UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE FIRE DANCE OF THE FORT SILL CHIRICAHUA/WARM SPRINGS APACHE

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

By

Thomas Christopher Aplin
Norman, Oklahoma
2002

Downloaded from SHAREOK. Persistent Handle URL: https://hdl.handle.net/11244/330049

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
LIBRARIES

OU
Thesis
APL
cop.2

THE FIRE DANCE OF THE FORT SILL WARM SPRINGS/CHIRICAHUA APACHE

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY

[redacted]

Dr. Paula Conlon

[redacted]

Dr. Eugene Enrico

[redacted]

Dr. Michael Lee

[redacted]

Dr. Michael Rogers

© Copyright by Thomas Christopher Apker 2002
All Rights Reserved

© Copyright by Thomas Christopher Aplin 2002
All Rights Reserved.

Acknowledgements

It is necessary that I acknowledge many people for their many roles over the past years as I worked to complete this effort. Despite walking in unannounced and without prior invitation, the folks at the Fort Sill Apache headquarters were hospitable and informative. Particular thanks are due to Michael Darrow, who offered much time and energy throughout my research and whose knowledge was revelatory. Without the insightful input of Ruey Darrow, and Lupe Gooday, this thesis and my own personal knowledge would be significantly poorer. Our interactions at the tribal headquarters feed and inspire me today as they will continue to into the distant future. Many, Many thanks.

A great debt is owed to the musicology staff at the University of Oklahoma—Dr. Eugene Enrico, Dr. Michael Lee, and Dr. Paula Conlon—for providing the inspiration and motivation to enter the discipline. To Dr. Conlon, in particular, many thanks for the insight, support, and patience throughout the development of this thesis. I extend many thanks to Dr. Jerry Bread and Dr. Bob Fields for their interactions, inspiration, and words of wisdom. To those scholars and academics whose influence transcend physical proximity and time—Dr. Tom Vennum, Jr., Dr. David Henderson, the folks at the American Folklife Center, Jeff, Stephanie and the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Dr. Matthew Allen, Dr. Alan Ross, Dr. Gary Kosloski, Dr. John Thomson—your wisdom and influence are felt daily.

A few other important friends and supporters should be thoroughly and accordingly thanked for their influence—Elliot Valdez, Robert Brennan, Joseph Guerrero, Richard Lewis Dey, III, and Daniel Foulks. Profound thanks are owed to the family—particularly Tom and Sam, Sam and Gene, Scott, Scottie, Thelma and Louise—

each who displayed undying patience and support while I remained locked away from the outside world during the completion of this thesis. The thought of each of you provided unparalleled inspiration, every step of the way, as I sought to realize the potential of this work to its fullest.

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	1
II.	Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs History	6
III.	Fire Dance Background and Cosmology	18
IV.	The Fire Dance and Medical/Religious Change	33
V.	Historical Documentation Pertaining to Fire Dance Performance	46
VI.	Personal Observation of Fire Dance Performance	73
VII.	Fire Dance Music	83
VIII.	Conclusion	95
IX.	Appendix I—Interview Transcripts	
	a. Lupe Gooday	102
	b. Michael Darrow	114
	c. Ruey Darrow	124
X.	Appendix II—Semiotic Analysis of Fire Dance Songs	134
XI.	Bibliography	152

I. Introduction

The masked ceremonial dance common among the Apache tribes of the Southwest has been called by different names throughout the history of its documentation. Among many early ethnographers, it was known as the Devil Dance. Still others have classified it as the Horn Dance, a reference to the physical similarity between the dance masks and deer antlers. Students of the scholarship of Morris Opler dub it the Dance of the Mountain Spirits. The numerous terminologies for this ceremonial stem in part from the fact that this ceremony is practiced in diverse form by most Athapaskan speaking groups of the Southwest. Distantly related is the Yeibechei ceremony of the Navajo and the Háschín of the Jicarilla, while the Western Apache Crown Dance, Mescalero Dance of the Mountain Spirits,[1] and the Fire Dance of the Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache are more closely related. The Fire Dance and its performance by the Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache will occupy the focus for this study.

Based on a traditional ethnohistorical approach, the opening of this study will trace the documented history of the Fire Dance of the Fort Sill Apache. No discussion of the Fort Sill Apache is complete without brief reference to their early history, their conflict with the United States government in the American southwest, and their subsequent removal as prisoners of war that resulted in their eventual residence in Oklahoma. The status of the Fort Sill Apache as prisoners of war, stretching over a period of a quarter century, is of great importance in understanding the tribe and Fire Dance ceremony in a contemporary sense.

[1] This terminology is sometimes also used among the Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache. Among the Mescalero Apache, the dance is sometimes interchangeably called "Dance of the Mountain Gods."

A basic discussion of the traditional function of the dance among Apachean groups will be provided. Whereas this is a music and dance tradition rooted in religious belief, insight into the cosmology of the Chiricahua Apache and an analysis of the representation of these beliefs within the ceremony itself will be discussed.

The Fire Dance was traditionally performed under the direction of a tribal specialist, the medicine man. The role of this figure, both within the ceremony and the larger community, will be addressed. It will be seen that, while originally a guardian of religious and practical medical knowledge, the role of the medicine man changed substantially under the influence of military health care and Christian missionaries. Consequently, the impact of these influences has also significantly shaped the modern performance of the Fire Dance.

A documented history of the Fire Dance will be drawn from early ethnographic manuscripts, scholarly writings, and periodicals. These sources will be employed in the construction of a historical framework in which the ceremonial may be viewed. This framework will then be juxtaposed with an eyewitness account of contemporary performances witnessed personally by the author, allowing for easy comparison.

The next section will focus on the musical aspects of Fire Dance performance. Derived from recorded Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs performances dating from the mid 1940s to the present, semiotic analysis of Fire Dance songs will be provided. In order to define and classify the conventional genre of Fire Dance song, the melodic material will be analyzed and the salient features described.

Through research and interviews, a dissonance has emerged between traditional ethnographic documentation addressing Fire Dance performance and community discourse

pertaining to the performance practice. For this reason, the final sections of this thesis—offered in the form of an extended appendix—will be in stark contrast to the preceding sections which center more on academic documentation. The latter portion aims to capture with fidelity community values, ideals, dialogue and perceptions surrounding the Fire Dance. This section will focus on the distinct community histories and lineages of local Fire Dance traditions in southwest Oklahoma, the aesthetics that surround its performance, and issues of intellectual property apparent in the dance, dress, music, and symbolic meaning behind the Fire Dance.

To be more specific, the goal is to address several questions in regard to the aforementioned areas of inquiry. On the issue of history and lineage, the aim is to accurately depict how the practice of the Fire Dance is transmitted. Where did the tradition originate? Who passes on the tradition? Who receives it and what qualifications have to be met in order to inherit the practice? How does the practice change and evolve over time? What are the community standards regarding acceptable variation and innovation within performance? While the performance is still practiced today, some traditions once present within southwest Oklahoma have disappeared. Why are these family traditions no longer practiced? What knowledge of its history remains in the collective memories of relatives still living in the area?

Music acts upon its audience in different ways. The performance itself can elicit an emotional reaction, but audience response often rests upon varying criteria. Is it the integrity of the musical sound—the timbre, rhythmic drive, or ensemble, for example—that elicits reaction from the members of the Fort Sill Apache? Or is it the clarity and poetry in the

delivery of the lyrical content, or prayers, that people find moving? Is it the effective use of performance space or sharpness in the step of the dancers that is thought to be the key to a successful performance? Perhaps it is instead knowledge of a collective history and tradition that gives meaning and drive to a Fire Dance. It is probably a combination of the preceding in conjunction with other yet unnamed criteria. In short, it is likely a very subjective experience shaped by personal preference, shared community experience and situation-specific interpretation. Despite the dangers inherent in probing such subjective areas of inquiry, exploration of aesthetics may shed light on broad community music values. In the form of a question: through exploration of the concepts surrounding aesthetics, are there any that emerge and particularly emphasize commonly held community preferences?

The last area of inquiry covers an issue with implications that comment upon the responsibility of ethnographers, hobbyists, scholars of Native American [American Indian; Indian] culture, and perhaps the discipline of ethnomusicology as a whole: the issue of respectful treatment of intellectual property. While speaking with informants associated with the Fort Sill Apache or the ceremony itself, it became apparent that apprehension existed concerning the transcription and publication of Fire Dance songs. A similar hesitancy marks, as well, discussions of dance choreography, symbol use and identification, and dance outfits. What was the source of this concern? Why shouldn't such songs be transcribed and published? If audio copies are available in public archives and even on publicly released recordings, what harm could come from academic analysis, description, and publication of these songs? If knowledge is power, how is it that a more informed public at large can be construed as detrimental to local Fort Sill Apache Fire Dance performances? By focusing on

such questions, the goal is to effectively utilize this negative space by consciously avoiding public discussion of the issues that the Fort Sill Apache are hesitant to address. Rather than talking about issues that the Fort Sill Apache find problematic, something equally valuable can be learned—such as local conceptualizations that comment on values surrounding the Fire Dance and the power and importance of its music and contemporary performance—through discourse over why they do not wish to talk about it.

II. Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Spring History

> Now he {Child of Water} had killed all of those different ones on earth who killed with their eyes. Now he was to create people.
>
> He made two mud [figures] just like men. He also made two just like women. He made all of them capable of speech.
>
> Then, [to one] man and woman: "You two will be called Indians," he said to them. "You others, you two will be called the white men," he said to them.
>
> Then he set down [several things] for them. Child of the Water is to choose for the Indians [and] Killer of Enemies is to choose for the white men; he put down a gun and a bow and arrow for them. Then Child of the Water [and] Killer of Enemies quarreled with each other. "You choose first," they said to each other.
>
> A little later Child of the Water chose the bow and arrow for the Indians. "The making of these is understood," he said.
>
> Then Killer of Enemies picked up the gun that remained without saying anything.[1]

In this origin tale of the Chiricahua lays the explanation for the Apache and their genesis in this world. Yusn Life-giver created the world. After making the world inhabitable through the destruction of predatory beings, Child of Water and his mother White Painted Woman created humans.[2] According to Apache belief the sons of White Painted Woman, Killer of Enemies and Child of Water, became the protectors of the white man and Apache, respectively.

After their creation, the discipline of anthropology includes the Apache, or at least the Athapaskan speaking groups from whom they are descended, among the last migratory waves from Asia before the Eskimos [Inuit] established themselves on the North American continent.[3] In support of this migration theory, Richard Perry states: "Some of the cultural features most Athapaskan peoples shared, such as the symbolic importance of femaleness,

---

[1] Harry Hoijer, *Chiricahua and Mescalero Apache Texts: with Ethnological Notes by Morris Edward Opler* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), 13-14.

[2] Morris Edward Opler, *Myths and Tales of the Chiricahua Apache Indians* (American Folklore Society, 1942; reprint Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 1.

death customs, and other beliefs are characteristic of certain northern Siberian peoples."[4] Related linguistically to Athapaskans still residing in the Alaska/Northwest Coast region, such as the Kutchin, Chipewyn, and Hupa, the Apache then moved south through the North American continent.

The actual events of this southward migration remain to be definitively determined. It is widely accepted that the Athapaskan groups moved through the Rocky Mountain region.[5] Consistently a mountain people, the Athapaskans moved south[6] along the mountain system that stretches from the northern Alaskan range to the Rocky Mountains in the south.[7] James and Delores Gunnerson, among others, provide a contrasting migration theory believing that the Apache may have entered the southwest through the Plains region.[8] Eventually coming to rest in an area that ranges from Northern Arizona, to the Kansas plains area, and south toward Northern Mexico, these migratory bands became the southern Athapaskans. Known amongst themselves as the Dine (or Nde, the Apachean term for "the People"), this group includes the Navajo and the following Apachean groups: the Jicarilla, the Lipan, the Kiowa-

---

[3] Donald E. Worchester, *The Apaches: Eagles of the Southwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 4.

[4] Richard J. Perry, *Apache Reservation: Indigenous Peoples and the American State* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 30.

[5] Bertha Dutton, *American Indians of the Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), 64; Morris Edward Opler, "The Apachean Culture Pattern and its Origins," in *Handbook of North American Indians, vol. 10*, general ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983), 382.

[6] Perry notes in *Apache Reservation* (32) that Athapaskan groups likely exploited the mountains for the diverse ecological zones that lay within and near the range due to the unpredictability of a hunting/gathering lifestyle, thus maximizing their potential for survival within often hostile habitats. This relationship between Athapaskan speakers and mountain environments runs from the far north of Alaska to the tribes of the American southwest.

[7] Perry, *Apache Reservation*, 31.

[8] D.C. Cole, *The Chiricahua Apache, 1846-1876: from War to Reservation* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 5; Opler, "The Apachean Culture Pattern and its Origins" in *Handbook of North American Indians*, 382.

Apache, the Mescalero, the Western Apache, and the Chiricahua.

Determination of the entry date of the southern Athapaskan speakers into the southwest is as difficult to pin-point as their migration route. Although some scholars have placed the date as early as 300 A.D., the window in which this occurred is most likely between 1000-1500 A.D.[9] Keith Basso notes that there is archaeological evidence to show that nomadic hunters were present in the southwest during the thirteenth century A.D., though there is some question as to whether these were Apache groups.[10] Confusing the matter further, D.C. Cole indicates that there is evidence supporting the Apache arrival in this region as occurring as late as 1600.[11] David Samuels emphasizes the problematic nature of dating Athapaskan entrance into the North American southwest, noting that contrasting anthropological theories place their arrival "either a few centuries or a few days before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors and friars."[12] Despite the Apaches' knowledge and skilled exploitation of their natural environment during military conflict with Spanish settlements, many ethnologists favor a later entry date into the region.

The greater Apache peoples received their name from the Zuni word *Apachú*, the English equivalent being "the enemy."[13] In a manner typical of the invading Spaniards, the subgroups

---

[9] Keith H. Basso, *Western Apache Witchcraft* (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1969), 7; J. Loring Haskell, *Southern Athapaskan Migration: A.D. 220-1750* (Tsaile: Navajo Community College Press, 1987), 81; Opler, "The Apachean Culture Pattern and its Origins" in *Handbook of North American Indians*, 382; Perry, *Apache Reservation*, 40.

[10] Basso, *Western Apache Witchcraft*, 7.

[11] Cole, *The Chiricahua Apache*, 5.

[12] David William Samuels, "A Sense of the Past: Music, Place, and History on the San Carlos Apache Reservation" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1998), 49 fn.2.

[13] This is the most commonly accepted interpretation of the term "Apache." James Haley offers several other possibilities as the source of the tribal designation. He speculates that its origin could stem from a Mexican tribe (which he fails to name) that was frequently preyed upon by the Apache, whose word *Apache* meant "raccoon." According to Haley, the term is an accurate description of traditional Tchi-he-nde Chiricahua facial war paint design. Or, he argues, it could come from the name that the Yuma Indians gave

within the Apache were often named after characteristic traits of the tribe or according to the traditional region or habitat in which the group dwelled. Due to their practice of gathering mescal, the Apache groups of central New Mexico were thus named Mescalero. Similarly, because of their skill at making baskets reminiscent of the Spaniard's jicarilla, the group located in northern New Mexico became known as the "Apache de Jicarilla."[14] The White Mountain Apache and Chiricahua branches were named after prominent geographic features of their traditional range.[15] The Chiricahua group and its associated bands, and their performance of the Fire Dance occupy the central focus of this study.

Once entrenched in the southwest, Apachean groups were able to maintain for the most part a consistent range for their hunting/gathering, minimal agriculture, and raiding. By the time of Apache-U.S. contact, the Jicarilla took up residence near the northern tip of the Rio Grande, in north central New Mexico and south central Colorado. Located close to San Antonio, Texas upon first encounter with the Spaniards, the Lipan had migrated to the north east of Santa Fe, New Mexico by the 1800s.[16] The Mescalero dwelled to the south of the Lipan and Jicarilla, ranging from south-central New Mexico south into the present-day Mexican state of Sonora. Farther to the west, the Western Apache[17] typically dwelled within present day Arizona, their range confined by the Little Colorado River and San Pedro River

---

the Apache associated Yavapai: *e-patch*, or "men that fight." James Haley, *Apaches: a History and Culture Portrait* (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 9; further possible origins for the term can be found in Muriel Wright, *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 35.

