into thread which would be used in the weaving. He goes on to discuss how imported cotton and wool came into the weaving materials of the people, first through the influence of the Ohinoyi of Ebira in the 1920s and the importation of real silk from England in 1931.

Ohiare (op. cit.: 8) discusses the warping and weaving techniques, where he compares the use of certain components of the loom between the Ebira and some other ethnic groups. For instance, he notes that "The Ebira weaver uses two shed sticks as against one being used by other groups like the Hausa and the Yoruba". Still discussing the technique of cloth weaving, Ohiare enumerates the various patterns and designs executed by the Ebira weavers. Of the six types of such patterns and designs, he states that, the web texturing' 'Inlay and float', and 'Raised surface texture', are more recent introduction which, was made possible through the use of supplementary heddles and cross-pieces. Ohiare further remarks that the introduction of intricate and fascinating designs was an innovation, which boosts the competitive capacity of Ebira cloth, thus its survival capability. As result of the multiple heddles, the Ebira weavers are now able to execute written sentences, and repeated motifs

often representing birds, animals and objects of material culture of the people on the cloth.

Ohiare mentions the development in the technology of the loom used in cloth weaving industry of the Ebira, which, he agrees with Ada (1985: 43) and Abdulkadir (1987: 23) was the brain child of Alhaji Yusuf Utohu. The development was the introduction of treadle loom, which he also remarks has a greater advantage over the traditional vertical loom. Still commenting on the technological development in the Ebira cloth weaving, Ohiare states that the organisers of the existing weaving centre - Ododo Weaving Centre, introduced some form of specialisation where there are designers, who create patterns and designs on graph papers, those who set up the warp, the heddle specialists, and the weavers. These are in addition to the vertical loom that was redesigned to have storage beam which stores a warp of over nine metres long (Ohiare, op. cit.).

On the future prospects of cloth weaving industry in Ebira Tao, Ohiare (op. cit.: 12) reports that there are fears about the future of cloth production among the Ebira women. Among these fears is the fact that the women who acquire western education hardly find time to weave cloth. This expression of fear is contrary to Abdulkadir (op. cit.:9) who writes that "...Hence every woman with or without western education has financial responsibilities and the major source of meeting up the expectation is cloth weaving ..." Besides, the present high rate of unemployment in the country, and the ever increasing demand for hand woven cloths as an alternative to the exorbitant costly machine produced cloths, have made many Ebira female adults who have completed their School Certificate course to take to cloth weaving in order to sustain themselves. Ohiare concludes his paper by remarking that the technology in the Ebira Tao clothweaving, though backward and slow to mechanisation, it is responsive to new challenges, a secret of its survival up till today.

This paper and other related studies mentioned above do not address themselves to philosophical implications of the features of the handwoven cloths they discuss. Instead they focus on the economic and social functions, and technological development of the weaving industry. It could have been interesting, for instance, to know the relationship, if any, between the philosophy of the Ebira and the motifs, patterns and designs found on the wovencloths of the people, and introduced innovation in the technology of the weaving, mainly the loom technology. The information contained in these studies are however valuable to the present study.

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2.3.3 Wood Decoration:

Very few literature on wood carving/decoration among the Ebira are available to the researcher. The only two published and two unpublished works available, make brief remarks on wood carving/decoration among the Ebira Tao, and nothing among the other two groups of the Ebira, the Ebira Nya and Ebira Chao. Among the published works is Frank Willett's African Art' (1971). Willett discusses the trading pattern in carved masks among some different ethnic groups in Nigeria. For instance, he reports John Picton's observation on this situation when he writes:

> ... On Igbira (sic) masquerades, I have seen the following types of masks; native Igbira (sic) carving, masks in the style of the Northern Edo people, Yoruba gelede masks from Ikot Ekpene ... an ebony face carved by Basa Nge. That is six different art styles fulfilling for Igbira (sic) ritual function ... (p.197).

One expects to be informed if the presence of the identified foreign masks in Ebira has influenced in one way or the other the carving/decorating styles of Ebira people. Willett none-theless notes the ritual fulfilment which the masks were able to meet.Willett's information is however a pointer to the fact that inter-ethnic influences can be studied through art works.

Supporting the possibility of inter-ethnic influence in wood carving, Willett states that an investigation by John Picton among the Ebira reveals a close similarity between the Ebira masks and those carved by the Basa Nge (op. cit: 206). Willett (op. cit.: 207, fig 205) presents a mask that was collected in the Eganyi district of Ebira Tao, which was carved in the early years of the 20th century. This mask has interesting linear and abstract patterns covering almost the whole surface. Willett, however, was probably unaware of this decoration as he did not say anything about the decorative aspect of the mask. A discussion would have thrown more light on the source or sources of the motifs used, whether they are indigenous to the people as a form of body or wall decoration motif or they are borrowed from any of the neighbouring ethnic groups.

Willett (op. cit: 207, fig.208) further presents another mask carved almost at the same period as the one discussed above. The mask is said to have been carved by one Ihiovi of Opopocho village in Ihima, Okehi Local Government Area of Ebira Tao. Willett does not give enough information about the mask, particularly the artistic features of the mask. The mask has angular eye brows, nose and mouth; robust cheeks; pierced eyes like those of the Nok figurines; and highly abstracted ears. The mask is further given facial markings of two vertical lines, which are painted white. Willett ought to have, at least, highlighted this last particular feature relating it to the facial marks worn by Ebira Tao people. Lastly, the mask has four fixed - projecting teeth on the upper part of the mouth. The function of these false teeth is not at all mentioned by Willett. He however

discusses the medicinal objects attached onto the top of the mask.

Leuzinger (1972: 206) discusses the relationships of various carved masks among some ethnic groups in Nigeria. For instance, she notes that "... The Idoma, Igala, Igbira (sic) ... who live in the area between the lower Benue and the Niger, have carvings which must be seen in relation to their close links with certain neighbouring people." Leuzinger further remarks that the mentioned ethnic groups also have white masks of the dead and fertility status, and they too like to decorate them with jequirity beans and horns. Leuzinger's information agrees with Willett (op. cit.) on cross-cultural relatedness conspicuously evidenced in the art products of a people.

Omensa (1986: 8) briefly mentions the wood carving of the Ebira Tao. He remarks that Ebira Tao people have utilized the art of carving to produce some of their agricultural tools, such as wooden handles for hoes, cutlasses, and sickles. In the homes, are carved mortars, pestles and stools. The traditional chiefs and compound heads, according to Omenasa, still possess and place high value on their ancient carved Xylophone (Agidibo). Omenesa, like Willett (op. cit) and Leuziger (op. cit), does not discuss the artistic characteristics of the carved objects he mentions.

Lastly, Sule (1985:48) reports that architectural exposition of the Ebira Tao culture would be noticed in the people's wood carving. According to him, the people's carved mask, important and decorated stool and staff of office of Chief priests, are examples of

architectural exposition of the people's culture. Like other writers mentioned on the subject, Sule does not highlight the types of decorations that feature on the objects he mentions in his study.

2.3.4 Metal Decoration:

Among the decorative arts of the Ebira on which studies have been done, metal work/decoration has received the least attention. Only two unpublished works are available on the subject.

Omenesa (op. cit.: 10) tries to trace the history of metalwork (blacksmithing) in Ebira, which he says is as old as the people themselves. He further highlights the strong force of the art in the people's farming occupation. He states that the art has for many years produced farming implements, such as hoe, cutlass, knife, and sickle. Other valuable metal objects produced by the people as weapons for hunting, include arrow, spear, traps and knives of different shapes and sizes. Omenesa, in addition, writes that the metal industry uses metal scraps and pieces of iron as raw material; and concludes by saying that the art has continued to sustain the entire Ebira Tao in agriculture with a considerable measure of self reliance. The changes in the art is also noted by Omenesa. He writes that:

> Today in Ebira, gunnery and metal welding are new dimensions in smithing work. Alhaji Jimoh Inoziomi is known for his gun manufacturing. Welding and metal construction are also produced and largely incorporated in our modern architectural work (P.11).

Another literature that relates to metal work of the people is Sule (1985). In the study, Sule casually mentions that the blacksmiths in Ebira Tao who are in charge of metal works produce such implements as hoes, cutlasses, arrows and spears (Sule, op. cit.: 50).

2.4 Previous studies:

Studying the anthropomorphic ceramic wares among two areas in the Gongola Valley, Berns (1989: 48-59) employed different approaches among which is fieldwork. The author engaged in a fieldwork research which enabled her to discover the richness of the region's terracotta arts whose scope and variety match its ethnic and linguistic diversity. She employed the method in order to get answers to how the forms, functions and distribution of ceramic arts in the Gongola valley could contribute to a reconstruction of the region's history. During the fieldwork investigation the author took into consideration multiple categories of information in addition to art and material culture, that is language, geography, ethnography and oral history.

In the absence of archaeological and written sources, Berns made use of the distribution of languages in the region as the most reliable guideline for reconstructing historical relationships. In doing this, the author found that where a group was assumed to have migrated in a particular direction, there were peoples of another linguistic group scattered on the periphery or otherwise divided by them. In each case these separated or peripheral groups had a much higher degree of internal linguistic differentiation than the intervenors. Berns was also able to draw another inference that the divided groups were prior inhabitants of the general area. The linguistic approach further implied that not only did groups with previous distinct ancestries and cultures share the same territory, but that their arts might be expected to reflect these distinctions as well as provide clues about the nature of historical interaction among them.

Despite the guideline reliability of linguistic evidence for investigating history, Berns still cross-checked such linguistic evidence against similar patterns of relatedness in oral traditions, ethnography, archaeology and art production. This was to distinguish relationships based on common ancestry or intergroup contact. The approach provided information to the author about interactions between neighbouring groups that might confirm or refute hypotheses based on language alone. The author was also conscious of the fact that, like language, purely formal (stylistic) considerations do not explain how or why such patterns of relatedness emerge, or what they mean, for both are equally limited as exclusive research methodologies. Thus, Berns analysed the concrete primary data, or artifacts in situ within and not dissociated them from the complex social and cultural framework in which they have functioned over time. The author discovered that the use of fired clay containers to objectify and thereby facilitate contact with spirit forces was pervasive in north eastern Nigeria, whereas anthropomor-phization in such terracotta vessels was most highly developed among Lower Gongola peoples. The stylistic variety evident in their distribution mirrored the ethnolinguistic complexity of the region (op. cit).

Geographical mapping of the vessels also revealed that linguistic relatedness is not always an index of ethnic or cultural congruity. In the Lower Gongola area, Berns discovered that vessels made by immediate neighbours tended to reveal more stylistic and often functional similarity than do those of their linguistic relatives who may now be separated in space. The author used this methodology to study the relationship between two groups living east of the Gongola river in an area called the Ga'anda and the Bena. Here Berns

extensively collected oral traditions among groups of Ga'anda and Bena elders. The most intriguing feature of all the Ga'anda oral accounts collected by the author was the importance consistently placed on who led the Ga'anda to their ancestral point of habitation which subsequently validated the dispersal of Ga'anda families to other sites in the surrounding landscape. The culture hero identified as a spirit - pot named Ngum - Ngumi, moving on its own, led the Ga'anda in their migration. Berns then mapped twenty-two such pots within four centres of Ga'anda population. The distribution of the spirit-pot (Ngum - Ngumi) provided some clue to the pattern and direction of Ga'anda population movement, as well as to the importance the spirit and its ceramic representation play in legitimizing and sustaining historical links between communities.

Berns (op. cit: 52) further comparatively analysed the spirit ceramic vessels produced by the Ga'anda and the Bena. The author states, that a further relevance to interpreting the mythic vessel (Ngum-Ngumi) made by men, was its close similarity in profile to a basic Ga'anda water pot made by women, which were both instruments of civilization and survival. The author further makes a functional and stylistic comparison of Ngum-Ngumi pots and another spirit pot (Mbirhlen'da) consistently mentioned in Ga'anda oral accounts. She reports that Mbirhlen'da like Ngum-Ngumi, had distinctive sculptural features beyond those that serve to anthropomorphize the spirit. This second spirit-pot also protects Ga'anda civilization and is identified by its meticulously executed surface decoration which referred both to male and female social realities. The Bena sacred vessel (Wiisa) were further compared with the Ga'anda

tutetary ceramic beings. As was the case with Ga'anda Ngum-Ngumi, sacred Wiisa vessels, which were made by Bena men, could be compared to the domestic wares made by women. Even more than their similarity of profile was their common surface treatment of the all-over impressions resulting from the finger markings left as the potter continuously joined coils of clay.

The evidence from ceramic vessels and otherwise, revealed that the Ga'anda and the Bena each maintained a distinct language and religious ideology within a geographically circumscribed area. This suggests that despite the degree of interaction necessary to have resulted in their striking cultural congruence, their autonomy has been sufficient to sustain unique ethnic and linguistic identities. Their ceramic arts reflect the historical dynamics and indeed helped to reconstruct it (op. cit.). Such ceramic evidence supported that the history of Ga'anda - Bena interaction in the region had been complex and dynamic. Considerations of the arts of the Ga'anda and their Bena neighbours demonstrated in Bern's study that the evolution of artistic traditions often involves an amalgamation of ideas and forms drawn from multiple sources over time.

The study also reveals how art responds to historical change and interchange, while simultaneously contributiing to the very process and context of that change. An analysis of the stylistic transformations and diffusions of sacred ce[illegible] in the region, alongside an exploration of the institutions and ideologies they supported, demons-trated how primary field data could contribute to historical reconstruction. Whereas language distributions revealed patterns and direction of intergroup contact, the

ceramic sculpture helped in better understanding the impact and meaning of that interaction. The study further revealed that similarity and in some cases identical features in the vessels take on different meanings when used by neighbouring groups. This also shows that to restrict
a study to one style and one people denies art a historical dimension and sharply compromises even its contextual interpretation. Berns (op. cit: 59), then remarked that a history of art in Africa could be advanced by a synthetic and distributional approach - one that takes into consideration multiple categories of data and the various groups who share a fluid geographical region.

Smith (1989: 60-65) carried out a study on the relationship of Earth, Vessels and the social harmony among the Gurensi of Ghana. The study which was carried out through different approaches revealed that there was a special relationship the Gurensi potters had with earth. That the potters and their products were important elements in maintenance of social harmony in the society in which the potters lived.

One of the approaches adopted by smith was a fieldwork approach. During the fieldwork investigation in February, 1973, Smith was informed that pot was a gift of the Earth, and it made water, food and millet beer taste better, and that pot among the Gurensi was a container of life and tradition. Adopting the oral tradition during the fieldwork exercise, Smith was informed of the various functions of the Gurensi pottery in the people's ritual activities. The author was informed that when a person died the funeral pot

containing millet beer would be placed at the entrance of the deceased's room during the funeral rites as a symbol of the family's
hospitality. In most cases the deceased may also partake of the millet beer, since it was provided for the clan, including its ancestors. After the funeral, the pot would be given to the kinswomen who brewed the beer as a sign of gratitude. This gesture also helped to reinforce kinship ties.

In addition to the fieldwork approach Smith made use of analytical method. He made a detailed analysis of the various ways the Gurensi potters and their pots relate to the people - both living and dead. The social and spiritual relatedness of pottery vessels and the earth was also analysed establishing the point that the pot which was made of clay obtained from the ground, and the maker of the pot were both part and parcel of the earth. The three elements share a common link harmoniously blended for the assurance of continuity of spiritual existence of the people. Smith reports for example that ceramic vessels, along with other containers, symbolize the life - giving force of the earth and dependency of human society upon it. Their motifs were meant not only to decorate, but to communicate essential ideas about social change and continuity (op. cit: 65).

Studying body markings in Nigeria in relation to other Nigerian arts, Adepegba (1976) adopted a synthesis of approaches as follows: 1. documentary evidences, 2. oral traditions, 3. archaeological artifacts in museums, 4. descriptive and comparative analysis.

Through literary sources Adepegba established the extent to which studies have been carried out on the subject. He pointed out certain shortcomings in some of the information however such information guided him about the scope which his own study could assume. Such information were from the accounts of early European travellers - mostly traders and Christian Missionaries, historians and archaeologists.

Through oral traditions Adepegba collected information on the possible origins of either the practice or types of body markings in Nigeria. He conducted oral interviews during field trips that took him to different parts of Nigeria and collected information on the identification and uses of body markings among different ethnic groups. A lot of such information might not be in written form, but its reliability was based on the fact that the informants were part of the system.

Archaeological artifacts were also used by the author to establish the possible origin of body markings in Nigeria. Specifically in this case, Adepegba used Nok terracotta heads which have patterns suggestive of body markings.

Based on Adepagba's studies (op. cit: 27) the descriptive analysis of the significance of body markings in Nigeria revealed the variance in the functions or purpose of body markings from one ethnic group to another. The author discovered, for instance, that a mark used for a specific purpose by a certain group may become an identification mark of the group as time goes on. The Ilorin facial marking is an example of such markings which were initially meant

for curative or preventive purpose, but which due to change in values became ethnic identification markings. The analysis further highlighted other purposes of body markings in Nigeria which include marriage, status attainment wealth, title taking, and personal ornamentation. The markings were analysed describing the forms, composition of the markings and the positions of the body on which the markings were made. The distribution pattern of the markings among different ethnic groups in Nigeria was also highlighted.

As revealed in Adepegba (op.cit.), a descriptive analysis of body markers was made relating their personalities to their societies and craft which varied not only according to places, but equally according to the types of markings they specialized in, either scarification or tattooing. The tools used by the markers for both scarification and tattooing were analysed as basically the same in Nigeria which could be used to suggest a common origin for the practice among various Nigerian peoples.

Adepegba used categorization in his descriptive analysis based on:

1) the sex of the markers and
2) the type areas of the markings.

His analysis thus revealed that both men and women markers were found in different parts of Nigeria, but the men markers formed the majority. In many cases the practice was not the birth right of any particular family lineages neither did the markers undergo formal apprenticeship training. Among some ethnic groups, however, the craft was not only hereditary, but also had some chieftaincy associations as was the case among the Yoruba Oyo. The analysis also extended to

professionalism of the markers. Most of the markers always combined their craft with some other jobs, meaning that the craft was not a full-time occupation and markers' survival required consistent sources of livelihood.

The subject of Adepegba's study according to the author, "was vast and bewildering, making a sort of systematization to appear difficult" (op. cit.:04). Thus, through some affinities within the designs of body markings, Adepegba divided Nigeria into eight type areas. Through the categorization or grouping approach the author effectively analysed the markings, focusing or highlighting the motif patterns or designs of the markings and the positions of the markings on the bodies. In this way the author was able to establish how body markings influenced Nigerian sculptural art works and also how patterns on sculptural art works influenced body markings.

This descriptive analysis through categorization or grouping of types of body markings, provided a basis of establishing whether body markings on the bodies of users of sculptures were the same with the motif patterns on the sculptures or similar patterns could be used to establish the provenance of traditional Nigerian sculpture. This was achieved through a discussion of similarities in body markings and sculptures in Nigeria making a comparative analysis of the markings and motif patterns on sculptures. The major ancient Nigerian sculptures which display body marking patterns were used for the comparative analysis. such sculptural works include the Nok terracotta finds, Ife terracotta heads, Ife bronze heads and figures, soap stone figures and heads from Esie, the Tsoede bronzes of Nupe villages of

Jebba and Tada, the court arts of Benin and Igbo Ukwu bronzes. In each case, the motif patterns on the sculptures were compared to body markings on people living within and outside the societies in which the sculptures were produced. From the possible dates of the sculptures, it was possible to establish if the sculptures influenced the adoption of the markings on the bodies or vice versa.

In a similar way, the scarification patterns on human bodies and the motif patterns on other Nigerian sculptures were comparatively analysed.

The analysis made it clear how in most cases the motif patterns on the sculptures represented the body markings of the users or the patrons of the images, which further ascertain that the spirits which the images materialized belonged to the user group. This did not however rule out the instances where art objects were made specifically to imitate other groups. Thus, to a large extent the mark patterns could be used to assign Nigerian figural sculptures to at least broad areas which however might not coincide with ethnic boundaries or the recognised ethnic styles of the art objects.

Nigerians' principles of evaluation of visual arts were also noted by Adepegba when he remarks that "... clarity above anything else is the quality looked for in body markings by several Nigerian ethnic groups" (op. cit: 178). Light pigmentation always enhances the clarity of body marks. This has a desirable attribute, especially among Nigerian women. The body markings, therefore, are more popular on light complexioned women whose bodies display the decorations or markings more conspicuously than on dark complexioned skin.

2.5 SUMMARY:

From the reviewed literature, it became clear that decorative arts comprise wall, body, cloth, furniture and pottery decorations. The decorative characteristics of the arts are the design patterns which are effected on the outer surfaces of the objects listed above. Such design patterns are meant to improve the appearance of the objects which are pleasing to the eye. They also enrich the objects with the symbolic patterns that are meaningful to both the artists and their communities. While some decorations are achieved by means of colour (paints) application on the objects as found on decorated walls and human bodies, others on objects such as furniture and pottery wares are either engraved, carved or impressed. Cloth decoration on the other hand is decorated through the arrangement of coloured threads during the process of weaving. These features contained in the reviewed literature are relevant to the present studies. They help to access the degree of relatedness of the decorative arts of the Ebira to the decorative arts of other ethnic groups.

Different motifs are used to effect design patterns in the decorative art forms contained in the reviewed literature. These motifs range from representational to non-representational. The representational motifs like flowers, plants, animals, birds, reptiles, personal items such as cars and aeroplanes are differently employed to decorate walls, cloth and to some extent human bodies. The non-representational motifs used in decorative arts of different ethnic groups in Africa include geometric shapes of different characters. Abstract motifs in form of colour arrangement feature in cloth decoration contained in the reviewed literature.

The motifs cited above have different meanings as they are used in the decorative art forms. In many cases, the motifs serve as an enhancement of the aesthetic appearance of objects. Some motifs, such as china plates used in the decoration of walls, are preventive signs as found among the lower Nubian. Among the Yoruba, some motifs used as design patterns in palace architecture have some mythological interpretations. Animal motifs like elephants, ostriches and lions signify majesty, while mokey and snake motifs signify wisdom for instance. Similarly, colours used as motifs, especially in cloth decoration, contain some meanings. Among the Yoruba, white colour in kijipa cloth signifies purity, while a combination of blue and black colours signifies peace or comfort. In the cloth decoration of the Igbo, snake motif signifies arrogance, grace and movement. The communicative symbolism of various motifs in body decoration was as well highlighted in the reviewed literature.

The functions of different decorative art forms contained in the reviewed literature are summarised under wall, cloth, pottery and body decorations. In many cited places, walls are decorated for the enhancement of surface aesthetics of the architecture. In some places such as in the lower Nubia, the decorated wall with China plate is for the purpose of preventing the inhabitants of such houses from the attack of evil spirits. In some other places, decorated walls help to express social status of individuals concerned, and also as an expression of religious belief. Mythological expressions of some communities are part of the needs for decorating walls. Shrine paintings in Owo (Nigeria) are examples of this.

Decorated cloths serve many purposes ranging from ceremonial functions, prestigious values, wall hangs, bell pulls, to many other daily uses. Among the Igbo, decorated cloths with mat motif are usually meant for newly wedded couples. Such cloths symbolise solidarity between the couples.

The socio-religious functions of decorated pottery wares in different places were highlighted in the reviewed literature. In Ashanti for example, a decorated family drinking pot is made for ceremonies that follow the burial of a deceased member. Among the Igbo of Aguleri, anthropomorphic pots are made for their yam spirit, used during the new yam festival. The Aguleri also have decorated perforated pots which are used as friction drums. In the Cross Rivers, the Ekoi perforated pots are used for drying meat or for washing farm produce such as locust beans.

Body decoration is done by different ethnic groups for many purposes. Among different peoples some forms of body decoration serve as ethnic identity. In some other places, the decorations are effected for personal beauty and attractiveness. Some other types of body decoration serve as preventive measure against evil attack, to solve some spirit-related problems. There are others which are for request for spiritual blessings as found among the Tiv where mudfish design motifs scarified on the belly of a woman promote fertility. Further, some body decorations are to mark social status and to denote various forms of achievement. Similarly, scarified designs on bodies among the Ekoi are meant to serve as money on the journey to the world beyond.

Motifs and their meanings, and the functions of the decorative arts cited in the reviewed literature will be of use to the present study. The usefulness will be in comparative analysis of motifs, meanings and functions of the decorative arts of the Ebira, relating the analysis to similar decorative arts of other peoples. This will bring out any uniqueness or universality of the decorative arts of the Ebira.

Different approaches have been adopted in the field. Adepegba (1976) used documentary evidences, oral traditions, archaeological artifacts, descriptive and comparative analysis, and fieldwork approach. Berns (1989) adopted fieldwork investigation, Language, geography, ethnography and oral history in her study of ceramic vessels in the Gongola valley. Smith (1989) carried out a study on the relationship of Earth, Vessels and the social harmony among the Gurensi of Ghana adopting fieldwork investigation, oral tradition and analytical method. Eicher (1976) also did a descriptive survey of clothweaving in Nigeria focusing on the types of looms used, techniques or creating patterns on cloth, motifs used and the functions of handwoven cloths. Similarly, Murnane (1976) adopted the descriptive and analytical methods in establishing the relationship that existed between an Okene clothweaver and her cloth.

Lamb and Holmes (1980) adopted comparative approach to examine the materials used, techniques employed to produce handwoven cloths, types of cloth produced and the functions of cloths found among different ethnic groups in Nigeria. Similarly, Willett (1971: 206) discussed the close similarity between the Ebira masks and those carved by another ethnic group adopting the comparative method.

From the pool of approaches adopted by the cited experts in Art History some of the approaches adopted by Adepegba (op. cit.) Berns (op. cit.) and Smith (op. cit.) are adopted in the present study for their workability and effectiveness. These are documentary evidences, fieldwork investigation, categorization, descriptive and comparative analysis. The study is an examination of continuity and change in the decorative arts of the Ebira. The study is to establish among other things any influence on the decorative arts of the Ebira by the arts of neighbouring ethnic groups in terms of motifs, style and technique, the categories of the patrons of the decorative arts of the Ebira whether patronage is influenced by religion, economics or politics; and the symbolic meaning of motifs used in the decorative arts, whether they are related to the philosophy of the people.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

3.1 Introduction:

Studies on the art of the Ebira show that attention has been on the types, functions and, to a lesser extent, the aesthetics of the art forms. In many cases the art forms were not studied in relation to the artists and the people for whom the art works were produced. By such approach, the readers are not well informed how the socio-political and cultural background of the people affect the arts being studied. Deverux (19784: 205) emphasises what he classifies "the two major functions" of art in the study of art of a people. These are the socio-cultural and psychological functions. These functions are further explained by D'Azevedo (1973: 168) as the systematic study of art in the whole structure of the culture and the history of art in particular societies.

The purpose of this study is to carry out an investigation into the continuity and change in the decorative arts of the Ebira as a result of changes in the cultural, social and political set up of the people. The Ebira for instance, have experienced religious and cultural change[8] with the coming of Christianity and Islam. Similarly, the influence of Western education has brought about some changes in the socio-political life of the Ebira.

3.2 Research Strategies:

All literature on decorative arts available to the researcher were reviewed. This was useful for the purpose of acquainting the researcher with the

existing documentary information on the subject, as well as helping to put the problem of the present study in a clearer perspective. The literature review also exposed to the researcher different research approaches adopted by experts in Art History. From the pool of methods or approaches adopted by the cited experts in chapter two, this researcher adopted a synthesis of research approaches applicable to the present study. These are documentary evidences, fieldwork investigation, categorization, descriptive and comparative analysis.

3.2.1 Documentary Evidences:

Written documents, in the form of research reports, articles in journals and conference papers on the decorative arts of the Ebira were reviewed in Chapter two of the present study. Such documentary information guided this study on the identification of types and functions of decorative art works produced by the Ebira. The information also assisted this researcher to know the scope and limitations of previous studies on the subject. For example, the documentary information revealed that an indepth descriptive and comparative analysis of the decorative arts of the Ebira were not treated in the cited studies.

3.2.2 Descriptive Method:

The descriptive research approach was adopted in this study because of its capability of describing and interpreting practices, beliefs and on-going process of concept. The method also has the merit of detailed representation and understanding of a concept. Lahman and Mehrens (1971), Trowell (1974), Adepegba (1976) Babalola (1981) and Okundaiye (1991) have used the descriptive method for effective results. Babalola

(op. cit.) for instance made an indepth description of some selected contemporary Nigerian art works for clear understanding. The decorative arts of the Ebira were therefore described in detail revealing the types, origin, functions and changes in the arts.

3.2.3 Categorization Method:

In this study the categorization method was adopted because of its merit of emphasising the functions of an art in the society that produces it. The different types of the decorative arts of the Ebira were taken as individual cases, which were then categorised into decorated walls, cloths, pots, furniture and human bodies. The arts were grouped under the three major geographical areas of the Ebira - Ebira Chao, Ebira Nya and Ebira Tao. By this approach the functions of individual art in the societies that produced them were focused so as to create room for adequate comparison.

The categorization approach adopted by Adepegba (1976: 78) was used in this study. Adepegba categorized his subjects into:

1) sex of body markers and
2) type areas of body markings.

The grouping afforded him effective analysis of his findings.

