Table of Contents

Acknowl	edgements	9
Prelimin	ary Remarks	11
1. Benin:	: History, Religion and Verbal Art	13
1.1.	The history of present-day Benin	
1.2.	The organisation of the Kingdom of Danxomè	16
1.3.	The Fon traditional religion	17
1.4.	Publications about Fongbe verbal art	21
2. Collec	ting the Corpus	25
2.1.	The social and political context of the fieldwork	25
2.2.	Planning and organisation of the project	26
2.3.	Preparing for the recording sessions	27
2.4.	The actual recordings of the corpus	28
3. The V	erbal Art of the Fon: the Performance Witnessed	33
3.1.	The setting of the performance	33
3.2.	The performers	37
3.3.	Gestures in performance: kinetics	39
3.4.	The interaction with the audience	40
3.5.	Ceremonies versus verbal art	42
4. Eleme	ents of Fongbe Stories	45
4.1.	The world of the Fongbe stories	45
4.2.	The central participant	47
4.3.	Agents	51
4.4.	The principle of duality	54
4.5.	Religious devices	56
5. Topics	s: Power and Violations	63
5.1.	The topic of power	
5.2.	The power of the powerful	63
5.3.	Wealth, food and sex	66
5.4.	Benevolence, malevolence and taboos	67
5.5.	The trickster stories: deceit and deception	68
6. The G	enre	71
7. The T	ools of the Performers	75
7.1.	Structuring the discourse: the timing of speech	
7.2.	The use of rhetorical elements	
7.3.	The underlying framework	
7.4.	The use of style elements	79

7.5. 7.6.	Referential and metalinguistic codes The storyboard technique	
8. Rema	arks about the Transcription and the Translation	85
8.1.	Remarks about the working process	
8.2.	Remarks about the transcription	
8.3.	Remarks about the translation in English	87
Referer	ces	91
	lix	
Appe	endix 1: The performers and the performances	94
The Ay	ou Stories	. 99
Hun	ter Little Finger and the King (Ayou 1)	100
How	Yeh deceived Great Spirit Dada Sehgbo (Ayou 2)	112
How	Yoh was thrown out of the Land of Sky (Ayou 3)	134
How	Yeh escaped from the market of the ancestors (Ayou 4)	154
The	cat and the leopard (Ayou 5)	182
The	rooster and the elephant (Ayou 6)	196
How	Yeh deceived the leopard and the termites (Ayou 7)	206
How	Yoh deceived them all (Ayou 8)	224
The Ab	omey-Calavi Stories	233
The	hunter's wife (Abomey-Calavi 1)	234
The	sadist co-wife (Abomey-Calavi 2)	242
	heartless brothers (Abomey-Calavi 3)	258
Two	heartless brothers (Abomey-Calavi 3)day to thresh the millet (Abomey-Calavi 4)	
Two	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	286
Two The Two	day to thresh the millet (Abomey-Calavi 4)	286 310
Two The Two Rath	day to thresh the millet (Abomey-Calavi 4) friends (Abomey-Calavi 5)	286 310 344
Two The Two Rath The	day to thresh the millet (Abomey-Calavi 4) friends (Abomey-Calavi 5) er friendship than power (Abomey-Calavi 6)	286 310 344 376
Two The Two Rath The The	day to thresh the millet (Abomey-Calavi 4) friends (Abomey-Calavi 5) er friendship than power (Abomey-Calavi 6) ruthless husband (Abomey-Calavi 7)	286 310 344 376 404
Two The Two Rath The The The	day to thresh the millet (Abomey-Calavi 4)	286 310 344 376 404 416
Two The Two Rath The The The	day to thresh the millet (Abomey-Calavi 4)	286 310 344 376 404 416 428
Two The Two Rath The The The The The	day to thresh the millet (Abomey-Calavi 4)	286 310 344 376 404 416 428 440
Two The Two Rath The The The The The The	day to thresh the millet (Abomey-Calavi 4)	286 310 344 376 404 416 428 440 458
Two The Two Rath The The The The The The The	day to thresh the millet (Abomey-Calavi 4)	286 310 344 376 404 416 428 440 458 466
Two The Two Rath The The The The The The The The	day to thresh the millet (Abomey-Calavi 4)	286 310 344 376 404 416 428 440 458 466 472
Two The Two Rath The The The The The The The The	day to thresh the millet (Abomey-Calavi 4)	286 310 344 376 404 416 428 440 458 466 472 494
Two The Two Rath The The The The The The The The The Th	day to thresh the millet (Abomey-Calavi 4)	286 310 344 376 404 416 428 440 458 466 472 494 516 540
Two The Two Rath The The The The The The The The The Th	day to thresh the millet (Abomey-Calavi 4)	286 310 344 376 404 416 428 440 458 466 472 494 516 540

e Abomey Stories605
Two women friends (Abomey 1)
The indiscreet hunter (Abomey 2)630
The vicious farmer (Abomey 3)640
The day to thresh the millet (Abomey 4)
The sadist co-wife (Abomey 5)668
The lion and the hyena (Abomey 6)676
The cat and the leopard (Abomey 7)690
The adulterous wife (Abomey 8)700
Who is important? (Abomey 9)714
How Yoh was up to his tricks again, or so he thought (Abomey 10)716