[14] Dutton, *American Indians of the Southwest*, 66.

[15] Wright, in *Indian Tribes of Oklahoma* (35), states that the Chiricahua name is taken from the Apache term for "Great Mountain."

[16] Thomas Mails, *The People Called Apache* (Engelwood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1974), 14, 17.

[17] Basso lists five sub-tribal groupings among the Western Apache: the White Mountain, the San Carlos, the Cibeque, the Northern Tonto, and the Southern Tonto (1969), 7. Samuels, in *A Sense of the Past* (58-62), notes that Yuman speaking Yavapai, Mojaves, or Yumans (each an interchangeable terminology) present on

on the North and South, and the Piñal Mountains and the western border of present-day New Mexico on the west and east. To the southeast of the Western Apache lay the Chiricahua. This group's territory straddled southeast Arizona and southwestern New Mexico, spilling into the northern Mexican states of Sonora and Chihuahua.

Morris Opler divides the Chiricahua tribe into three subgroups, or bands: the Eastern, Central, and Southern Chiricahua.[18] The Eastern Chiricahua were the most northeasterly situated of the groups, residing predominantly in the western New Mexico region bound by the Mogollon Mountains on the southwest and the San Mateo Mountains on the east. Alternately known also as the Chihene,[19] Coppermine, Mogollones, and Ojo Caliente Apache, this group will be referred to throughout the text of this thesis by their most relevant, common, and contemporary designation, the Warm Springs Apache.

The Central Chiricahua traditionally dwelled around the mountain range from which the tribe took their name, located in the southeastern corner of Arizona. This group has been represented by numerous names throughout the history of their documentation, such as Chokonen (Chukunen) or Cochise Apaches. Another group of significant importance within the scope of this study, they will be referred to simply as the Chiricahua Apache.

The Southern Chiricahua ranged in the northern most parts of what is now known as the Mexican states of Sonora and Chihuahua. Also called Nedni (Nednai) or Pinery Apache, this

---

the San Carlos reservation have historically been problematic when discussing Western Apache history and culture, but shouldn't be factored out of the cultural equation in the region.

[18] Morris Edward Opler, *An Apache Life-way: the Economic, Social and Religious Traditions of the Chiricahua Indians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941; reprint Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 1-3; Morris Edward Opler, "Chiricahua Apache" in *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983), 401; Scott Rushforth, "Introduction to the Bison Book Edition" in *Myths and Tales of the Chiricahua Apache Indians* by Morris Edward Opler (American Folklore Society, 1942; reprint Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), viii.

group eventually disappeared into the fabric of the larger Chiricahua (Central) group. While all three groups—the Eastern, Central, and Southern Apache—are closely related, the tri-partite division of the tribe remains problematic. Though they were connected through language, cultural practice, and marriage, each of the groups traditionally maintained political autonomy. Furthermore, Opler's tribal designation ignores the influence of the Bendonkohe band of Apache on the other three groups. The Bendonkohe, also sometimes called the Broncho or Geronimo Apache, were of substantial influence in the unfolding of Chiricahua history in the southwest, primarily through the actions of the famous band member known as Geronimo.

Fluctuating designations of tribal identities by early Spanish explorers creates some confusion as to when the Apache first encountered Europeans. It is generally accepted that contact was made between the Apache and the Spaniards by 1550, after which documentation of this tribal group becomes relatively more consistent. The relationship between the differing regional cultures, that is the Spaniards and numerous Indian tribes of "New Spain," was initially friendly. In fact, many regional tribes collaborated and traded openly with the European visitors. As time passed, however, tensions increased and the local Indians of the southwest began to believe that their visitors were outstaying their welcome. As a result:

> On the tenth day of August 1680, the northeastern frontier of New Spain exploded like a penetrated magazine. Within a short space of time, one third of the European population in the Rio Grande Region lay dead. The rest, with the loyal Christian Indians who survived the carnage, fled in undignified disarray, not stopping until they had reached El Paso del Norte or some equally remote bastion of safety.[20]

---

[19] This term translates into the Apache language as "Red Paint People."
[20] Haley, *History and Culture Portrait*, 29.

After the Pueblo revolt of 1680, the Spaniards would remain outside of their abandoned territory until 1692 when Diego de Vargas and his army would retake the territory. Even upon reestablishing their influence within the region the "new colonists found themselves largely at the Apaches' mercy."[21] In many ways, this first encounter with Europeans would prove to be a harbinger of frictions to come.

The successful Mexican revolution of 1821 created a new nation independent of Spanish rule, but by the 1840s the northern provinces of the new nation had fallen into disarray.[22] Spanish treaties with the indigenous inhabitants of the southwest were not observed by the new Mexican government. As a result, various Indian tribes in the southwest were revolting and settlements were being emptied due to fear of raiding Apache. With its defense weakened in the frontier territory, Mexico was dealt another blow when war commenced between Mexico and the United States in 1846. The Apache proved cooperative toward the United States government against their common foe, the Mexicans, during this war. Unfortunately for the Indians of New Mexico and Arizona this important bond between the Apache and the Americans evaporated after the treaty of Guadalupe de Hidalgo ended the war in 1848.

The treaty between the formerly warring countries came with the stipulation that the government of the United States would insure that Apache raiders north of the border would no longer venture into northern Mexico for raids. Apachean groups, particularly the White Mountain and Chiricahua, had long relied on the Mexican land and property of northern

---

[21] Ibid, 30.
[22] Ibid, 52; Worchester, *Eagles of the Southwest*, 43.

Sonora and Chihuahua for many of their necessities, namely horses, cattle, and guns. After the war they quickly resumed their raids, commencing the looting of Northern Mexico. The U.S. government soon discovered that it would be difficult to control the actions of these Apachean bands. Raiding had become the most significant provider in the up-keep of the tribe. In a region where the land was generally hostile, Euroamerican settlers were making themselves ever more present, and carrying on the traditional life-way was becoming ever more difficult, the Apache would not and could not cease their raiding activities.

It was evident by the mid 1850s that conflicts between Euroamerican settlers and the indigenous inhabitants of the southwest were increasing. Colonel James L. Collins began urging that Apache bands should be concentrated near military posts within the region, given supplies, and kept peaceful as early as 1857.[23] Such a remedy for the frictions between the U.S. and the Apaches was among the more moderate proposed within the region at this time. Although the U.S. was legally obliged to keep the Apache from raiding into Mexico, they were not bound by law to monitor hunters who crept north to collect Indian scalps, a lucrative trade after the Mexican government began offering money for Apache scalps in order to curb raiding from the north. Nor was the United States government obligated to keep its Anglo citizens in New Mexico and Arizona from collecting this bounty. Extermination of the tribe became a topic in the regional discourse concerning the conflict between the settlers and Apaches.

Although contrary to the wishes of many of the new settlers within the Arizona/New Mexico area, the Indians within newly acquired states were eventually relocated onto

[23] Perry, *Apache Reservation*, 119.

reservations. Muriel Wright indicates that agreement was reached between the Apache groups and governmental representatives at Santa Fe, on July 1, 1852, when the only treaty between the United States and the Apache of Arizona and New Mexico was signed.[24] The treaty provided for a tribal reservation, the boundaries of which were to be fixed by the government.[25] In the early 1870s, the San Carlos reservation was established to become the home of the Western branches of the Apache. Lieutenant Britton Davis described this reservation, or "Hell's Forty Acres," thus: "Scrawny, dejected lines of scattered cottonwoods, shrunken, almost leafless, marked the course of streams. Rain was so infrequent that it took on the semblance of phenomenon when it came at all. Almost continuously, dry, hot, dust- and gravel-laden winds swept the plain, denuding it of every vestige of vegetation. In summer a temperature of 110 in the shade was cool weather."[26]

The Chiricahua were originally allotted lands near their traditional range near Apache Pass, Arizona through an 1872 agreement between Cochise and General O. O. Howard. The Chiricahua were later moved to a new home on the San Carlos reservation in 1876—a move likely more the result of the consolidation policies of the U.S. government than the violent disturbance of two Apache brothers, named Skinya and Pionsenay, upon whom the government pinned the blame.[27] The Yavapai had been relocated to San Carlos in 1875, as well, and the introduction of the Chiricahua lead to overcrowding and distrust between tribes that had not been friendly even in pre-reservation days. The acreage of land began to

---

[24] Wright, *Indian Tribes of Oklahoma*, 37.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Perry, *Apache Reservation*, 120.
[27] For further information on this incident, see Angie Debo, *Geronimo* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 97-98; Haley, *History and Culture Portrait,* 311; and Worchester, *Eagles of the Southwest,* 193-194.

diminish due to the discovery of valuable mineral deposits within the reservation. Thinking of the monetary benefit to their settlements, local whites fought for and won the rights to land within the boundary of the Apache reserve.

Geronimo had been living on the Chiricahua reservation at the time of their removal to San Carlos. After a brief meeting with Indian agent John Clum, Geronimo agreed to move to the new reservation as well, but added that he must first return to his people, inform them of the situation, and gather their belongings. Clum agreed to this, but when Geronimo returned to his band, they quickly packed and broke away from the reservation, abandoned their agreement with Clum, and fled from the agent and his soldiers.[28] Geronimo later reemerged on the Warm Springs reservation in southwestern New Mexico Territory. When news of Geronimo's presence at this reservation reached Clum in early 1877, the agent mounted forces and headed to the home of the Warm Springs Apache to apprehend the "renegade."[29] As a result of harboring the wanted Geronimo and his followers, the Warm Springs Apache were forced to join the Chiricahua at the San Carlos agency. Once again a transparent incident provided sufficient reason to consolidate Apachean groups on this reservation, this time resulting in the removal of Warm Springs Apache, who had lived peaceably upon the reservation since 1852, from their traditional homelands.

The crowding and distrust among the neighboring populations at San Carlos along with insufficient support from the governing agencies led to repeated outbreaks by Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apache from the reservation. Among the reservation breakers on the loose in the American southwest were the famous Apache leaders Juh, Naiche and Geronimo. This

[28] Debo, *Geronimo*, 98-99.

group's pattern of breaking away from the reservation and raiding settlements in the newly acquired U.S. territory, as well as northern Mexico, would prove to be a nuisance to government officials and Arizona/New Mexico citizens for the next decade. Once again, the citizens of New Mexico and Arizona found themselves "at the mercy" of the Apache threat.

As a result of their noncompliance with United States governmental policy, the historically related but politically independent Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apache suffered a fate unique in American history. After several failed negotiations and agreements with Major General George Crook, Geronimo's group of reservation breakers were forced to submit their final surrender to General Nelson A. Miles in August 1886. The agreement reached between the parties resulted in the Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apache being seized as prisoners of war by the United States. The majority of the Apache prisoners were then transported to an old Spanish fort called Fort Marion, near the northeast Florida town of Saint Augustine. Geronimo and Naiche, both prominent Apache leaders of the outbreaks, were held in similar accommodations at another old Spanish fort, called Fort Pickens in Pensacola, Florida. Many children were deported to the Carlisle Indian school in Pennsylvania during this period, where they suffered from a large mortality rate due to tuberculosis. The high death toll among the Apache at Fort Marion, a result of the poor living conditions and unsuitable coastal environment, gained the support of Northeastern Indian rights groups, who intervened on behalf of the Apache. The groups from both Fort Marion and Fort Pickens were later relocated to Mount Vernon Barracks, Alabama as a result of increasing pressure on the government to provide adequate provision for the Apaches'

[29] Ibid, 103.

confinement.

The Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache were uprooted once more in October 1894 and relocated to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Through an agreement with the inhabiting tribes, the Chiricahua found a home on Kiowa/Comanche land. In 1913, the "Fort Sill Apache," as they had come to be known, were finally released from their status as prisoners of war after the death of Geronimo and 27 years in captivity. The freed Apache were allowed the option of either receiving land allotments near the military post,[30] or returning to reside on the Mescalero reservation located in central New Mexico, near Ruidoso. Approximately two-thirds of the tribe accepted a place with their Mescalero relatives and returned to New Mexico to be closer to their traditional lands. Many descendents of the handful who remained waiting for their promised allotments from the United States government still reside near a town called Apache, Oklahoma. Descended from predominantly Warm Springs and Chiricahua ancestry, these Apache will henceforth be called the Fort Sill Apache. Their continued performance of the Fire Dance rests at the center of this study.

[30] The Fort Sill Apache were originally promised ownership of the land upon which the Fort Sill military instillation is currently located. The option to receive allotments in Oklahoma was discouraged in large part. Only a small minority of the group received their claims in the state of Oklahoma, often at reduced acreage.

III. Fire Dance Background and Cosmology

Although described by Elizabeth A.H. John as "a perceptive and concerned officer" who maintained a "sympathetic attitude toward the most notoriously troublesome aborigines on New Spain's northern frontier," Lieutenant Jose Cortes' broad, simplistic interpretation of Apache religious belief is representative of many early ethnological reports concerning this aspect of Apache culture:

> The Apache recognize the existence of a Supreme Being and universal Creator with the name Yastasitan-tan-ne, which is the same as Chief of Heaven. They render him no worship or veneration whatsoever, and, steeped in their ignorance, they totally lack the notions that he might reward the good and punish the evil. Nor do they consider any creature preeminent or a direct servant of heaven. On the contrary, they believe that all are created equally or fashioned by him for his diversion and entertainment, and thus they live in the belief that man's existence lasts until his final annihilation, after given time which comes to an end through some random misfortune or through the greater or lesser weakness of his nature.
> –Lt. Jose Cortes, Spanish Corp of Engineers, 1799[1]

Such generalized accounts do little toward providing a full and accurate portrayal of Apachean religious belief. Former Fort Sill Apache prisoner of war Asa Daklugie argues that without knowledge of Apache religion there is no knowledge of the Apache:

> Without a little understanding of our religion it is difficult to comprehend what motivates the Apache. My people have never liked to talk about our religion, partly because they anticipate ridicule, but more because it is the only thing we possess of which the whites have not robbed us. Instead of trying to force it upon all whom we contact, as your people seem obligated to do, we preserve it for ourselves and our children. It is the one thing of which we cannot be deprived. You already know much about it. You might as well get it right.[2]

---

[1] Jose Cortes quoted in Elizabeth A.H. John, ed., *Views from the Apache Frontier: Report on the Northern Provinces of New Spain by Jose Cortes*, translated by John Wheat (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 53.

[2] Asa Daklugie quoted in Eve Ball, *Indeh: an Apache Odyssey* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 56.

It was not until the twentieth century and, in particular, the pioneering ethnological work of Morris Opler that Apache cosmological organization was more clearly defined and expanded within academic scholarship.[3]

Drawing heavily from the works of Opler and his influential predecessor, ethnologist Harry Hoijer, this chapter will look at the rich religious belief system of the Apache. The hierarchical structure and functions of select Apache deities, as well as the interrelationship of these deities and, in turn, their relation to the Apache people will be explored first. Insight into cosmological organization will provide the interpretational framework important to a discussion of religious imagery and belief as it is expressed within the performance of the Fire Dance ceremony. Historically, the Fire Dance was a multi-functional rite among the Apache. Patrick Coppersmith lists among its traditional uses the bestowing of blessings and protection upon departing warriors and to bless homes and property.[4] Much academic scholarship, however, typically emphasizes Fire Dance performance in the modern sense as being closely tied to two separate ceremonial complexes: the girl's puberty ceremony and the generalized healing ceremony. The function of this dance within these two rites will be discussed.