3.2.4 Analytical Method

Analytical method was adopted in this study especially in the presentation of the findings. The analysis of practice, types and patronage of the decorative arts among the Ebira which are the variables was done. The analysis of how the arts were

practised in the past and how they are practised now, helps one to understand the influence of growth in civilizations. This may be in terms of development in technology, method of apprenticeship and socialization through modern Western education. The analysis also helps to understand the changing pattern in art patronage among the Ebira. That is, it helps to know whether art patronage is as strong as it was in the past, or changes in the economic, social, political and religious life of the people, have either positive or negative effect on patronage. The analysis of trends was, therefore, adopted in this study. The study identified the changes, types causes and rate of changes in the decorative arts of the Ebira over a period of time.

This approach follows the pattern adopted by Adepegba (op. cit), Berns (op. cit.) and Smith (op. cit). The approach has helped in the understanding of development in the decorative arts of the Ebira like dates, styles and forms.

3.2.5 Comparative Method

Comparative method of presenting research findings was adopted in this study. The method was found suitable for this study which investigated into the origin and changes of the decorative arts of the Ebira who share common boundaries with some other ethnic groups. The comparison helped to reveal the circumstances that led to the variations in the decorative arts of the three groups of the Ebira who share common boundaries with some other ethnic groups.

This method was adopted by Adepegba (1976: 90) and (1981: 111-117) to examine the relationship

between body markings in Nigeria and other Nigerian arts, and to discuss and establish the style provenance of the human-face helmet masks of the Western Igala respectively. The method was also used by Berns (1989: 52) to discuss the form, decoration (design motifs) and functions of ceramic vessels produced by different ethnic groups in the Gongola valley. The approach enabled her to draw lines of artistic influence of one area over another, establishing the possible evolvement of anthropomorphic pottery in the Gongola valley. The effectiveness of this approach as used by the cited experts motivated this researcher to adopt it in his study.

3.2.6 Fieldwork Investigation

A field work approach was also adopted in this study to collect data. Several journeys were made to relevant places within the period of 1988 - 1989. Places visited include Abaji, Toto, Umaisha and Koton-Karfe all in the Ebira Nya domain (see fig.2.). In the Ebira Tao area, the seven old divisional districts were visited. These are Adavi, Ajaokuta, Eganyi, Eika, Ihima, Okene and Okengwe (see fig.3). Igarra, the only Ebira settlement town in Edo State (the EbiraChao) was also visited (see fig.2).

During such journeys the existing decorative artists were located who were orally interviewed. The items of the research questionnaire were translated into Ebira language where the informants could not speak the English language. In doing so, care was taken to ensure that the original contents of the questions were not lost nor distorted. Tape recording system was used for the oral interview, which was

supported by taking photographs of some completed art works or works in the process of production.

A visit was made to the Edo State Arts and Culture Unit of the State Ministry of Information, the Edo State Library and Ministry of Information. Similarly Kwara State Council for Arts and Culture, and Kwara State Library were visited. For the purpose of getting more literature on the subject of research, particularly on the Ebira, visits were made to Institute for African Studies, University of Ibadan; and the Obafemi Awolowo University Library, Ile-Ife.

Fieldwork approach has been one of the most reliable methods adopted by Art historians. Adepegba (1976) successfully adopted the method to collect data from different parts of Nigeria for his study. Berns (op. cit.) also adopted fieldwork approach in studying sacred ceramic vessels in two ethnic groups in the Gongola valley as earlier stated. This method afforded the writers the face-to-face opportunity with their various subject matters which yielded them fruitful results.

3.3 The Subjects of the Study

The subjects of this study consist of decorative artists and traditional chiefs among the three groups of the Ebira. The following decorative arts of the Ebira also form part of the subjects of the study:

a) Decorated Walls;
b) Decorated Door Panels;
c) Decorated Pots;
d) Decorated Bodies; and
e) Decorated cloths.

3.3.1 Method of Sampling

The simple random sampling method, as suggested by Pelto (1970: 170-171), Ndagi (1984: 127) and Adetoro (1986) was adopted to draw the sample population for this study. By this method every element in the targeted population has an equal chance of being selected for interview. Random sampling by means of a table of random numbers was then used. Thus, the Table of Randomly Assorted digits in Ndagi (1984: 129) was adopted.

The targeted population for this study were traditional decorative artists. Traditional chiefs in the three groups of the Ebira who were knowledgeable in the decorative arts of the Ebira gave lists of renown traditional decorative artists within their domains numbering two hundred and fifty (250). Numbers were given to the listed artists. The table of Random Numbers was then used to get two hundred (200) which is 80% of the listed artists. Two hundred (200) decorative artists were therefore sampled for the study. In addition, four (4) traditional Chiefs from each of the three area groups of the Ebira formed part of the informants for the study. On the whole two hundred and twelve (212) informants were interviewed.

3.4 Research Instruments:

In collecting data for this study, the following instruments were used:

a) Questionnaire
b) Oral tape recorded interview
c) Photography.

Two sets of an open-ended questionnaire marked 'A' and 'B' were designed to collect information from traditional chiefs and decorative artists

respectively. The questions were drawn in line with the stated objectives of the study which followed the patterns adopted by Saliu (1983 and 1984) and Etchie (1985). The items in the questionnaires were validated by Dr.D.O. Babalola, Prof. R.B. Fatuyi both of Fine Arts Department, Ahmadu Bello University, and Dr. J.A. Ohiare of History Department, Abuja University. The items were pilot tested for suitability, and some amendments were effected before the final application.

Questionnaire 'A' contained twenty-six (26) items which were in two parts. Part one contained personal data of the informants like name, age, dialectal group - whether they belong to the Ebira Chao, Nya or Tao group as well as their religion. The second part, containing twenty-two (22) items, was on the decorative arts of the Ebira. The items covered the types of decorative arts practised by the Ebira, the time or period the arts started being practised, the origin of the arts, factors responsible for the discontinuation of any of the arts, factors favourable to the continuation of the decorative arts, changes that must have taken place in the practice, functions and patronage of the decorative arts, and lastly the traditional Chiefs were asked to name reputable decorative artists in their domains (see appendix 1).

Questionnaire 'B', which contained thirty-six (36) items, was designed to collect information from Ebira decorative artists. The first six (6) items were on personal data of the artists, that is, name, age, sex, dialectal group, religion, and the class of artist - whether traditional or modern artist. The second part contained items on decorative arts of the Ebira, covering the types of decorative art being practised by the artists, the time they started

practising art, and whether they were still practising the art or they have stopped the practice. If they have stopped practising any of the arts, the artists were asked to state or explain the circumstances that were responsible for the discontinuation of the practice. The artists were also asked to state whether they noticed any change or changes in the arts they practised, and if there were changes the artists were asked to state what brought about such changes. Similarly, the artists were asked to highlight the symbolic significance of the motifs they used in their art as well as the patronage and functions of the art works.

The two sets of questionnaire were administered on the respondents orally by the researcher. A tape recorder was used for the oral interview. The tapes were played back and transcribed. Along with the recording device, the researcher took photographs in black and white and colour of the art works. According to Pelto (1970: 9), recent developments in recording devices and photographic equipment have provided some important supplemental items to a researcher's kit. These two instruments were portable, reliable, and therefore valuable as fieldwork equipment for this study. They also ensured accuracy and completeness. The photographs taken helped to visualise the findings of the study.

An attempt has been made to survey different methods or approaches through which the objectives of this study could be achieved. From the previous works of Fagg (1955 - 1956), Hoebel (1958), Beattie (1964), Pelto (1970), Willett (1971), Adepegba (1976), Etchie (1985) and Berns (1989) to mention but a few, suitable approaches and research instruments were adopted for

this study. The implication of this to the present study is that adequate documentation of the decorative arts of the Ebira is possible. Data collected and analysed provide answers to the research questions.

The research procedures discussed earlier helped this study to address itself to Art History essentials as suggested by Feldman and Odita (Akolo, 1990). That is, this study identifies different forms of decorative arts and the artists that produce them among the Ebira. The study also attempts to establish the period and place of production, the materials used, and functions of the art works. In addition, the study analyses the decorative arts of the Ebira, highlighting the meanings and values of the art works.

Odita's suggestions on how to appreciate art works in Art History has guided this study. That is, the study attempts to highlight the ideas that the decorative art works convey, whether the ideas got to the artists through political, religious or social means, or through other artists' works. Odita's suggestion further guided this study to concern itself with the symbols used in the decorative arts of the Ebira, whether the art works convey ethnic, national or international message (Akolo, op.cit).

Finally, the various methods and procedures adopted in this study help to establish whether there have been changes in the decorative arts of the Ebira. Where changes are noticed, the study attempts to establish the type and effects of such changes on the practice, functions, and patronage of the arts.

3.5 Pilot Study:

The two sets of questionnaire designed and validated by experts were tested on thirty (30) traditional decorative artists of the Ebira. These comprised of ten (10) artists each from the three groups of the Ebira. The artists were orally interviewed based on the items in the questionnaire. Two (2) traditional chiefs each from the areas (Okene in Ebira Tao, Koton-Karfe in Ebira Nya and Igarra in Ebira Chao) were also orally interviewed based on the items contained in the second set of questionnaire. In each case it was discovered that the items on development and improvement could not be translated adequately in Ebira language for the desired response. That aspect of the questionnaire was then amended. The result of the pilot study revealed that the study was feasible and that the instrument (questionnaire) was adequate and reliable.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction:

In this chapter on the analysis of data, the data include samples of decorative arts of the Ebira which are categorised into wall, body, cloth, pottery, mat, metal and furniture decoration. Each of these is analysed along the three major geographical groupings of the Ebira: Ebira Tao, Ebira Nya and Ebira Chao. The analysis of types, motifs, meanings and functions of the decorative arts is based on oral tape recorded response from the sampled informants which were later transcribed as stated in chapter three. A careful study of art works being photographed further helped in the analysis.

4.2 Cloth Decoration

Cloth weaving and decoration among the three groups of the Ebira has a long history". The art is an ancient tradition along which the peoples migrated through Idah to their present places. The art has been practised mainly by women who initially hand-spun the thread before weaving it on vertical loom. Among the Ebira Chao, cloths woven with hand-spun threads were mainly of three different colours. These are Owu-oyu, Owu-oji and Owu-ododo (white, black and brown threads respectively). The black and brown threads were dyed locally by women. With the influx of machinespun threads as from the early 20th century, handwoven cloths have been in assorted colours and patterns.

Type/Form of Cloth Decoration:

The general cloth type of the Ebira in the past was calico known as ikitipa or uba. The only

remarkable patterns made on these earlier cloths were based on colour stripes which were achieved through the warp and weft yarns arrangement. In the modern time, there are variations of the cloths.

Among the three groups of Ebira being studied, cloth weaving and its decoration are done on vertical looms by the female members. However, among the Ebira Tao, horizontal loom is also used to weave decorated cloths, also by the female members. Strips of cloths woven on vertical loom are relatively wider than those woven on horizontal loom.

Decorations effected on woven cloths in all cases are either through colour arrangement both horizontally and vertically, or through incorporation of planned patterns. Further, the cloth-types are in most cases identified by colour combination of the thread used, the motifs used or by historical events (see Page 102).

Motif

Motifs used in the decoration of handwoven cloths of the Ebira Tao and Ebira Nya are commonly drawn from representational objects like bird, animal, house-hold items such as stool, comb, and plant. Geometric motif is peculiar to decorated cloth of the Ebira Tao while abstract motif features in the decorated cloth of Ebira Nya and Ebira Chao. In addition, wording motif is variously used by the Ebira Tao and Ebira Chao weavers. Sometimes, specific motifs are brought by clients. In many cases, once a motif is woven into decorative pattern and found to be good, other cloth weavers would adopt the pattern and it becomes additional design type in the cloth weaving of the people.

Functions and Meanings

The handwoven cloths of the Ebira have different functions with some symbolic meanings. Among the three groups of the Ebira, the social functions or purposes of their handwoven cloths outweigh other functions. Similarly patterns made on woven cloths are to enhance the aesthetic appeals of the cloths. However, some of the wording designs on cloths are proverbial sayings which portray certain aspects of the people's philosophy of life. Some of these are "Isuwame ro duwavame" (Think twice before doing anything), "Enesiha", Enyi oza anasiha inehe" (Who is free, no body is free in this world). The researcher was also informed that Okekereku (crown motif) on Ebira Tao cloth signifies wealth (see plate XI and figs 4-7).

The use of handwoven cloth by the Ebira has been on a large scale both within and outside Ebira country. Some old restrictions placed on the uses of certain handwoven cloths type are relaxed. The relaxation is attributed to changes in the weaving procedure which have made such ceremonial cloths like ita okueta and opete to be fashionable as found among young men and women who use them for casual dresses. The informants opined that the original types of ita okueta and opete were used as shrouds for elderly people and as costumes for elderly masquerades. The information further revealed that the original ita okueta and opete were thick and heavy, but that the modernised types are light which is the resultant effect of the machine-spun thread being used (see plate II).

It was further revealed that Ebira Tao white uba was used in olden days by the priest and his assistants to worship ori (god of fertility and

protection), observed by only Ihima and Eganyi people of Okehi and Ajaokuta Local Government Areas of Kogi State respectively.[12] Nowadays, machine-woven white cloth is used for this purpose. As in the case of the use of uba for ori worship, many masquerades in Ebira Tao are costumed in machine-produced cloths. It is only aged masquerades that have their costumes built with traditional handwoven cloths. Similarly, it was revealed that the use of hand-woven cloths like ita okueta and opete as shrouds for elderly people has changed to machine-produced cloth mostly the white type. ita okueta and opete are used as shrouds for old non-muslim and non-christian Ebira Tao. Generally, the various types of woven cloth of Ebira Tao are still fashionable and functional to the tastes of consumers, factors which have contributed to the continued practice of the art. Among the Ebira Nya, different cloth types have their various functions or purposes. Examples of these are okerengu, dunna, and karaworo cloth types which are said to serve different purposes[13]. The informants added that during ogale festival, which started around 1750 AD, to mark the establishment of Panda Kingdom, and now observed in December of each year in Umaisha, different wears made out of handwoven cloth are worn to grace the festival[14]. Similarly, during Islamic festival celebrations, different sets of dresses made with handwoven cloth are worn by the celebrants.

Another function of handwoven cloth among the Ebira Nya, as revealed by the informants, is in the burial of people[15]. It was stated that the white cloth (Uba) was used as shroud for people generally, while the black type was used as shroud for old people. It was however, pointed out that with the coming of

Islamic religion to the people, the use of black cloth as shroud has since stopped, while the traditional white cloth (uba) has been displaced by white machine woven cloth.[16]

The informants further stated that masquerade costumes are made with handwoven cloth which are either black, red or white in colour, depending on the age and particular masquerade concerned. The informants gave the example of Ekuoha (masquerade) who uses a mixture of white and black coloured cloth. It was explained that Ekuoha is a tall masquerade similar to the Bida type (Niger State). Another masquerade - Owuna, uses another colour - type of costume, so also is Oganje. The informants added that the last two types of masquerade mainly dance to entertain audience.[17]

Changes In the Handwoven Cloths

A major change noticed in handcloth weaving of the Ebira Tao is more technical than pattern design. It was revealed to the researcher that around the early 1980s the use of horizontal loom by Ebira Tao cloth weavers was noticed. Before this time, the traditional vertical loom (Plate XIV), operated by women cloth weavers, had been the only loom type in Ebira Tao. It was further pointed out that influence of the Yoruba aso oke on Ebira Tao cloth weaving extended to the use of or adoption of Yoruba horizontal loom cloth weaving.

The source of this foreign influence is traced to Ihima district in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State where the horizontal loom was first used. Ihima is the most nearest Ebira Tao neighbours to the Yoruba.[18] The technique involved in manipulating the

horizontal loom is a total new dimension in Ebira Tao textile art. In addition, the modern weavers on horizontal looms are young Ebira Tao women who may not be knowledgeable in the traditional vertical loom cloth weaving (see plates XV and XVI).

Unlike the components of the horizontal loom and its technique of cloth weaving, motifs being used to decorate cloths woven on horizontal loom are locally based. Such motifs include house and other familiar objects. Examples of such motifs are traditional comb, traditional stool, tree and crab, which are frequently used. Geometric and abstract motifs also feature in the decorative patterns of the cloth (plate XVII).

Among the Ebira Chao, the change from hand-spun to machine spun thread, brought a change in the cloth's texture. It was explained that the old cloth types were thick and heavy rendering the cloth too heavy for both casual and occasional wears, while the ones woven with imported thread are light and more fashionable. It was further explained that the old cloths were typified according to colour - dominance. There were, therefore, samari, (brown dominated), ita ododo (red dominated), ita owuoji (black dominated), and ita owuerere (green dominated) cloths. In the modern weaving, patterns woven into the cloths are purely to beautify the cloths and to attract the would-be customers.

In the olden days, according to the informants, handwoven cloth was generally used to cover the body and specific types of handwoven cloth were used as shroud. For example, ita owuoji was for the burial of rich people, while samari was for the commoners.

However, this practice of burying people with handwoven cloth is limited to old traditional people of over 100 years of age.[19] It was stated that the influence of Christianity and Islam has made most people to use white machine-woven cloth. The process of cloth-weaving among the Ebira Chao is the same as in Ebira Tao warping, wefting, and pattern execution. Further, the incorporation of abstract motifs and wordings like names of people and sayings is similar to that of the Ebira Tao.

The philosophical sayings or adages of the Ebira started featuring on their hand-woven cloth in the 1980s (see pages 91 & 155). As from the 1980s the usage of hand-woven cloth started to be more emphasised along the line of social purposes. Islamic and Christian religions have some influence on the use of handwoven cloth as shroud. In place of it has been white machine woven cloth of different types. It is only in very few cases that elderly people are buried with handwoven cloth. Similarly, almost the complete costumes of masquerades are built with machinewoven cloth. Where the hand woven cloth is used, it is an appendage to machine woven cloth.

Detail Description of Woven Cloths

Detailed description of twelve (12) cloth types of the Ebira is presented below:

a) Kente Kente (plate I) is an imitation of Ghana Kente cloth which was woven first around 1978 in Okene. Ikente usually has black or green background of cotton thread. Metallic thread of white and orange colours is used to create vertical linear stripes of equal thickness. The white and orange stripes alternate at equal spacing in a simple repeat manner. Geometric motifs are

employed to create harmonious patterns on the background. Silk thread in colours like yellow, sky blue, red and white feature in the patterns. Like the metallic stripes, the geometric patterns are arranged in a systematic repeat pattern.

b) Opete: Opete (plate II) is a new version of the old type which was primarily meant for the burial of elderly women. The new version started featuring as from 1980s. The major difference between the old type of opete and the modern version is the thread used in the weaving. While handspun thread was used to weave old type of opete, machinespun thread is used to weave the modern version. Information had it also that colour combination in both old and modern opete were the same, however, the varied width of colour stripes in the modern opete brings in a difference. As seen in plate II, prussian and sea-blue threads are arranged vertically in stripes of different thickness following regular simple repeat pattern.

c) Onorupa: Onorupa (plate III) is a rope-like patterned cloth which was woven first in 1975. Onorupa generally has one colour background. There is no restriction on what colour the back-ground should assume. Whichever colour forms the background, the most important thing is that a contrasting colour is used to divide the cloth into bands of equal width. In plate III, purple thread is used for this purpose. Within each band horizontal linear pattern in simple repeat of seven (7) are created. The patterns are achieved by using a different coloured thread which floats horizontally over the back-ground. The floating thread is given the name onorupa, literally

meaning "rope-like cloth". In some cases other forms of motifs are employed to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the cloth. In plate III, triangular shapes in a growing manner are incorporated into the design. The shapes are arranged in green thread. The green patterns alternate with horizontal linear patterns in a regular repeat manner.

d) Onisuga: Onisuga (plate IV) is sugar-like patterned cloth which was designed in 1973. Onisuga is woven totally with cotton threads of different contrasting colours. The colours which are commonly used are blue, white, red and light green. The colours chosen (mostly two) are waped in stripes of equal width in alternating manner. The same colours are used for the wefting also in alternating order and of equal width. In plate IV, blue and white threads are employed for the warping and wefting exercise. The equal alternation of both the warping and wefting gives the patterns that suggest sugar cubes, the name onisuga, literally meaning cloth with sugar shape motif.

e) Anatovi: Anatovi (plate V) is ga lena-like patterned cloth which started featuring around 1978. Anatovi is woven with a mixture of cotton and metallic threads. Two colours, one of which is always navyblue, feature in anatovi cloth. The colours alternate in varied width, maintaining a regular repeat. The metallic navy blue which is common to all anatovi cloth glitters like galena, and this earns the cloth the name anatovi, literally meaning "galena- cloth"

f) Onupatesi: Onupatesi cloth (plate VI) was first designed in 1976. Onupatesi is said to be a modern version of ako-ohinoyi (special cloth design which was first woven for the late Ohinoyi of Ebira, Alhaji Ibrahim Onoruoza, (see Saliu, 1984). The cloth was then woven with hand-spun thread. The modern version of the cloth now named onupatesi is woven with machine-spun thread. The cloth has white back ground, white, black and brown threads are used to create vertical striped-patterns. The conspicuous appearance of these patterns are likened to road which earns the cloth onupatesi, literally meaning "road-like cloth". To reduce the flatness of the white back ground, narrow stripes of black are created horizontally.

g) Onigorigo: Onigorigo cloth (plate VII) was designed in 1988. Onigorigo has a combination of two colours as in Onisuga (plate IV). Colours chosen are for the warping process in alternating manner of very narrow width. One of the colours, usually white, is used for the wefting resulting into a checkered cloth. The sizes of the squares which are likened to the sizes of beniseeds earned the cloth onigorigo, literally meaning "Beniseed-like cloth". In (plate VII) sky-blue and white threads are used for the warping while white thread is used for the wefting.

h) Sunsun: Sunsun (plate VIII) is a white and sky-blue striped cloth which started featuring as from 1988. Close observation of the cloth and information from the informants revealed that sunsun is an imitation of machine-produced cloth known as cocaine, which came into markets in different parts of Nigeria around 1988. The blue

and white stripes are in vertical arrangement in alternating order. The stripes have different widths, but they alternate in a simple repeat order.

i) Oninomi: Oninomi cloth (plates IX-X) has bird motif, and it was first woven in 1989 by women weavers of Upogoro in Okene local Government Area. oninomi is an example of hand-woven cloth with figurative motif. The cloth usually has white back-ground over which some linear patterns are created. In most cases the bird motif forms the centre of attraction, with the bird as the main theme. The white background of oninomi is woven in cotton thread while the bird motif is created with a mixture of different colours of cotton and metallic threads.

j) Okekereku: Okekereku cloth (place XI) has the traditional crown of the Ebira as the motif. The cloth started featuring as from 1984. Like many other hand-woven cloths, okekereku has one colour-dominant background. Any desired colour is used for the background. Different contrasting, yet harmonious, colours are used to effect the traditional crown motif and any other supportive patterns. In plate XI black cotton thread forms the background while yellow, light green and white silk threads are used to effect the crown motifs. Wording motifs are employed here as the supportive patterns.

k) Ita'Adamu: Ita'Adamu (plate XII) was designed to commemorate the election of Alhaji Adamu Atta as the first executive civilian governor of Kwara State. The design was created in 1979 and named ita'Adamu, literally meaning 'Adamu's cloth". Ita Adamu is entirely a variation of modern opete, having almost the same colour combination.

However, the colour arrangement and width of the vertical stripes are different. In ita'Adamu, black silk thread is used to create a selvedge pattern on one side of the cloth which has a width that is considerably more than the remaining stripes. The other remaining stripes vary in width but maintain a regular repeat throughout the weave. Beside the black selvedge, the rest other colours balance one another resulting into a harmonious appearance due to the blending nature of the colours.

I) **Ita'Shagari**: Like ita'Adamu, ita'Shagari (plate XIII) was designed in 1980 to commemorate the election of Alhaji Shehu Shagari as the executive civilian president of Nigeria and named after him. The cloth consists of black, brown, light green and yellow colours. The colours which are arranged in horizontal stripes have various widths. The black and brown stripes have equal width, while the dominant light green and yellow have equal wider stripes. The yellow and light green stripes are broken by narrow green and brown stripes respectively. The yellow stripes highlight the brightness of the entire cloth, while the black stripes give solidity to the cloth.

4.3 Body Decoration

Type/Form of Body Decoration:

Body decoration among the Ebira comprises tattooing, scarification, body painting, hair style and body adornment. These types of body decoration are discussed below highlighting the possible origins, characteristics, motifs and functions of the decorations. Fourteen (14) of such decorations are therefore discussed.

The Ebira Tao have two forms of facial scarification. These are egu and avuku. Egu was marked on both sides of the face, temple of the face and chin. This form of facial marking is the earliest form of body decoration of the Ebira. Egu was reported worn by both male and female, mostly common among Ihima people. According to the informants, egu was initially marked on children to cure enyahi (a disease that made the face of a child to swell up):[20] However, the linear texture of the scar and the arrangement of the texture on the relevant portions of the face made it decorative. Thus, in many cases children without enyahi were consequently marked with egu.

Egu is no longer marked on contemporary Ebira Tao to cure enyahi since modern medication is available. As a result of this, egu is no longer fancied for medication or decoration. It should be noted here that egu marks are only found on people of not less than 70 years in age. Photographic documentation of egu, therefore is not possible as the marks are very faint on the faces of the wearers.

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Avuku, two vertical marks of about 2½ cm long parallel to the nose on the cheekbone, is popularly referred to as Ebira eleven "11" by non-Ebira. Avuku featured particularly during the Nupe jihad invasion into Ebira Tao in the 19th century [21]. It was also stated that avuku was equally marked for identification purpose, particularly during inter-ethnic warfare. Avuku is similar to the Ilorin and Ondo facial markings, however, the Ebira Tao type is shorter and has darker scar. Further, modern avuku, though not as long and dark as the earlier type, featured on younger Ebira Tao during the 1967 Nigerian civil war. The avuku was said to differentia[illegible]

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Tao from the Igbo who formed the major secession group from the Federal Republic of Nigeria (see plates XVIII and XIX).[22]

Slightly at the same time that avuku markings came into existence, was esa (plates XX - XXI) is tattooed with the use of needle and knife, according to the taste of wearer. An esa mark made with knife is known as esaireku while the type made with needle is referred to as esaorihi. Esa is marked on different parts of the body: face, temple, neck, arm, thigh, hand, chest, ankle, at the back of the palm, wrist, at the back of the leg, and any other part that the client desires to be tattooed.

The origin of esa among the Ebira Tao was traced to the neighbouring ethnic group to north-west, the Bunnu-Ijumu speaking people of Kabba area. The Bunnu-Ijumu body marking called iyagba, was made on the lower part of the chin to the neck down to the chest. The Ebira Tao later adopted the body marking and also referred to it as iyagba (plate XXII). The Ebira Tao version of iyagba was mainly marked on women particularly when they were ready for marriage. It was from the inspiration of Iyagba body marking that esa was said to have developed.

Along with esa came apele (scarification) which is done one each side of the face and below the eyes. Short and vertical or horizontal in shape, apele (figs 8 and 9) is said to be an imitation of Yoruba pele, and it consists of three short vertical markings on each side of the face, and two horizontal markings below the eyes (see figs.8 and 9)

The researcher was also informed that around the middle of the 1960 to early 1970, particularly during the Nigerian Civil War, another foreign oriented body-marking featured among the Ebira Tao[23]. The body-marking, known as kalangu, was introduced in Ebira Tao by the Hausa residents, particularly within Okene township. Kalangu was marked on each side of the face of both male and female Ebira Tao, though it was remarked that the female formed the major patrons (see figs 10 and 11).

Another form of body decoration among the Ebira Tao is body painting. The informants stated that body painting is done with ukokori and henna (lali - Ebira; lale - Hausa). Ukokori is said to be a temporary body decoration with local substance of certain herb, which is made on various parts of a female body for beautification particularly during festivals. Except Ihima people (Oboroke, Obeiba and Ikuehi),[24] all other Ebira Tao are free to decorate their bodies with ukokori. The informants further stated that it was only in Ihima where religion is attached to ukokori decoration. According to the informants, the Ori (god of fertility and protection) of Ihima people would be annoyed with the entire community if any body has ukokori decoration on the body, because such act would be endangering the natural fertility and protection of the people. Because of this belief, it is vehemently disallowed for anybody having ukokori decoration on the body coming to Ihima district, talk less of an Ihima indigene wearing ukokori decoration (plate XXIII).

Body decoration with henna (Lali-Ebira; Lale-Hausa) is the only form of body decoration among the Ebira Tao that has religious influence throughout

Ebira Tao area. The informants stated that body decoration with henna is mainly limited to the palm of the hand, ball of the thumb, the thumb, the fingers and nails of the hand, on the heel, the arch, the toes and toe-nails of the foot.

This art is said to be patronised by the Muslim female members only. To the Muslims, henna decoration makes the women wearers attractive or more beautiful before God. The informants also stated that it was a common belief among Ebira Tao muslims that the Angels would be particularly pleased with any woman that died with henna decoration on her feet and hands.[25] As a result of this belief, when a muslim woman died without henna decoration, the relations would in most cases prepare henna substance and decorate the appropriate parts of the body with henna substance before she was buried (see plate XXIV).

Two other forms of body decoration among the Ebira Tao are teeth filing and piercing of lip. These forms of body decoration were among the earliest forms of body decoration among the people. Teeth filing, according to the informants, was patronised by both male and female adults. In both cases the eight (8) incisors were filed into two different shapes. For the female, the incisors were shaped into top-flat and mid-narrowed teeth, known as Okana. The male's incisors were filed into triangular-shape known as ohoro. Lip piercing was patronised by female adults only. The upper lip of the mouth, according to the informants, was pierced with needle into which costly bead ovene[26] was fixed for the purpose of enhancing the beauty of the woman. Both teeth filing and lip piercing among the Ebira Tao have since ceased to exist.

The last form of body decoration among the Ebira Tao is hair decoration or hair style. Different hair styles are worn by the female members of the Ebira Tao, most of which are determined by the purposes for which they are made. These purposes which are socio-cultural include marriage ceremony, festival celebrations, and traditional religious worship. When an old man or woman died for instance, the wives and daughters of the man, and the daughters and son's wives of the woman plait their hair into two simple strips backward. For the daughters and sons' wives, the mourning hair style is retained till after the fourteenth day of the death of the man or woman, while the wives of deceased husbands would retain the hair style until after the nine-tieth day (see plate XXV).

Similarly, during the Ori worship by the people of Ihima, the women-entourage of the priest (Onitu Ori) decorate their hair which remains so till the fourteenth day of the celebration. Like in the mourning hair style, the wearer of Ori worship hair style does not cover the hair with any cloth material. Other types of hair styles which are worn for various social activities include: Ishuku, Korova, Ikonkosi, Edage, Ovahirema, and Onoturosa (see plates XXVI and XXVII).

Among the Ebira Nya, the art of body decoration is said to be as old as the people. Body decoration of the people, which is mainly on the face, palm and feet, is in form of tattoo, scarification, and body painting. The tattoo, and scarification markings are generally made on the faces of both female and male. Two types of scarified markings were indicated among the Ebira Nya. These are three (3) converging short markings on each side of the mouth marked on the faces

of royal family members or royal descendants. The second type is the one (1) diagonal mark from the nose ridge to the cheek on the left hand side of the face. The diagonal marking was said to be for people outside the royal families (plate XXIX). It was further stated that the three converging short markings known as esa eteta was mainly for the purpose of identification, particularly during war times. However, the markings eventually became the general identification mark for the Ebira kwotto, Umaisha, Toto, Ujah, Shafa - Kwatto, Shaffa - Bapa, Kennyihu and Abaji - all under Panda Kingdom (fig. 16)

Tattoo decoration among the Ebira Nya was said to have Hausa influence. Known as kalangu, the tattoo is facial marking on both sides of the face, which is worn by both male and female. The origin of kalangu facial marking is traced to the early 1960s when it was imitated from the neighbouring Hausa people. Kalangu facial marking is still fancied till date, though mostly patronised by the female members of the community.

The elaboration and variation of body tattoo and scarification among the Ebira Nya, are not as much as the practice among the Ebira Tao. However, it was remarked that the palms and feet of the people, mostly the female members, are painted with henna substance. It was also pointed out that in the past it was a practice for the male to decorate his palm and feet with henna substance at marriage occasions and continued to do so till he died. It is the female members of the community who practise the art fully these days, while the male members decorate the palms and feet at marriage ceremonies only. It was further revealed that among the western educated female Ebira

Nya, the art of decorating the palms and feet with henna substance is becoming unpopular. In place of henna substance is the use of modern finger nail paint among this class of the Ebira Nya. It was also stated that both muslim and christian women in Ebira Nya use henna substance to decorate their palms and feet, particularly during festival celebration, in addition to the purpose of pleasing their husbands.

The women of the Ebira Nya take pleasure in painting their bodies, particularly the legs, face and hands, with uru (cam wood substance). This form of body-painting, was widely used to tone the skin, but that uru has been displaced greatly by imported cream and cosmetics. The Ebira Nya female members also plait their hair in the traditional form. The common hair style, according to the informants and from personal observation, is ovahirema, which is not sophisticated as the hair styles found in Ebira Tao (plate XXX).

Body decoration among the Ebira Chao comprises ukokori, uru eburu, and esa. Ukokori and uru decorations are said to be in form of body painting through the use of certain leaf substance and cam wood substance respectively. The informants mentioned that ukokori and uru decorations are made to last for about one week, mainly done to celebrate some traditional ceremonies. Ukokori in particular is usually applied decoratively all over the body a night or two to the day of azi (grand-child) title ceremony. ri decoration is said to be women affair. Uru decoration on the other hand is usually the application of uru substance all over the body of a woman that gives birth to a new child, for the purpose of toning the skin of the body. The informants remarked that unlike ukokori, uru is rubbed all over the body without any

specific patterns being drawn with it.

The third type of body decoration among the Ebira Chao, according to the informants, is eburu decoration. Eburu is a form of bead which is plastic in nature and disc in form. A complete set or strand of eburu comprises discs of different colours mixed together and worn round the waist by both young and old female Ebira Chao. The informants stated that initially, the traditional types of eburu were used, but that later the factory made ones (plastic) which were lighter, replaced the traditional types. It was further added that due to the plastic nature of the factory - made eburu, it catches fire easily when a wearer is very close to naked flame. Thus, the usage is now limited to female adults who wear eburu underneath their clothing. The informants added that the only outward usage of eburu is during some traditional festival celebrations when it is worn by female participants in form of ribbon across the chest (plate XXXI).

The last form of body decoration among the Ebira Chao is esa (body tattoo and scarification). The informants revealed that scarification was initially done with knife or blade, thus carrying the name of esaireku (scarification). Later, the use of needle became the fashion to effect body tattoo, known as esaorishi (tattoo with needle). The informants pointed out that all the four forms of body decoration which are generally patronised by the female members of the community, are purely for fancy, without any form of religious inclinations.

Motifs In Body Decoration:

Stylised possessive objects like wrist-watch, stylised reptiles, abstract, geometric shapes, and wording motifs feature in body tattoo and scarification among the Ebira Tao. Similarly, abstract and geometric motifs are utilised to effect body tattoo and scarification among the Ebira Chao, while among the Ebira Nya linear motif features in their body tattoo and scarification. In most cases, the choice of a motif pattern is determined by the taste of the clients (see figs.12-15). In the art of body painting with lali (henna substance) and ukokori (leaf substance) abstract and geometric motifs are employed.

Functions and Meanings

According to Etchie (1985), art forms are means of expressing people's basic philosophy of life. This concept of art is entrenched in the philosophy of Ebira. The Ebira believe that life does not end on this earth, but that it continues in the world hereafter. Because of this belief, the Ebira feel that among other forms of preparation for the next world is body decoration. For instance, it is a common belief among the people that body tattoo accords the wearer a cordial reception in the world hereafter. This is explained that, when a wearer of body tattoo dies the people of the other world would like to admire the beautiful decoration on his body, thus the dead would be well entertained. As a result of this general concept of the world hereafter, there is a popular saying "Na tu-esa du wasihisari oze" (Go and decorate your body - body tattoo, with which to buy food on the journey to the next world). Supporting this philosophy of life, Ebin (1979: 163) remarks that the Ekoi of Nigeria believe that the scarified designs on their bodies will serve them as money on their journey to

the place of the dead. It was revealed that some body markings such as egu could be also done at the age of puberty to indicate that a marked person had reached the marriageable age.

Painted ukokori decoration in curvilinear pattern was usually effected all over the body of a bride on the eve of her marriage. This was for the purpose of more admiration by the husband as the bride's body would be exposed to him for the first time, that is, the first night of the marriage. It was however pointed out that ukokori decoration featured also during traditional festival celebrations. Besides, ukokori decoration was done on babies for the purpose of curing sickness like high temperature and paleness of the skin - that is, when the skin of a child was unnaturally too light. This was said to be in line with the function of egu decoration, which, beside the decorative value of it, was made to cure enyahi in children (a disease that made the face of a child to swell up). Of all the body decorations of the Ebira Tao, it was informed that only ayuku marking was for identification purpose.

The informants concluded generally that all types of body decoration were patronised by almost every Ebira Tao, with the exception of ukokori which was forbidden in Ihima district. However, the informants remarked that only girls still patronise the art, mainly the esa decoration, which is even limited to the forearms where the opposite sex could easily see, possibly for attraction (plate XXVIII).

Muslim female members of Ebira Tao similarly believe that any woman that dies with lali decoration would be cordially received by Angels. As a result of

this belief, if any woman without lali decoration dies, efforts will be made to see that the appropriate parts of the deceased's body are, at least, stained with lali before burial. This is similar to the Nubian belief that if a Nubian woman dies without having being scarred, a spirit scarrer will do the job before she could enter afterlife (Faris, 1972: 36).

In addition to the religious meaning or importance attached to body decoration, identification, social and medicinal purposes of body decoration are of great recognition among the three groups of the Ebira. Amount the Ebira Tao and Ebira Nya, particular types of body marking - scarification, are for identification purpose. These are avuku, esa eteta and diagonal facial markings. The social purpose of body decoration - tattoo, painting, hair style and body adornment, includes body beautification for possible attraction to the opposite sex of the wearer; for wedding ceremony mainly the bride; and for marking marriage period as practised among the Ebira Nya. The medicinal purpose of body decoration, which resulted from a particular form of body marking (scarification), was to cure a particular type of disease in children. This was seen in the egu facial scarification which was practised by the Ebira Tao before the 1969s.

Changes In Body Decoration:

Body Tattoo (esa) patronised by young women in Ebira Tao is limited to the fore-arms. Similarly, few female members of Ebira Tao decorate their palms and feet with lali (henna), while the use of ukokori is highly limited to some remote parts of Ebira Tao. Further, the identification marking - avuku, of the

Ebira Tao are attributed to influence of modernisation whereby the mode of body decoration is now copied from outside. For instance, most con-temporary female members adopt the modern body decorative approach. That is the use of eye-shadow, lip-stick, finger nail paint, etc.

Contrary to the view expressed by de Negri (1960:191) that with the spread of modern thoughts and ideas, and change in profession, the African woman may not have the time for elaborate traditional hair dressing which may lead to a total loss of the art, the current situation in Ebira Tao is an advancement of past achievement in hair style. Different hair styles, particularly those for social purpose, are frequently developed and patronised, even more than before, by modern educated female members.

Among the Ebira Nya, however, body decoration with lali (Henna) is still cherished by the female members while the male members decorate their palms and feet at marriage ceremonies only. In addition, the modern educated female members do not fancy the Lali decoration. Like among the Ebira Tao, the place of Lali has been taken over by finger nail paint.

The only noticeable change in body decoration among the Ebira Chao is in the use of eburu (beads), rolls of which were worn round the waist. For no specific reason(s), eburu is now mainly worn as ribbon across the chest by female participants in some traditional festival celebrations.

4.4 Architecture and House hold Decoration:

Type/Form

The decoration of architecture - related and house hold objects of the Ebira is discussed here. These are wall, pottery, mat metal and furniture decorations.

a) Wall Decoration

Wall decoration among the Ebira has a long history. All the interviewed informants agreed that decoration of walls was very much cherished in the olden days.[27] They also informed that the decorations were usually done on the walls of houses owned by important personalities, particularly traditional chiefs. As such, decorated walls usually indicated the socio-political status of traditional chiefs. Decorations of this type were limited to the sitting room where visitors were received.

Wall decorations among the Ebira Tao were of linear, geometric and abstract patterns. These were said to be executed on wet mud plaster and cow dung. In addition to cow dung; osasa (a substance like modern factory-made white wash) was used to decorate walls in the olden days. Further, it was stated that the geometric and abstract motif-patterns were made on the upper parts of the decorated walls. The cowrie shells, according to the informants, were embedded onto wet cow dung plaster. The use of cowrie shells was reported to make the lower ends of decorated walls look decoratively interesting. Besides the wall, it was also stated that in most of the olden days traditional chiefs' houses, the sitting rooms and the floors were equally plastered with cow dung, and embedded with palm-kernel shells to enhance the surface texture of the floors.[28]

On whether wall decoration among the Ebira Tao had any religious influence, the informants pointed out that there wall no religious prohibition on traditional was decoration. There were also no religious functions of wall decoration in recent years. The informants added that they never learnt of any of their traditional religious activities that needed built shrines, the walls of which must have been decorated.[29]

This group of informants among the Ebira Tao observed that traditional wall decoration of houses in Ebira Tao had almost been phased out. They attributed this situation to the people's exposure to the outside world which has influenced the technique of building and decorating houses. They explained that instead of mud, cow dung, palm kernel shells, and cowrie shells, walls are plastered with cement, and painted with factory - produced paints in different colours. It was also pointed out that while the traditional wall decoration was limited to the interior decoration, the contemporary wall decoration is both interior and exterior (see plate XXXII).

Among the Ebira Nya, wall decoration was said to be an important art before the 1960s. The informants stated that interior decoration of sitting rooms of important personalities like the Ohimege [30], village heads and wealthy members of the community, featured. Decorative patterns of linear, concentric and abstract motifs were executed on wet cow-dung plastered walls. The informants added that similar decorations were also made on the side surfaces of traditional mud beds for the purpose of pleasing a newly wedded woman. Traditional wall decoration was reported to have ceased being practised among the Ebira Nya with the introduction of cement plaster.

Traditional wall decoration among the Ebira Chao was executed with clay plaster in the olden days. Smooth stone and carved wood known as oriruvo were said to be used to achieve the decoration. Decorative patterns were made on walls and mud-beds like the other groups of the Ebira. Patterns made on walls of living houses were for social decoration, while those on walls of shrines were to portray the sacredness of the building.

As reported of wall decorations in Ebira Tao and Ebira Nya, the traditional wall decoration in Ebira Chao changed with the coming of cement and factory - produced paints. Motifs being utilised to decorate wall these days are linear in nature which do not portray traditional cultural life of the people. Modern wall painting and decoration on their walls are the same with those found in many areas of Akoko-Edo Local Government Area (see plate XXXIII and XXXIV)

Motifs: The most common motifs used in wall decoration of the Ebira include linear, geometric and abstract shapes. The motifs were mostly conceived by the artists, and they were incorporated into the decoration in simple repeat order.

Functions and Meanings:

The principal function of decorated walls among the Ebira was to serve social purpose. Decorations made on the walls of the sitting rooms of traditional chiefs were to boost the chiefs' socio-political status, while those on the walls of wealthy personalities were to depict the social status of the owners of such houses. Above all, the decorations were for decorative purpose so as to attract the aesthetic attention of visitors.

There were no specific meanings attached to the motifs employed for the decoration, but among the Ebira Chao, decorations made on the walls of shrines were meant to portray the sacredness of the buildings.

Changes:

Some noticeable changes have taken place in wall decoration of the Ebira. Around the 1960s the people had some outside world exposure which resulted into new technique of building and decorating houses. One of such innovations was the coming of cement into the building technology of the people. Cement took the places of mud plaster and cow dung as plastering media, while modern paints displaced the use of cowrie shells and palm kernel shells as media with which to embellish the beauty of the plastered walls. In addition, traditional decoration limited to interior walls has been extended to exterior wall decoration in the contemporary situation (see plates XXXIII and XXXIV).

Owing to these developments, traditional wall decoration has almost disappeared, and contemporary mason does the building, plastering and the new form of decoration on the walls of houses. Among the Ebira Chao, motifs employed in the contemporary wall decoration are linear and figurative in nature which have little or no bearing with the traditional culture of the people. Further, it should be mentioned here that the contemporary wall decorations of the Ebira Chao are the same in form and content with the wall decorations of the surrounding neighbours of Akoko-Edo local Government Area of Edo State (see plates XXXIII and XXXIV).

b) Pottery Decoration:

Pottery in Ebira Tao is practised in all towns and villages that make up Ebira Tao. The only major producing area however is Ihima district in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State. Abundant availability of the raw material - clay, in the district is responsible for the monopoly of the art by Ihima potters who are women.

Different types of pots for various domestic uses, ranging from fetching water, st[illegible] of water, soup pot, frying pot, to local beer brewing and serving pots, are produced. In all the pot-types, linear and roulette decorations are made on the outer surface of the pots (plates XXXVIII and XXXIX).

About seven years ago (1987), a renown potter, madam Aromotu Lawal[31] started more d[illegible]ive oriented pottery. From 1987 stylised pots have been decorated with relief animal, reptile and human motifs (plate XL). This development in Madam Aramotu's pottery was inspired by pictures in her grandson's text books which were initially copied, but later drawn from memory. In addition, Madam Aramotu produces sculptural ceramic works. This artist Madam Aramotu, also informed the researcher that her recent pottery wares have decorative functions more than any other thing else. The informants generally opined that there were no religious nor political functions of pottery ware of the Ebira Tao.

It was observed by the researcher that with the availability of factory - produced pots (Tower aluminium, and other types), the production and patronage of traditional pottery wares have reduced. However, the decoration-oriented pottery wares like

those being produced by Madam Aramotu are well patronized both within and outside Ebira Tao.

Pottery among the Ebira Nya is an old art tradition practised by their female members. Different types of pottery-ware were decorated with linear, dotted and pinched motifs, mainly to reduce the all over smoothness of the outer surface of the pots[32]. The conscious taste for decorative pottery came into the art later. It was also stated that Pottery art in Ebira Nya reduced drastically with the influx of factory-produced cooking pots (Tower aluminium products and the like). Only a few women still practise traditional pottery on part time basis (see plate XLI).

Pottery, as in the other two groups of the Ebira was an art of the past among the Ebira Chao. From the history of the people, pottery was restricted to Anupata quarters of Igarra (Anupata being a section or large family group of Ebira Chao). As time went on, according to the Otaru (Chief) of Igarra[33] for unknown cause or causes, the whole Anupata died so also their art of pottery. As a result, there are no potters in Ebira Chao nowadays, and pots being used by the people are produced by Ojiram, Utuo, Itshuwa and Oja people who are the immediate neighbours of Ebira Chao.

Motif: The common motifs found on pottery wares of the Ebira Tao and Ebira Nya include linear and roulette motifs. Among the Ebira Tao, however, the use of animal, reptile and human motifs in relief came into their pottery in the 1980s. These motifs are usually executed on the outer surface of the pottery wares decoratively.

Functions and Meanings:

Pottery wares produced among the Ebira Tao have various functions which include fetching of water, water storage, soup preparation, brewing of local beer, food frying, meat smoking and house decoration. Among the Ebira Nya, the dominant uses of pottery wares are fetching and storing of water. In both areas - Ebira Tao and Ebira Chao, the general function of the decorations made on pottery wares is to beautify the outer surfaces of the ware. In addition, the texturised decorations were to reduce the over all smoothness of the pottery wares, particularly those meant for fetching water.

Changes In Pottery Decoration:

Some changes are noticed in pottery tradition of the Ebira. Among the Ebira Tao, a sort of developmental change came into the art as from 1987, when decorative - oriented pottery started to feature in the art. By this, representational motifs are found on some pottery wares which are mainly used as decorative objects in the house.

It should be stated that factory - produced pottery ware, particularly the Tower aluminium products, have reduced the production and use of traditional clay pottery ware among the Ebira Tao. Decorative pottery ware which were introduced in 1987, are however in high demand both locally and outside Ebira Tao.

Among the Ebira Nya, the changes in pottery art are somehow negative. As from 1979s when there was great influx of factory - produced pottery ware, the practice of traditional pottery reduced drastically. The result of this is that very few potters practise

the art, and on a small scale for family consumption. More seriously affected is the pottery art of the Ebira Chao which has since seized to exit. The only known family of the Anupapa Quarters, who was producing pottery ware had seized to exist many years back for unknown reasons. This implies that the art of pottery of the Ebira Chao died out with the extinction of the producer - family.

c. Mat Decoration:

Mat weaving and decoration among the Ebira of Nigeria is practised among the Ebira Nya only, and it is only in Toto - one of the settlement areas of the Ebira Nya, that the art is practised. The mat, known as 'Tabaruma Toto' (Toto mat), is produced from raffia palm fibre woven in plaited form and colourfully decorated with local dye solution prepared by the artists themselves. The mat is similar to the types found in many parts of northern Nigeria - north of river Niger. The mat weavers in Toto however maintained that they learnt the art from their fathers and other close relations.

The informants (artists) revealed that the local dye solution was obtained from the inside substance of corn-stalk which was soaked in water for certain number of days [14]. By this process, pink dye was obtained. To obtain black dye, the corn stalk substance was mixed with river-side mud and left for some days before boiling the mixture. In each case, the raffia palm fibre was soaked in the solution to assume the particular colour.

'Tabaruma Toto' are woven in narrow stripes which are later sewn together to make up a mat piece. Completed 'Tabaruma Toto' is generally used for

relaxation by elders, particularly after a day long work on water doing fishing. Traditional chiefs possess many of the mats in their palaces - the receiving rooms, for visitors to sit on. On this basis, it was opined that the chiefs were the main patrons of the product, but that there was no restriction on the possession of the mat nowadays.

Motifs in Mat Decoration: Patterns created on woven mats are achieved through colour arrangement. This means that the manner of placement of coloured raffia fibre determines the type of pattern created on a woven mat.

Functions and Meanings of Mat Decoration

Among the Ebira Nya generally, 'Tabruma-Toto' is used by elders for relaxation. It is however noted that considerably large woven and decorated mats found in the receiving - rooms of traditional chiefs are meant for visitors to sit on. The green and cavmine colours, and the geometric and abstract patterns on 'Tabruma Toto' are purely for aesthetic satisfaction of the users.

Changes In Mat Decoration:

The only noticeable change in the art of mat weaving among the Ebira Nya is in the possession of the woven mat. Contemporary woven mat of the Ebira Nya is not limited to any particular class possession. Any body who can afford to own the woven mat does so. In addition, the mat is even sent to neighbouring places for sale.

d) Metal Decoration:

Metal decoration, like mat decoration among the Ebira was found among the Ebira Nya. Though the other two groups - Ebira Tao and Ebira Chao, practise black-smiting, their products are not decorated with any significant pattern motifs.

Among the Ebira Nya, metal decoration (black and brass smithing) was a popular art before the 1960s. Decorated metal was mainly incorporated into wooden masks for masquerades. But the dominant Christian and Islamic influences later made the use of masks to decline, as few masked masquerades now feature.

Besides decorated metal on masks, other types of metalwork were produced by the black and bras smiths of the Ebira Nya. These include long dagger and spears which were produced mainly for the Ohimege [35] as well as arrows, hoes, ear rings and hair pins. On each of the products linear and abstract motifs are used for the decoration. Generally, the informants opined that the decorations made on metal products of the people were mainly to enhance the aesthetics of the products and to attract would-be buyers.

Motifs In Metal Decoration: Linear, abstract and dotted motifs are variously employed to decorate metal products among the Ebira Nya.

Functions and Meanings of Metal Decoration:

Decorated metal products of the Ebira Nya have social, domestic and political purposes. The decorated metal-plated masks and head-dresses for instance, are worn to entertain people during both traditional and some other festivals or occasions. In addition, the decorated spears are mainly possessed by the traditional chiefs as part of the emblem of royalty of the Ebira Nya which is political in purpose.

Changes In Metal Decoration:

As from the 1960s not much of decorated metalplated masks are produced. This is as a result of Islamic religious influence - which discourages the production and use of masks. Emphasis has rather been

on metalplated head-dresses, domestic and other social products - particularly ear wears and hair pins.

e) Furniture Decoration:

Furniture decoration, which was locally understood as wood carving/decoration, forms an interesting component of the art of Ebira Tao. Before the coming of Christianity, Islam and modern Western education, all wooden house-hold, musical and farming equipments were carved and decorated locally. These equipments included mortar and pestle, stool of different sizes and functions, mask, hoe handle, xylophone, flute and door panel. The wooden objects were decorated mostly with linear and abstract motifs. But as many Ebira Tao became influenced by foreign faiths and culture, emphasis in the production and patronage of wooden objects reduced drastically.

It was also observed by the researcher that the wooden objects being produced nowadays have little or no prominent decorations. It was only the traditional chief's stools that are fairly decorated. In homes where traditional stools are found they don't have any form of decorative embellishment (see plate xxxv). The reason for this, according to the informants, was the availability of modern chairs of varied types.

As far back as the early 1960s, traditional wooden door-panel started to give way to modern carpenter-produced door panel[16]. At this stage the panel had no significant decoration. But as from the early 1980s some conscious and complex decorative touches started to feature on door panels. The producers of modern door panels are not traditional artists, but modern carpenters who specialize in modern furniture production.

Different types of carved wooden objects were common with the Ebira Nya before the coming of Islam. Stools, staff of office, masks for masquerades, human figures, and door panels were produced and decorated by traditional carvers. But when Islamic religion was embraced by majority of the people, the practice of the art stopped[37]. As time went on, existing carved and decorated works were totally destroyed. As a result of this all sculpture works in the Ohimege's palace were completely destroyed as far back as in the 1950s[38]. This means that furniture work in form of wood decoration is not in existence among the Ebira Nya.

Among the Ebira Chao, wood carving and decoration were done in an elaborate manner in the past. The researcher was informed that stools, staff of office and door panels were among carved and decorated wooden objects of the people[39]. On the stool, particularly those used by traditional chiefs like the Okomanyi and the Otaru, were carved images of human beings and animals. It was further explained that images of animals like tiger, lion and leopard were carved on stools to signify the spiritual power of the owners of particular stools.

The informants further stated that staff of office were decorated with traditional motifs according to the rank of the owner - chiefs[40]. Nowadays, however, traditional stools of the people are not elaborately decorated, and not many traditional chiefs use the stools any more. The modern chair - thrones are mostly used by the chiefs. In addition, staffs of office are not being decorated and many chiefs do not use traditionally produced staff of office.

The information given also revealed that door panels were decorated among the Ebira Chao in the past with interesting patterns created out of traditional motifs.[41] It, was however, pointed out that christianity and islam have influenced the people not to practice sculpture - including all forms of woodcarving. The two religions preached that it was only God who created and any body who created an image was producing idols. As a result, all sculpture works available were destroyed. The only existing example of decorated door panels, according to the Otaru of Igarra - Chief Ukwo Luse, were in one Ajayi's compound which he said had been removed to Benin Museum (Edo State) by the eldest son of the Ajayi family. This was done for fear that the door panels might likely get destroyed totally with time.

Motif In Furniture Decoration: Motifs used in furniture decoration among the Ebira are mostly linear and abstract in nature. On the traditional stools, especially those used by traditional chiefs were images of human beings and animals. The animal motifs such as tiger, lion and leopard signified the spiritual power of the owners of particular stools.

Functions and Meaning:

Decorated furniture among the Ebira Tao have social, domestic, political and religious functions. Household equipments like stools are used by female members mostly in the kitchen. Similarly, the decorated musical wooden equipments are more of social value than any thing else, while traditionally decorated stools for the chiefs are political in function. The traditional chiefs normally sit on the stools when addressing their subjects and anytime they are carrying out some religious rites on behalf of

their people. On the whole, motifs used on the furniture are purely decorative both in form and content.

Changes:

Noticeable changes in furniture decoration among the Ebira are in the art form itself and the artist. As from the 1960s, decoration on furniture has been emphasised on modern door panels which are produced by contemporary furniture designers with carpentry background. Similarly, motifs used on modern door panels range from representational to abstract objects or images (see plates XXXVI and XXXVII).

An attempt has been made in this chapter to analyse the decorative arts of Ebira people of Nigeria as found on the field. The types, motifs used, meanings, and functions of all identified decorative arts have been analysed based on information supplied by sampled population through tape-recorded interviews and through the researcher's personal observation of art works being photographed.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the summary of the study comprising the purpose, procedures and methodology of the study. Conclusion based on the findings in chapter four is presented on the basis of which recommendations are drawn.

5.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were to:

a) establish if their decorative arts of the Ebira have been influenced by the neighbours in terms of motif, style and technique;

b) determine the symbolic meanings of motifs used in the decorative arts and whether they relate to philosophical statements on the life of the people;

c) identify the categories of the Ebira that patronise the decorative arts, and whether preference for any of the arts is influenced by religious beliefs; economic status or political system of the people;

d) examine the changes that must have taken place in the decorative arts, and establish the causes and effects of such changes on the arts.

5.3 Description of Procedures

The study was approached through the descriptive, comparative, categorization and fieldwork methods. Research instruments (questionnaire, interview and photography) were carefully selected to collect data for the study. The population for the study consisting two hundred traditional decorative artists and twelve traditional chiefs who supplied oral information. An intensive fieldwork was done to enable the researcher

have face-to-face experience with the artists and their works. This was in addition to photographic recording of available decorated art works in places visited. Data collected were analysed in a categorised order of wall, body, cloth, pottery, metal and furniture decoration.

5.4 Major Findings

Based on the objectives and basic assumptions of the study, the following major findings are made from the analysis of data presented in chapter four

5.4.1 Influence on the Decorative Arts of the Ebira:

The study revealed that the decorative arts of the Ebira have been influenced by the arts of the neighbouring ethnic groups. The facial markings of the Ebira Nya (three converging marks on both sides of the mouth) known as esa eteta are similar to the type found on the Igala, particularly the Igala of Ayangba and Idah (see fig 16). As earlier stated in chapter one, the Ebira had a migrational link with the Igala. Thus, the esa eteta was an influence from the neighbouring Igala. Similarly, the kalangu facial markings and henna (lali) decoration among the Ebira Nya and Ebira Tao are influences of early Hausa Muslim settlers. These influences do not extend to the Ebira Chao in Edo State, who are surrounded by various Akoko-Edo speaking groups.