Residing at the head of the hierarchy of Apache religious belief is Yusn.[5] Sometimes called Life Giver, Yusn is credited with the creation of the universe.[6] This Supreme Being is a nebulous and distant entity that is above intervention in the daily

---

[3] Opler conducted most of his research while at the University of Chicago, the bulk of which was conducted among former Apache prisoners of war residing at the Mescalero reservation, near Ruidoso, New Mexico. Opler was a Professor Emeritus at the University of Oklahoma at the time of his death.
[4] Clifford Patrick Coppersmith, "Cultural Survival and a Native American Community: the Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apache in Oklahoma, 1913-1996," Ph.D. diss., Oklahoma State University, 1996, 226.
[5] Sometimes spelled Ussen. Michael Darrow states that Bik'éguiindan is a synonymous terminology for this figure, the single supreme being of the Apache, and translates to mean "God." Michael Darrow, interview by author, 24 May 2002.
[6] Opler, *An Apache Life-way*, 194; Cole, *The Chiricahua Apache*, 14.

affairs of the Apache. Thought by Opler to exist more "for logical completeness" than for "functional importance," this religious figure indeed plays a marginal role within academic texts documenting Apache religious belief. Opler's collection of origin stories mention this figure only in passing reference to his initiation of the floods that destroyed a "bad class of people," thus setting the stage for the creation of the Apache people.[7] Yusn receives even less development within Harry Hoijer's *Chiricahua and Mescalero Apache Texts*: "At the beginning the Creator existed. Everyone knows about him."[8] While Yusn will not directly intercede on the behalf of the Apache, an Apache might pray to him in time of need. It is believed by an informant of Opler that Yusn, after hearing the prayer of the person in need, will assist the Apache through the direct intervention of another source, such as lightning.[9]

Another important religious figure, White Painted Woman,[10] is of "more immediate importance to the Apache people."[11] White Painted Woman and her eldest son, Killer of Enemies,[12] resided upon the earth before the flood. During this time, monsters inhabited the earth and made the existence of man difficult. After several of her children were eaten by Giant (a monster then dwelling on the earth), White Painted

---

[7] Opler, *Myths and Tales*, 1.
[8] Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 5.
[9] Opler, *An Apache Life-way*, 280-281.
[10] While Hoijer's informant states that, like Yusn, White Painted Woman existed at the beginning of time (1938:5), D.C. Cole, who claims Chiricahua ancestry, indicates Ussen [Yusn] created her following the moccasin game that established day and night (1988:14).
[11] Opler, *An Apache Life-way,* 416.
[12] Killer of Enemies holds varying positions within the beliefs of Apachean groups. He is the principal culture hero among the Navajo, Western Apache, Jicarilla, and Lipan. Among the Chiricahua, however, he is depicted as a weakling in comparison to Child of Water. There is variation in the relationship of the two beings according to differing Chiricahua beliefs. Killer of Enemies is sometimes portrayed as the older brother, a mother's brother [presumably white painted woman's brother], or a stepfather of Child of Water. Opler, *Myths and Tales*, 3 fn., 4. He is also sometimes considered a twin brother of Child of Water. This relationship parallels the twin war gods concept prevalent in many belief systems within the Greater Southwest and is possibly of Mesoamerican origin. For further information on the prevalence of this belief in the American Southwest, see Polly Schaafsma, "Introduction," in *Kachinas in the Pueblo World* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), 1, 4.

Woman became impregnated by lightning[13] resulting in the birth of her youngest son, Child of Water. She was able to successfully hide this offspring from the Giant by placing him in a hole under her campfire. Child of Water therefore was able to safely mature and one day confront this monster.

Child of Water grew and, while still younger than Killer of Enemies, one day became strong enough to fight and slay the Giant. After performing this feat, he confronted and destroyed the remaining monsters that inhabited the world.[14] In doing this, he made it possible for humans to inhabit the earth. It was after the earth was free of the monsters that the flood occurred and the Apache were then created[15] from mud by Child of Water.[16] As noted in the tale that introduces Chapter II [History of the Fort Sill Apache], Killer of Enemies then became the father of the white-eyes, giving them corn, domesticated animals, and guns. Child of Water became the benefactor of the Apache, providing them with wild vegetation, wild game, and the bow and arrow.[17]

Because White Painted Woman gave birth to the culture hero Child of Water, and her offspring actively worked to make the world inhabitable through the killing of the monsters and aided in the creation of man, both beings therefore maintain a more direct

---

[13] Some versions indicate that Child of Water was conceived by Water instead of Lightning. This variant was chosen in part because of the potential significance of lightning symbolism within the Fort Sill Apache Fire Dance ceremony, to be discussed later. Some confusion surrounds not only the conception of child of Water, but also the role of both Water and Lightning within Apache belief.

[14] Among these monsters were a bull, an eagle, and prairie dogs. See Hoijer *Apache Texts* (5-13) and Opler's *Myths and Tales* (2-14) for further information.

[15] This argument is based upon the placement of the creation story as related in Hoijer's *Chiricahua and Mescalero Apache Texts*. The organization of Opler's *Myths and Tales* clouds his chronology by initiating his text with the flood tale and variant. According to the variant, it is immediately following the flood that humans were created and the Apache were given the bow and arrow. The fact that Opler revisits this episode after the tales documenting the killing of the monsters seems to indicate a parallel chronology between the informants of both Hoijer and Opler. By alternating between the stories as presented within the Chiricahua-specific works of these ethnographers, a broad composite of Chiricahua perspectives on their genesis is created.

[16] Opler indicates in *Apache Texts* (1) that an informant states that humans were created by both White Painted Woman and Child of Water.

[17] Haley, *History and Culture Portrait*, 1; Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 13-14; Opler, *Myths and Tales*, 14.

relationship with the Apache people. It is for this reason that they still figure prominently within this culture's ceremonial complexes. White Painted Woman, for example, is represented symbolically within a particular Lightning ceremony. In this ceremony, the earth is referred to as White Painted Woman and the conception of Child of Water is dramatized: "Just as lightning strikes the earth today, so White Painted Woman lay down 'while the lightning flashed four times and acted as a man to beget Child of Water. This is why the three [beings] are connected.'"[18] D.C. Cole indicates that Child of Water also maintains a prominent position within the practice of the novice ceremony, a rite for young warriors.[19]

White Painted Woman and Child of Water are also credited with the creation of one of the most important of Apache ceremonials, the Girl's Puberty Ceremony.[20] The Fire Dance is an important component of this Puberty rite and the relationship of both the dance and the rite will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. Although once actively working on the behalf of the Apache, these divinities are now, like Yusn, distant sky gods removed from the daily trials of Apache life.[21] It should be noted, as well, that the higher deities of Apache belief, Yusn, White Painted Woman, Killer of Enemies, and Child of Water, are four in number; this will prove significant within the context of the Fire Dance. While now distant, White Painted Woman was perhaps most helpful to the Apache in befriending the Gahe, and thus winning their sponsorship of the Apache people.[22]

---

[18] Opler, *Life-way*, 281.
[19] Cole, *The Chiricahua Apache*, 15.
[20] Opler, *Life-way*, 89.
[21] Ibid., 281; Cole, *The Chiricahua Apache*, 14-15; Haley, *History and Culture Portrait*, 74.
[22] Cole, *The Chiricahua Apache*, 14.

Unlike the higher deities in the Apache cosmology, the Gahe[23] are more actively involved in the daily lives of the Chiricahua Warm Springs Apache. A race of beneficent beings that live in the mountains, the Gahe are "considered not only the denizens of a given mountain but also the custodians of the wild life ranging in the vicinity."[24] Opler states further:

> Often the power-acquisition stories have the "holy homes" of the mountain people richly populated with game animals. The most unequivocal statement on this subject came from an Eastern Chiricahua who said: "All the animals, horse, sheep, come from the mountains. The Mountain people keep them. They take them in at night sometimes and let them out to graze here on earth during the day. R. killed a buck here. It was cut {castrated}. That shows that the mountain people make steers too."[25]

Linked as these beings are with the subsistence needs of the Chiricahua, the Gahe are of further significance through their role as protectors against the enemy and disease. Within the origin stories, these spirits often protect the Chiricahua from their enemy through direct intervention. One tale tells of a party of Warm Spring Apache on the run from the Mexican cavalry. Because they were not equipped with guns to fight their pursuers they were forced to flee. As they attempted to escape, they began to pray to the Gahe who, in response, emerged from the mountains and herded the cavalry into a mountain cave from which they would never again emerge.

More important is the tale in which a blind and a crippled Apache became separated from the tribe. Unable to fend for themselves, these Chiricahua were approached by the Gahe and taken to their mountain home. The mountain dwelling spirits performed a healing ceremony for the two Apache and the sight of the blind Apache was

---

[23] This is the term used by the Fort Sill Warm Springs/Chiricahua Apache. Opler calls these beings "mountain spirits," an obvious reference to the mountain homes where the Gahe reside.
[24] Opler, *Life-way*, 280.
[25] Ibid.

restored and the use of the leg restored to the cripple.[26] This particular story emphasizes not only the acquisition of the ceremony by the Apache, but also the curative powers of the Gahe and their prominent role within the healing ceremonies of the Chiricahua.

Although the Gahe are beneficent beings, they are treated with great reverence, respect, and sometimes fear. An informant told Opler, "I'm not supposed to tell stories about the mountain spirits because it is dangerous for me."[27] Another informant stated: "In order to use another word besides Mountain Spirit in the stories, a term 'man from the mountains' is used. This is put in the story a few times to show that the mountain spirits are held in awe and to prevent harm befalling the teller."[28] This use of indirect address is echoed by Michael Darrow, who indicates that the Fort Sill Apache traditionally refer to these beings indirectly as Chazhááda, a descriptive terminology translated by some to mean "pointed hats," as a sign of respect.[29] Origin stories of the Chiricahua record disease and death among the consequences of disrespecting the Gahe.[30]

The Gahe are among the most developed of characters within Apache religious belief. As beings of both kindness and, when provoked, wrath, the Gahe interact with the Chiricahua in an evolving relationship that displays emotions of a human nature. The statement of a Chiricahua develops the human-like nature of the Gahe further, while emphasizing the similarities between these figures and the Apache:

---

[26] Hoijer's *Apache Texts* (33) relate a similar story in which an old woman who could not hear, speak, or see was abandoned by her tribe. While weeping, the Mountain Spirits came to her aid, healed her and taught her how to perform the healing rite to benefit her people.
[27] Opler, *Life-way*, 269.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Interview with Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache Tribal Historian Michael Darrow, 4 April 2002. The origin and meaning of the term is a matter of debate. Some argue that the term refers to a bird. Both Bourke and Opler use this terminology to refer to both the Gahe and the performance of the healing ceremony.
[30] See Opler, *Myths and Tales*, 79; Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 30-33.

> There are people in the mountains who are just like us. They are not masked dancers, but they make masked dancers just as we do. We hear people drum in there and we hear the masked-dancer performance too. We hear words in there when we listen at cliffs or mountains, but we can't see the people. We call all these people in there Mountain People. They live in these mountains and have many children. There are girls, boys, women, and old men in there. The real masked dancers are the masked dancers of these people.[31]

The immediacy of the relationship of the Gahe and the Chiricahua is expressed through the representation of these figures during healing ceremonies and dances held in conjunction with the girl's puberty ceremony. Before turning our attention to the general information concerning these two rites and the role of the Gahe within them, a short discussion of the Clown, interchangeably know as "Gray One," is appropriate.

The Gray One and his meaning to the Apache are well developed within the oral tradition of the Apache. In Hoijer's *Chiricahua and Mescalero Apache Texts* a variant of the previously mentioned tale about the blind and lame Apache who were healed by the Gahe indicates that it was the Gray One who first approached these desperate Apaches and then took them to the Gahe in their mountain home.[32] Another story reported to Hoijer tells of a young girl and boy who were accompanying a woman across a plain. The woman, who was carrying a young child in a cradle, was attacked and killed by a bear. The enraged animal then picked up the cradle and killed its occupant by smashing it against a rock. The young girl and boy escaped uninjured, however. These youths were then approached by the Gray One, who took them to his mountain home and placed them in a wickiup for a period of four days. After this period, the Gray One showed the surviving children that, as a punishment for its evil deed, he had chained the attacking bear within the mountain for the rest of its life. He then returned the young Apaches to

---

[31] Opler, *Life-way*, 199.
[32] Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 35.

their people. An informant of Opler tells the story of a shaman who received his masked dancer ceremony through a personal experience with the Gahe.[33] The shaman was told by a spirit voice to enter a mountain cliff. As he did so, the cliff opened like a door and the Gray One met and led the prospective shaman through several obstacles on his quest to gain his healing ceremony. The function of the Clown/Gray One as the escort to and from the Gahe is a theme characteristic to each of these tales.

A more revealing Gahe tale spotlights the importance of the Gray One within the rite while telling of the first Gahe ceremony.[34] According to this story, a medicine man among the Apache revealed to his tribe that he had learned the Fire Dance and would use his newfound power by ritual preparation of dancers and ceremonial performance. He warned before beginning that no one should approach the Gahe dancers as they prepared for the evening's dance at the foot of a nearby mountain. He further warned that if recognized during the performance, the name of the dancer should not be said out loud[35] for this would be a sign of disrespect to the real Gahe which, as previously mentioned, is a dangerous thing to do. A young girl among the tribe disregarded both of these wishes. While the dancers were being "made" by the mountainside, she spied on them, recognized one of the dancers and that night she spoke the name of that dancer during the performance. The medicine man knew immediately what had happened. It was decided that the only thing that could be done to shield the young girl from the wrath of the Gahe

---

[33] Opler, *Life-way*, 269-71.

[34] See Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 27-30; Opler, *Myths and Tales,* 75-78. It should be noted that this tale details the receipt of the dance by a specific, albeit unnamed, practitioner. Because each Apache undergoes a unique and individual experience while receiving the tradition, each dance tradition will have a different origin story. Michael Darrow, personal interview by author, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Headquarters, 24 May 2002.

[35] This taboo is still observed in contemporary performances.

was to hide her underneath the central fire.[36] This was done and the Shaman resumed the ceremony, using his shamanistic power to shield the girl from the repercussions of her actions. On the fourth morning of the rite, several Mountain Spirits descended from the mountain:

> One Gray One stood at the very end. These, who were Mountain Spirits from the mountains whom they had never seen all carried sabers. The Big Black Mountain Spirit stood in the very first place. Right behind him stood the Big Blue Mountain Spirit. And right behind him stood the Big Yellow Mountain Spirit. At the very end stood the Gray Mountain Spirit.[37]

Because the girl was hidden, the Gahe dancers and Gray One "worshipped the fire" (Ibid) and searched to no avail for the youth. The angered spirits circled the fire several times, first led by the Black Mountain Spirit, then the Blue, then the Yellow, trying in vain to discover where the disrespectful youth was hidden. The Gray One led the group, circling the fire four times, in a final attempt to locate the girl:

> The last time, the fourth time it was done, the Gray One pulled [the girl] out of the center of the fire holding her by the top of her head. As he held her up, all the Mountain Spirits cut her into very small [pieces] with [their] sabers. Circling the fire, they went off.[38]

Through this tale the danger of disrespect toward the Gahe is again emphasized, but the ritual importance of the Clown/Gray One is also addressed. The conclusion of Hoijer's

---

[36] Note that this parallels the hiding of Child of Water under White Painted Woman's central fire in an effort to shield the child from the Giant.

[37] Hoijer, *Apache Texts,* 30. It should be noted that reference to the Gahe as Big Black, Big Blue, and Big Yellow Mountain Spirit makes reference to the importance of color/directional associations within the beliefs of the Apache. According to Chiricahua practice, the Gahe associated with the east is represented by the color black, the south by blue, the west by yellow, and the north by white. Michael Darrow, personal interview by author, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Headquarters, 4 April 2002; Opler, *Myths and Tales*, 77, fn. 1; Lamphere, "Southwestern Ceremonialism," in *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 10, Southwest, general ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983), 747. By omitting the presence of the white, or northern Mountain Spirit, the inclusion of the clown places the number of ritual participants at four, a number of recurrent religious significance often said to represent the four cardinal directions (recall as well that the higher spirits of Apache belief were also four in number). The presence of the Gray One within this variant as the fourth spirit dramatically emphasizes the importance of this being not only within the tale, but also within the ceremony.