Among the Ebira Tao, the apele and iyagba scarification and tattoo respectively are influenced by the Yoruba Ijumu who are the immediate neighbours to Ebira Tao eastwest ward. In the architecture of the Ebira, the study revealed influence of the Akoko-Edo neighbours of Ebira Chao (see plates XXXIII and XXXIV). These findings satisfy objective 5.2a which was to establish if the decorative arts of the Ebira

have been influenced by their neighbours in terms of motif, style and technique. They also agree with basic assumption 1.5a which states that the decorative arts of the Ebira are not the same because of different environments in which the people live. The findings further correspond with the views of some cited experts like Adepegba (1976) and Berns (1989) who reported influences of neighbouring ethnic groups on the arts of different peoples they studied.

5.4.2 Symbolic Meanings of Motifs used:

The expression of philosophy of life through art is eminent in the decorative arts of the Ebira. In the body decoration of the people (tattoo, scarification and body painting) the philosophy of the Ebira on life after death is expressed. Decorated body among the people is an additional qualification to earn peaceful entry into the world beyond. Similarly, wise sayings and proverbs with symbolic meanings of the Ebira are expressed as motif-designs on handwoven cloth (see page 93). This finding satisfies objective 5.2b of the study which was to determine the symbolic meanings of motifs used in the decorative arts and whether they relate to philosophical statements on the life of the people. It also corresponds with Faris (1972), Ebin (1979) and Etchie (1985). These experts have written how art has been used by different ethnic groups to express their philosophy of life.

5.4.3 Categories of Decorative Arts Patrons and Influences:

The study also revealed that the decorative arts of the Ebira is patronized by all categories of Ebira irrespective of religion, social, political and economic status and mostly for social purposes. However, body decoration with henna (lali) is mostly

patronized by the muslim women of Ebira Tao.
Similarly, ukokori decoration is prohibited in Ihima district of Okehi Local Government Area (Ebira Tao) because of the people's local ori worship. This finding is in line with objective 5.2c which was to identify the categories of the Ebira that patronise the decorative arts, and whether preference for any of the arts is influenced by religious beliefs: economic status or political system of the people. The decorative arts of the Ebira also have more social values than anything else. This finding is in line with basic assumption that the decorative arts of the Ebira have social functions more than anything else, and it corresponds with the findings of some of the cited experts like Ebin (op. cit.), Jefferson (1974), Trowell (1970), Adepegba (op. cit), Fatuyi (1972) and Akiga (1973).

5.4.4 Changes in Decorative Arts Causes and Effects:

Some noticeable changes in the decorative arts of the Ebira are recorded in the study. These changes include materials, techniques, design patterns and usage of the decorative arts. In the handwoven cloth of the Ebira, improved threads (imported) have almost taken the place of handspun threads. Restrictions on the specific usage of the handwoven cloths have been relaxed due to modern social values and educational advancement of the people.

In addition, modern political events both locally and at national level are recorded through some of the decorative arts of the Ebira. Between the period of 1966 - 1967 a cloth design was created to mark the political disturbance in the then Western region of

Nigeria now Lagos, Ogun, Oyo and Osun States. In 1979/80 another cloth design was created to commemorate the election of Alhaji Adamu Atta as the first executive governor of Kwara State. Similarly, the election of Alhaji Shehu Shagari as the first executive President of Nigeria was commemorated through a cloth design. Also, the horizontal loom-cloth-weaving has come to supplement the traditional vertical loom, increasing the varieties of the handwoven cloths of the Ebira.

These findings satisfy the stated objective 5.2d which was to examine the changes that must have taken place in the decorative arts, and establish the causes and effects of such changes on the arts. They are also in line with basic assumption 1.5b which states that political, social and religious changes in the country have affected the decorative arts of the Ebira.

5.4.5 Reinforcement of Traditional Institutions through Art:

The study further revealed that some traditional institutions of the Ebira are reinforced through some of the decorative arts. Some of the body decorations of the people are done to mark marriageable age, to attract suitors and to mark entry into married life. These findings correspond with the findings of some of the cited experts like Adepegba (op. cit.), Ebin (op. cit) and Faris (op. cit).

5.5. Conclusion

The study has considered the historical and cultural aspects that affected the development and changes in the decorative arts of the Ebira to date. From the available information on the Ebira and their arts before 1960s, it seems likely that the first important advance in the evolution of decorative arts

was towards the early 19th century when they had settled down, and there was already an establishment of contacts between them and other Nigerian societies. Around this time, the process of migration had already begun to modify the overall character of the Ebira, as a result, the people began to develop their own distinctive characteristics. For instance, the Ebira in Plateau, Kogi States, and in the Federal Capital Territory, that is the Ebira Nya, have the Nupe, the Bassange, the Oworo and the Hausa as their immediate neighbours.

The Ebira Tao have Ijummu speaking people of Kabba area, the Yoruba speaking Akoko, Igbedde, Aworo, and the various Akoko-Edo people of Edo state as their neighbours; while the Ebira Chao are surrounded by peoples who belong to the family of Edo - speakers of Edo State. The development and changes in the decorative arts of Ebira, therefore, were affected by the art traditions of their various neighbours. However, as from 1960 when Nigeria had her political independence and subsequent global contact through modern education and professions, the influence on the arts of the Ebira became more obvious. For instance, the materials used for the arts, techniques, designs and functions of the arts were influenced.

5.6 Implications of the Study

5.6.1 Cultural Awareness of the Ebira

Art has been used or employed to express man's feelings, that is man's state of mind, his desire, and his beliefs. Among the Ebira, philosophy of life and life here-after is well entrenched in their decorative arts. For instance, wise sayings of the people, which are in line with what they believe in and practise, are highlighted in the art as found on contemporary

handwoven cloth of the Ebira Tao and Ebira Chao. In addition, desire for a happy life here-after is also expressed in the people's art. This is seen in the body tattoo of the Ebira Tao, which is marked on the body not only because of social fancy but also as a means of ensuring peaceful and cordial existence in the world beyond. This philosophy may still be conceived unconsciously by the contemporary Ebira that patronise body tattoo despite the presence of various agents of modernisation.

The cultural identity and promotion of indigenous art creativity are further noticed in the decorative arts of the Ebira. Before the 1960s, the Ebira Tao and Ebira Nya had their unique way of identifying themselves. This was by way of wearing facial markings (scarification) meant for the purpose of identification. Adepegba (1976: 29) notes this cultural ethnic identification. However, the wide spread of modern civilizations have almost put an end to inter-ethnic wars. Facial identification marks are therefore unnecessary. Thus, the present day Ebira does not fancy facial identification marks.

The uniqueness of the Ebira still continues to manifest itself in the traditional handwoven cloth they produce and use. This has strengthened the promotion of indigenous art creativity. From 1960 to now, for instance, numerous and sophisticated patterns and designs have been created on handwoven cloth of the Ebira. The constant evolvement of new designs and patterns in cloth decoration has also made the artists to be more creative, more so that
the finished products are always in high demand both locally and outside.

5.6.2 Social Implications:

Social activities/engagements of the Ebira are promoted through their decorative arts. For example among the Ebira Tao, marriages are contracted by way of presenting specified number of well decorated cloth to the bride, in addition to other cultural laid down procedures. Generally, many Ebira festival celebrations are graced with the wearing of variously designed clothings made from decorated handwoven cloths.

Body decoration in the form of tattoo, painting and adornment, also adds to social satisfaction of the Ebira at various occasions. Contrary to Aboderin's (1984:235) observation that body marking in Ogbomoso does not differentiate between the rich and poor, but between the literates and illiterates in the society, body decoration in Ebira Tao is highly patronised by modern educated female members in the society irrespective of financial status of the individuals. The Lali (henna) decoration, however, is an exception. The educated Ebira females prefer the use of finger nail paint instead of lali.

In recent times, decorated handwoven cloth of the Ebira further meets more contemporary needs of the people. For instance, handwoven cloth is used for car upholstery, and also as decorative wall hangings in sitting rooms and offices.

5.6.3 Political Implications:

Before the 1960s, some of the decorative arts of the Ebira were meant to boost and complement the political status of the traditional chiefs. Such arts include traditional stools, staff of office which were decorated with representational motifs,

and spears which were part of the official regalia of the chiefs (the Ohimege of Ebira Nya is an example). As from 1960, however, when political leadership has been along the laid down guidelines of the colonial system, politically inspired decorative art of the Ebira has been in the form of marking and commemorating political development in Nigeria as a whole. For example, the political disturbance in 1966 in Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Osun and Ondo States was documented through cloth decoration in Ebira Tao. That is, a particular cloth type known as ijandiku was designed to mark the incidence. In Ebira Nya, a political party during the second Republic - Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) was marked or documented through metal-plated headdress. On the metal-plated head dress the party's name and emblem formed the main design motifs.

The Yakubu Gowon regimeof 1967-1975 whose initial task was to unite Nigeria was also marked through a created cloth design. Thereafter, some civilian political leaders like Alhaji Shehu Shagari and Alhaji Adamu Atta were commemorated with specially designed cloth types. In all cases, once a design was created it became a repertoire for cloth-weavers, which was further developed to suit the demand of the time. By this, the traditional art expression integrates into contemporary needs of the people.

Some of the decorative arts of Ebira have evolved to a national/international recognition, capable of contribution to Nigeria's desire for self-reliance for better development. This effort is manifested in the handwoven cloth of the people which is widely patronised both within and outside Nigeria. It is

along this line that in the recent past emphasis has continued to shift from foreign-oriented culture, both material and non - material, to indigenous culture. To achieve this, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced programmes like War Against Indiscipline (WAI), Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Mass Mobilisation for Self Reliance (MAMSER) and so on, for Nigerians to look inward to their cultural heritage for meaningful development. For instance, there is an embargo on importation of foreign goods while exportation of Nigerian made goods is encouraged.

This study has, therefore, contributed a coherent body of knowledge to previous studies on relevance of indigenous arts in the realisation of Nigeria's desire for self-reliance philosophy. There is need, therefore, for further investigations among other ethnic groups in Nigeria to identify their peculiar art characteristics, with a view to contributing to a national contemporary art that has Nigerian cultural philosophy. All in all, this study is intended to highlight the present position of traditional decorative arts among the Ebira with a view to opening the area for further research investigations. This will be achieved if the recommendations made below are given the desired utmost consideration.

5.7 Recommendations

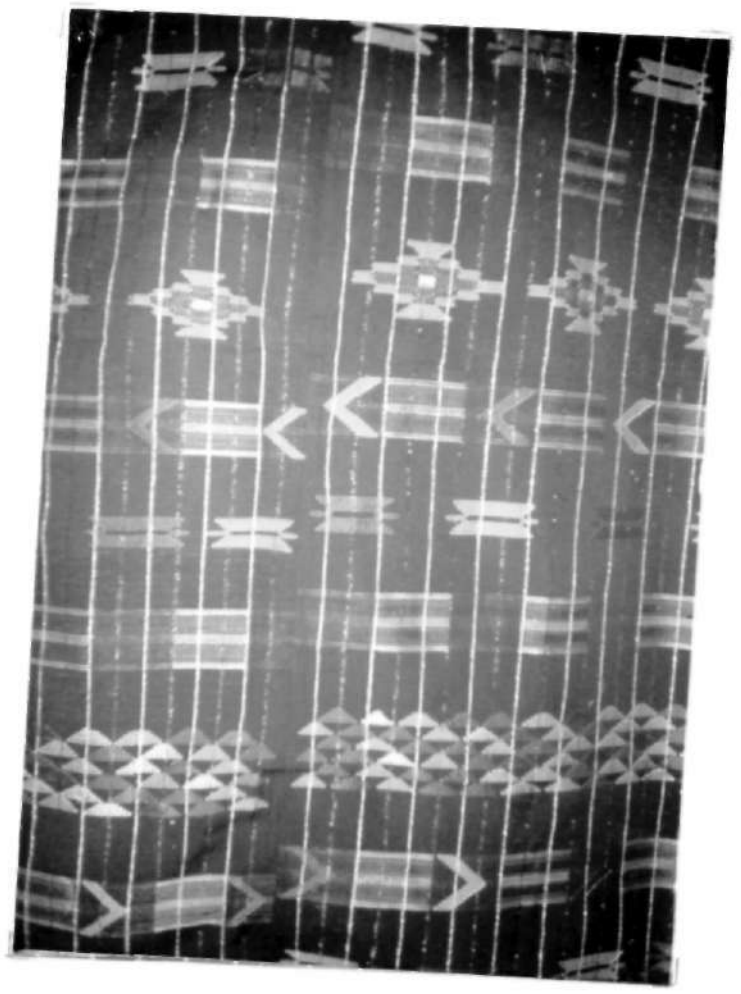
From available information on the decorative arts of the Ebira, and based on the discussions that followed in this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. It is recommended that a comprehensive study of other forms of art of the Ebira be carried out.

The present study is silent on the sculptural art of the Ebira. This however, is in line with the stated scope of the study. In such study, the materials used, styles and techniques employed, and the functions of sculptures among the Ebira should be focused.

2. During the fieldwork in this study one stone figure of a woman was located at Uboro (see fig.3) in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State. The stone figure was the only one of its kind seen by the researcher. The custodians of the stone figure even claimed that the figure was created by God, meaning that they did not have the knowledge of who the artist was. It is, therefore, recommended that a study should be carried out on the style provenance of the stone figure. An excavation of the site should be carried out for possible discovery of more stone figures.

3. Based on the findings of the present study, it is also recommended that a study on con-temporary trend in the general arts of the Ebira be carried out.



late I: Ikente cloth woven with cotton and metalic threads by Mrs Salamotu Momoh at Obangede, Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State.
184cm x 63cm. 1986



Plate II: Mrs Balkisu Jimoh dressed in a modern version of Opete cloth made of cotton and silk threads. The cloth is usually designed into wrapper, buba and head tie and commonly used during important social ceremonies. The photograph was taken in 1989 at Ebogogo, Adavi Local Government Area, Kogi State

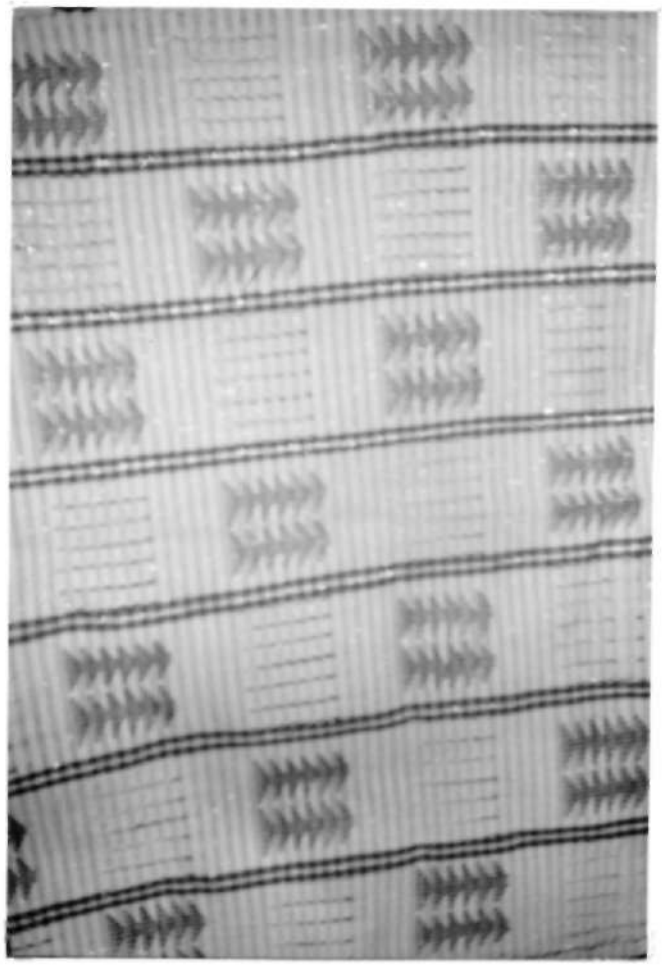


Plate III: A design by Mrs. Balkisu Jimoh. Onorupa cloth made of cotton and silk threads. Ebogogo. Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi Stat. 180 x 63cm. 1991.



Plate IV: One of Mrs. Ademi Malik's master pieces. Onisuga cloth made of cotton thread. Obehira, Okene Local Government Area, Kogi State. 180 x 63cm. 1989



te V: Anatovi cloth designed and woven by Mrs. Mariyamo Salami. Anatovi cloth is made of cotton and metalic threads. Okene, Okene Local Government Area of kogi State, 180 x 63cm, 1990.



Plate VI: A middle-aged man wearing a dress designed with Onupatesi cloth woven with cotton thread. The dress is an example of contemporary use of hand-woven cloth of the Ebira. The photograph was taken in 1990 at Ikuehi, Okehi Local Government Area, Kogi State.

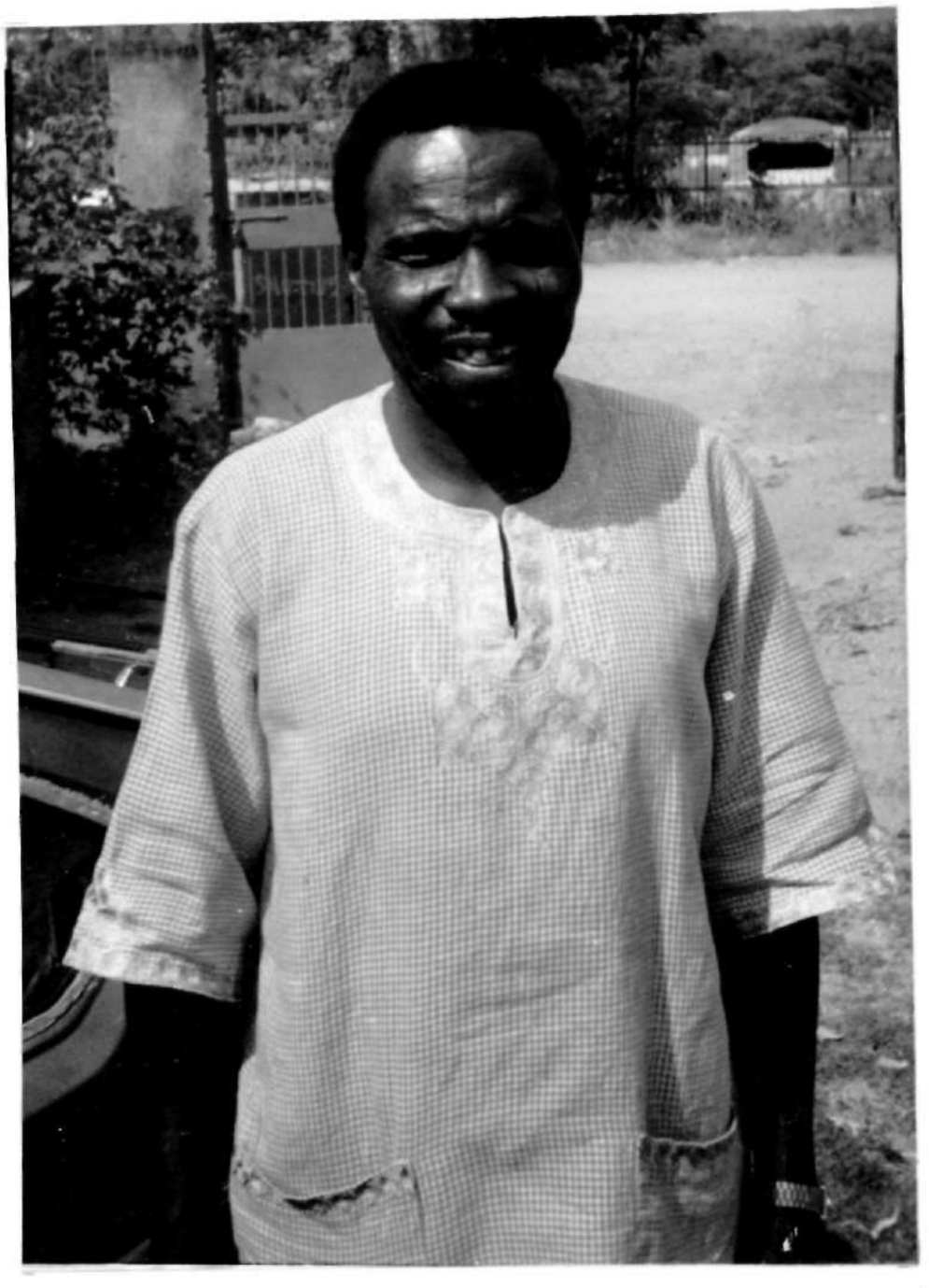


Plate VII: An embroidered modern jumper sewn with Onigorigo cloth. The cloth was woven with cotton thread in 1991 at Ikuehi, Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State.



Plate VIII: A yung man wearing a modern jumper sewn with Sunsun cloth. The cloth was woven by Mrs Rekiya Salami with cotton thread in 1990 at Idoji, Okene Local Government of Kogi State.

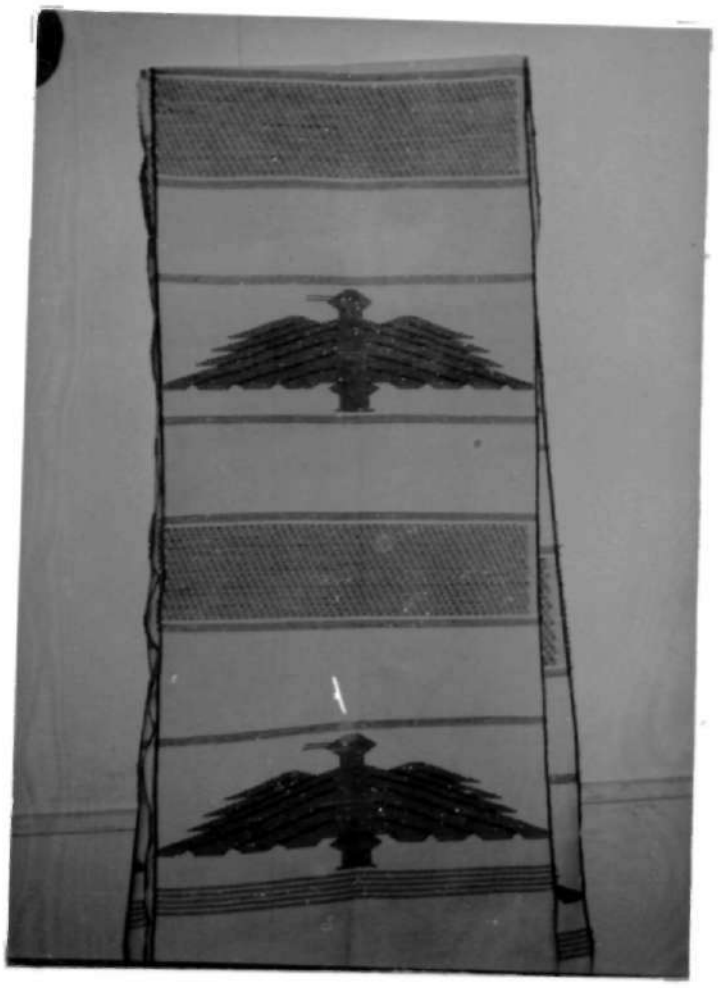


Plate IX: Mrs Raliat Yusuf. Oninomi cloth with bird motif woven with cotton. silk and metalic threads. Upogoro, Okene Local Government Area of Kogi State. 182cm x 60cm. 1990

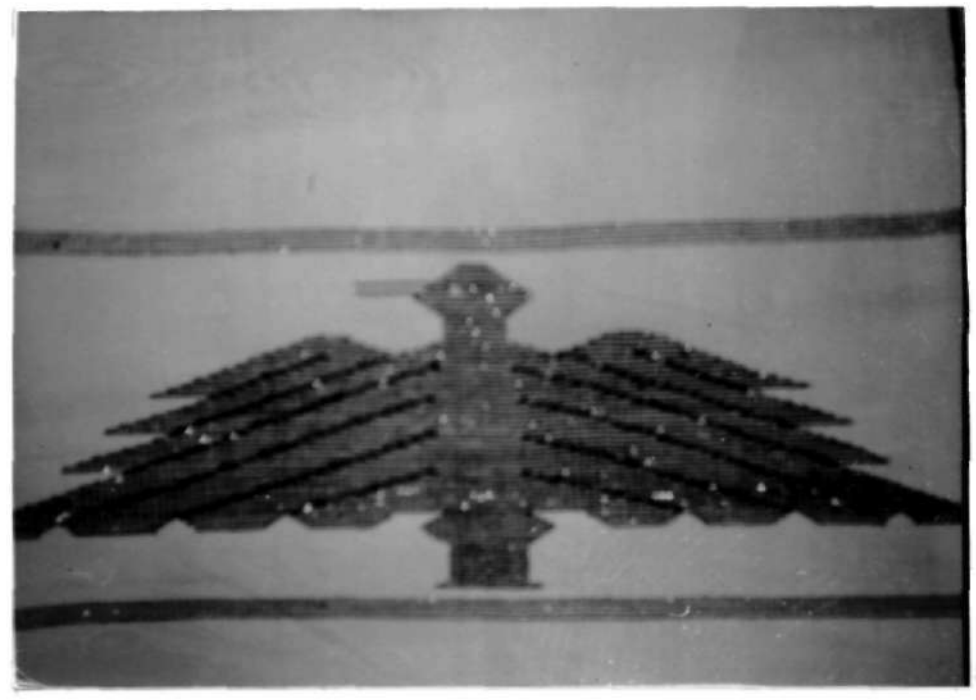


Plate X: A close-up of Oninomi cloth with bird motif (plate IX)



Plate XI: Mrs Hajaratu Abdullahi designed and wove this Okekereku cloth. The cloth is characterised by stylised crown motifs which are embellished with wording. The wording is an example of Ebira wise sayings. In this sample the wording serves as a reminder to people that no body is free in this world. Cotton and silk thread. 175cm x 63. Ozuri, Adavi Local Government Area, Kogi State, 1989.



Plate XI4: A middle-aged woman wearing head tie, jumper and wrapper designed with Ita'Adamu cloth. Woven with cotton and silk threads, the cloth was designed in 1980 to commemorate the election of Alhaji Adamu Atta as the first executive Governor of Kwara State. Okene, Okene Local Government Area in Kogi State

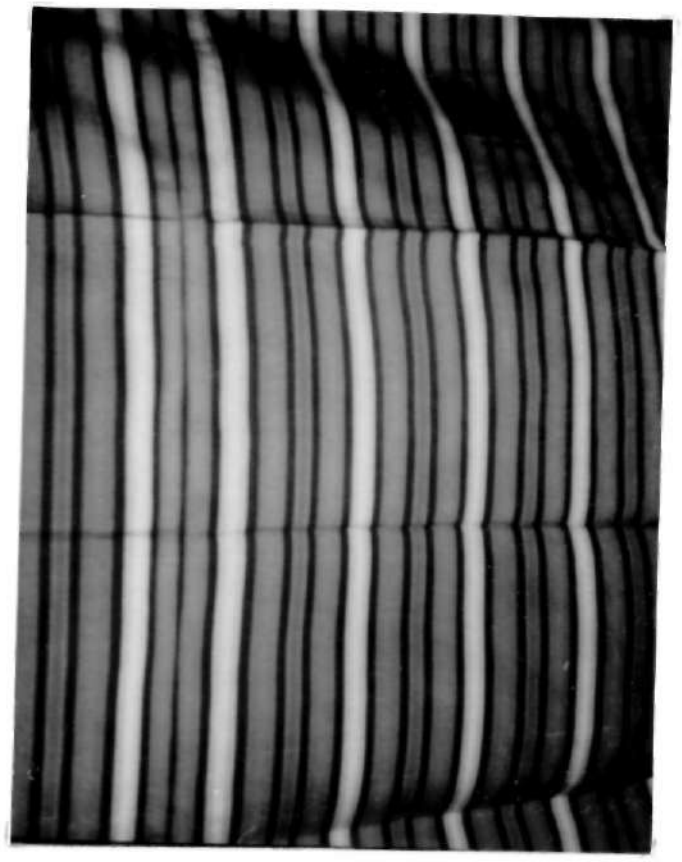


Plate XIII: Mrs Oremeyi Ademoh. Ita'Shagari Cloth woven with cotton and silk threads. The cloth was designed in 1980 to commemorate the election of Alhaji Shehu Shagari as the first executive President of Nigeria. 180 x 62cm. woven in 1987 at Ogaminana, Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State.

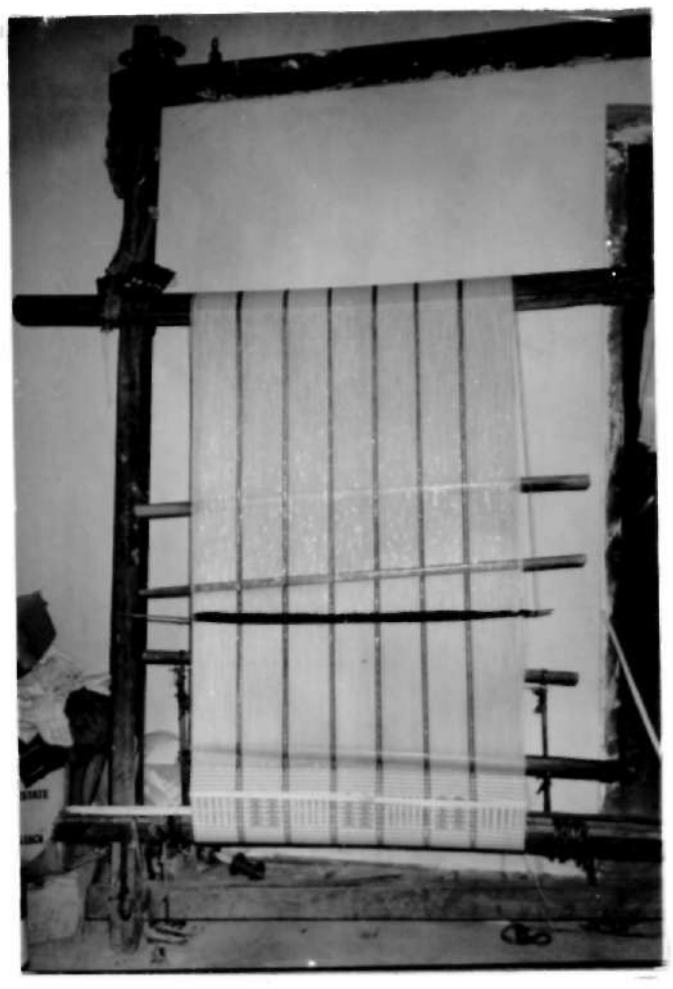


Plate XIV: Mrs. Balkisu Jimoh. Onorupa cloth in the process of weaving on a vertical loom. See plate XX for the completed piece of the cloth. Cotton and silk threads. Ebogogo in Adavi Local Government Area, Kogi State. 180 x 62cm. 1991.



Plate XV: Young girls trying their hands on horizontal loom cloth weaving. Most of the girls have completed their Primary School education. Obeiba, Okehi Local Gocal Government Area of Kogi State. 1991



Plate XVI: A close-up of horizontal loom (plate XV)



Plate XVII: Mrs. Bose Momoh. Samples of horinzontal loom woven cloth. Geometric and linear motifs feature in the woven samples. Cotton and silk threads. Ikuehi in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State. 15 x 90cm (each sample) 1990.

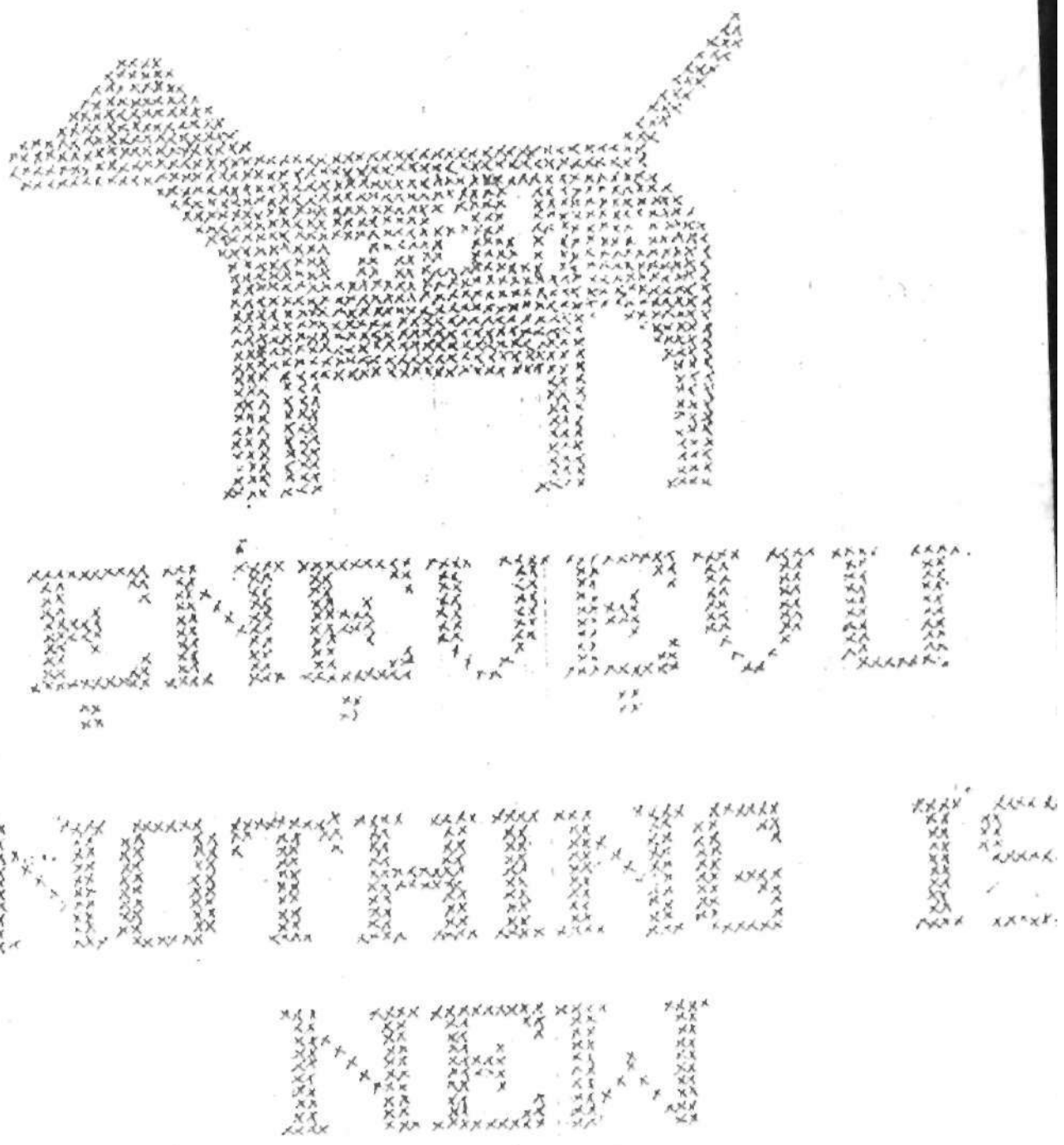


Fig. 4: Representational and wording motifs for cloth decoration. Unlike the olden day cloth decoration, motifs of this nature are ploted out on graph sheets before they are woven onto cloths. Curtesy of Mrs Hajaratu Abdullahi, Ozuri in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State, 1990

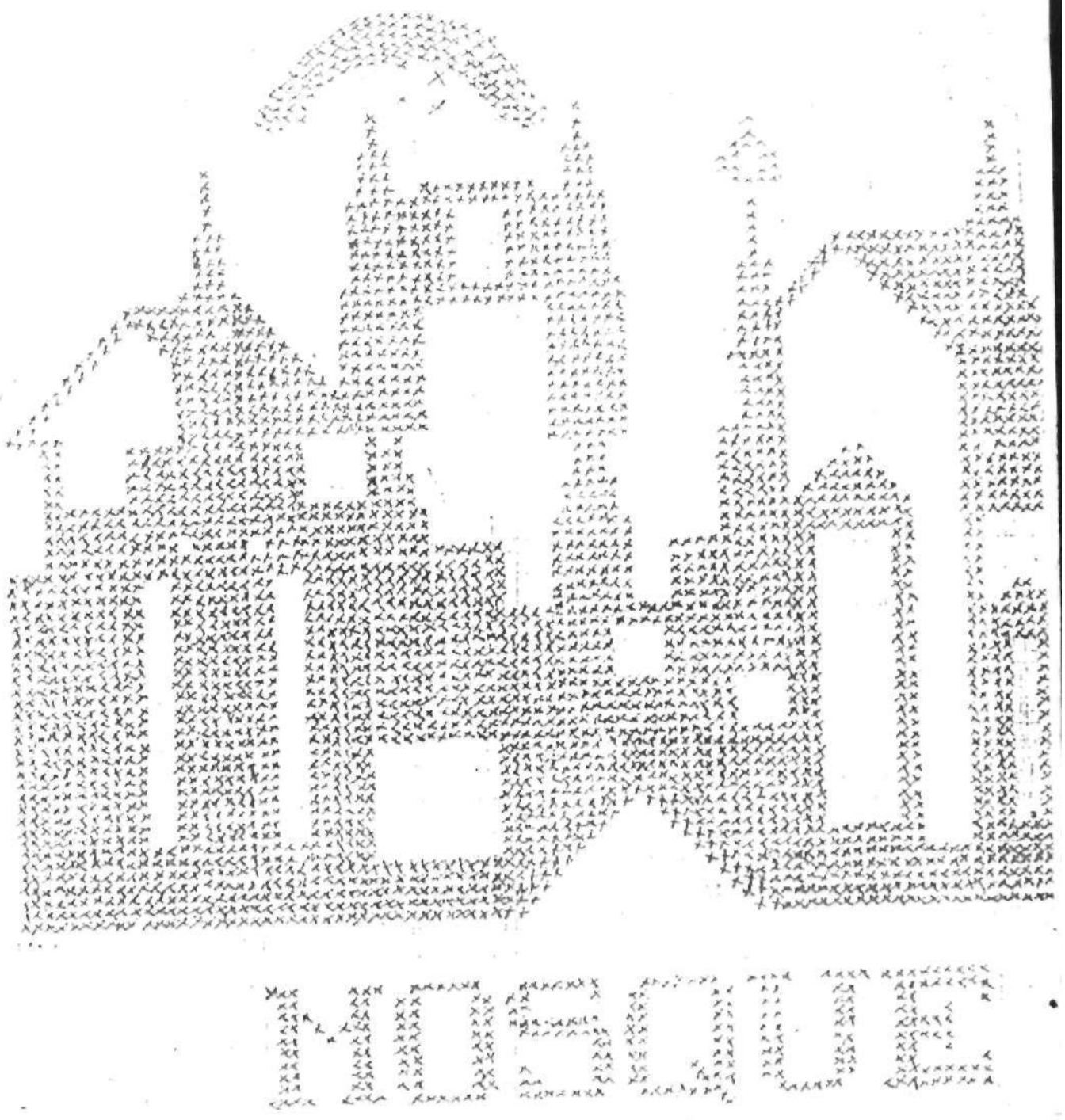


Fig. 5: A motif representing a Mosque ploted on a graph sheet to be woven into cloth. Curtesy of Mrs. Hajaratu Abdullahi, Ozuri, Adavi Local Government, Kogi State, 1990.

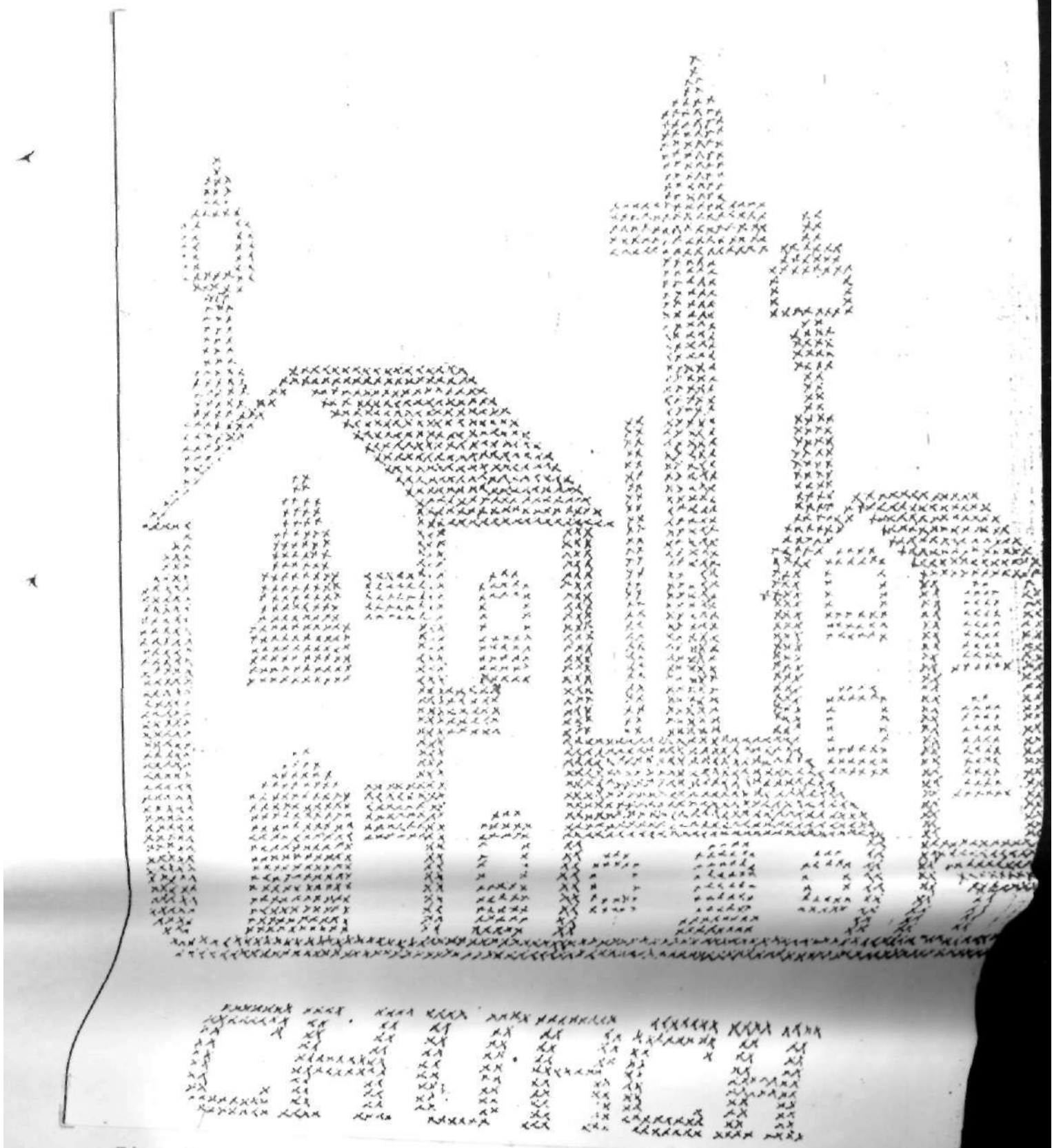


Fig. 6: A motif representing a Mosque ploted on a graph sheet which is later woven onto cloth. A Curtesy of Mrs. Hajaratu Abdullahi, Ozuri -Adavi Local Government, Kogi State, 1990.

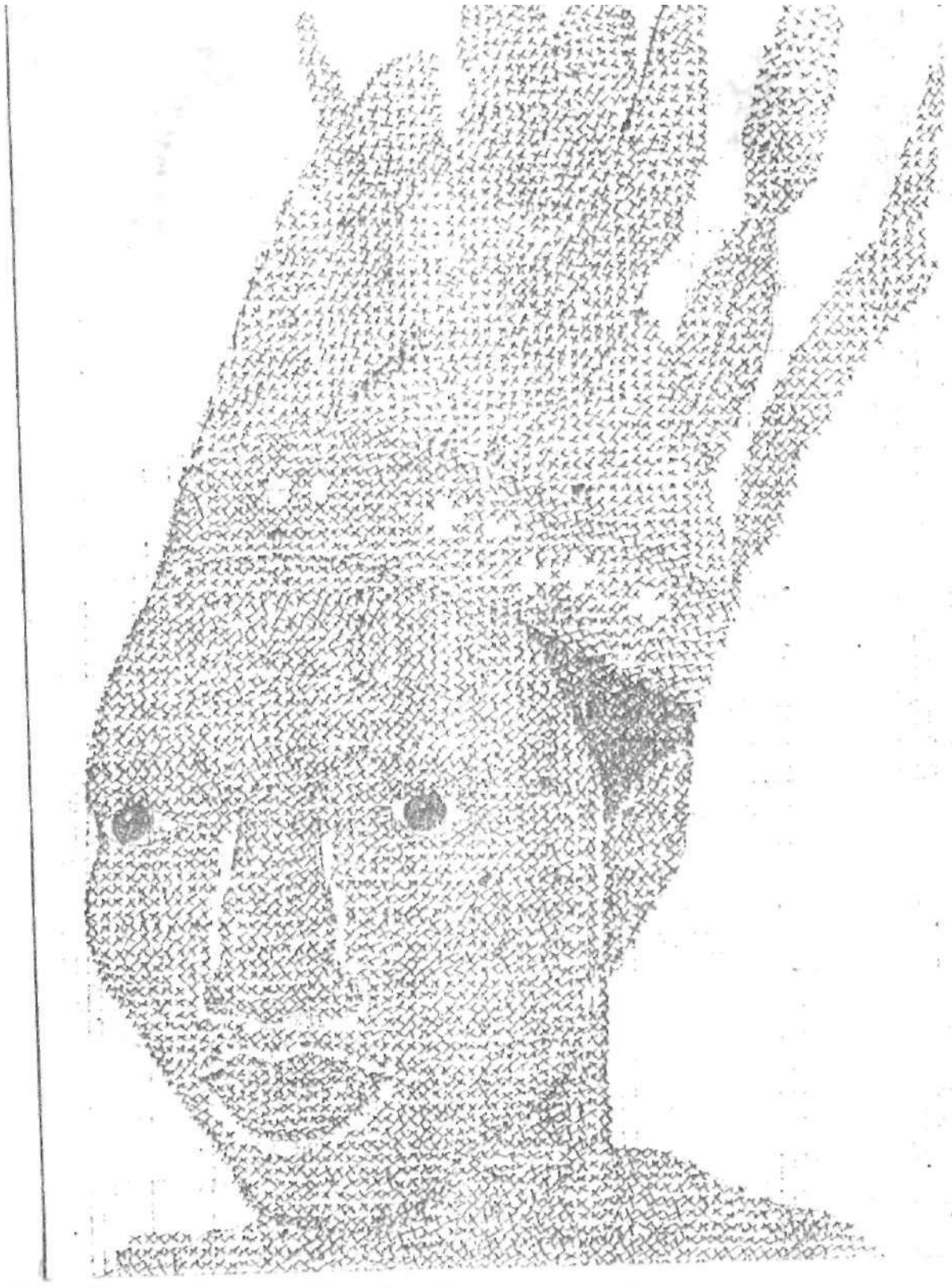


Fig. 7: Figurative motif ploted on a graph sheet which is later woven onto cloth. A motif of this nature is usually a portrait of client. A particular figurative motif does not therefore feature on many cloths. This particular motif is the portrait of Chief Raji, the Asema Ezuka of Ogaminana. The portrait was woven on a piece of cloth to commemorate his installation as the Asema, and the decorated cloth is hung on the wall of his sitting room. Curtesy of Mrs Hajaratu Sbdullahi. Ozuri, Adavi Local Government Area, Kogi State, 1990



Plate: XVIII: A man with the early type of facial marking (scarification) of Ebira Tao known as avuku. The photograph was taken in 1991 at Ikue hi-Ihima district in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State.



Plate: XIX: A young man wearing modern type of facial marking (scarification) of Ebira Tao known as avuku. The marking is shorter and shallower than the early type in plate XVIII. The photograph was taken in 1991 at Idoji in Okene Local Government Area of Kogi State

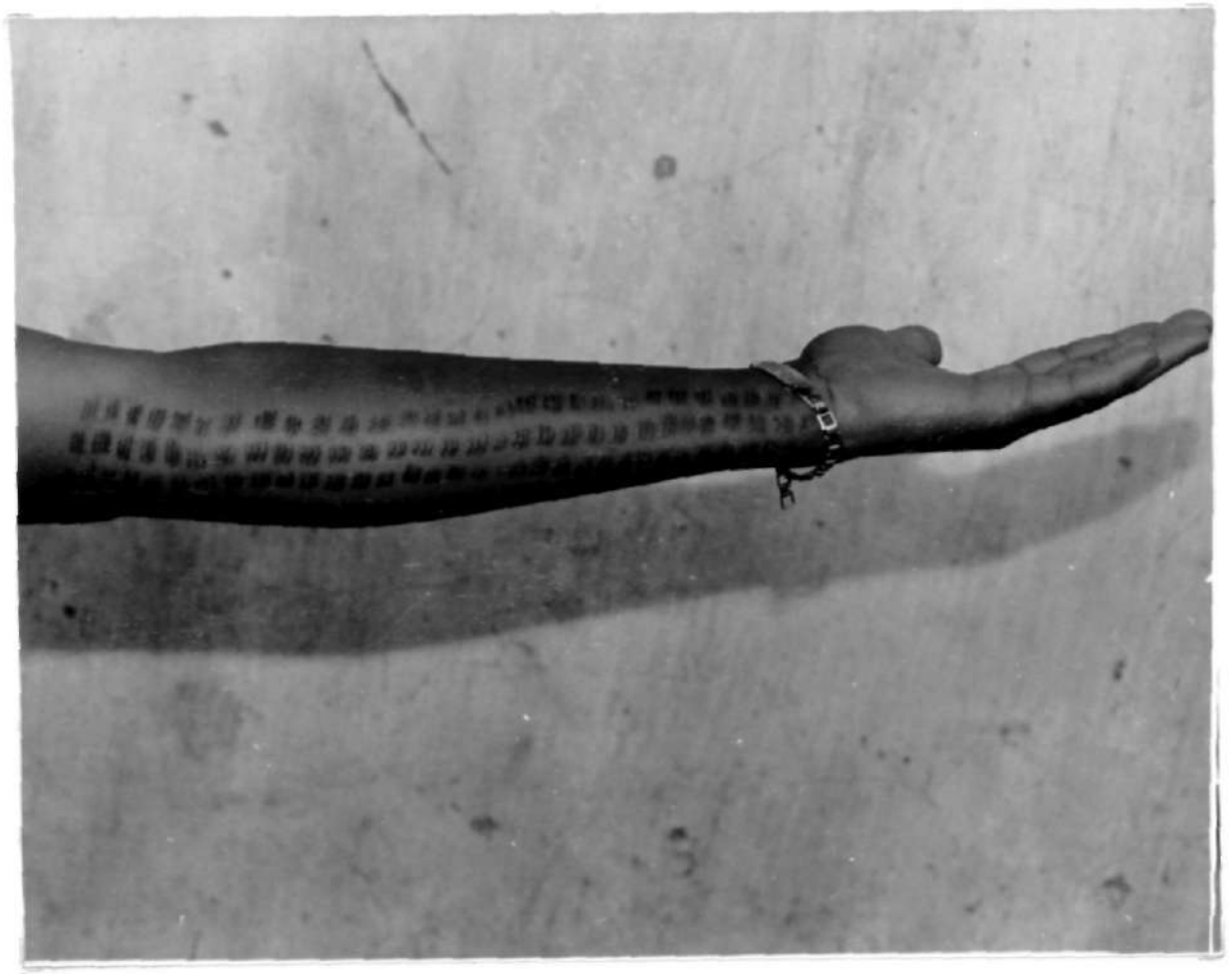


Plate: XX: A Woman's hand with scarification known as Esaireku among the Ebira Tao. The scarification was achieved through the process of making short marks with sharp knife in linear order. Plant juice and in most cases primary school ink was applied on the marked areas. When healed, the marking would become greenish in colour. The Esaireku has social function. The photograph was taken in 1989 at Inoziomi, Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State.



Plate: XXI: A woman's right leg with tattoo. The decoration which is vertically effected and with a circular pattern at the base is characterised by both geometric and abstract motifs. Needle and local indelible dye. The photograph was taken in 1991 at Ikuehi, Okehi Local Gocal Government Area of Kogi State.



Plate: XXII: A fairly old woman wearing body tattoo known as Iyaba, the origin of which was traced to Kabba area - neighbouring area to Ebira Tao. A combination of geometric, stylized object and abstract motifs feature in the decoration. Needle and local indelible dye. Photographed in 1990 at Ogaminana in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State.



Fig.8 An illustration of facial marking type (apele) on an Ebira Tao Woman. The facial marking was said to have been an off shoot of the Yoruba type known as pele (see fig.9).



Fig.9 Artist's impression of a Yoruba facial marking known as pele on a woman. The marking was said to have been copied by the Ebira Tao, though with some modifications (see fig.8).



Fig.10 An illustration of an Ebira Tao woman wearing a facial marking (tattoo) known as Kalangu. The facial marking is on both sides of the face which is similar to the Hausa facial marking - Kalangu (see fig.11).



Fig.11 An illustration of Hausa facial marking (either tattoo or scarification) known as Kalangu found on both male and female. The Housa Kalangu was said to have been copied by Ebira Tao from the early Hausa settlers in Ebira around the 1960s.



Plate XXIII: A woman with Ukokori facial decoration. The decoration which is of linear motif, was effected with plant juice through painting. The photograph was taken in 1989 at Kuroko, Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State.



Plate XXIV: A woman's foot decorated with Lali (Henna). The decoration is characterised by rectangular geometric motifs which were patterned through staining. Obehira in Okene Local Government Area of Kogi State, 1989.

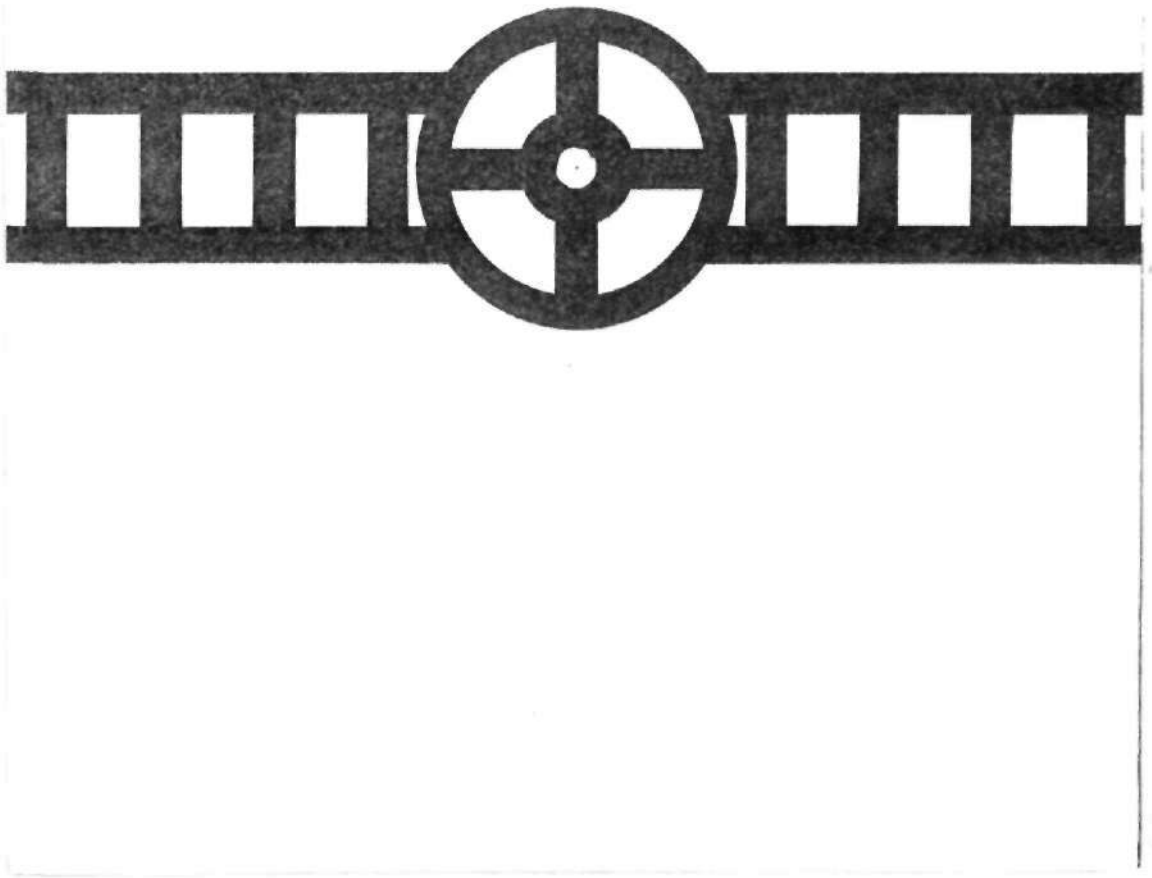


Fig.12: An illustration of wrist watch motif which is very common in body tattoo among the Ebira Tao. Such body decoration is found round the left wrist of female adults.



Fig.13: An illustration of wrist watch motif (fig.12) on a woman's hand.