[38] Ibid.

variant clarifies further: "Gray One knows more than all of the Mountain Spirits of whatever kind. He is over all Mountain Spirits. Where the [other] Mountain Spirits were unable to find that young girl, the Gray One pulled her out. Only the Gray One is supreme."[39] When performing within the healing or disease avoidance rites of the Apache, the Clown performs soberly[40] and is often the final and most influential dancer. As stated by a shaman and informant of Opler: "When I make other masked dancers, and they do not set things right or I can't find something out, I make that clown and he never fails."[41] While he is often a being of great power, Gray One's temperament within the fire dance is one of a dual nature.

In contrast to healing rite performances, the Gray One generally acts as a jester or buffoon when performing for the girl's puberty ceremony. On such occasions he may mimic the Gahe dancers, roll around on the ground, or may "be asked by the parents of an unruly child to single out the miscreant and frighten him."[42] The jovial nature of the Gray One in this capacity displays a marked contrast to the gravity of his role in the healing ceremony.

The dichotomy between the contrasting functions of the Clown/Gray One within the healing rite and the girl's puberty ceremony is accentuated further by the fact that "those who impersonate the Mountain Spirits usually act as clowns for the first time."[43] Still practiced in contemporary performances personally witnessed by the author, the Gray One is, in accordance with tradition, executed by young boys. This provides them

---

[39] Ibid, 30; see also Opler, "Sacred Clowns of the Chiricahua and Mescalero Indians," *El Palacio*, vol. XLIV, nos. 10-12 (1938): 75-79 and *Life-way* (1996): 276-277, and Cecile R. Ganteaume, "White Mountain Apache Dance: Ceremonies and Social Traditions," in *Native American Dance*, ed. Charlotte Heth (Golden: Smithsonian Institution/Fulcrum Publishing, 1992), 72.
[40] Opler, *Sacred Clowns*, 77.
[41] Opler, *Life-way*, 276.
[42] Opler, *Sacred Clowns*, 77.
[43] Ibid.

with training in the basics of the Fire Dance performance, in particular allowing them to practice the dance steps while acquainting themselves with the music.[44] Although these actors can be the strongest and most powerful within the ceremony, they are also generally the youngest and least experienced.

In assuming a humorous posture for the girl's puberty rite and a serious character for the healing ceremony, the contrasting behaviors of the Gray One parallels the shifting emphasis of the two ceremonial performances. In discussing the function of the healing ceremony among the Chiricahua, Opler states: "The primary purpose of the masked dancer rite when it is not associated with the celebration for the adolescent girl is to ward off epidemic and evil or to cure illness that has been contracted. When it is so used, its performance is a most serious matter."[45] Because healing rites were traditionally commissioned by agreement between individual and medicine man[46] or performed during times of community stress, such as the outbreak of an epidemic,[47] they therefore represent a plea to the Gahe for assistance. While reverence and respect for the Gahe is required for any ceremonial Fire Dance, performance of the healing rite is marked by a more somber and reverent gravity.

Opler's quote in the preceding paragraph also implies the more relaxed, social role of the Gahe Dancers at a puberty rite.[48] An informant of Opler, in relating his experiences as a masked dancer, addresses the strenuous task of dancing for healing rites

---

[44] Opler, *Sacred Clowns*, 77.
[45] Opler, *Life-way*, 87.
[46] A sick individual would traditionally seek out the assistance of the shaman and approach him with ritual items that might include turquoise, hoddetin, or an eagle feather, among others. For more information on the relationship between the patient, shaman, and aiding spiritual powers, see Opler's "Remuneration to Supernaturals and Man in Apachean Ceremonialism," in *Ethnology*, October 1968, 356-393.
[47] Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 155; Opler, *Life-way*, 276; H. Henrietta Stockel, *Survival of the Spirit* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1993), 98fn.
[48] Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 148; Opler, *Life-way*, 87; Stockel, *Survival*, 7-8, 38.

and further emphasizes the polar nature of the dance within its dual performance contexts:

> It's hard work to dance {at healing rites} like this. I'd rather not do it. They go out there and dance around that sick person for four or five hours. I'd rather get out on the feast grounds and dance [at the girl's puberty rite]. I get more pleasure out of it. This other is tiresome work.[49]

The girl's puberty rite is not a strictly social affair, however. The young girl for whom the ceremony is held is, during its four-day observance and for four additional days afterwards, the earthly embodiment of White Painted Woman.[50] On the first day of the rite the young girl must participate in elaborate morning rituals which include singing, prayer, ritual dressing of the maiden, assembly of the "holy lodge," and a basket run. The maiden spends the afternoon at rest, while visitors are entertained by various contests.[51] A social dance takes place at night.

Again pointing toward the sacred/social divide inherent in the rite, the young girl at first participates in the evening social dance and then retires to the specially constructed ceremonial structure for private ritual, dance, and song performance,[52] while the Gahe continue to dance for the enjoyment of the crowd. The bulk of the more somber

---

[49] Opler, *Life-way*, 273.

[50] As a result, the young woman is called by the name "White Painted Woman" throughout the performance of her rite.

[51] Claire R. Farrer, "Singing for Life: the Mescalero Apache Girl's Puberty Ceremony," in *Southwestern Indian Ritual Drama*, ed. Charlotte Frisbee (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1980), 128-136. Farrer lists a rodeo and a "pan-Indian powwow" as examples of such diversions at a contemporary Mescalero puberty rite.

[52] Ibid, 140-141. It should be noted that Farrer's article focuses on the puberty rite of the Mescalero Apache and not the Chiricahua/Warm Springs. Ruey Darrow indicated to me, however, that the Mescalero had received their Gahe Dance from the Fort Sill Apache. Ruey Darrow, personal interview with author, 5 May 2002. Farrer indicates that the Mescalero practice of the dance and puberty rite was suspended between 1873-1911 due to a government enforced hiatus. Farrer therefore cites 1912 as the date for the rebirth of the girl's puberty ritual, tying this renaissance to an attendant growth in population and eventual economic prosperity. The time period she proposes for the re-introduction of the puberty ceremony coincides *exactly* with the era when the Fort Sill Apache prisoners of war were released from Fort Sill and a large constituency of these Apache relocated to the Mescalero reservation. This fact could also account for the population explosion cited by Farrer. Claire R. Farrer, "Singing for Life: the Mescalero Apache Girl's Puberty Ceremony," in *Southwestern Indian Ritual Drama*, ed. Charlotte Frisbee (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1980), 125-26.

ritual is therefore practiced by the young girl, a few select ceremonial practitioners, singers and their attendants in a ceremonial structure that is relatively isolated from visiting friends, extended family, and other event attendees.[53] While "White Painted Woman" is undergoing the required ritual practices, guests and well-wishers entertain themselves in numerous ways; among these are the nightly diversion and spectacle of the social dances.

The nightly social dances adhere to a general performance format for each consecutive repetition, with slight variation on the fourth and final evening. When night falls, the Gahe Dancers make their appearance at the dance ground, typically performing between sundown and approximately midnight. The ritual attendees take over the festivities next, through active participation in social dances, while the Gahe and Gray One retreat for the evening.[54] Hoijer subdivides these social dances into two distinct groups: a Round Dance in which both men and women participate and a male/female partner dance "in which the man and woman face each other and go back and forth in the same direction at the same time."[55] The only variation in this format is that on the fourth night, both the social dances[56] and the private ritual dances of "White Painted Woman" must continue until the sunrise of the fifth day, at which time a morning ceremony is performed.[57]

Parallels between the contemporary performance of the Fire Dance by the Fort Sill Warm Springs/Chiricahua Apache and the documented literature pertaining to its

---

[53] Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 150.
[54] Farrer, *Singing for Life*, 142; Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 150; Dan Nicholas, "Mescalero Apache Girl's Puberty Ceremony," *El Palacio*, vol. XLVI, no. 9 (September 1939): 195fn.
[55] Hoijer, *Apache Texts,* 150.
[56] Opler indicates that the Gahe dancers often return unmasked to participate in the Round and Back and Forth Dances on the fourth and final evening; see *Life-way*, 89.
[57] Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 150.

association with the girl's puberty rite are of significance. At ceremonials personally attended by the author, the following format provides the basic framework of the annual Fort Sill tribe-sponsored event:[58] Gahe Dance (sundown-midnight), Round Dance (midnight-2 a.m.), Back and Forth Dance (2 a.m.-sunrise), and Morning Songs (at sunrise).[59] Though Hoijer's discussion of the social dances in the preceding paragraph does not mention the Back and Forth Dance by name, his description of its movement leaves little doubt that it is the same dance as that described by Michael Darrow. The broad format of the girl's puberty complex and that of the modern Fort Sill Apache Fire Dance is therefore the same. This, in conjunction with the humorous nature assumed by the clowns while performing, suggests that the general format of the contemporary annual Fort Sill dance could be derived from the social aspects of the girl's puberty ceremony.

[58] At the Annual Fort Sill Dance, the highly popular Gourd Dance is often performed as a preliminary to the main ceremonial complex. Due to its Plains origins, it will not figure into the current discussion.
[59] Terminologies adopted from Michael Darrow lecture, University of Oklahoma, 28 February 2001.

IV. The Fire Dance and Medical/Religious Change

The Fire Dance is a ceremonial invocation based on the religious beliefs of the Apache. The beneficent Gahe and Gray One occupy the central focus at any performance of the Fire Dance, both traditionally and in the contemporary sense, and their actions within the performance of that rite will be discussed in further depth in the next chapter. Yet, despite their central position within the healing and puberty rites, a curing ceremony can be held without their presence.[1] It is instead another less visibly prominent figure that is most vital to the realization of a Fire Dance performance. The medicine man, sometimes interchangeably called shaman within the academic literature, receives the right to perform the ceremony directly from the Gahe and it is he who acts as intermediary between the Apache and the power of the Mountain Spirits. Without him and his spiritually bestowed rite, the Fire Dance would never have been performed.

There are typically two ways in which a Fire Dance ceremony can be acquired. The first is through a direct religious experience with the Gahe. In a vision or dream, the Gray One will lead an Apache to the mountain home of the Gahe,[2] where the ritual is taught to the recipient.[3] As described in both western scholarship and Apache oral traditions, the Apache often receives his instruction over a four-day period and, when properly trained in the execution of the rite, will return to his tribe where he maintains the sole rights to its ceremonial performance.[4] The second way that a Fire Dance ceremony can be acquired is by inheriting it from an established medicine man that has obtained rights to a ceremony either through inheritance himself, or by direct receipt from the Gahe.

---

[1] Opler, *Life-way*, 276.
[2] Both men and women can receive healing rites from the Gahe.
[3] William Denman, *Fire Dance of the Apache Indians* (San Francisco: Grabhorn Press, 1954), 1-2; Thomas LeRoy Larson, "Gaan/Gahe: the Art and Performance of the Apache Mountain Spirit Dancers," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1996, 57; Opler, *Life-way*, 202, 204, 269; Stockel, *Survival*, 17.
[4] Coppersmith, "Cultural Survival," 235; Opler, *Life-way*, 269-272.

In 1892, John Gregory Bourke believed that one figure stood in the way of the rapid assimilation of indigenous Native groups into Anglo culture. In his paper "The Medicine Men of the Apache," Bourke states:

> Recent deplorable occurrences in the country of the Dakotas have emphasized our ignorance and made clear to the minds of all thinking people that, notwithstanding the acceptance by the native tribes of many of the improvements in living introduced by civilization, the savage has remained a savage, and is still under the control of an influence antagonistic to the rapid absorption of new ideas and the adoption of new customs. This influence is the "*medicine-man*." [5] [emphasis mine]

Bourke ascribes the medicine man considerable political power with this statement. Invoking the memory of the tragedy at Wounded Knee, his statement is aimed also at emphasizing the influence these medicine men held within the greater context of most Native North American tribes and among the Apache, in particular.[6] Despite Bourke's characteristic rhetoric, laced as it is with the assimilative jargon common of his era, such an assessment is perhaps understandable. The influence of the medicine man lay not only in his knowledge of herbal remedies or treatment of external ailments so vital to the physical well being of the tribe, but was also rooted in his religious guidance, an important tool for the spiritual well being of the tribe. It is because of this bipartite foundation within the practical and spiritual, and the determined practice of the medicine man, called diyi among the Apache,[7] that more traditions were not lost to the often piecemeal policies aimed at assimilation.

---

[5] John Gregory Bourke, *Apache Medicine Men* (Ninth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1887-88, 1892; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1993), 12.

[6] This information is taken from the 1993 Dover publication of this manuscript, an unabridged re-publication of the Accompanying Paper, "The Medicine Men of the Apache" (original pages 442-603), from the *Ninth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary' of the Smithsonian Institution,* 1887-88, as originally published by the United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., in 1892. The argument that Bourke is here referencing the Wounded Knee Massacre (1890) operates on the basis that despite being published under the heading the "Ninth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1887-88," neither the finished manuscript nor the final publication were completed until 1892.

[7] Bourke gives the translation of this term as "doctor" (Bourke, 1993), 2.

Medicine Men, Healing, and Government Provided Health Care

Bourke states that, among the Apache, the status of the medicine man is obtained not through heredity or clan distinction. Instead, it is necessary for the practitioner to prove that he has "the gift."[8] Because the tradition is not organized by heredity or clan affiliation, Opler asserts that there is no hierarchy of religious/medical leadership among the Chiricahua.[9] A Chiricahua informant of Opler adds: "there were not a few shamans. Supernatural power is something that every Chiricahua can share. Most of the people have some sort of ceremony, little or big . . . Shamans aren't ranked: each person knows a different thing, so no one is better than another."[10] The shamans or medicine men associated with the Fire Dance are, therefore, part of a larger spectrum of spiritually endowed Apache practitioners.

Historically within ethnographic documentation, the practice of the Apache medicine man is often misunderstood due to a tendency on the part of scholars to oversimplify their role within the tribe. Frequent references to these medicine men as quacks, sorcerers and other derogatory terms within ethnological manuscripts is in some way responsible for the continued misinterpretation of these figures and their role within Native American tribes.11 Early ethnological reports such as the following likely contributed to the common misinterpretation of Native medicine:

> The native medicine man in attendance upon the sick, no matter the nature of the disease, employs his time by indulging in a song or dirge in which he enumerates all the good qualities of his tribe, extolling their power and ability in the past to surpass other tribes. Besides this they frequently draw figures upon the bare breast and back of their patients, sometimes using a live snake which they flourish about the sick person, sometimes partially thrusting it into their own mouth. They frequently draw upon the ground figures of snakes which they color, at times, most beautifully. They place their patients over these

---

[8] Bourke, *Apache Medicine Men*, 2.
[9] Opler, *Life-way*, 200.
[10] Ibid.
11 See Haley, *History and Culture Portrait*, 65; Vogel, *American Indian Medicine*, 22 for further examples.

> figures which they believe by the effect it produces upon the imaginations of the sick person capable of drawing from them the evil spirit.[12]

While much early documentation focuses on the sensational in Native American medicine, a more complex picture of the duties and the skill with which the medicine men practiced their art has emerged over time. Author Virgil J. Vogel, in his book *American Indian Medicine,* notes that "Indian treatment of externally caused injuries, in which the origin of the ailment was perfectly, was usually rational and often effective."[13] Of importance among these external injuries was the proper dressing and treatment of battle wounds. Ethnographer E. Andrews lists the use of mescal root and boughs of ash employed as a treatment useful for the Apache in tending to arrow wounds.[14] Andrews tells also of a medical doctor campaigning against the Apache who acquired the medical kit of a slain medicine man. Among the items contained within were several pieces of cone shaped carbonite of lime. Each stone was of successive size, one appropriately sized for plugging musket ball wounds, the others for varying arrows of the region.[15] Herbs were often applied externally to such wounds at a later time.