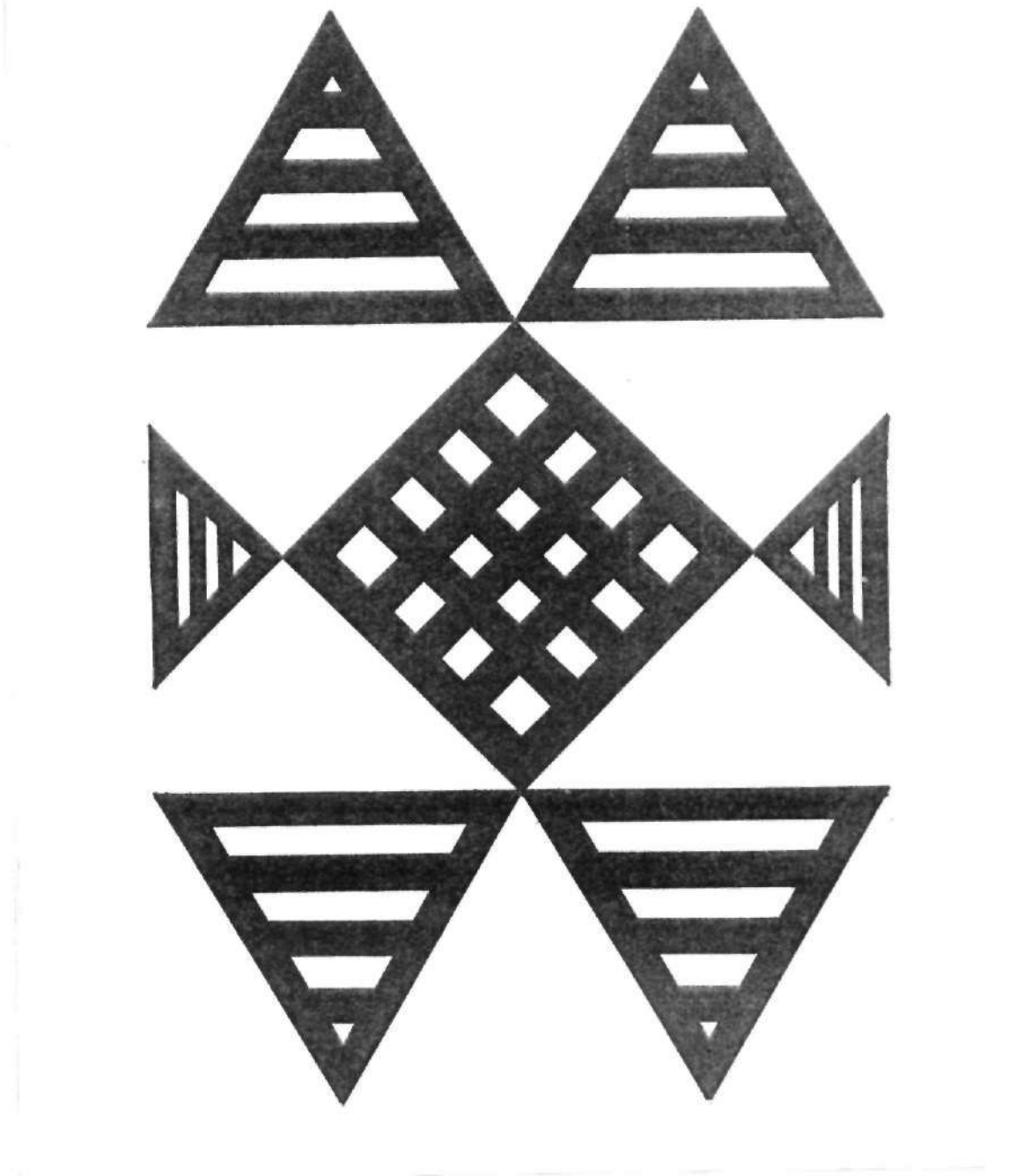


Fig.14: An illustration of geometric motif commonly found on decorated (tattooed) legs of Ebira Tao women.

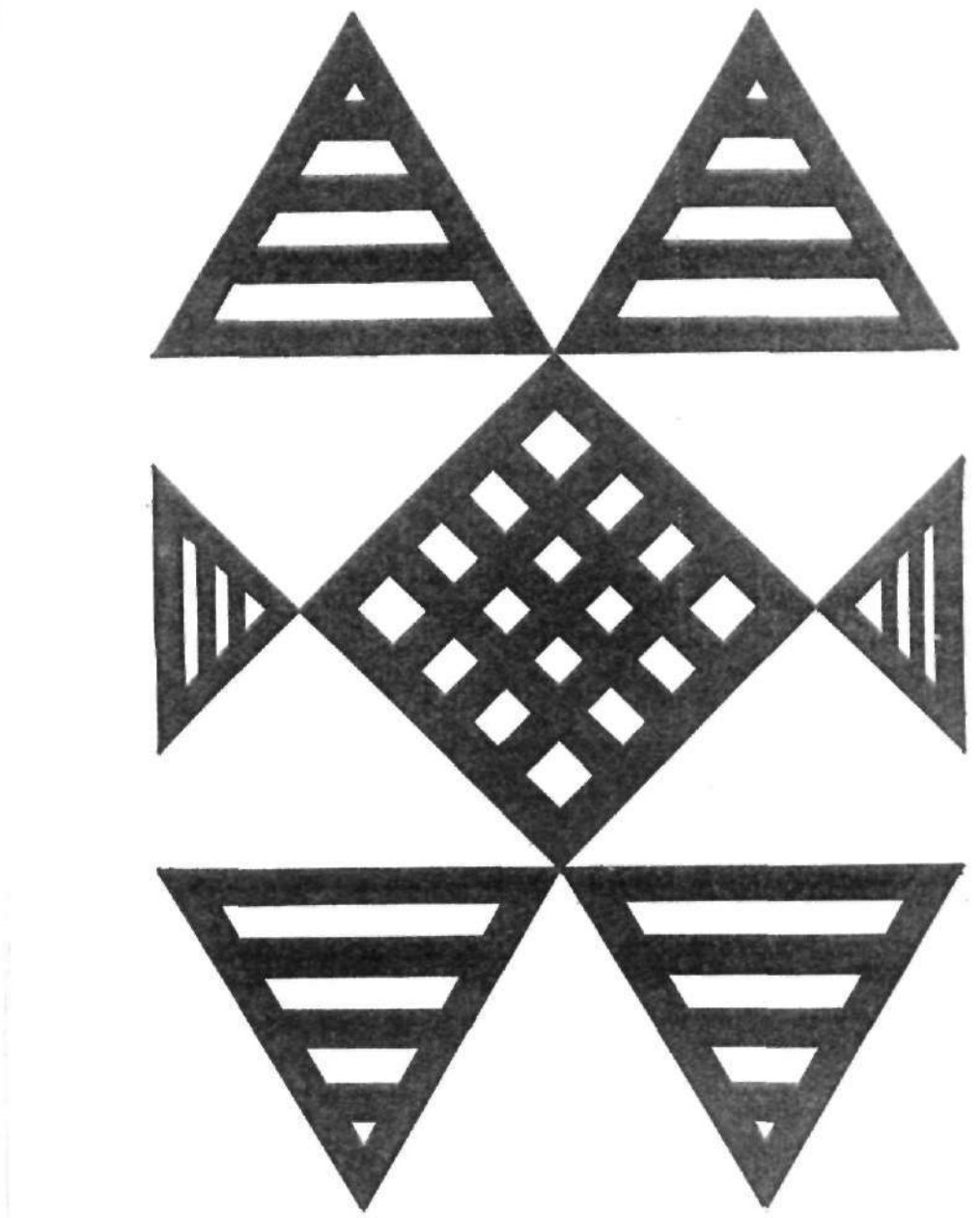


Fig.14: An illustration of geometric motif commonly found on decorated (tattooed) legs of Ebira Tao women.

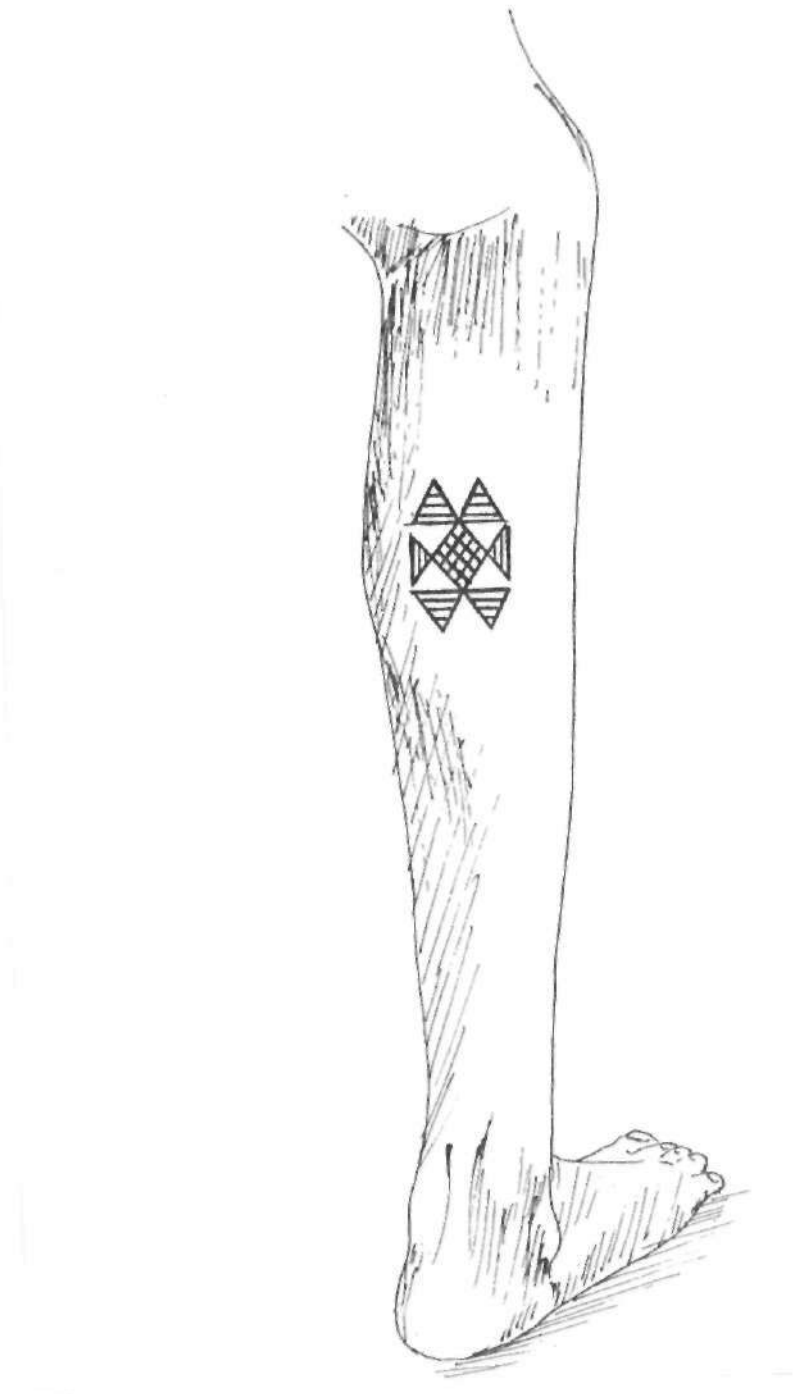


Fig.15: An illustration of geometric motif (fig 14)) on the back of a woman's leg.

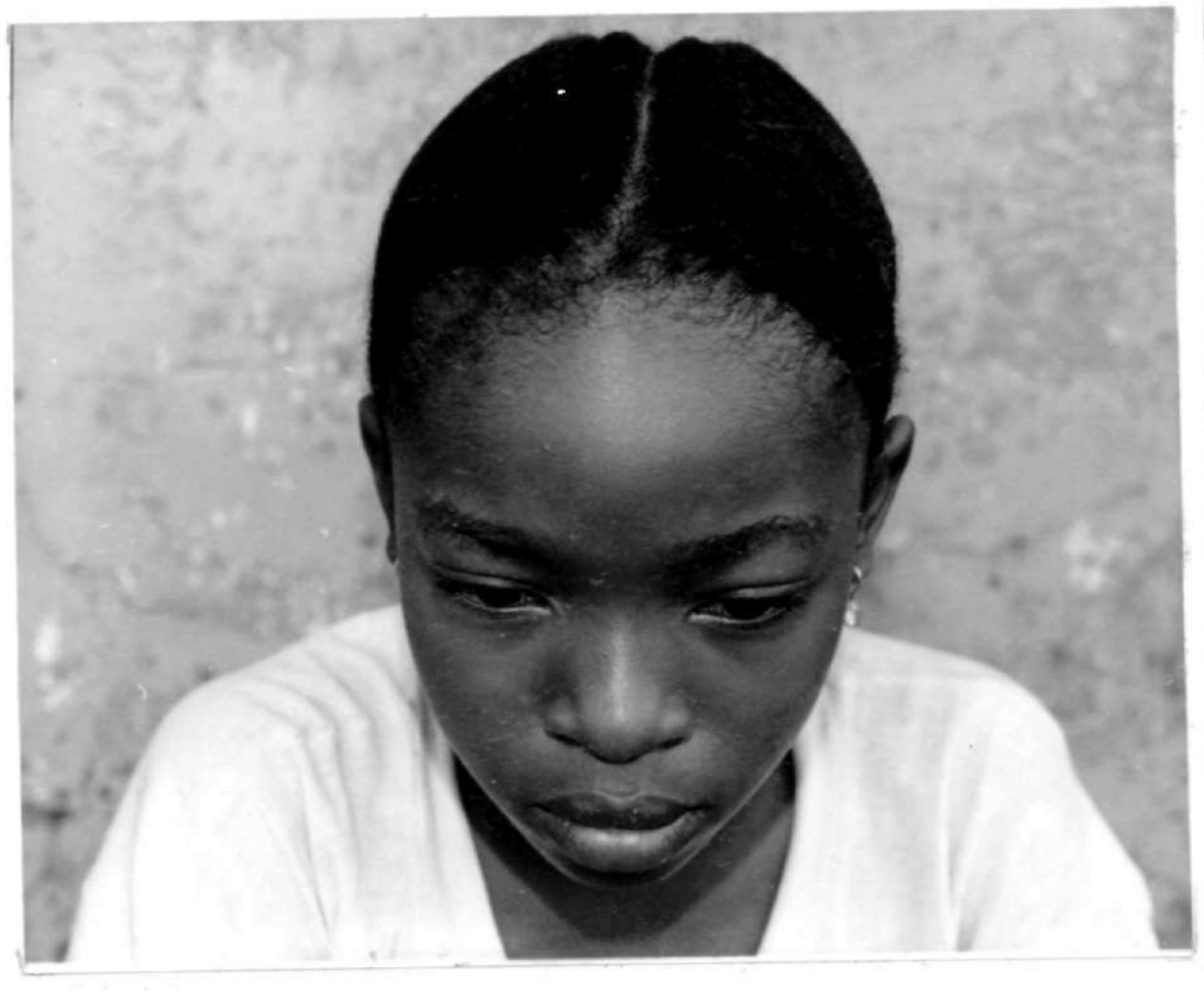


Plate: XXV: A young girl wearing mourning hair style among the Ebira Tao. The photograph was taken in 1991 at Oboroke, Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State



Plate XXVI: A woman wearing social hair style known as Isuku among the Ebira Tao. The hair style of this nature features during occasions like marriage, naming and other social ceremonies. The photograph was taken in 1991 at Ikuehi, Okehi Local Government Area, Kogi State.

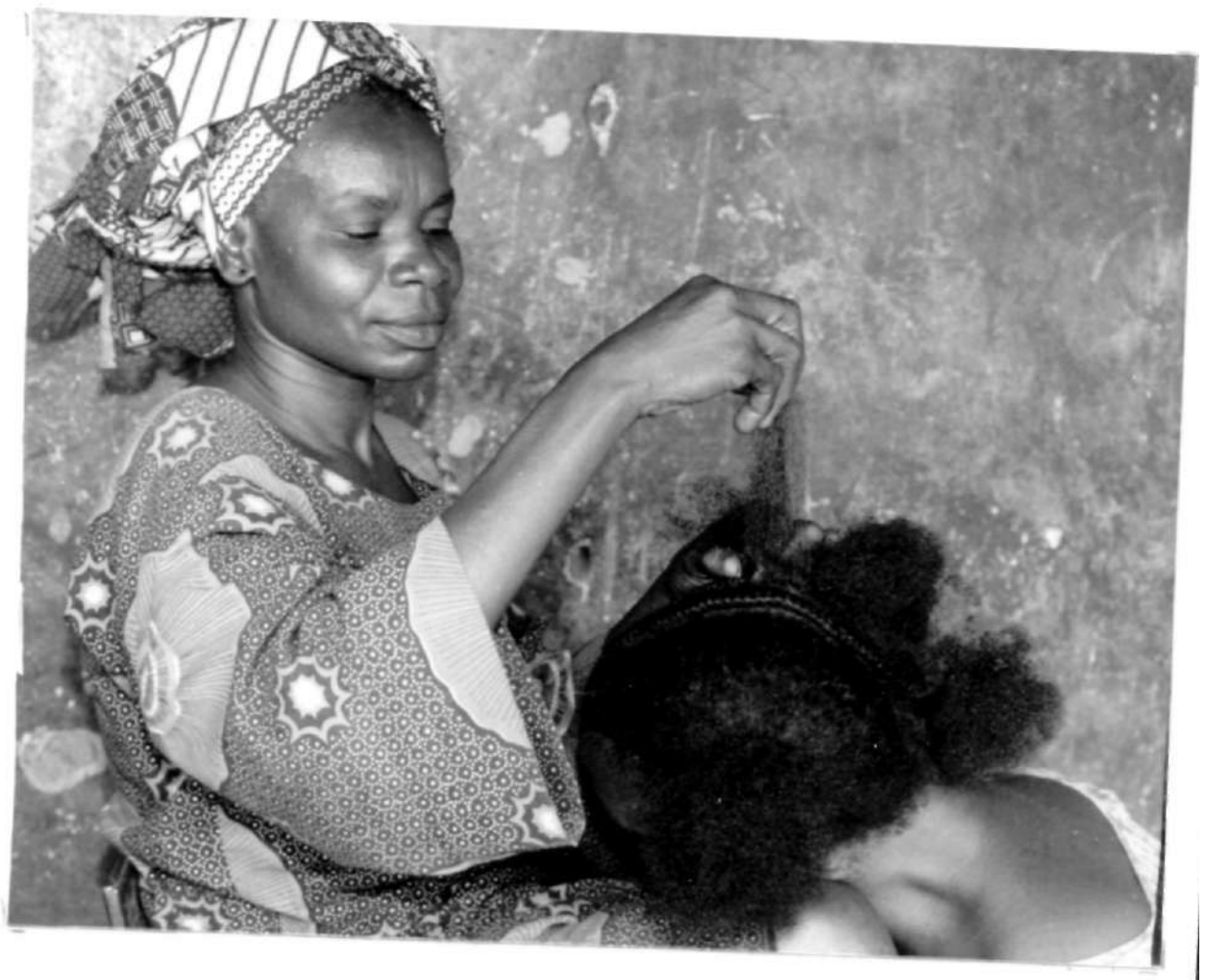


Plate XXVII: Mrs. Sefi Audu effecting social hair style on one of her customers. Plaiting. Oboroke, Okehi Local Government Area, Kogi State, 15th September, 1991



Plate XXVIII: A young woman wearing body tattoo on her arm. The decoration which is based on abstract motif is an example of the common body tattoo found on young females of Ebira Tao. The photograph was taken in 1990 at Adavi-Eba, Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State.



Plate XXIX: A middle-aged woman wearing a slanting facial mark (scarification). The facial mark is commonly found on both male and female among the Ebira Nya. The picture was taken in 1990 at Koton-Karfe, Koton-Karfe Local Government Area of Kogi State.



Fig. 16: An artist's impression of facial marking of the Ebira Nya known as esa eteta. Esa eteta is found on both male and female adults.



Plate XXX: Ovahirema hair style worn by a woman. The hair style is commonly found on female members of Ebira Nya. The photograph was taken in 1990 at Koton-Karfe in Koton-Karfe Local Government Area of Kogi State.



Plate XXXI: A young girl wearing colourful beads as ribbons across the chest. Known as Eburu, the beads used to be worn by both young and adult females among the Ebira Tao and Ebira Chao round the waist. The photograph was taken in 1989 at Ahache Quarters, Okene Local Government Area of Kogi State.

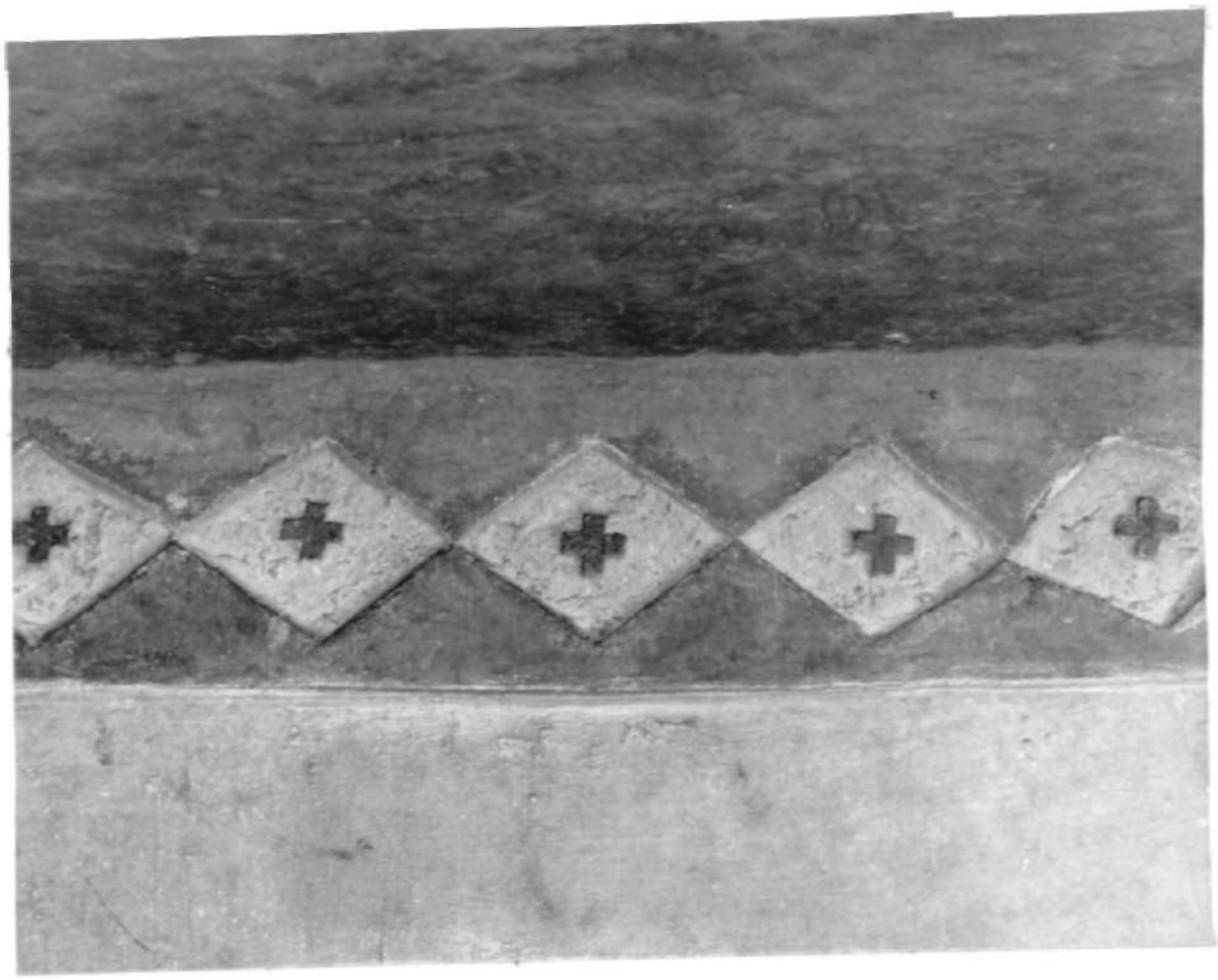


Plate XXXII: Modern wall decoration by an Ebira. The decoration is on the lower end of the wall which comprises light-brown back ground within which are rhomboid-shaped motifs of about 4cm x 4cm. At the centre of each shape is a cross motif in brown and black colours. Cement plaster and Emulsion paint. Obeiba in Ihima district of Okehi Local Government Area. Kogi State.



Plate XXXIII: Modern wall decoration by an Ebira Chao. The horizontal decoration is a relief pattern based on a combination of geometric, linear and abstract motifs. Cement plaster. Abobo Quarters in Akoko Edo Local Government Area of Edo State. H. 10½ cm.

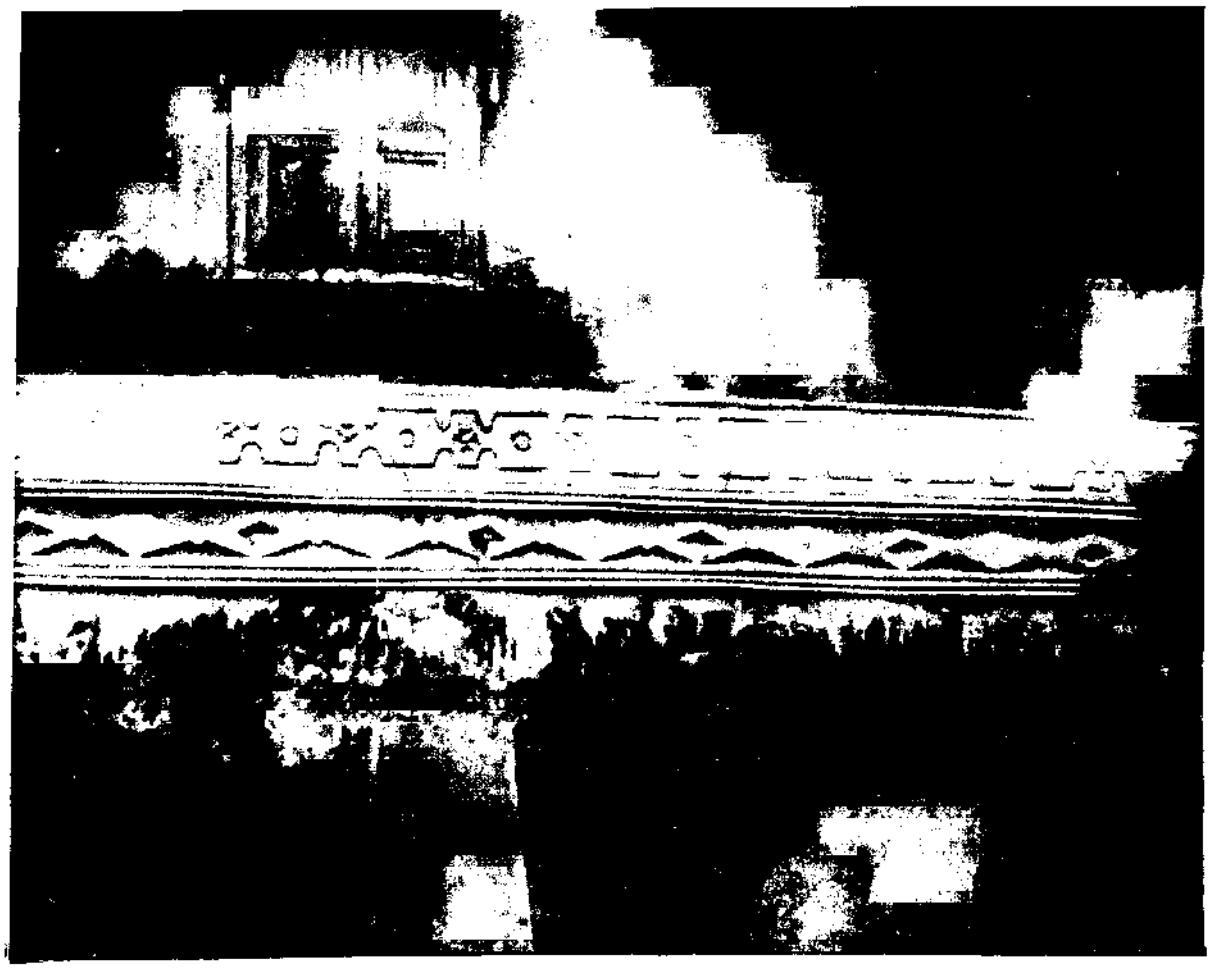


Plate XXXIV: Modern wall decoration in a neighbouring town of Ebira Chao. See the similarity in the position of the decorative pattern, technique and motif with plate XXXIII. Cement plaster. Ibilo in Akoko Edo Local Government Area, Edo State.



Plate XXXV: Pa Simpa. Traditional stools. Wood. H 30cm and 30.5cm. Eganyi. Ajaokuta Local Government Area of Kogi State. The stools have some cowrie shells tied round the middle regions. The cowrie shells are meant to imbibe spiritual purity for the stools.



Plate XXXVI: Alhaji Yahaya Apelende. Modern door panels. Wood and polish. H. 226cm. Okene, Okene Local Government Area, Kogi State, 1990.



Plate XXXVII: Alhaji Yahaya Apelende. Modern door panel. Wood and polish. H. 226cm. Okene, Okene Local Government Area, Kogi State, 1990.



Plate XXXVIII: Mrs. Asimawu Musa. Pot for fetching water. Clay and local glaze. H.25cm. Okoroke in Okehi Local Government Area, Kogi State. 1990



Plate XXXIX: Mrs. Aramotu Lawal. Storage Pot. Clay and local glaze. H. 70cm. Okumehi in Okehi Local Government Area, Kogi State. 1989. In a house hold a storage pot of this type serves as water reservour for the family use. A pot for fetching water (Plate XXXVIII) is usually used to fetch water either from a well, tap or a spring into the storage pot. The pot is characterised by linear motif decoration.



Plate XL: Mrs Aramotu Lawal. Decorated pots with stylised human and animal motifs. Clay. H. 35cm. 45½cm. Okumehi, Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State. The motifs on the pots are to enhance their surface appearance, and their significance or meanings are said to be purely aesthetics. The pots are used as house decoration items.

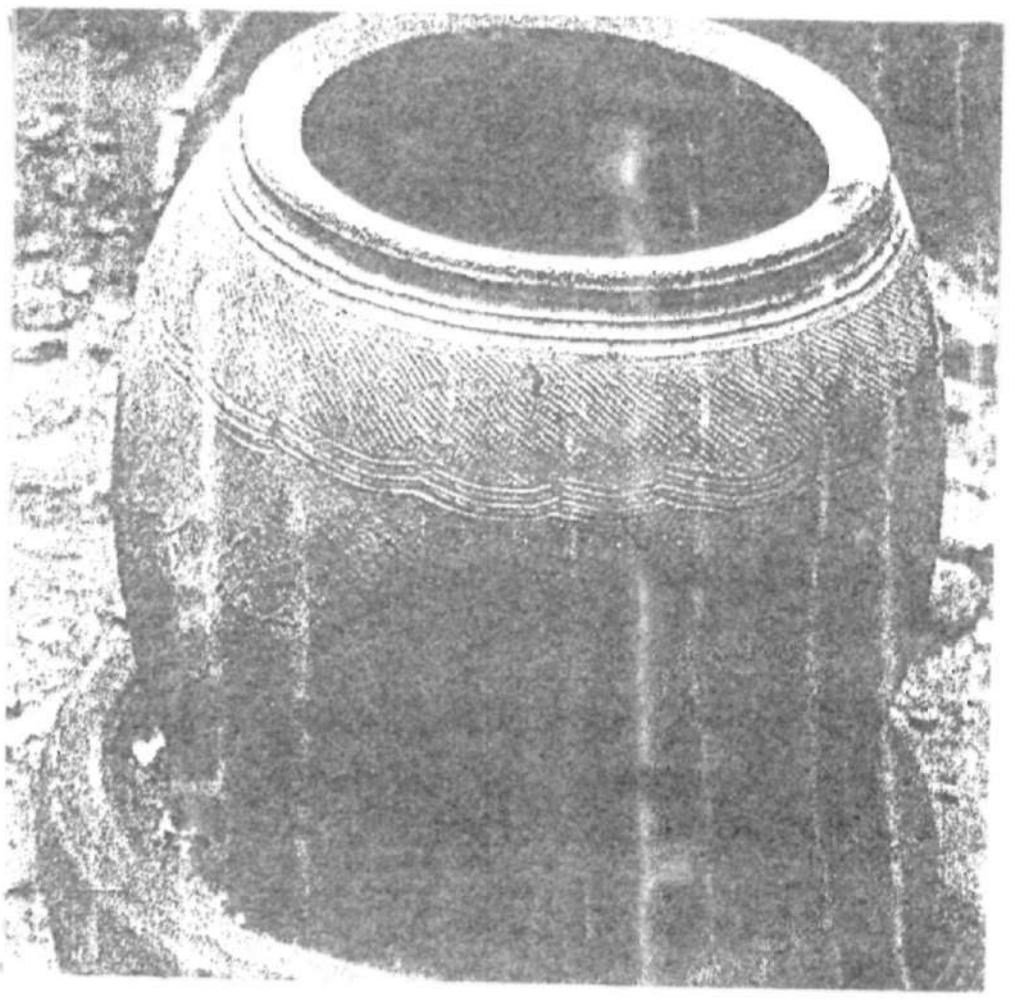


Plate XLI: A water storage pot made of clay. H. 60cm. Koton-Karfe. Kokoton-Karfe Local Government Area of Kogi State. 1987. The storage pot is decorated with linear motifs as in Plate XXXIX.

NOTES

1. Tao, Nya, and Chao are general greeting words of the Ebira. Tao is peculiar to the Ebira around Okene area. Nya is the greeting word of the Ebira of Koton-Karfe, Abaji, Toto, Umaisha and Nassarawa, while the Ebira in Akoko Edo Local Government Area of Edo State are identified with the greeting word Chao.

2. Madam Aramotu Lawal, aged 60 years is the current Head of Potters in Ihima district of Ebira Tao. She was interviewed (oral) on June 2, 1989.

3. Sule A.O. carried out a study on Architectural exposition of Ebira Tao culture for his master of Science degree in Architecture from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in 1985.

4. Ihima district of Ebira Tao is generally agreed to be the major pot producer in the whole of Ebira Tao. See Sule (1985), Saliu (1988) and Omenesa (1986).

5. 'Okene Cloth' is a general name for cloths that are produced in Ebira Tao. The name came as a result of the centrality of Okene town (the former headquarters of Ebira Tao land) where selling and buying of woven cloths take place. Up till now, the every-other-day market at Okene is the centre of commercial activities on hand woven cloths.

6. It is a tradition in Ebira that specific number of cloths are presented to a bride by the family of the groom. In most cases, the cloths, which are hand woven, are specially designed onto which wordings like 'Happy Married Life', 'Good Luck', 'Okene Cloth', etc are woven. See Murnane (1976), Lamb and Holmes (1980), and Saliu (1984).

8 Echeane is an annual traditional festival during which masquerades variously dress in costumes that are made from the hand woven cloth of the Ebira Tao.

9. Ekuechi is another annual traditional festival that features in the month of December. Unlike the Echeane, women and men dress fancifully in various types of hand woven cloths to grace the occasion.

10. Alhaji Yusuf Utohu was the first man in Ebira Tao who took the initiative to go into cloth weaving. As a result of his keen interest in the traditional art - cloth weaving, Alhaji Utohu was sponsored by the then Northern Region Government to study treadle loom weaving in India. When he came back, he established a Weaving Centre in Okene for the purpose of extending his knowledge in treadle loom weaving to Ebira women

and men. See Saliu (1984), Abdulkadir 1987), Ada (1985) and Ohiare (1989).

11. The historical origin of cloth weaving among the Ebira is treated in Saliu (1984), an M.A Thesis titled "The Position of Okene Cloth in the contemporary cloth weaving in Nigeria", Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

12. Ori: Ori is god of fertility and protection who is worshipped annually by Ihima people in the month of June and by Eganyi people in the month of July. The ceremony (Echeori) marks the beginning of eating new yam in Ihima. It is not expected of any body to eat new yam before the Echeori rituals are observed.

13. Oral interview with Alhaji Usman Idris, the Ohimege Panda of Umaisha Kingdom in Plateau State. Aged 62 years, Alhaji Idris was interviewed on 13 October, 1989.

14. Same as in note 13 above.

15. Oral interview with Alhaji Isa Usaini in Koton-karfe on 1 June, 1989.

16. Same as in note 15 above.

17. Oral interview with Alhaji Usman Idris, the Ohimege Panda of Umaisha kingdom on 19 October, 1989, and Alhaji Isa Usaini in koton karfe on 1 June, 1989.

18. Ihima: One of the districts in Ebira Tao, in Okehi Local Government Area. The district is the nearest Ebira Tao neighbour to the Yoruba Via Ijumu speaking people of Kabba.

19. Oral interview with Chief Ukwo Luse II, the Otaru of Igarra in Akoko Edo Local Government Area of Edo State on 10 October, 1989.

20. Oral interview with Chief Abdullahi Raji, the Otaru of Ezuka Ogaminana in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State on 9 October, 1989, and with Jimoh Enesa - one of the existing body markers among the Ebira Tao. He was interviewed on 29 May, 1989.

21. Oral interview with Chief Abdullahi Raji, the Otaru of Ezuka Ogaminana on 9 October, 1989.

22. During the 1977/67 Nigerian civil war, the Igbo were the secessionists, and in order to differentiate them from other Nigerians facial marks were used to identify the Ebira. Thus, the facial marks of the Ebira were once again reactivated.

23. Oral interview with Chief Abdullahi Raji, the Obaru of Ezuka Ogaminana, Jimoh Enesa, a body marker in Ogaminana in Adavi Local Government Area, and Mr Akande Anivasa in Ihima, Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State on 9 October and 29 May 1989 respectively.

24. See notes 12 and 18 above.

25. Oral interview with chief Abdullahi Raji, the Otaru of Ezuka Ogaminana on 9 October 1989, Mrs Hajaratu Abdullahi and Mrs. Hannah Isaac of Ozuri in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State on 12 October, 1989.

26. Ovene: Costly beads which are cherished by the Ebira Tao. The wearing of the beads signifies wealth, since it is only the rich people who can afford them.

27. Oral interview with the sampled informants between 29 May and 19 October, 1989.

28. It was a tradition in the olden days to plaster the walls and floors of houses with cow dung. The floors were also embedded with palm kernel shells, particularly the palaces of the chiefs.

29. Oral interview with Mr Akande Anivasa in Ihima, Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State and Chief Daniel Umoru, the Asema of Adavi District in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State on 29 and 30 May, 1989.

30. Ohimege: The title of traditional chiefs of Ebira Nya of Koton-Karfe and Umaisha. In Koton-Karfe the traditional chief is known as Ohimege Igu, while that of Umaisha Kingdom is known as Ohimege Panda.

31. See note 2 above.

32. Oral interview with all sampled pot makers between May to October 1989.

33. Chief Ukuo Luse II is the current Otaru (chief) of Igarra (Ebira Chao) in Edo State. Chief Luse was 70 years old when he was interviewed on 10 October, 1989.

34. Oral interview with Mallam Musa in Toto on 17 October, 1989. Mallam Musa is one of the existing mat weavers in Toto of Plateau State.

35. See note 30 above.

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APPENDIX I

A STUDY OF THE DECORATIVE ARTS OF THE EBIRA

Questionnaire A:

(TRADITIONAL CHIEFS WHO ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE IN DECORATIVE ARTS)

1. Name:_____
2. Age:_____
3 Dialectal group:_____
4. Religion:_____
5. Indicate which of the following arts is being practised or once practised in your area.
   (a) Textile (f) Basket decoration
   (b) Leather decoration (g) Pot decoration
   (c) Hair decoration (h) Jewellery: Specify.
   (d) Body decoration (I) Wall decoration.
   (e) Metal decoration.

6. Since when have the arts indicated been in practice?

7. Which of the indicated arts are no more in practice, and when did they stop being practised?

8. What would you say was responsible for the discontinuation of the art?
   (a) Lack of patronage
   (b) Lack of materials
   (c) Religious prohibition (Islam/Christianity)
   (d) Lack of good artists
   (e) No more noticeable function(s) to the people of the community.

9. Which of the arts indicated in 1 above are still being practised?
   (a) Textile (f) Basket decoration
   (b) Leather decoration (g) Pot decoration
   (c) Hair decoration (h) Jewellery: Specify.
   (d) Body decoration (I) Wall decoration.
   (e) Metal decoration.

10. What would you say is responsible for the continuation of the practice of the arts?
    (a) Continuous demand for the art work
    (b) Religious functions of the art work
    (c) Social functions of the art work
    (d) Political functions of the art work
    (e) Continuous availability of materials
    (f) Increase in the number of practising artists.

11. Have you noticed any change or changes in the art forms indicated in 1 above? Yes/No

12. If YES in 11 above, what are these noticeable changes?

13. What would you say has brought about the changes mentioned in 12 above?

14. In what way would you say the changes mentioned in 12 above have affected the art works?
    (a) The technique employed
    (b) The quality or finish of the work
    (c) Patronage
    (d) Function

15. What would you say are the symbolic significance of the motifs used in the art forms indicated in 1 above? That is:
    (a) Textile
    (b) Leather decoration
    (c) Hair decoration
    (d) Body decoration
    (e) Metal decoration.
    (f) Basket decoration
    (g) Pot decoration
    (h) Jewellery: Specify.
    (i) Wall decoration.

16. Please. say as much as you know of the origin of the arts indicated in 1 above.

17. Who are the patrons of the art forms indicated in 1 above? That is:
    (a) Textile
    (b) Leather decoration
    (c) Hair decoration
    (d) Body decoration
    (e) Metal decoration.
    (f) Basket decoration
    (g) Pot decoration
    (h) Jewellery: Specify.
    (i) Wall decoration.

18. Would you say that the patronage of the art forms indicated is on the increase or declining?

19. What would you say is responsible for the increase or declining in 18 above?
    (a) Affordable cost
    (b) High cost of the art works
    (c) Religion - specify
    (d) Social structure of the society - specify
    (e) Western modern education - specify.

20. What would you say are the functions of the art forms indicated in 1 above? That is:
    (a) Textile
    (b) Leather decoration
    (c) Hair decoration
    (d) Body decoration
    (e) Metal decoration.
    (f) Basket decoration
    (g) Pot decoration
    (h) Jewellery: Specify.
    (i) Wall decoration.

21. Have these functions mentioned in 20 above changed?
    YES / NO

22. If YES in 21 above. are these changes in:
    (a) Textile?
    (b) Leather decoration?
    (c) Hair decoration?
    (d) Body decoration?
    (e) Metal decoration?
    (f) Basket decoration?
    (g) Pot decoration?
    (h) Jewellery: Specify?.
    (i) Wall decoration.?

23. What would you say are responsible for the changes mentioned in 22 above? That is in:
(a) Textile
(b) Leather decoration
(c) Hair decoration
(d) Body decoration
(e) Metal decoration.
(f) Basket decoration
(g) Pot decoration
(h) Jewellery: Specify.
(i) Wall decoration.

24. In what ways would you say that the mentioned changes in 22 above have affected:
(a) The technique employed?
(b) Patronage of the art?
(c) Practice of the art?

25. Who are the artists engaged in the art forms indicated in 1 above? That is:
(a) Textile
(b) Leather decoration
(c) Hair decoration
(d) Body decoration
(e) Metal decoration.
(f) Basket decoration
(g) Pot decoration
(h) Jewellery: Specify.
(i) Wall decoration.

26. Kindly name reputable artists in your area who are still practising the indicated art forms in I above. That is:
(a) Textile
(b) Leather decoration
(c) Hair decoration
(d) Body decoration
(E) Metal decoration.
(f) Basket decoration
(g) Pot decoration
(h) Jewellery: Specify.
(i) Wall decoration.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

APPENDIX II

A STUDY OF THE DECORATIVE ARTS OF THE EBIRA

Questionnaire B: (ARTISTS)

1. Name _____
2. Age: _____
3. Sex: _____
4. Dialectal group: _____
5. Traditional/Modern Artist: _____
6. Religion: _____
7. Indicate which of the following arts is being practised by you.
   - (a) Textile
   - (b) Leather work
   - (c) Body decoration
   - (d) Metal decoration
   - (e) Basket decoration
   - (f) Hair decoration
   - (g) Pot decoration
   - (h) Jewellery: Specify
   - (i) Wall decoration

8. Since when have you been practising the indicated art?
9. If out of practice, when did you stop practising the art?
10. Why did you stop the practice?
    - (a) Lack of materials
    - (b) Lack of demand for the art work
    - (c) Lack of tools
    - (d) As a result of old age
    - (e) Prohibition by religion
    - (f) Little or no economic benefits
    - (g) Any other.
11. If 9 above, what were the materials with which you used to produce your works?
12. From your observation, has there been any change in these materials as they are used by the present practising artists? YES/NO.
13. If YES in 12 above, what are these changes?
14. For those still practising: What are the materials you use in producing your art works?
15. Has there been any changes in the materials? YES/NO.
16. If YES in 15 above, what are these changes?
17. What would you say has brought about the changes mentioned in 16 above?

18. In what ways would you say that the changes mentioned in 16 above have affected your art work in terms of:
    (a) Your techniques?
    (b) The quality or finish of the work?
    (c) Patronage?
    (d) Functions?

19. What would you say are/were sources of inspiration for the type of art you practise/practised?

20. What are or were the sources of the motifs you use or used in your art works?

21. What are the symbolic significance of the motifs used in your works?

22. How did you come to be practising this art form?

23. Is or was the practice of this art restricted to your family, clan, or linage, or it is open to everybody in your community?

24. Briefly say all you know on the origin of the art form you practise/practised.

25. What would you say are the external or foreign influences on your styles and technique of work if any?

26. Who are the patrons of your art works?

27. Is the patronage of your art works on the increase or declining?
28. What would you say is responsible for the increase or declining in 27 above?
    (a) Economics - specify
    (b) Religion - specify
    (c) Social Structure of the society - specify
    (d) Western modern education - specify

29. What would you say are the functions of your art works?
30. Have these functions mentioned in 29 above changed? YES/NO.
31. If YES in 30 above, what are these changes?

32. What would you say are responsible for the changes mentioned in 31 above

33. In what ways would you say that the mentioned changes in 31 above have affected your technique?

34. Have the changes mentioned in 31 above affected the patronage of your work? YES/NO.

35. If YES in 34 above, please specify.
36. If NO in 34 above, please specify.

Thank You Very Much.

APPENDIX III

DATA COLLECTED ON THE FIELD FROM SOME ARTISTS AND TRADITIONAL CHIEFS

Below are data collected from some of the informants through tape-recorded oral interview. The presentation is in the following order:

INFORMANT	DATE OF INTERVIEW
Pa Jimoh Enesa	29 May, 1989
Mr. Akande Anivasa	29 May, 1989
Chief Daniel Umoru	30 May, 1989
Ms. Bose Momoh	30 May, 1989
Alhaji Isa Usaini	1 June, 1989
Mrs. Aramotu Lawal	2 June, 1989
Chief Abdullahi Raji	9 October, 1989
Chief Ukwo Luse II	10 October, 1989
Mrs. Mary Mayaki	10 October, 1989
Mallam Musa	17 October, 1989
Mrs. Hannah Isaac	12 October, 1989
Mrs. Hajaratu Abdullahi	12 October, 1989
Alhaji Usman Idris	19 October, 1989

1. PA JIMOH ENESA

Pa Jimoh Enesa is a body decorator. He lives at Ogaminana in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State. Aged about 70 years, Pa Jimoh still practises the art of traditional body decoration Below is an interview dialogue with the artist which took place on the 29 May, 1989.

SALIU: Would you please say as much as possible what you know about Body Decoration among the Ebira Tao, beginning with how it started?

JIMOH: Egu (facial marks on both sides of the face, temple of the face and chin) was the first form of body decoration of Ebira Tao. It was worn by both male and female, mostly common among Ihima people. Beside the decorative function of egu, it was made to cure envahi in newly born children. The marks are only found on people who are not less than 70 years in age. Later came ayuku - two vertical marks on the face (II). This came at about the time of Nupe Jihad invasion into Ebira Tao (19th century). The marks were purely for facial identification purpose. More of this type featured on younger generation during the 1967 Nigerian Civil War. That is, the marks were used to differentiate the Ebira Tao from the Igbo who formed the major secession group from the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Slightly at the same time when avuku came into existence, esa (tottoo) came. The fact that the Ebira Tao were having contact with the outside world, the immediate neighbours being the Yoruba group in the West, there was the need to differentiate the Ebira Tao from the Yoruba, thus another reason for avuku. This contact had some influence which was imported from the Yoruba. Unlike the egu and avuku which were effected with locally produced knife, esa was made with both knife and needle, according to the taste of the wearer. An esa made with knife is called esa ireku, while the type made with needle is called esa orihi.

SALIU: On which part of the body is esa marked?
JIMOH: Esa is marked on different parts of the body. These include the face, temple, neck, arm, thigh, hand, chest, ankle, at the back of the palm, wrist, at the back of the leg (the calf) etc. The specific parts to be marked are determined by the client.

SALIU: What are the motifs used to decorate the bodies of your clients?

JIMOH: The motifs are stylised objects, reptiles, abstract shapes, and wordings. These are variously used according to the taste of the clients.

SALIU: What are the tools and materials used to mark the body of your client? And please state how these tools and materials are used.

JIMOH: Initially, locally produced knife (ovakere) was used to mark egu and avuku. Later, small knife with handle produced by blacksmiths came into use. Till date this type of knife is used to marked avuku and esa ireku. Soot from bush Lantern is rubbed into the marked avuku and esa ireku, for the purpose of leaving a dark mark (scar). For esa orihi (needle tottoo), about 5 factory made needles are tied together and used to prick the portion of the body to be tattooed. Soot from bush lantern mixed in School ink is used to draw the pattern on the body along which the needle pricking is done.

SALIU: What do you think are the functions of body decoration among the Ebira Tao?

JIMOH: Body decoration was made to secure pleasant reception in the next world - the world of the dead (Ida-Aneku). It was the belief of the people that if anybody with beautiful body decoration dies, he/she would be entertained well, as many of the dead would want the person to stay with them for a while so as to admire the decoration on the body. There are curable markings e.g. to cure diseases like small pox, chicken pox, to ward off evil spirits e.g. Imasu (Abiku, Obanje) in children. Nowadays, the fashion purpose of body decoration predominates. There are no specific types of body decoration according to age. That is, any type can be worn at any age.

SALIU: Is there any religious (Islam/Christianity) prohibition on the art?

JIMOH: There is no serious religious prohibition on the art. It is only the influence of modern civilization that reduces the practice of facial markings (avuku). Egu is totally out of practice, while young ladies fancy both knife and needle tattoo. Around the late 1960s Hausa kalangu facial markings came into existence. Worn by both male and female, it is commonly found in Okene township.

SALIU: Thank you Sir.

2. MR. AKANDE ANIVASA

Mr. Akande Anivasa, aged 61 years, lives at Oboroko in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State. He is a farmer by profession, and he wears a body decoration. Interviewed on 29th May, 1989. Mr Anivasa expressed similar views as those by Pa Jimoh Enesa as regards the history and types of body markings among the Ebira Tao.

SALIU: As a Christian, would you say that Christianity discourages the practice and wearing of body markings?

ANIVASA: Christianity does not in any way discourage Christians from wearing body marking. Rather, individual parents decide not to put markings on their children, possibly due to the influence of modern civilization. However, when the children grow of age and decide to put on any type of body markings, the parents have no objection.

SALIU: Why do you think people put on body markings?
ANIVASA: In the past, when I was a young man, it was a sign of body enhancement to have esa on the conspicuous parts of the body for the purpose of attracting the opposite sex. Due to modern civilization in terms of mode of dressing, body decoration is mainly patronised by the female which is done on the exposed parts of the body like the legs and hands. Facial decoration is not favoured at all these days.

SALIU: Do the Ebira Tao have their traditional way of decorating the walls of their houses?

ANIVASA: Wall decoration was very much cherished in the olden days. It was usually done in the houses of important personalities - on the walls of sitting rooms. The decorations were mainly linear, achieved through the movement of fingers on wet mud plaster and cow dung. Abstract motifs were also used. Wall decoration is almost extinct as cement plastering dominates.

SALIU: Has there been any form of religious prohibition on the art?

ANIVASA: There is no religious prohibition, neither were there any religious functions of wall decoration. I don't know of any traditional religious activities that needed a built shrine the walls of which must have been decorated throughout Ebira Tao.

SALIU: Thank you. I am very grateful.

3. CHIEF DANIEL UMORU

Chief Daniel Umoru is the Asema (Leader) of Adavi District in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State. Aged about 83 years, Chief Umoru lives at Adavi-Eba. His views on body decoration among the Ebira Tao, as regards the history, types, materials and functions, are the same with Pa Jimoh Enesa and Mr. Anivasa already reported above. Chief Daniel Umoru wears egu tattoo.

4. MS BOSE MOMOH:

Ms Bose Momoh lives in Ikuehi-Ihima District in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State. Aged 28 years, Bose is an example of horizontal cloth weaver in Ebira Tao. Bose was interviewed on 30 May, 1989.

SALIU: Horizontal loom weaving is not a traditional method of Ebira Tao cloth weaving. How comes then that you are weaving in this new method?

BOSE: There was a Yoruba woman residing at Oboroke (in Ihima District) who was weaving cloth on horizontal loom. As her products were patronised by our women, our young ladies started to learn the method of weaving from the Yoruba woman. That was how I also went to her to learn this method about three years ago.

SALIU: Do you mean it took you about two years to learn the horizontal loom technique of weaving?

BOSE: Yes, because I started the learning in 1986 and graduated in 1988.

SALIU: Would you say that your previous knowledge in Ebira Tao traditional weaving motivated you to learn the horizontal loom weaving, or the knowledge helped you to master the new techniques?

BOSE: Honestly speaking I was not very good in our traditional method of cloth weaving. I was mainly motivated by young ladies in Ihima who learnt the new technique earlier.

SALIU: What are the sources of the motifs that you usually use to decorate your cloth?
BOSE: I normally get my motifs from house-hold and other familiar objects, for example, traditional stool, comb, three, crab, etc. In some cases I also use wordings and single letters to decorate the cloth.

SALIU: How do you sell your products?

BOSE; People usually place order when preparing for occasions like wedding, naming and some other important ceremonies and festivals.

SALIU; Thank you. Do you allow me to take photograph of some of your finished works.
BOSE: Yes, no problem.

5. ALHAJI ISA USAINI:

Alhaji Isa Usaini, aged 65 years, is a retired civil servant and a writer. He lives at Koton-Karfe in Kogi Local Government Area of Kogi State. He was interviewed on first June, 1989.

SALIU: Please Sir, would you be kind enough to talk on body decoration among your people.

USAINI: Body decoration among the Ebira Koton-Karfe was as old as the people. The decoration has mainly been on the face, palm and feet. The tattoo and scarified markings are found on the faces of both male and female. The diagonal scarified mark from the nose to the cheek on side of the face belongs to the riverine people, while the three scarified converging marks on both sides of the mouth belong to the up-land people. This marking is similar to that worn by the lineage of "Emir's" slaves - Kasno. However, the markings in Koton-Karfe are indigenous to the people.

SALIU: When I was moving about in the town, I noticed the Hausa Kalangu type of facial markings on both male and female. What would you say about this?

USAINI: The Hausa kalangu facial markings on both sides of the face, worn by both male and female, is an influence from the neighbouring Hausa people which started featuring in the early 1960's. Up till today, we still fancy the kalangu facial marking.

SALIU: Is there any form of body decoration practised by your people?

USAINI: Yes. Palms and feet of the female in particular, are decorated with substance from lale (Henna). The males only decorated their palms and feet at marriage occasions and continued to do so till death. These days it is the females who practise the art fully, while the males decorate the palms and feet at marriage ceremonies only. Even among the Western educated female, the art is becoming unpopular, instead the use of finger nail paint suits their taste.

The female also took pleasure in painting their body particularly the legs, face and hands, with uru (calm wood substance). This was widely used to tone the skin. This also has been displaced greatly by imported and factory produced cream and cosmetics. Hair decoration is also an old art of our people. The most popular hair style is the ovahirema.

SALIU: Would you say that any of these forms of body decoration has been influenced in any way?

USAINI: Like body tattoo, there is an influence of neighbouring ethnic groups on the hair decoration of our female members. However, this influence is not so much as in the case of body tattoo for, the traditional style of hair weaving - the long stripes from the forehead backward, is dominant among the female members.

SALIU: Do your people decorate the walls of their houses?

USAINI: Wall decoration was an important art before 1960s.

Internal decoration of sitting rooms of important personalities like the Ohimege, Village heads etc, featured. Patterns of linear, concentric and abstract motifs were executed on cow-dung plastered walls. Similar decorations were also made on the side surface of traditional mud-beds to attract any visitors to the bed rooms. The art stopped with the introduction of cement plaster.

SALIU: Please sir, kindly say what you know of textile (cloth) decoration of your people.

USAINI: Textile is an ancient art with which my people came along from Idah area (point of migration). It has been women affairs on vertical loom. When weaving cloth with hand spun thread was diminishing as a result of importation of Yorkshire textiles and thread, weaving and decoration started to reduce. Very few women practise cloth weaving these days because of the presence of machine woven cloths.

SALIU: What type of patterns do the cloth weavers make on their cloths?

USAINI: Abstract patterns are woven into cloths. Cloth dying was also a flourishing industry before the 1960s. Colours like blue (in different shades), black, and green were produced and used to dye hand spun thread and hand woven cloth. These days dying is mainly executed on factory woven cloth.

SALIU: Besides the change from the use of hand spun thread, what other changes have you noticed?

USAINI: The traditional plain white hand woven cloth (uba) for example, was initially used to bury dead people. This has since changed with large influx of factory produced cloths.

SALIU: Do your people practise metal decoration?

USAINI: Yes. The art of metal decoration was before the 1960s. It was mainly incorporated into wooden masks for masquerades. As Islamic and Christian influence became dominant, the use of masks declined as few masquerades featured. The art is no more in full scale existence. Hoe-blades, spears were also decorated by blacksmiths. Linear and abstract motifs were used to decorate the objects, but now decoration is highly reduced to few linear patterns on hoe-blades (back).

SALIU: Please sir, kindly tell me what you know about pot m... decoration among your people.

USAINI: Pottery is an old art practised by the female members. Different types of pots were decorated with linear, dotted and pinched motifs. The main aim of the decoration was to reduce the all over

smoothness of the outer surface of the pots. Later decorative taste came into the art. With the influx of cooking pots (Tower aluminium products and the like), the art of pottery has reduced drastically. It is mainly practised in hinter land villages.

SALIU: Thank you very much sir. I am most grateful.

6. MRS. ARAMOTU LAWAL (63 YEARS)

Mrs Aramotu Lawal lives at Okumehi Quarters in Ihima District of Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State. She is the current Head Potter in Ihima and she was interviewed on second June, 1989.

SALIU: You have been producing pots for sale, and I was told you are the leader of all Pot makers in Ihima. Can you please say when you started making pots?

ARAMOTU; I can not say the exact date, but I know that the first pottery I produced which was rated as being good by my mother was when I was about eight (8) years old.

SALIU: What type of pottery ware have you been producing?

ARAMOTU: I have been producing different types of pots ranging from pots for fetching water, soup pot, frying pot, to local beer brewing pot.

SALIU: What types of decoration do you usually put on your pottery ware?

ARAMOTU: When ever I finish moulding or building a pot I use a small size stick to make some linear patterns. I also use maize cob or the stick of it and roll it along the round surface of the pot when the pot is still well.

SALIU: Has there been any change(s) in your production of pots?

ARAMOTU: Years. Two years ago, when I was told that some people from Ilorin (Kwara State Capital) would be coming to see my works, I started to produce pottery ware whose main function is not necessarily utilitarian. Some of the pottery ware took the shape of human head, and I tried to put other shapes on the ware to make them look funny and interesting.

SALIU: You did not go to Wester School, how then are you able to decorate these modern pottery ware you have been producing for the past two years?