While knowledge of such external ailments was skilled, other aspects of Native American medicine were lacking. Andrews notes that to the Apache medicine man acting in a military capacity:

> Their prime [concern] is that the chief danger of a wound is from the loss of blood, a notion which must have been very near the truth in the days when they only received wounds from knives and arrows. They have no idea of a circulation of the blood, but suppose that each part of the body has its own permanent stock of that fluid: but they recognize that hemorrhage from the head, neck and breast is more dangerous than from the extremities.[16]

---

[12] John B. White, NAA manuscript 179.
[13] Vogel, *American Indian Medicine*, 14.
[14] NAA Manuscript 1093.
[15] Ibid.
[16] NAA Manuscript 1093.

The report of Dr. John B. White reinforces Andrews' assertion that the Apache were unaware of the circulatory system and notes further limitations in the medical knowledge held by the medicine men of this tribe:

> It may be said at the outset that the Apache use no medicine for the cure of disease, placing implicit confidence in their medicine man and depending solely upon him to cure them, which seems a strange thing to do, as they are as a race, familiar with the anatomy of the entire body, being able to give the name of every bone, to locate the different organs of the body, though they are entirely ignorant concerning the circulation of the blood, or the various functions which the various organs of the body perform.[17]

Without knowledge of the circulatory system or the functions of various organs, medical practitioners were certainly confronted with ailments beyond their comprehension. It is in situations concerning internal maladies that Vogel argues, "where cause [of ailment] was not apparent, the usual Indian custom was to attribute the disease to supernatural agency."[18] If traditional medicines were ineffective, the sick then required the aid of a medicine man, often with the rich ceremonial complexes that accompanied this practitioner's healing processes.

Through the influence accompanying the increased Anglo presence in the Southwest during the period of settlement in the late nineteenth century, Native Americans found themselves in a position to share medical knowledge with the territorial newcomers. Knowledge received from the settlers would, however, eventually undermine the power of the traditional medicine man. The increasing reliance of Natives Americans, and even their medicine men, on government administered health care is addressed in a 1932 letter from G. E. E. Lindquist, a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners reporting on the Jicarilla Apache reservation in Dulce, New Mexico, to Board Chairman Samuel A. Elliot:

---

[17] NAA Manuscript 179.
[18] Vogel, *American Indian Medicine*, 14.

> As a rule the Indians cooperate in a good degree with the health agencies, and are becoming more and more dependent on these institutions. At the time of my visit one of the leading medicine men of the tribe was a patient in the hospital, convalescing from a severe attack of gallstones. Evidently this medicine man was completely won over by the white man's doctoring as he has declared his intention of staying at the hospital the rest of his life. Whether or not he will join Doctor Cornell's staff has not been indicated.[19]

An increased reliance on Anglo medicine is also indicated in the writing of Hugh L. Scott. A lieutenant at the time, Scott acted as the officer in charge of the Kiowa, Comanche, Kiowa-Apache, and the Chiricahua/Warm Springs prisoners of war at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, at the close of the nineteenth century. In his annual report, dated 30 June 1897, he comments on the medical attention paid these tribes:

> On one occasion the Kiowa and Comanche members of Troop "L7" cavalry were so much pleased with the skill and devoted attention paid their families during an epidemic of measles when those at the Anadarko Agency lost 200 people in one month that they subscribed forty dollars among themselves to purchase a piece of silver for him [their doctor, Capt. J. W. Glennman] as a token of gratitude, a trait often said to be wanting in the Indian.[20]

The Fort Sill Apache were impacted by the greater availability of government administered health services, as well. As prisoners of war, large numbers of this group fell victim to tuberculosis while held in captivity at Fort Marion, Florida, and Mount Vernon, Alabama. Shared encounters with other reservation groups and often inferior sanitary conditions during their period of captivity while at Fort Sill increased the spread of disease among this tribal group and resulted in greater utilization of post medical facilities.[21] Even still, western medical practices available at the time could do little to cure, much less contain, the tuberculosis still present among the Apache. While becoming less inhibited in the use of western medical practices, the Apache prisoners often turned back to their traditional ceremonies when other options failed.

---

[19] NAA Manuscript 4525, pg. 10.
[20] Library of Congress Manuscript Archive, Papers of Hugh L. Scott January-December 1912, Box 47.
[21] For more information on the medical history of the Fort Sill Apache during their period as prisoners of war, see H. Henrietta Stockel's *Survival of the Spirit: Chiricahua Apaches in Captivity* (1993).

The Fort Sill Apache Dutch Reformed Church

As the utilization of governmental health services increased among the Chiricahua and Warm Spring Apaches, other outside influences were shaping the practices of the Apache medicine men. Christian missionaries had begun working among the Apache as early as their period of confinement at Fort Marion and Mount Vernon. In 1895, the same year the Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache arrived at Fort Sill,[22] a Choctaw named Frank Hall Wright arrived in southwest Oklahoma to preach among the Comanche. Wright learned of the recently arrived Apache and desired to work with them, but military authorities forbade mission work among the Apache at that time.[23] Four years passed before Lieutenant Beach, officer in charge of the Apache prisoners of war, gave Wright permission to work among the group in 1899. In the same year, Dr. Walter C. Roe was recruited from his post at Colony, Oklahoma, where he was then working among the Cheyenne, and soon joined Frank Hall Wright. The two men gained the financial backing of the Women's Board of Domestic Missions of the Dutch Reformed Church[24] and began ministering among the Apache.

While discussing missionary influence during the Mount Vernon period, Woodward Skinner reinforces the relationship between Apache religion and medical practice:

> The Mission School greatly affected the lives of the prisoners who attended it. It was used to combat the influence of the old women whose remedies and concoctions competed with Dr. Reed's more studious medications. The Apache doctors, often forced to use herbs and plants that were entirely unknown to them in their new surrounding, mixed

---

[22] The Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apache were, at this time, called the "Geronimo Apache" due to their association with this famous Apache.

[23] That Frank Hall Wright had petitioned to work among the Apache as early as 1895 is well documented within the literature. Ruth McDonald Boyer and Narcissus Duffy Gayton, *Apache Mothers and Daughters* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 120; Coppersmith, "Cultural Survival," 120; Debo, *Geronimo,* 428; John Anthony Turcheneske, Jr., *The Chiricahua Apache Prisoners of War: Fort Sill 1894-1913* (Niwot: University of Colorado Press, 1997), 71. Only Boyer offers any reasoning for the denial of the missionary's request: "Army officials suggested he [Frank Hall Wright] not preach to the Chiricahua. 'They've just arrived. Give them breathing time—time to settle in.'" Boyer does not offer a source for her quote.

[24] Jason Betzinez, *I Fought with Geronimo* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1987), 171.

> deadly potions. The old women refused to attend the mission since it offered a direct challenge to their power within the tribe. The missionaries would never completely overcome old tribal practices…[25]

Since the Fire Dance is a component of Apache medical practice rooted in religious belief, the presence of missionaries among the Apache impacted upon its practitioners in a manner similar to the introduction of government provided medicine. The reaction of the Apache prisoners to the missionaries and the Christian faith was highly varied from the first encounter. Some tribal members gradually began to embrace Christian theology through exposure, others initially rejected the new faith, while still others incorporated into their spiritual life elements of the two beliefs.

Typically, traditional scholarship on the Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache attributes this variety of responses to the new doctrine with several factors, including age and exposure to western education. As depicted within the scholarship pertaining to the Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache, the youth of the tribe were particularly subject to the influence of the new religious doctrine. Exposure to the church while away from the tribe at the Carlisle School in Pennsylvania was of particular influence in promoting Christian belief among the group. One Apache in particular, Jason Betzinez, provides such an example.

A cousin of Geronimo, Betzinez was among the prisoners of war when they were confined at Fort Marion in 1886. It was there that he was selected to leave the tribe for training at the Carlisle Indian School in 1887. Betzinez remained in Pennsylvania after receiving training as a blacksmith. Reflecting on his experiences at the Carlisle school in his collaborative biography with William Sturtevant Nye, *I Fought with Geronimo,* Betzinez reflected: "The most powerful influence on my life at this or any other time was my introduction to the teachings of

---

[25] Jason Betzinez, *I Fought with Geronimo*, 291.

Christianity... It changed my whole life" (1987:156).[26] Native students of diverse tribal background were required to attend Sunday services while at Carlisle, and also given the opportunity to attend Y.M.C.A. meetings in which Betzinez also took part. In his autobiography, he states that, later as a worker at the Pennsylvania steel company, he "accepted the teachings of Christ, which I firmly believed then, as I still do, are straight from God."[27] Betzinez's experiences in the predominantly Dutch/German population of Pennsylvania had left a marked impact on his character. He finally returned to his tribe, which was at that time located at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, after more than a decade in the east.

Jason Betzinez moved to Oklahoma in 1898 where he began work in Darlington as a blacksmith. In 1900 he moved again, this time to Fort Sill where he assumed a position as blacksmith at the post. It was at this time that the conflict between old ways and the new, the traditional and the Christian became most apparent. After the introduction of the Dutch Reformed missionaries among the Apache in 1899, the Apache began to practice the Fire Dance with increased frequency and interest. In his autobiography, Betzinez describes the "great deal of loathing" he felt as he briefly watched the dance and criticizes other former Carlisle students who were present and participating in the event.[28] Of this time, Betzinez states:

> There were many times in those days when it seemed that Christianity would never take hold in the Apache tribe. I recall days and nights, especially when the medicine dance was at its height, that I was the only Indian present at church services. At that time we almost despaired, I think, not realizing that the good seed which had been planted would grow—imperceptibly at first, but with an eventual full flowering.[29]

Betzinez approached Captain Farrand Sayre, the officer in charge of the Apache prisoners of war at that time, in response to the resurgent interest in the practice of the Fire Dance. It is

---

[26] Betzinez, *I Fought with Geronimo,* 156.
[27] Ibid, 161.
[28] Ibid, 177.
[29] Ibid, 173.

unknown whether Betzinez's plea was the primary stimulus, but Captain Sayre forbade the practice of the ceremony soon thereafter.

Resurgent interest in the Fire Dance at the turn of the century may have begun in response to a perceived threat to traditional belief, a threat that found its most concrete manifestation in Betzinez's response to its performance. Clifford Patrick Coppersmith lists the famous episode as a revitalization movement that, in a manner similar to the Ghost Dance among the Sioux or the Handsome Lake religion of the Seneca, ignited in reaction to the perceived threat posed by the Dutch Reformed missionaries,[30] thus indicating strong initial resistance to Christianity. John Anthony Turcheneske, Jr. reinforces this stance, noting that according to a July 22, 1976 interview with Blossom Haozous conducted by Pat O'Brien, "Chiricahua elders initially expressed some resentment toward the missionaries."[31] Based solely on the scholarship addressing Christian influence among the Apache, it appears that the resistance ends there. This is not to say that resistance was not present,[32] only that traditional historical/ethnographic scholarship typically focuses on the Christianized or, more commonly, the Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache who instead live along a graded spectrum, balancing between the two religious beliefs.[33]

The literature is replete with instances of Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache who were at once both traditional and Christian practitioners. Eve Ball provides the example of Martine, who

---

[30] Coppersmith, "Cultural Survival," 222-23.
[31] Turcheneske, *Apache Prisoners,* 205, fn. 25.
[32] A study of resistance to efforts to Christianize the Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache, both in the historical and contemporary sense, and its ramifications among the modern group would likely be a revealing endeavor.
[33] This approach may result partly from a strong reliance by many authors on traditional historical/ethnographic source materials based predominantly on early documentation generated by government officials and missionaries. Reverend Robert S. Ove, who co-authored *Geronimo's Kids: A Teacher's Lessons on the Apache Reservation* (1997) with Henrietta Stockel, provides a modern example of the extent to which Christian interpretation helps to shape written depictions of the Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache.

states, "I don't believe in the old ways. . . .I am a member of the Reformed Church and have been for many years," but then amends, "but there are some good luck things that work: turquoise and hoddentin and certain shells."[34] In her biography of Geronimo, Angie Debo develops in detail the uncertain spiritual struggle between tradition and Christianity in the last days of the famous warrior.[35] Despite being a Carlisle graduate, Asa Daklugie regardless remained a rigid traditionalist. A compromise of a different form was reached in his case: "the strong willed Asa Daklugie remained steadfast to the native religion, but Ramona [his wife] was an earnest Christian, and Asa, whose love for her had begun in youth across the barriers of Apache etiquette and was to continue unchanged through a life extending beyond their golden wedding anniversary, accompanied her to all religious services."[36]

The reasoning behind the Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache acceptance of Christianity along with their traditional beliefs is easily understandable once revealed: these Apache saw their traditional theology and the new Christian doctrine as parallel.[37] Patrick Coppersmith's interview with tribal historian Michael Darrow gives this belief further substance and highlights its continued validity among the modern Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache tribe: "he [Darrow] believes that essentially Christian beliefs, as presented by the Dutch Reformed Church missionaries, were essentially the same as basic elements of traditional Chiricahua belief."[38] The presence of flood tales enumerating the destruction of a bad race of people and monotheistic belief in an ultimate power named Yusn are the most prominent parallels.

---

[34] Eve Ball, *Indeh: An Apache Odyssey*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 60.
[35] Debo, *Geronimo*, 427-44.
[36] Ibid, 431.
[37] Ball, *Indeh*, 58; Boyer and Gayton, *Apache Mothers*, 293; Debo, *Geronimo*, 433; Rev. Robert S. Ove and H. Henrietta Stockel, *Geronimo's Kids: a Teacher's Lessons on the Apache Reservation* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1997), 89, 119.
[38] Coppersmith, "Cultural Survival," 134, fn. 31.

Though a compromise could be reached, maintaining the balance between the two faiths was not always easy. Eve Ball, who worked closely with the freed Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache residing at the Mescalero reservation, describes an interesting story regarding Eugene Chihuahua. After the death of his father, the famous Chief Chihuahua, the spirit of Eugene's deceased patriarch continued to act as a "spirit control" or guardian angel.[39] Eugene's wife Jennie told Eve Ball: "He's [Eugene] worse than sick. He's lost contact with Chief Chihuahua [his father]."[40] Ball explains Eugene's predicament further: "[Eugene] Chihuahua explained that the chief, who had died years before, disapproved of his attending church. And Eugene needed his guidance."[41] The tension between traditional practice and Christian ideology is made more apparent by the fact that Eugene Chihuahua was a Fire Dance shaman and that his ceremony had been inherited from his deceased father. The Chihuahua Fire Dance tradition is still practiced today by a family residing in southwest Oklahoma.

Angie Debo makes reference to another family known in southwest Oklahoma for their practice of the Fire Dance, the Kaywayklas. Debo notes that James Kaywaykla and his wife Dorothy,[42] both Carlisle school graduates, were also members of the Christian Endeavor Society.[43] Again, a readiness to participate in both traditional and Christian belief is apparent, but while memory of the Kaywaykla dance remains strong at the Fort Sill Apache tribal headquarters, their Fire Dance tradition and its accompanying songs are no longer performed.

The practice of the Fire Dance within the Fort Sill Apache community has gone through many changes. Among this group, the rite is no longer performed in conjunction with the girl's

---

[39] Ball, *Indeh*, 305.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Dorothy was a descendent of the Fort Sill Apache leaders Cochise and Naiche. It was from these famous ancestors that the Kaywaykla family inherited their Fire Dance tradition.
[43] Debo, *Geronimo*, 431.

puberty rites, nor is it employed for healing purposes. Two groups continue to practice the Fire Dance, but as a general rule, only one of these groups of dancers appears annually at the September dance. Although other factors make its continued performance problematic (for example, loss of the traditional language and the large number of tribal members living outside the region), the effects of western medicine and Christian belief on a rite strongly moored to traditional medical and religious practice should be considered.

V. Historical Documentation Pertaining to Fire Dance Performance

Contact increased between Euroamerican governmental officials, miners, and fortune seekers and the Apachean groups of New Mexico and Arizona after these territories were ceded to the United States in 1848. The United States boundary commission, led by John Russell Bartlett, surveyed within Warm Springs territory while marking boundaries for the newly acquired land in 1851. In 1853, the United States increased its land ownership within the southwest through the Gadsden Purchase. This land exchange between the Mexican and American governments pushed the international boundary further south, thus placing Cochise's Chokonen, or Central, Chiricahua within the boundary of the United States. Soon thereafter, the Central Chiricahua were cooperating with American business by allowing free passage through their territory to American stagecoaches heading to California. Treaties were struck between Apachean groups and the encroaching easterners and Indian agencies were gradually implemented.

Dan L. Thrapp implicates the role of mineral wealth in changing the demographics of the southwest after acquisition: "It was gold that ultimately defeated the Apaches… for it was gold that brought in population, the army to protect it, and the farmers and ranchers to feed the soldiers, and the communication lines the Army needed."[1] As settlers migrated into the region from the east, contact between recent immigrants and indigenous inhabitants demanded cross-cultural exchange. Hardships resulting from cultural differences and the friction created by the inability to operate between drastically different world-views threatened the economics, politics, stability,

[1] Thrapp cited in Coppersmith, "Cultural Survival," 49.

and future of the region, however.[2] Increased documentation of the regional tribes became important to diverse American interests for many reasons—including economic, military, legal, and scientific—and therefore also accompanied the burgeoning flow of eastern settlers to the region after 1848.

A diverse range of individuals carried out the ethnographic documentation of the southwest. Among the characters documenting the close of the American west were missionaries, military men and their wives, as well as ethnographers sent by the Smithsonian Institution Bureau of Ethnology in Washington, DC. For largely practical reasons, documentation of indigenous languages and war practices were of particular interest to many of these individuals, but Native American musical and ceremonial practices did not go undocumented. Such ethnographic documents provide not only an impressionistic portrait of Apachean ceremonial practice—with hints of its broad standard features, subtle differences, and change over half a century—in the second half of the nineteenth century, but also a glimpse into the aesthetics and intellectual processes of the recently arrived Euroamerican settlers.

Early Ethnographic Documentation

Ethnographer N.S. Higgins writes of a ceremonial event with strong similarities to the practice of the Fire Dance. Higgins' 1866 manuscript, which is housed at the Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives, is titled "Ethnographic notes and vocabulary of Apache Tribes of Arizona Territory... collected from captives belonging to the Chiricahua, Sierra Blanca, Pinal and Coyotero tribes...", thus indicating

[2] Richard J. Perry's *Apache Reservation: Indigenous Peoples and the American State* (1993) provides a skilled portrait of the vast differences that marked Apachean and Euroamerican thought processes at this period of time. In particular, see Chapter 4, "The Apache in the Nineteenth Century," 66-118.

that the ceremony he is describing is of Apachean origin. His discussion of a healing ceremony is embedded within some elaboration on the role of Apache medicine:

> They [the Apache] have medicine men who are allowed no fees from patients. Colds and consumption are about all the complaints the Apaches suffer from. If the patient is very sick, past being benefited by herbs or root, they have a grand medicine dance, continuing it for 6 or 7 days. They commence this strange performance about sunset. The medicine man with four or five others go into the neighboring hills, making their appearance at times whooping to those in camp [sic]. These are employed in chanting a single melody and keeping time by rasping a notched stick with one that is held in the hand. A large fire is built in front of the one in which are seated the singers. After a time the medicine men make their appearance with curious headdresses, around the bottom of which feathers are fastened extending over and covering the face. Their backs, breasts, and legs are painted with red and black zig-zag lines. They come in, dance around the fire led by a fellow whose actions resemble the monkey antics of a clown. He is dressed less gaudily than the others. They circle two or three times around the fire and off they go to appear in a few moments going through the same strange performance whilst dancing about the fires. Each gives an unearthly yell at the same time turning to face one another. These nightly dances continue until the patient declares him or herself better. This I presume they would say even on the point of death.[3]

In very broad terms, Higgins documents several traits of a Gahe/Gan[4] healing rite: a patient who is considerably ill commissions a multi-day healing rite that begins in the dark of night, is centered around a bonfire, and performed by masked dancers (or "medicine men" with "curious headdresses").

His reference to "the medicine man" and "four or five others" who go "into the neighboring hills" likely alludes to ritual pre-dance preparations that occur away from the main camp and, when in proximity, in nearby hills or mountains.[5] It should be recalled, as well, that the medicine man typically prepares four Gahe dancers, one for each of the

---

[3] Higgins, N.S. Manuscript 180, Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives, 16-18.

[4] Gan (also seen within the literature as Gaan) is generally used within academic scholarship as the equivalent Western Apache term for Gahe. Both terminologies are used in this instance because the origin of the dance described within the excerpt cannot at this time be definitively attributed to any one Apachean group—Western, Mescalero, or Chiricahua.

[5] Even the oral traditions of the Apache reference the ritual preparation of the medicine man, dancers and Gray One before the performance of a healing rite. See Opler's *Myths and Tales of the Chiricahua Apache Indians*, 75-78 for an example.

cardinal directions, and a Clown, or Gray One. The interrelated cardinal directions and constant repetition of the number four—witnessed in the origin stories associated with the dance, repetition of songs, regalia design, and actions, for example—are both themes recurrent throughout the historical documentation of the dance and in modern performances. The importance of this number is stressed in numerous texts and is multifaceted in meaning. Thomas L. Larson counts among its meanings unity, inclusiveness, and balance, and anchors it to observable manifestations in the day-to-day human life: the four directions, the four seasons, and the four elements of fire, earth, wind, and air.[6] Larson notes that, in giving a blessing with a pinch of pollen, an Apache "draws a cross in the air above the head and then draws an imaginary circle around it, signifying the four directions unified by the circle, or universe."[7] Claire R. Farrer confirms in part Larson's interpretation. When speaking of the number four, or what she calls "the base metaphor," she states that the number four represents balance, circularity, and directionality.[8]

These Gahe emerge from the hills "whooping to those in camp" or, as stated later in Higgins' passage, giving an "unearthly yell," which is likely a reference to the characteristic call of the Gahe during a dance performance. The "fellow whose actions resemble the monkey antics of a clown" reference the comedic role of the Gray One in performance. Also note the reference to the body paint of the dancers. The use of zigzag motifs is a recurrent theme in both historical documentation and contemporary practice.

---

[6] Larson, "Gahe/Gaan," 169.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Claire R. Farrer, "Singing for Life: the Mescalero Apache Girl's Puberty Ceremony," *Southwestern Indian Ritual Drama*, ed. Charlotte Frisbee (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press), 147.

One trait within the ethnographic description is difficult to interpret, however. In his brief description of the musical elements of the rite, Higgins indicates that a rasp is used to provide rhythmic accompaniment. According to most ethnographic documentation pertaining to Chiricahua/Warm Spring specific performance practice, men traditionally provided rhythmic accompaniment by playing small water drums held in the crook of the arm. At the same time, another group of male performers, seated around a stretched rawhide staked to the ground, contributed to the rhythmic drive by keeping unison time. The use of the rasp as accompaniment may indicate the performance witnessed by Higgins was not of Chiricahua/Warms Springs origin, though further research is necessary before this can be definitively determined.

A photograph held in the National Anthropological Archives provides another account of an early Masked Dancer performance.[9] This famous photo, which captures the image of four Gahe dancers (three with the upright horn headdress and one with a cross-shaped headdress) holding bows and arrows and a younger Gray One, can also be seen in Angie Debo's biography on Geronimo.[10] The information contained in and on the photograph, both in the visual image and in the notes written on the back, is conflicting, but also useful. While the print is listed within the N.A.A. database as "Ceremony, Devil's Dance, 1899," and attributed to Katherine T. Dodge, Debo maintains that the photograph may have been taken by a famous photographer of the southwest, A. Frank Randall, in the spring of 1884.[11]

---

[9] SPC Sw Apache No # Group portraits 0291000, Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives.
[10] Debo, *Geronimo*, 75.
[11] Ibid.

The latter date, 1899, is probably a reference to the year that the Smithsonian acquired the photograph from Mrs. Katherine T. Dodge, who was, as noted on the back of the photo reference copy, the wife of a Captain Dodge. Mrs. Dodge is listed as an active photographer at San Carlos, Arizona Territory in 1899.[12] A statement on the back of the photo reference copy, dated October 15, 1970, and attributed to noted Western Apache researcher Keith Basso, supports the possibility that the photo may be from this later time period:

> These are most assuredly not Western Apaches, but Mescalero. The gan headdresses are unmistakably Mescalero. It is possible, however, that the photograph was taken at San Carlos when, between 1898 and 1902, a handful of Mescalero renegades were being held there. The low mountains in the background suggest that, indeed, San Carlos may have been the location.[13]

It is unknown, however, if Basso, in his statement "the gan headdresses are unmistakably Mescalero," is basing his judgment on the broad stylistic differences that mark Western Apache dance masks apart from other Apaches: Western Apache Gan masks are typically distinguished by *cross* and *fan* shaped headdresses. Three of the four Gahe in the photo clearly display the upright horn-style headdresses characteristic of both Mescalero and Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache Gahe dancers.

While the placement of the photograph at the San Carlos agency may be correct, the designation of the masked dancers as Mescalero is problematic. Debo's contention that the photo was taken by A. Frank Randall deserves further consideration. Randall at one time operated from a studio in Wilcox, Arizona Territory, approximately 90 miles to

---

[12] Andrew Eskin, II, ed., *Index to American Photographic Collections, 3rd ed.*, (New York: G.K. Hall and Co., 1995), 586; Paula Richardson Fleming and Judith Luskey, *The North American Indians in Early Photographs* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), 235; Patrick Frazier, ed., *Many Nations: a Library of Congress Resource Guide for the Study of Indian and Alaska Native Peoples of the United States* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1996), 158.

[13] SPC Sw Apache No # Group portraits 0291000, Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives.

the east of Tucson.[14] Though his studio had moved to Deming, Arizona circa 1885-86, Randall is noted as itinerant between 1882-1886, presumably on location within the region.[15] In 1883, this famed photographer accompanied General George Crook into the Sierra Madres of Northern Mexico to document the surrender negotiations between Crook and Geronimo in pictures. Close scrutiny of the original print reveals, though difficult to discern, an upturned toe on the moccasins of at least one of the dancers—a stylistic flair commonly attributed to the Chiricahua fashion sense. If the photo was taken at the time stated by Debo, in the spring of 1884, this would coincide with a period of time in which Randall was operating from his operation in Wilcox, Arizona. This places the photographer in close proximity to the San Carlos reservation, the same reservation to which the Chiricahua were at that time assigned and two years before their removal from the southwest.

Compounding the confusion surrounding the date and contents of the photo is the issue of the party responsible for the ethnographic notes written on the backside of the picture. On the basis that the statement was present on the original photo endowed to the Smithsonian, it was presumably written in the latter half of the nineteenth century, probably between 1884 and 1899. Despite the elusive nature of its genesis, the statement describes recognizable elements of Apachean masked dance. The back of the original photograph is marked as follows:

> No. 7. Devils Dance. A semi-religious dance, peculiar to the Apaches and held only in the month of January. The four men represent the four quarters of the globe, north, east, south, and west. The boy is supposed to be the invisible spirit of the 'Great Chief.' In addition to the tom-toms always used for dances and all ceremonies, on this occasion they have also, a tanned raw-hide, that is beaten fiercely by as many Indians as can gather round it. We were told they were

[14] Fleming and Luskey, *American Indians in Photographs*, 242.
[15] Ibid.

> beating the 'evil spirit' out of camp. The dance is held at night, and once seen is not forgotten: the many campfires with their peculiar flickering light, the circles of Indians around the dancers, the tom-toms, the steady thump thump of the sticks on the raw-hide, and the peculiar wailing chant of the Indians is weird indeed. After the dance is finished, the four dancers go separately, up into the mountains, to the north, east, south, and west, and wait and watch until dawn, for the coming of the 'Great Chief,' who will bring with him peace and prosperity, his coming has been promised them far back in the past and they believe he will come.[16]

The designation of Apachean masked dancer rites as the "Devil's Dance" was probably the creation of early Euroamericans fascinated by the spectacular visual image of its performance,[17] but the evocative flavor of the title fueled its popular use in many early documents. The ethnographer's categorization of the dance as semi-religious may be apt, in light of its role within the girl's puberty rite, though such terminology might be the center of debate among Apache practitioners and attendees of such performances. The statement that the rite is only practiced in the month of January is unique and likely the product of misinformation. Of interest in the ethnographic account is the confirmation of the directional associations of the Gahe, though no reference is made to color association. The ethnographer in attendance at the event also describes the traditional arrangement of Chiricahua musicians. Some performers keep time on hand held water drums, or the so-called "tom-toms," while a chorus of singers supports the rhythm by playing on a stretched piece of rawhide.

The choice of language within the two ethnographic accounts is revealing and also reflective of the general tone for many of the ethnographies that followed. Adjective use such as "strange," "curious," "gaudy" expresses some degree of condescension on the

---

[16] SPC Sw Apache No # Group portraits 0291000, Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives.

[17] It should be noted that the name "Devil's Dance" has no foundation in the traditional language or community-based terminologies for this rite.

part of Higgins, or at least strong aesthetic aversion.[18] Michael Steck, a civilian Indian administrator in New Mexico Territory, presaged Higgins' impatience with Apachean performance practice by approximately three years when he argued against their "absurd" custom of "making of feasts of which they have a great number and the most extravagant of which is one made when a female child arrives at marriageable age [the girl's puberty rite]. The parents at this feast will sacrifice all the property they possess to feast the tribe, who dance & *make night hideous with their songs.*"[19] The choice of descriptive language on the photographic resource resonates as a little more tempered, though the statement that "the peculiar wailing chant" was "weird indeed" still views the musical performance of the Apache, in the language of contemporary ethnomusicologists, as that of the "exotic Other." The use of such critical terminologies, a practice prevalent throughout early ethnographic resources, glosses over in large degree the complexity of the ceremony, and thus represents the dismissal of the aesthetic and belief values of an entire tribe. Such musical aesthetic judgments underscore the differences that marked Apachean and Euroamerican decision-making processes and values in the late 1800s. Unfortunately, the rite still continues to be subject to sensational portrayals within Apachean scholarship, or at least until as recently as the second half of the twentieth century.[20]

---

[18] Should the degree of Higgins' condescension toward Apachean practice be doubted on the basis of this evidence, it should perhaps be weighed in conjunction with his interpretation of Apachean religion: "They [the Apache] have none. No objects of worship. No idea of how they came into existence, or what becomes of them after death, except that a bad Indian turns into a bear. No instance of a crazy Apache is known among them, but sometimes fools are seen. These they never trouble or molest. Among the Yavapai (a friendly tribe of Indians) scarcely a camp can be visited without finding some fools. The cause of this is masturbation, which seems to be more prevalent among this tribe than any other of which we have knowledge in this territory". NAA Manuscript 180, 11-12.

[19] Emphasis mine; Steck cited in Dan L. Thrapp, *The Conquest of Apacheria* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 86.

[20] Woodward H. Skinner's book *The Apache Rock Crumbles: the Captivity of Geronimo's People* provides an example. Skinner depicts, without reliance on quoted material, musicians and their contribution to a Fire Dance at a circa 1900 performance as follows: "The musicians, really only a few drummers, beat a drum and slapped a cowhide with sticks while the singers howled as loud as they could. From the ridges of the

Fort Marion

In 1886, the Chiricahua Apache groups were taken into captivity, loaded onto trains, and transported east to either Fort Pickard, near Pensacola, Florida, or Fort Marion, in Saint Augustine. Just prior to their imprisonment, each of the Chiricahua groups—the Central, Warm Springs, and Nednai—were following different paths. Some of these Chiricahua groups remained on the reservation, others had broken away from the reservation and disappeared into the mountains of Mexico, while still others were acting as scouts for the U.S. military and aiding in the round up of the reservation breakers and, in particular, Geronimo. After years of unrest at San Carlos and the inability to reach agreement between U.S. governmental officials and the Chiricahua bands, all Chiricahua associated groups were placed under the status of prisoners of war and sent to the east coast for confinement. The imprisonment of these tribal groups marked the beginning of a painful period, a time marked by illness and loss for the Apache prisoners.