ARAMOTU: Initially, I will do the moulding of the pot myself, and my grand-son who was in form one then would do the figurative relief decoration. Later, I started trying my hands on this type of decoration, and I do it now with some amount of perfection.

SALIU: What meanings do you and the Ebira Tao attach to all the forms of decoration on your pottery ware.

ARAMOTU: The decorations are just to make the outer surface of the pots beautiful so that many people will like to buy them. Even all the pottery ware that I and other potters have been producing, have domestic and decorative meanings.

7. **CHIEF ABDULLAHI RAJI:**

Chief Abdullahi Raji, aged 49 years is the Otaru (Traditional Chief) of Ezuka Ogaminana in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State. He was interviewed on 9 October, 1989.

SALIU: Sir, could you kindly say as much as you know of body decoration of the Ebira Tao?

CHIEF RAJI: Egu was the earliest form of body decoration of our people. Though it was often done to cure enyahi (a disease that made the face of a child to swell up), the linear and texture of the scar, made it decorative. Thus, in many cases children without enyahi were consequently given egu marking. Egu was made or marked on both sides of the face and on the chin. Egu is no longer marked on modern Ebira Tao to cure enyahi since modern medicine is available. As a result of this, egu is not marked on the face these days whether for medication or for decoration.

Followed by egu was esa (body tattoo and scarification, the former was done with needle while the latter was done with knife). Esa has been for fashion or decoration, which was an influence of our neighbouring people - the Owe speaking people of Kabba area. The Owe

body mark was called iyagba which was made on the lower chin to the neck down to the chest. The Ebira Tao call it iyagba also since it was a direct limitation from the Owe speaking people of Kabba area. This type of body marking was mainly made on women particularly when they were ready for marriage. Esa was to make young ladies more beautiful and attractive to would-be husbands. It is now made on the forearm of adolescent female - both literate and illiterate in modern Western system education. In the past, esa was patronised by both adolescent male and female, made on various parts of the body. ukokori is another type of body decoration. It is a temporary body decoration with local substance of certain herb, made on various parts of female body for beauty, particularly during festivals. Due to modern civilization which provided alternative make-up materials, ukokori marking is no more patronised by majority of Ebira Tao, particularly the town dwellers. Unlike other forms of body markings, ukokori has been a female art. All forms of body decoration were made on almost all over the body in the past. Now, the girls who still patronise the art have it on the forearms where boys could easily see it, possibly for attraction just like they use eye-shadow and other forms of modern make-up for attraction.

SALIU: Excuse me sir, before you continue, what would you say of the two vertical marks found on the faces of many Ebira Tao people?

CHIEF RAJI: Thank you, the facial marking known as avuku, alias "Kwara II" is an identification marking of our people. It was mainly done for identification purpose particularly during inter-ethnic wars.

SALIU: These markings you are talking about, are they not the same with those of Ilorin people?

CHIEF RAJI: No. Our avuku is not the same with the facial markings of Ilorin people. They are only similar. The Ebira-Tao facial marking - avuku are darker (i.e. the scar) and shorter than those of Ilorin people.

SALIU: Is there any of the body decorations of the Ebira Tao that has religious influence?

CHIEF RAJI: Body decoration with henna (Lali-Ebira; Lale - Hausa) is the only form of body decoration that has religious influence. This form of body decoration (on the palm of the hand and around the lower portion of the foot) is patronised by muslim female only. To the muslims, it makes the women attractive or more beautiful before God, according to their religious belief. The art was introduced by the early Hausa settlers in Ebira Tao, who were muslims.

SALIU: Is there any other form of body decoration of your people that had its origin from outside Ebira Tao?

CHIEF RAJI: Another foreign method of body decoration is the Hausa facial marking on both sides of the faces known as kalangu. This was very popular between the middle of 1969s to early 1970s, particularly during the Nigerian Civil War period. [illegible]s marked on both male and female, though the female formed the major patrons. Fulani's influence on body decoration of Ebira Tao is also noticed. This is in the decoration of the ear lobes by making many holes (pierced) on them for the purpose of wearing many ear rings or ear ornaments.

SALIU: Please, say as much as you know of the art of pottery of your people.

CHIEF RAJI: Pottery in Ebira Tao is not practised in all the towns and villages that make up Ebira Tao. The only most producing area is Ihima District in Okehi Local Government. The abundant availability of the raw material - clay, in the District is responsible for the monopoly of the art by Ihima potters who are women only. For the fact that pottery

is not made in my area of jurisdiction (Ogaminana), I do not have much to say on the technique and decoration of the art. However, in the past locally produced pots were used for different domestic purposes, ranging from cooking, fetching of water, to storing of farm produce like beans, melon and locust beans. With the coming of factory produced

pot (Tower aluminium, and other types), the production and patronage of traditional pottery have reduced.

SALIU: Sir, what about wall decoration? If it is being practised by the Ebira Tao, kindly say what you know of the type(s) of decoration made on the walls of the houses.

CHIEF RAJI: Wall decoration started with the people since the time they started living in mud-built houses. The decoration was done with mud, cow dung and osasa (a substance like contemporary factory - made white wash). The floor of a house was plastered with cow dung and palm-kernel shells were embedded to enhance the surface texture of the floor. Patterns were made on the wall with geometric and abstract shapes, while the lower end of the wall was decorated with cowrie shells which were embedded just like the palm kernel shells. The use of cowrie shells was to make the lower end of the wall look very interesting, decorative wise.

SALIU: Is the practice still the same ti[illegible]?

CHIEF RAJI: The practice has almost phased out as the exposure to outside world has influenced the technique of building, and decorating of houses. Instead of mud, cow dung, palm kernel shells, and cowries shells, walls are now plastered with cement, and painted with factory - produced paints in assorted colours. While traditional wall decoration was limited to internal decoration, the contemporary wall decoration is both internal and external.

SALIU: Please sir, I would be grateful if you could tell me the historical background of cloth weaving/decoration of Ebira Tao.

CHIEF RAJI: Cloth weaving started with the people. With time, innovations have been brought into the weaving. In the past, the general cloth type was the calico known as ikitipa or uba. These days, there are variations of the cloth. In addition, modern decorations have come into cloth weaving of my people. Modernisation effected on the woven cloth has attracted the attention of outside world. For instance, words, diagrams and pictures are now easily woven onto cloths. This manipulation of designs woven onto cloths is one of the major noticeable changes in cloth weaving of my people (the Ebira Tao). Otherwise, the basic weaving technology still remains the same.

SALIU: What would you say of the use of the cloth?

CHIEF RAJI: As for the use of woven cloths of my people, there has been wide usage both within and outside Ebira Tao, thus the old restriction on the types/usage is relaxed. Changes in the weaving have made such ceremonial cloths like itaokueta to be fashionable as found among young men, who use it for casual dresses. The original type of itaokueta was either used to burry elderly people or used to build costumes for masquerade. This original type was thick and heavy, but the modernised type is light which is as a result of the type of thread used. Generally, the various types of woven cloth of Ebira Tao are still

fashionable and functional to the tastes of consumers, and these must have contributed to the continued practice of the art.

SALIU: Thank you a lot for your co-operation.

8. CHIEF UKWO LUSE II

Aged 73 years, Chief Ukwo Luse is the Otaru (traditional government-recognised Chief of Igarra - Ebira Chao) in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State. Chief Luse was interviewed on 10 October, 1989.

SALIU: Sir, would you kindly discu ;es of body decora area (Ebira Chao)?

CHIEF LUSE: Well, there are different types of body decoration in this area. These are ukokori, uru, eburu and esa decorations. ukokori which is obtained from certain type of leaf is used to decorate the body (body painting) to last for about one week, mainly done to celebrate ceremonies. It is particularly painted all over the body decoratively on a woman taking azi (grand child) title. Uru (cam wood substance) is also used to paint the body to last for some days. Uru decoration is usually made on the body of a woman that gives birth to a child, for the purpose of toning the skin of the body. Unlike ukokori, uru, is rubbed all over the body without any specific patterns being painted with it on the body.

SALIU: Sir, you have just mentioned azi title taking for which occasion ukokori decoration features. From my visits to the other two groups of the Ebira - Ebira Tao and Ebira Nya, it seems that azi title taking is peculiar to your area. Would you say that the tradition must have been an influence from the surrounding Akoko-Edo neighbours?

CHIEF LUSE: Eem, Well, I can not say whether it is an influence from our neighbouring people or it was one of the art traditions that our ancestors developed. This is because I grew up to meet the practice, and nobody has ever given me any historical background of azi title taking. The only thing I know is that it is a tradition which is common in Akoko-Edo.

SALIU: Agreeing with you sir, when I was at Okpe - a town of about 10 kilometres from Igarra (Ebira Chao) two days ago, I came across a woman taking the azi title and she had a nice body decoration with a substance probably similar to the ukokori you are talking about.

CHIEF LUSE: Good, that is how our women decorate their body for the azi title taking. I hope you will have the opportunity to witness one here in Igarra (Ebira Chao).

SALIU: I hope so myself.

CHIEF LUSE: Eburu decoration is done by wearing a particular type of bead by women and young girls round their waist. Initially, the traditional types of eburu were used, but later the factory - made types which are plastic, and lighter than the traditional types, replaced the traditional ones. Because of the plasticity of the factory made eburu, it catches fire easily when a wearer is very close to naked flame. Thus, the usage is now limited to female adults who wear the eburu underneath their cloth dresses. The only outward usage of eburu is during some traditional festivals when it is worn by female participants inform of ribbon across the chest. The last form of body decoration among the Ebira Chao is esa (body tattoo and scarification). The scarification was done with knife or blade, but later the use of needle became the fashion, known as esa orishi (tattoo with needle). All forms of body decoration which are generally patronised by the female members of the community are purely for fancy, without any form of religious inclination.

SALIU: Thank you very much sir. What would you say of pot making and decoration in your place?

CHIEF LUSE: Pottery was an olden days art which was restricted to Anupata quarters of Igarra (Ebira Chao). As time went on, for unknown cause or causes, the people died so also their art of Pottery. These days no body does pottery. Pots used by us are produced by the Ojirami, Utuo, Itshuwa and Oja - all neighbouring people to us.

SALIU: Is the art of wall decoration the same as pottery? If not, how do your people decorate the walls of your houses?

CHIEF LUSE: Walls were plastered with clay using a smooth stone and carved wood called oriruvo. Patterns were made on the walls were for social decoration, while those on the walls of shrines were to portray the sacredness of the building. This traditional method of wall decoration has since changed with the coming of cement and factory - produced paints which are mostly used for the decoration. Similarly, the motifs used are linear, which do not portray the traditional cultural life of the people. In fact, the wall painting and modern decoration on the walls are the same with those of many areas of Akoko-Edo Local Government.

SALIU: I would be grateful sir if you could tell me as much as you know about cloth weaving/decoration of Ebira Chao.

CHIEF LUSE: Cloth weaving was met by my people at the time of their settlement, and it has been developing along with time. The earliest types were woven with hand-spun thread, mainly white (owu-ovu), brown (samari), black (owu-oji) and red (owu-ododo), the last two being dyed locally by women dyers. Later imported thread, of assorted colours, came to feature in cloth weaving as far back as 1974.
Before this time, small quantity of imported thread was available for cloth weavers to weave cloth with. The change from hand-spun to machine-spun thread brings change in the cloth's texture. For

instance, the old types were thick and heavy, while the ones woven with imported thread are light and more fashionable. The old ones were typified according to colour-dominance. There were samari (brown dominated:), itaododo (red dominated), itaowuoji (black dominated) and ita-owerere (green-dominated).

SALIU: Sir, do your people practise wood carving?

CHIEF LUSE: Yes, wood carving was a popular art of my people in the past. Stools, staff of office and door panels were among carved wood objects.

SALIU: What type of decorations were made on these carved objects?

CHIEF LUSE: On the stools, particularly those used by traditional chiefs like the Okomanyi and the Otaru, were carved images of human-beings and animals. Images of animals like tiger, lion and leopard were carved on the stools to signify the spiritual power of the owners of the individual stools. Similarly, staff of office was decorated with traditional motif according to the rank of the owner - chief. These days, traditional stools are not elaborately decorated, and not many of the traditional chiefs use the stools any more. The modern chair-thrones are mostly used, as you can see in my place. You can see also that my staff of office is not decorated and not even the traditionally or locally made type. Door panels were decorated in the past with interesting patterns created out of traditional motifs. Islam and Christianity have influenced the people not to practice sculpture - including all forms of wood carving. The two religions preached to the people that it is only God who creates, and anybody who creates an image is producing idols. As a result, all sculpture works available have been destroyed. The only existing ones (decorated door panels) were in one Ajayi's compound which have been removed to Benin Museum by the eldest son of the Ajayi family. He did this for fear that the door panels may likely be destroyed totally with time. These door panels have very interesting decoration.

SALIU: I am very grateful for your patience. Thank you sir.

9. **MRS MARY MAYAKI**

Mrs Mary Mayaki, aged 55 years, lives in Chief A.B. Mayaki compound in Igarra (Ebira Chao). Mrs Mayaki is an example of traditional cloth weavers among the Ebira Chao, and was interviewed on 10 October, 1989.

SALIU: Please Madam, kindly tell the history of cloth weaving here in Igarra (Ebira Chao) including how it started, the materials used and the decorations made on the cloth up till now.

MAYAKI: Cloth weaving has been an age long art of our people. The earliest weaving was done with hand spun thread. With the coming of machine-spun thread, the use of hand spun thread reduced considerably. This change from hand-spun thread to machine-spun type was necessitated

by the thickness of cloth woven with the former thread, which rendered the cloth too heavy for both casual and occasional wears. In addition, traditional cotton from which hand spun thread was obtained is no more produced by farmers, thus almost total dependence on machined-spun thread for weaving cloth. The process of weaving cloth here is the same as in Okene area (Ebira Tao) both in warping, wefting, and pattern execution. The incorporation of abstract motifs and wordings like names of people and sayings is similar to that of Ebira Tao cloth weavers. Despite these similarities, present day woven cloths here are thicker than those woven by Ebira Tao women.

SALIU: What would you say are the functions of the patterns on the cloths?

MAYAKI: Patterns woven into cloths are purely to beautify them and to attract would-be customers. An example of such patterns is onoturosa (upstairs motif) which you can see in that cloth still on the loom.

SALIU: What are the woven cloths used for by your people?

MAYAKI: Hand woven cloths are used for various purposes like marriage, naming ceremonies and many festival celebrations.

SALIU: Thank you Madam. Please allow me to take photograph of the cloth still on the loom.

MAYAKI: O.K., no problem.

SALIU: Thank you very much.

10. MALLAM MUSA

Mallam Musa is an example of mat weaver among the Ebira Nya. Musa lives in Toto (see fig. 2) and he was 60 years of age. Mallam Musa was interviewed on 17 October, 1989.

SALIU: When did you start weaving mat?

MUSA: I have been making mats since my youth. I can not say the years.

SALIU: I can see that you decorate your mat with different colours. How do you get these colours?

MUSA: I prepare the colours myself. The inside substance of corn stalk is soaked in water for certain number of days after which pink dye is obtained. To get black dye, the stalk substance is mixed with river-side mud and left for some days before boiling the mixture. The major raw materials-raffia palm fibre, is equally obtained locally.

SALIU: What are the meanings of the colours you use in decorating your mats?

MUSA: All the colours that I use are to make my mats look nice so that they are bought on time and with more money (high price).

SALIU: What would you say are the functions of the mats that you produce?

MUSA: The mat is used for relaxation by elders, particularly after the day long work on the farm or on water doing fishing. Chiefs also have many of the mat in their palaces or sitting rooms for their visitors to sit on. In the past, the chiefs were the main consumers of the product. These days there is no such restriction. Anybody who can afford the cost of my mat can own as many of it as possible.

SALIU: Thank you very much.

11. MRS HANNAH ISAAC

Madam Hannah Isaac lives at Ozuri, in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State. Aged about 60 years, Madam Hannah was interviewed on 12 October, 1989.

SALIU: I would be very grateful if you could tell me different types of body decoration of Ebira Tao that you know.

HANNA: Egu, esa, teeth filing, piecing of lip, avuku, apele, ukokori and lali are the different forms of body decoration among my people for one purpose or the other.

SALIU: Can you explain more on these types of body decoration?

HANNA: Egu, the most earliest, was done with knife (scarification). It was done on the face of both male and female at the age of puberty, indicating that one had reached marriageable age. Esa is of two types. The first is esaireku, done with knife (scarification), while the second type is done with needle - esaorihi (tattooing). The two types came to fashion after egu which was no longer too popular. Like egu, both types of esa were done for beauty. Though patronage is now mainly on esaorihi (tattooing), the purpose of the decoration is still for fashion. In the past, both male and female patronised esa, it is only the female adolescents that have esaorihi on their bodies these days. Avuku is the traditional facial marking of one vertical mark on each cheek of the face. This came as a result of inter-ethnic wars for the purpose of identifying one's ethnic members. The influence of Western mode of education brought a break - off from the tradition of giving the identification markings to children.

During the Nigerian Civil War of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the tradition resurfaced to avoid an Ebira Tao being mistaken for an Igbo, who were claimed, were not carrying facial identification marking. The tradition has once again started fading out. Along with esa came apele (scarification) which is done on each side of the face - close to the eyes. An imitation of Yoruba 'pele', apele consists three short vertical markings on each side of the face. Like the esa,

apele is done to enhance the facial beauty of a female Ebira Tao, though the patronage is not as much as that of esa orihi (tattoo).

Ukokori, a painted body decoration, has been another form of body decoration among Ebira Tao, mainly on the bodies of female adolescent. In the past it was painted in curve linear pattern all over the body of a bride on the eve of her marriage. This was for the purpose of more admiration by the husband, as the body would be exposed to the husband for the first time, that is, the first night of the marriage. In addition, ukokori was done on babies to cure some sickness like high temperature and paleness (that is, the skin being unnaturally too light).

SALIU Like the types of body decoration you have mentioned, is ukokori decoration worn by any Ebira Tao female member?

HANNA: Except the Ihima people, all other people of Ebira to decorate their bodies with ukokori. However, the use of ukokori is not as much as before due to modern fashion make-ups like powder, lip-stick and so on. Other forms of early body decoration of our people are teeth filing and lip piercing. Teeth filing was patronised by male and female. In both cases the eight incisors were filed in two different shapes. For the female, the incisors were shaped into flat-topped and narrowed-middle teeth, known as okana. The male's incisors were filed into triangular-topped teeth, known as ohoro. Lip piercing was patronised by female adults only. The upper lip of the mouth was pierced into which costly beads like ovene were fixed to enhance the beauty of the woman.

SALIU: Excuse me Madam, are you saying that all the forms of body decoration you have so far discussed, there is none of them that has some religious interpretations?

HANNA: All these forms of body decoration, with an exception of avuku (identification marks), are purely for the beautification of the body. The only religious connection with the art is in the ukokori which is prohibited in Ihima District of Ebira Tao. To Ihima people, their ori - god of fertility and protection, will be annoyed with the entire people of Ihima, If anybody has ukokori decoration for trying to endanger the natural fertility and protection of the people. Because of this belief it is vehemently disallowed for anybody having ukokori decoration on the body to go to the District, talk less of an Ihima indigen wearing the ukokori decoration.

SALIU: Do you still know of any other form of body decoration of the Ebira Tao?

HANNA: The last form of body decoration among Ebira Tao is the application of lali (Henna) substance on the palm, ball of the thumb, the fingers and the nails of the hand; and on the heel, the arch, the toes and toenails of the foot. The patrons of this form of body decoration are muslim female. Besides the enhancement of the beauty of the wearer, it is a common belief among Ebira muslims that the angels

would be pleased with any woman that dies with lali (Henna) decoration on her feet and hands.

SALIU: Why do you think that the muslim female members of the Ebira Tao patronise lali decoration more than other people?

HANNA: Beside the enhancement of the beauty of any woman that decorates her feet and hands with lali, it is a common belief among Ebira Tao muslims that the Angels would be pleased with any woman that dies with lali (Hanna) decoration on her feet and hands. Because of this belief, when a muslim woman dies without the lali decoration, the relations will prepare lali substance and the feet and palms of the dead will be covered with the substance, at least to stain the appropriate parts of the body before she is buried.

SALIU: Thank you very much for all you have told me.

12. MRS HAJARATU ABDULLAHI

Mrs Hajaratu Abdullahi is a traditional cloth weaver on vertical loom among the Ebira Tao. She lives at Ozuri - in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State. Aged 38 years, Mrs. Abdullahi teaches traditional cloth weaving to female pupils of Zonal Education Board (ZEB) School at Oziokutu on part-time basis. She was interviewed by this researcher on 12 October, 1989.

SALIU: When did you start the art of cloth weaving?

ABDULLAHI: I cannot say, because I grew up in the art. That is, when I was young I was assisting my mother who was a cloth weaver. But I have been weaving cloths for sale for more than twenty (20) years now.

SALIU: That is great. Then could you please say all you know of cloth weaving of the Ebira Tao?

ABDULLAHI: Cloth weaving among my people is as old as the people. Initially, hand-spun thread was used for the weaving of cloth. This can still be found among few cloth weavers. The thread is mainly used to weave special cloths for the burial of elderly people. Where the thread is mixed with certain fibre it is known as Itaorupa, mostly of white and black colour design. Without the fibre it is known as itaogede (used to bury very rich elderly people). Other types of hand-woven cloth used as shroud are itaokueta and opete. Ita ilueta is used to bury elderly men, while opete for elderly women. With the importation of machine-spun thread, traditional cloths are woven with the 'new' thread in assorted colour patterns, and cloths are named according to pattern-type.

SALIU: Can you please mention some such pattern-types and if possible, when the patterns were created?

ABDULLAHI: These are: anahina, ikente (a copy of Ghana Kente cloth), opete, onorupa (rope-like pattern), onishuga (sugar-like pattern), onatovi (galena-like pattern), onupatesi (road-like pattern). Onniwaya (wire-like pattern), onigorigo (beniseed-like pattern), first woven in 1988. Aso Oke (Ebira version of Yoruba asoooke, which is wider in strip than the Yoruba type. It started featuring as from 1988), sunsun - started at the same time as asooke, oniflawa (flower-like pattern, which started in 1987), oninomi (bird-motif, started in 1989), coat of arms - started in 1983, okekereku (crown-like motif), ubaanipogoro (started in 1986 by the people of upogoro area in Okene Local Government). The background colour is white with assorted coloured patterns), ita Adamu (designed to commemorate the election of Alhaji Adamu Atta as the first Executive Governor of Kwara State. The design started in 1980), ita Shagari (designed to commemorate the election of Alhaji Shehu Shagari as the executive President of Nigeria. The design started in 1980), and ijanduku (woven to mark the turbulent political disturbance in the former Western Region - now Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Osun and Ondo States of Nigeria, first designed in 1967).

SALIU: How do you normally get your motifs/designs?

ABDULLAHI: Designs are formed out of the creative mind of the artist. Some times motifs are brought by clients, and once they are woven onto cloth and found to be good, other cloth weavers started to copy, and it becomes additional design type in cloth weaving. There is no copyright law on any design.

SALIU: Why do you make patterns on cloths?

ABDULLAHI: Patterns made or incorporated wordings and proverbial sayings like "Isuwame ro duwavame" (Think twice before doing anything),"Enesiha, Enyi Oza Anasi ha Inehe" (who is free, no body is free on this earth) etc, okekereku (crown-like motif) signifies wealth.

SALIU: Can you mention the uses of hand woven cloths?

ABDULLAHI: Handwoven cloths are used for different functions, mainly social functions. There is no restriction these days on the type of cloths for specific occasion, except the ones used as shroud as earlier mentioned. White cloth (uba) was used in olden days by chief priest and his assistants to worship ori (god of fertility and protection) which

is observed by Ihima and Eganyi people of Okehi and Ajaokuta Local Government Areas respectively. Nowadays, factory or machine-woven white cloth is used for this purpose. The traditional hand-woven cloths used as shroud were also used to build masquerades' costumes. As in the case of the use of uba for ori worship, many masquerades are dressed in machine-produced cloths. It is very aged masquerades that have their costumes made with traditional hand-woven cloths. The new or modern version of traditional opete, which comprises prucian blue, light blue and black colour-patterns, is used by both male and female for fashion dresses. Unlike the old types which were mainly used as

covering cloth, modern woven cloth has multi-purpose functions.

SALIU: Who are the patrons of your cloths?

ABDULLAHI: People who buy my cloths cut across the society provided they have the money to buy the cloths. Many times, some traders even took my cloths, among others, to different places outside Ebira Tao for sale.

SALIU: Thank you very much, and I wish you keep up the practice of cloth weaving.

13. ALHAJI USMAN IDRIS

Alhaji Usman Idris is the Ohimege Panda (Government recognised traditional ruler) of Umaisha Kingdom in Plateau State (see fig. 2). Aged 62 years, Alhaji Usman Idris was interviewed on 19 October, 1989.

SALIU: Would you please say as much as possible all you know about body decoration of Ebira Nya?

ALHAJI IDRIS: Among the Ebira Nya (Ebira of Panda Kingdom), the only form of body decoration in form of scarification are the facial marks. For the royal families or royal descendants, the facial marks are three (3) covering short lines on each side of the mouth and one (1) diagonal mark from the nose to the cheek on the left hand side of the face. The mark, known as esa eteta was mainly for the purpose of identification, particularly during war times. Those outside the royal families have one (1) line mark, the diagonal type from the nose to the cheek. These facial marks, particularly the esa eteta (three-three marks), is the general identification mark for the Ebira Kwotto, Umaisha, Toto, ujah, Shafa-Kwotto, Shafa Bapa, Kenyihu and Abaji - all under Panda Kingdom. The people do not decorate their body with tattoo or paint like the Ebira Tao. However, they have different hair styles (female), which are according to taste and the amount of hair of an individual.

SALIU: Sir, do you mean there are no other forms of body decoration of Ebira Nya?

ALHAJI IDRIS: The only other form of body decoration of my people I know is lale decoration. Our women decorate their palms and feet with lale (Henna) substance to please their husbands. Both muslim and christian women use lale for this purpose. They also decorate the palms and feet with the substance whenever they are pleased and during festivals.

SALIU: Please sir, what about pottery art? I am sure your people produce pottery ware.

ALHAJI IDRIS: Pottery is one of our old art traditions which is done by women. The men are fully engaged on the field - farming throughout the day, so no time for 'minor' works like pottery. The style, decoration

and functions of our pots are the same as those of our people in Konton-Karfe near Lokoja.

SALIU: Sir, I would be grateful if you say as much as possible all you know about cloth weaving of your people.

ALHAJI IDRIS: Cloth weaving started with the people. Various types have been produced. Formerly the thread used for the weaving was made from locally grown cotton. With the coming of machine-spun thread, hand-woven cloth has been in assorted colours and patterns. Different motifs ranging from representational to abstract ones have been woven onto our cloth.

SALIU: What would you say are the functions of hand woven cloths of your people?

ALHAJI IDRIS: Different cloth types are produced for different functions or purposes. For instance there are okerengu, dunna, karaworo etc, serving different purposes. The cloths vary in superiority according to types. This also determines the costs of the cloths. During ogale festival, which started around 1750 AD to mark the establishment of Panda Kingdom, and now observed in December of each year, different wears made out of hand woven cloth are worn to grace the festival. During Sallah celebrations, different sets of dresses made with hand woven cloth are worn by the celebrants.

Further more, the cloth was used to bury dead people in the past. The white type (uba) was used to bury dead people generally, while the black type was used to bury very old people. With the coming of Islamic religion, the use of black cloth as shroud has stopped, while the white machine-woven cloth is now used for the same purpose in place of the traditional type (uba). The masquerades' costumes are made with the hand woven cloth. which are either black, red or white in colour, depending on the age and the masquerade concerned. For instance, Ekuoha uses white mixed with black cloth. Ekuoha is a tall masquerade like the Bida type. Owuna uses another colour - type of costumes, so also is oganje. The last two types of masquerade dance to entertain audience.

SALIU: Who practice the art of cloth weaving in your area?

ALHAJI IDRIS: Cloth weaving is an art for women, and my four wives are cloth weavers, who are capable to create any design or patterns on cloths.

SALIU: What would you say are the functions of patterns and motifs on the woven cloths of your people.?

ALHAJI IDRIS: Patterns and motifs on woven cloths are created and incorporated onto the weaving mainly to beautify the cloths and to attract the buyers.

SALIU: Please sir, do your people produce metal objects, if so, what forms of objects do they produce and what type of decoration do they make on the metal objects?

ALHAJI IDRIS: Yes, my people (black and brass smiths) produce different types of metal work. These include knives, spears (made for the Ohimege), arrows, hoe-blades, ear-rings/plugs, hair pins, and many others. On each of these objects, nice decoration is made mainly to enhance the aesthetics of the products, and to attract buyers.

SALIU: What about wood carving and the decoration of carved wooden objects?

ALHAJI IDRIS: Different types of carved wood objects were common with the people in the past-before the coming of Islam to the area. Stools, staff of office, masks for masquerades, human figures, door panels etc, were produced by traditional carvers. But when Islamic religion was embraced by the people the practice of the art stopped. As time went on, the produced carved works were destroyed. For instance, all sculpture works in the Ohimege's palace were completely destroyed as far back as in the 1950s. And since then my people have not been producing any carved wood object beside hoe and knife handles.

SALIU: Thank you very much sir.