The conditions under which the Apache prisoners of war dwelled while at Fort Marion affected the collective health of the group upon arrival. According to author Angie Debo, the Apache had been sleeping on the beach, and "although the agency of mosquitoes in malarial infection had not yet been discovered, the unhealthfulness of such localities was generally known, and it was also believed that the water there was contaminated."[21] Malarial fever took its toll on the group, eventually resulting in a

---

low-lying hills coyotes added their voices to the commotion. The clatter caused by the beating drums, the wails and cries emitted by the singers and chanters, joined by the more doleful yelps from above could have made, comparatively speaking, Pandemonium, the capital of Hell, a quiet place to live." (Pensacola: Skinner Publications), 413. While some elements are distinctly Skinner's elaboration, similarities in phrasing and the fact that this quote is extracted from a discussion of the 1899 Fire Dance "revival" at Fort Sill indicates that Skinner relied heavily on Betzinez's *I Fought with Geronimo* as a source.

[21] Debo, *Geronimo*, 313.

reported seventy-six cases of illness in one month.[22] Also at this time, Apache children were for the first time sent away to boarding school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, a move that would soon introduce tuberculosis among the group and result in the loss of many children.

John Gregory Bourke, a soldier and later a noted ethnographer, had aided General Crook in his 1883 campaign against Geronimo in the Sierra Madres. During their period of imprisonment at Fort Marion, Bourke worked on behalf of the Apache prisoners to call attention to their unfair treatment and exile in the east. While visiting the Apache prisoners in Saint Augustine, Bourke recalls viewing a Fire Dance at the old Spanish fort during this period:

> A great many of the band had been suffering from sickness of one kind or another and twenty-three of the children had died; as a consequence, the medicine-men were having the Cha-ja-la [Chazhááda],[23] which is entered into only upon the most solemn occasions, such as the setting out of a war party, the appearance of an epidemic, or something else of like portent. On the terreplein of the northwest bastion, Ramon, the old medicine man, was violently beating upon a drum, which as usual, had been improvised of a soaped rag drawn tightly over the mouth of an iron kettle holding a little water.[24]

Bourke provides a thorough account of this 1887 Fire Dance in his report for the Bureau of Ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution, *Apache Medicine Men*, the most detailed and insightful look into Fire Dance performance of the period. He begins by describing the ritual preparations of the Gahe dancers (alternately referred to by Bourke as "kan" or "medicine men") by Ramon, the main medicine man officiating the ceremony:

---

[22] Ibid, 317.

[23] Bourke's terminology "Cha-ja-la" appears to be his personal notation for the Apachean word *Chazhááda*, the traditional Chiricahua designation for the dancers. Whether or not the terminology was interchangeably used in the historical past to designate both the dancers and the ceremony is not certain at this time.

[24] Bourke, *Apache Medicine Men*, 133.

> Although acting as master of ceremonies, Ramon was not painted or decorated in any way. Three other medicine-men were having the finishing touches put to their bodily decoration. They had an undercoat of greenish brown, and on each arm a yellow snake, the head toward the shoulder blade. The snake on the arm of one of the party was double headed, or rather had a head at each extremity.[25]

The head medicine man Ramon, rather than being painted as a Gahe himself, directed the ritual painting of the dancers, most likely while also accompanying the action with song.[26]

The presence "on each arm" of a "yellow snake, the head toward the shoulder blade" references a zigzag design that extends from the shoulder of the dancer to the hand. It should be noted that the recurrence of the zigzag motif is reminiscent of the Higgins account. This design is often cited as representing a snake or lightning, and remains a prominent design in contemporary Fire Dances. Alan Ferg and William B. Kessel's chapter on Apache ritual in *Western Apache Material Culture* (1987) provides an analysis of "snake-like" designs on Western Apache headdresses.[27] According to Kessel and Ferg, early researcher Dorothy Francis Gay forwarded an interpretation of the zigzag figures in her 1933 thesis. According to Gay's informant John Robinson, the zigzag designs represent:

> ... the voice of the lightning, or the reverberations that are heard after the clap of thunder. John Robinson was most emphatic in stating that this was not a snake, nor was it intended to represent one. He [John Robinson] gave an ingenious explanation for the forked tail: "The forks of the tail work in the same way that the antennae of a radio do. The sound is caught by them and is amplified, and thus we are able to hear it."[28]

Based on the secondhand input of unidentified sources from the Fort Apache

---

[25] Bourke, *Apache Medicine Men*, 133.

[26] Opler, who defines the ritual preparations of the Gahe as having the Gahe "made," discusses this aspect of Fire Dance performance as related to him by his informants in *An Apache Life-way* (1996:100); see also *Myths and Tales of the Chiricahua Apache Indians*, (1994:77).

[27] Alan Ferg and William B. Kessel, *Western Apache Material Culture: the Goodwin and Guenther Collections* (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1987), 120-123.

[28] Ibid, 120.

Reservation, Larson supports Gay's argument against interpreting these symbols as a snake.[29] Yet, despite Robinson's statement, the Ferg and Kessel chapter continues further to argue, "lightning and snakes do seem to be closely associated with one another… and it appears they can be used interchangeably… as symbols or designs."[30] Grenville Goodwin elaborates upon this contention:

> Certain species of snakes, some from earth and some imaginary ones, with porcupine, lizard, and skunk, fly about in space just beneath the sky. From certain of these animals comes the dangerous lightning. A great snake in the underworld communicates with a lightning being above concerning certain happenings on the earth. The connection between snakes and lightning is an important one.[31]

Fire Dance styles, their symbols, and meaning are as diverse in character as the Apachean groups or the medicine men that practice the rite. Use of Western, Fort Apache, or Mescalero Apache interpretations of symbols cannot speak with great certainty for meaning within the Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs community, but may provide a framework for understanding localized meaning within this community. What is of particular importance, however, is the association of these images with broader cosmological concepts. For example, four points are apparent in the zigzag designs worn by contemporary Fort Sill Apache Dancers (and, presumably their ancestors). This reinforces the ritual significance of the number four within the dance, particularly as representative of the four cardinal directions. Regardless of meaning, the recurrence of this design in early ethnological accounts and its continued use in contemporary performances represents not only longstanding adherence to broad stylistic features, but also to the highly varied, yet individually meaningful symbols that surround the dance.

---

[29] Larson, "Gaan/Gahe," 208 fn. 20.
[30] Ferg and Kessel, *Apache Material Culture*, 121.
[31] Ibid.

Of the 1887 Fire Dance performance at Fort Marion, Bourke states in a later passage that, "There were four medicine-men, three of whom were dancing and in conference with the spirits, and the fourth of whom was general superintendent of the whole dance."[32] The "general superintendent" references Ramon, the main medicine man. Of the three remaining "medicine men," or Gahe, Bourke notes that their foundational green body paint provides the backdrop for the yellow designs. This implies that the services of the Grey One, whose upper torso is usually painted white and is not mentioned anywhere within Bourke's account, was not employed for this particular healing rite.

In the following, Bourke draws attention to the subtle differences in the body paint of the dancers, which adds not only to the basic creative variety of the dance, but also to the deeper religious symbolism inherent in the rite:

> Each had insignia in yellow on back and breast, but no two were exactly alike. One had on his breast a yellow bear, 4 inches long by 3 inches high, and on his back a kan of the same color and dimensions. A second had the same pattern of bear on his breast, but a zigzag for lightning on his back. The third had a zigzag on both back and breast. All wore kilts and moccasins.
>
> While the painting was going on Ramon thumped and sang with vigor to insure the medicinal potency of the pigments and the designs to which they were applied. Each held, one in each hand, two wands or swords of lathlike proportions, ornamented with snake-lightning in blue.[33]

Here, Bourke addresses the body paint which adorns the entire upper body of the dancer, the heavy buckskin kilts that cover the lower body until approximately mid- to lower calf, and the moccasins, which in accordance with Chiricahua tradition likely had the characteristic up-turned toe. Each of the Gahe dancers also typically carries two swords or wands, one in each hand. The blue "snake-lightning" ornamentations are

[32] Bourke, *Apache Medicine Men*, 134.
[33] Ibid, 133.

probably similar to the zigzag designs present in the body paint of the dancers. Bourke confirms later in his article that the ceremony was continued for the prescribed four nights, reinforcing the important ritual repetition of the rite and states that the colors and the symbols painted on the Gahe dancer changed from night to night—also an indicator of the creative and symbolic diversity of the dance.

Bourke then describes the most striking aspect of the dancers' regalia, the headdresses:

> The mask and headdress of the first of the dancers, who seemed to be the leading one, was so elaborate that in the hurry and meager light supplied by the flickering fires it could not be portrayed. It was very much like that of number three, but so fully covered with the plumage of the eagle, hawk, and apparently, the owl, that it is difficult to assert this positively. Each of these medicine-men had pieces of red flannel tied to his elbows and a stick about four feet long in each hand... All these headdresses were made of the Spanish bayonet, unpainted, excepting that on number two was a figure in black, which could not be made out, and that the horizontal crosspieces on number three were painted blue.[34]

The Gahe headdress typically consists of a black buckskin or canvas mask that covers the dancer's face and vertical and horizontal slats of wood, in the shape of a trident, perched atop the head. The flannel streamers, wands, and use of feather ornamentation, like all of the previous regalia described by Bourke, continue to be used in the contemporary performances of the rite. The colored figures present on the Gahe headdresses may designate that dancer's directional association.[35]

---

[34] Bourke, *Apache Medicine Men*, 134.

[35] Again, the traditional Chiricahua color/directional associations for the Gahe are black for the Gahe of the east, blue for the Gahe of the south, yellow for the Gahe of the west, and white for the Gahe of the north. Opler, *Myths and Tales*, 77, fn. 1; Michael Darrow, personal interview by author, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Headquarters, 4 April 2002. If the colored figures on the headdresses do designate color/directional associations, the line up of the Gahe as described by Bourke appear to deviate from this standard, which was probably not that uncommon. In his *Myths and Tales* (77), Opler relates a Gahe story in which the dancers do not adhere to this general pattern.

In the following, Bourke appears to be describing an introductory segment (or as Bourke terms it, "preliminaries") of the dance sometimes called "the worshipping of the fire" or, perhaps more appropriately, "the blessing of the fire":

> The medicine-men emitted a peculiar whistling noise and bent slowly to the right, then to the left, then frontward, then backward, until the head in each case was level with the waist. Quickly they spun round in full circle on the left foot; back again in a reverse circle to the right; then they charged around the little group of tents in that bastion, making cuts and thrusts with their wands to drive the maleficent spirits away.[36]

The passage appears to describe the Gahe as they approach the fire from a single cardinal direction. The "peculiar whistling noise" is sounded as they near the fire, at which point they again retreat and repeat the action. When the action has been repeated the prescribed number of times, the Gahe circle the dance area (or charge around the tents of the bastion, in this case) and then approach from the next cardinal point.

Bourke continues, next addressing the healing component of the rite:

> These preliminaries lasted a few moments only; at the end of that time the medicine-men advanced to where a squaw was holding up to them a little baby sick in its cradle. The mother remained kneeling while the medicine-men frantically struck at, upon, around, and over the cradle with their wooden weapons.
>
> The baby was held so as successively to occupy each of the cardinal points and face each point directly opposite; first on the east side, facing the west; then the north side facing south, then the west side, facing the east; then the south side facing the north, and back to the original position. While at each position, each of the medicine-men in succession, after making all the passes and gestures described, seized the cradle in his hands, pressed it to his breast, and afterwards lifted it up to the sky, next to the earth, and lastly to the four cardinal points, all the time prancing, whistling, and snorting, the mother and her squaw friends adding to the dismal din by piercing shrieks and ululations.[37]

---

[36] Bourke, *Apache Medicine Men*, 133.
[37] Ibid, 133-34.

By approaching the sick participant for whom the ceremony was held, in this case the baby, and waving the wands over the child, the Gahe transfer the sickness from which the patient suffers into their wands and shake it into the air to be carried away by the wind.[38]

The recurrence of important religious concepts, specifically reference made to the cardinal directions and ritual repetition of action by four, adds a sense of unity to the performance. Though Bourke notes that the baby was held up to each successive cardinal point, he also describes a counter-clockwise ritual movement: "[the baby was held] first on the east side facing west, then the north side facing south, then the west side," etc. This counter-clockwise ritual movement within the rite is unique in relation to the author's experiences. Each Fire Dance and its accompanying ritual was taught to an Apache medicine man in a very personal experience, however, an experience that was often shaped directly by the distress or needs of the shaman at that time. Such variation further delineates the slight variations between Fire Dance shamans and their dance groups.

Despite his detail in describing the Gahe, their actions, and their regalia, Bourke's ability to summarize adequately the musical elements of Gahe performance was lacking. The musicians were of little interest to Bourke, who focused his attention on these performers only in the absence of the Gahe:

> Having attained the degree of mental or spiritual exaltation necessary for communion with the spirits, they [the Gahe] took their departure and kept away for at least half an hour, the orchestra during their absence rendering a mournful refrain, monotonous as a funeral dirge. My patience became exhausted and I turned to go to my quarters.[39]

---

[38] William Denman, *Fire Dance of the Apache Indians*, 1-2; Haley, *History and Culture Portrait*, 75.
[39] Bourke, *Apache Medicine Men*, 135.

While the Apache prisoners had access to military medical treatment and utilized this new resource, the Apache prisoners of war nevertheless improvised a performance of their traditional ceremony. It is apparent that, though far from their home, the Gahe continued to function as an important symbol to the Chiricahua/Warm Spring Apache who sought relief in their traditional religion and ceremonial practice. When the Apache prisoners left Fort Marion in 1887 for Mount Vernon Barracks, Alabama, a picture of a Gahe dancer was left behind, sketched on the wall in one of the casemates of the old Spanish fort.[40]

Fort Pickens

At the time the Apaches were designated prisoners of war and sent to Florida, Geronimo, Naiche, and Mangus and their associated warriors were sent to confinement at Fort Pickens, Florida, near Pensacola on the Gulf of Mexico. The wives and offspring of many of these men had been sent to Fort Marion, however. When plans were made in 1887 to move the prisoners located at Fort Marion to Mount Vernon, the main body of prisoners went directly to the new location, while the men at Fort Pickens were joined by their estranged relations near Pensacola. In June of that same year, a puberty rite was held for a girl who had been transferred to the fort. Spectators and reporters were invited to witness the celebration by the officer in charge of the prisoners. This resulted in at least two accounts of the Fire Dance being published in regional newspapers.[41]

The following account is an article that ran in the June 14, 1887 edition of the Mobile Register, a reprint from the original story in the Pensacola Commercial on June 11 of that same year. Of particular interest is the description of the two Gahe dancers and

---

[40] Omega East, "Apache Prisoners in Fort Marion, 1886-87," United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, January 1951, 57; Boyer and Gayton, *Apache Mothers*, 107.
[41] Debo, *Geronimo*, 331; Skinner, *Apache Rock Crumbles*, 182-192.

Gray One, the latter performed by a son of Geronimo named Chappo, and the discussion on the musical elements of the performance which is, though still broad, the most detailed encountered so far.

> The Medicine Dance—Strange scenes around the Indian Camp Fire at Fort Pickens.
>
> Four hundred to five hundred people from the city and the reservation repaired to Fort Pickens last evening to witness the Chiricahua Medicine Dance of the captive Apaches, which had been announced to begin at sunset. The spectators clambered up the path leading to the ramparts on the east side of the enclosure, and the steep hillside was soon occupied by the many, who gazed down into the arena, as preparations for the performance were going forward. The picture was much as must have been one side of an ancient Roman amphitheatre, as the sides of the declivity furnished seats for people who, closely pressed by the crowds on top, gently gravitated to a more comfortable and advantageous position.
>
> The monarch of the solar system had but sunk below the western horizon when flames from a pile of ignited old lumber placed at the base of the hill sprang heavenward, casting a lurid glare around, and rendering vivid in their picturesque costumes the forms of three braves who ran within the circle of light, and began their extraordinary capers. Two of the three were led by Chappo, a son of Geronimo, who was perfectly nude, with the exception of a white breech-cloth, the others wearing knee dresses. They all wore closely fitting masks covering the whole head, the only openings being for the eyes and mouth. Chappo wore no head dress, but the other two carried each a capillary ornamentation that were magnificent in their elaborate proportions, and would put to blush an orchard of three-year old LeConte pear trees. Chappo's body was painted white from head to foot, and the bodies of the others were similarly decorated from the waist up. The dresses were decked with vari-colored ribbons, and each of the three carried a wooden sword in one hand and a wooden cross in the other. These they brandished as they danced, and the spectator was reminded, on a larger scale, of the 'waltz me again' of George Wilson, the comedian.
>
> Seated at twenty paces from the fire was the band. It consisted of the bucks and boys, led by Geronimo, Natchez and Mangus,[42] the instruments consisting of a canvas stretched upon the ground which, as they sat surrounding it, they beat upon with sticks, singing while a melody that ranged from C to G in the same octave, flats and sharps being skipped, the song being a successive series of about five notes repeated with scarcely ever or never a variation. Interpolated here and there in each verse was a curious yelping, which appeared to be a prompting of the dancers, as the latter would change the step when the yelp came, and cut another shuffle. The musicians were also provided with a camp kettle, over which had been stretched some tough substance, and which answered the purpose of a drum. At different intervals a squaw, or a half dozen squaws at once would emit a

[42] Each is a renowned leader of the Chiricahua Apaches.

peculiar cry, which was produced by placing one hand over the mouth as the sound was freed from the throat, the duration of the call being so long as the breath held out, the wild note dying away in a mournful cadence, as the sweet singers of Fort Pickens planned to replace the lost inflation of their lungs.

This particular feature of the programme was kept up for two or three hours when a change was effected by introducing all the bucks in the circle, after the wild and terror inspiring antics of whom, the squaws performed a ballet de Apache, Geronimo's daughter, a Princess of the tribe, being the premier, and leading the other fairies with the grace born of her blood and rank. Then the performance wound up by a grand hoop la hey walk-around, by the whole company, who furnished the most striking illustration of Pandemonium the audience had ever witnessed, the night being made hideous by the yelps, peculiar cries and occasional yell from Indian throats. The show concluded about midnight, not lasting until sunrise as was anticipated.

The medicine dance, so the interpreter of the Indians informed a reporter, is not a periodic affair, but is had whenever there is an inclination for a little festivity.

When asked the difference between a medicine dance and a war dance, the interpreter said: "there is just this difference: if this was a war dance, you'd see all those people up there flying over the ramparts of the fort."

As with the performance at Fort Marion, the Fort Pickens rite commenced in truncated form, this time with only two Gahe and a Gray One. The article reaffirms some of the basic traits of a Fire Dance as addressed by the previous ethnographers, particularly by focusing on the material culture associated with the dance, but also hints at the diversity of individual style. In particular, the wands of the dancers at Fort Pickens, described as "a wooden sword" in one hand and a cross in the other, contrast with the "lath-like" swords described by Bourke. Evident in headdress design, body paint and symbols, and dance/musical styles, subtle variations such as this are among the distinguishing factors that mark the unique character of the different Fire Dance groups.

The description of the musicians, or "band," and instrumentation is recognizable, but the use of canvas instead of buckskin and the camp kettle in lieu of individual water drums is unique. Keeping in mind that the Apache at Fort Pickens were prisoners far

from home, such exceptions to common practice were more likely the result of necessity than choice.

More interesting is the fact that this article represents the first documentation of the melodic material characteristic of Fire Dance songs. The reporter's statement that the songs were composed of "a successive series of about five notes" could be an indicator of the pentatonic pitch material typical of many Fire Dance songs. Whether the reporter arrived at this insight through keen intellect or accident is uncertain, however. Though the reporter appears, through word choice, to maintain some musical knowledge, his own language also amplifies the limitations of that knowledge. While Fire Dance songs often display pentatonic pitch material, the pitch range of a fifth assigned by the reporter is too constricted to be accurate. The reporter's aesthetic reaction to the musical elements of the dance, embedded in a passage that could be describing the Round Dance that often follows the Fire Dance, strongly parallel the comments of Michael Steck some thirty years prior: "Then the performance wound up by a grand hoop la hey walk-around, by the whole company, who furnished the most striking illustration of Pandemonium the audience had ever witnessed, *the night being made hideous by the yelps, peculiar cries and occasional yell from Indian throats*" [emphasis mine].

The Apaches held at Fort Pickens reunited with the other Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apaches at Mount Vernon, Alabama on May 13, 1888.[43] There is no documentation known to the author referencing Fire Dance performance during this period. Coppersmith provides a possible reason for this void in documentation: "Army officials prohibited the practice of the Mountain Spirit Dance while the Chiricahuas were in Alabama, although it is quite possible some elements of the ritual were practiced

[43] Coppersmith, "Cultural Survival," 88; Stockel, *Survival of the Spirit*, 150.

without official knowledge."[44] Both Apachean and Native American scholarship would benefit from further inquiry into the impact of such censorship practices upon the performance of the Fire Dance and musical life of the Apache prisoners. Coppersmith's indication of a ban on the Fire Dance at Mount Vernon, though not unlikely, is offered without citation or other source documentation. The author has not yet discovered another source indicating likewise and tribal historian Michael Darrow has stated that he maintains no knowledge of such a ban.[45] Regardless, if the Fire Dance was subject to prohibition at Mount Vernon, it was not the only time.

Fort Sill

Documentation of Fire Dance performance during the Fort Sill prisoner of war era focuses primarily on one period of intensified practice. Christian missionaries, in the form of the Dutch Reformed Church, appeared among the Apache prisoners in 1899. In that same winter, a medicine man among the group began holding Fire Dances with greater frequency. This episode is cited in numerous texts,[46] but most of these authors appear to have derived their information from the same original sources, Jason Betzinez and Wilbur Nye's *I Fought with Geronimo*,[47] or to a lesser degree Betzinez's unpublished manuscript "My People: A Story of the Apaches," an unedited draft containing much of the same information as the published work. A result of heavy reliance on one source, much of the scholarly writing surrounding this episode is heavily flavored by the language in Betzinez's *I Fought with Geronimo*. Although this source provides some

---

[44] Coppersmith, "Cultural Survival," 229.
[45] Michael Darrow, personal interview by author, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Headquarters, 24 May 2002.
[46] Debo, *Geronimo*, 340; Coppersmith, "Cultural Survival", 222-23; William Grosvenor Pollard, "Structure and Stress: Social Change Among the Fort Sill Apache and their Ancestors," (Masters Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1997), 143-44; Stockel, *Survival of the Spirit*, 213-215.
[47] Jason Betzinez and Wilbur Sturtevant Nye, *I Fought with Geronimo* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 171-72, 175-77, 179.

interesting insight into the origins and issues of ownership surrounding the Fire Dance, Betzinez, himself a Fort Sill Apache, strikes a tone reminiscent of some early ethnographers:

> Many preparations preceded the dance, such as the painting of the bodies of the dancers with special designs and the decoration of the weird headgear and other articles used in the dance. The patterns used in these decorations, and the form of the headgear, were the specific property and the right of the medicine man. Sacred to him alone, no other medicine man had a right to use them. In addition to all this costuming each dancer had to be put through some kind of ceremony or incantation prior to going to the dancing ground. Naturally this combination of mysticism, pageantry, and exhibitionism had a great appeal to these poor people, who had little other entertainment except gambling and drinking.[48]

Coppersmith feels that *I Fought with Geronimo* was far more critical in tone than the original unedited typewritten manuscript of "My People," suggesting that some change occurred through his collaboration on the published work.[49] Regardless of critical degree, Betzinez represented, as both a Christian and a Carlisle School graduate, a new influence among the Apache prisoners of war.

Soon after the arrival of Christian missionaries, an Apache named Harold Dick claimed that he could cure any Apache of the tuberculosis that had plagued the group since their confinement at Fort Marion in 1886. According to Betzinez, healing the sickness among the Fort Sill Apache was not the only goal of Dick: "He denounced the white man's religion, saying it is good only for the white man. The Indians were urged to reject it and stick to the old ways and the old religion."[50] Performances of the Fire Dance increased in frequency in the winter of 1899.

Betzinez felt that these performances were detrimental to the good of the Fort Sill Apache. In particular, he believed that the cold weather was influential in spreading

---

[48] Betzinez, *I Fought with Geronimo*, 176.
[49] Coppersmith, *Cultural Survival*, 126.
[50] Betzinez, *I Fought with Geronimo*, 172.

pneumonia throughout the group and that the exchange of dance masks by the Gahe dancers was a dangerous transmitter of tuberculosis. In October 1900 Betzinez approached the officer in charge of the Apache at that time, Captain Farrand Sayre, and citing recent deaths among the group that summer, all of which Betzinez attributed as a result of the winter dancing, requested that some action be taken. After initial hesitation, Sayre curtailed the dances during the winter months. Betzinez admitted that, "this did not increase my popularity among the Apaches."[51] Purrington, who succeeded Sayre in 1904, lifted the ban imposed upon the Fire Dance.[52] Though officially a tough censorship order, Skinner's designation of this attempt to curtail Apache ceremonial practice as a "toothless order" may be correct.[53]

In 1912, M.R. Harrington published his eyewitness account of a Fire Dance near Medicine Creek, on Fort Sill. His descriptions of the Gahe as "awe-inspiring demons" and of the "wild, weird song" performed by the musicians indicate that little ground had been gained in the approximately fifty years of ethnography (or at least in terms of aesthetic description) among the Apache. Despite this, a picture emerges within the article that begins to approach the unique nature of the ceremony's performance in southwest Oklahoma and also foreshadows its contemporary performance:

> Everywhere was laughing and talking. Here we heard the complex sounds of the Apache language, one of the most difficult phonetics of any Indian language with which I am acquainted. There, from groups of sheeted visitors, the plain, matter-of-fact Comanche, and from still other groups were heard the singsong, drawling tones of the Kiowa tongue. Altogether the scene was a noisy one... A modern touch was given to the scene by a flourishing soda-water booth, where some enterprising soul was doing a land-office business in pop and lemon sour.[54]

---

[51] Betzinez, *I Fought with Geronimo*, 179.
[52] Stockel, *Survival of the Spirit*, 306, fn. 47.
[53] Skinner, *Apache Rock*, 412.
[54] M.R. Harrington, "The Devil Dance of the Apache," *The Museum Journal*, vol. III, no. 1 (March 1912), 109-112.

The relationship between the Kiowa, Comanche, and Fort Sill Apache inhabitants began in 1896 when the Apache prisoners arrived at the post in southwest Oklahoma. These Southern Plains groups, who were also among the first to meet the Apache prisoners upon their arrival in the region,[55] made room for the group by ceding Kiowa-Comanche-[Kiowa] Apache reservation lands to the newly arrived prisoners through compromise with the locally established representatives of the United States government. Continued interaction between these groups is evident at the annual Fire Dances held today. Though likely also true in varying degrees throughout the history of the Fire Dance, description of the scene as "noisy" and full of laughing and talking, the presence of adjacent tribes, friends, and neighbors, and the marketing of wares by vendors point toward the more social elements witnessed at modern Fire Dance performances.

Stockel cites a Fire Dance circa 1913-1914, held near the village of famous tribal member Loco at Four Mile Crossing on Fort Sill, as the last Dance of the Mountain Spirits held while prisoners at the post.[56] Between this approximate date and 1980, written documentation on performance of the ceremony by the Fort Sill Apache who remained in the region is a void. However, a broad portrait of its performance can be sketched from the memories of tribal members who grew up in the region. Asked on one occasion regarding Fire Dance performance during this period, Tribal Chair Ruey Darrow recalled three performances as she was growing up. Each of these dances were held in the 1930s and 1940s—two performed by the Gooday family and one performed by another local family tradition at their allotment that was located adjacent to the Fort Sill Apache

[55] Debo, *Geronimo*, 365.
[56] Stockel, *Survival of the Spirit*, 224.

headquarters.[57] Similarly questioned, Tribal Historian Michael Darrow cited a dance held to honor the installment of grave markers at the Apache cemetery at Fort Sill in 1963 as prominent in his memory, as well as various performances at local events such as the annual American Indian Exposition in Anadarko, Oklahoma or by invitation to regional events and powwows.[58] When asked whether the Fort Sill Apache ever held a tribal dance specifically for its members, Michael Darrow stated, "I don't recall the tribe ever having dances just for the tribe... up until 1980."[59] Therefore, performance of the Fire Dance after 1912 is perhaps best characterized as intermittent, depending largely upon invitation to special occasions or other prominent Native American events within the region.

Interestingly, of the aforementioned Fire Dances, only the Gooday performance in the 1930's was held on an occasion of sickness.[60] Further, except for one occasion in 1995,[61] performances of the dance for the girl's puberty ceremony over the course of the last century are unknown to the author. Among the contemporary Fort Sill Apache, the dance is no longer performed for the purposes of healing or to honor the girl's puberty rite. It is perhaps in part because of the separation of the dance from these important rites that local discourse on the Fire Dance sometimes indicates that tribal members perceive a loss of "significance"—ritual, spiritual, or otherwise. Coppersmith addresses the debate over the meaning of the dance within the local community as well:

---

[57] Ruey Darrow, personal interview by author, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Headquarters, 2 May 2002.
[58] Michael Darrow, personal interview by the author, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Headquarters, 4 April 2002.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ruey Darrow, personal interview by author, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Headquarters, 2 May 2002.
[61] This event took place in May 1994 and was held for Sarah Kaywaykla. According to a *Lawton* (Oklahoma) *Constitution* article dated May 31, 1994, this was the first performance of the rite in Oklahoma in 81 years. Participation of the Bacca family Mountain Spirit dancers and other contributors from the Mescalero reservation in New Mexico were instrumental to the realization of the dance.

> The Mountain Spirit dance, however, continued to retain a critical place in Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apache culture (albeit with diminished spiritual significance), throughout the duration of the post-allotment period to the present day. Even though the Mountain Spirit Dance has lost much of its spiritual significance for most members of the tribe, it still projects a powerful political and cultural symbolism which personifies the survival of Chiricahua and Warm Springs identity.[62]

Regardless of the surrounding debate, the dance continued to perform an important function for members of the Fort Sill Apache over the course of the twentieth century, as it does now at the turn of the millennium. The role of the dance as a vehicle for tribal history, values and beliefs, or, in the personal words of Michael Darrow, as a symbol of validation for the Fort Sill Apache,[63] make it a cultural practice of central importance to the tribe and contributed to the establishment of its yearly performance at the tribal headquarters in 1980.

[62] Coppersmith, "Cultural Survival", 184.
[63] Michael Darrow, personal interview by author, 114-123.

VI. Personal Observation—Annual Fort Sill Apache Fire Dance

The Fire Dance hosted by the Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache Tribe was initiated as an organizationally promoted and annually celebrated event in 1980, roughly coinciding with the dedication of the Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs tribal complex. The event generally falls around the third weekend in September every year. Supported in part by personal attendance at the yearly event and available announcement flyers listing the scheduled events for previous years' celebrations, the Annual Fire Dance of the Fort Sill Apache fits broadly into a consistent format. Festivities begin after the workday on Friday evening and last until sometime early Sunday morning. The Friday performance often commences with a Gourd Dance at around 6:30 in the evening, with the Gahe dancers taking over the dance ground soon after sundown. The Saturday celebration is usually an all day affair and might include events such as a horseshoe tournament, an Apache War Dance, a reception for the Apache tribal princess, a lecture by Fort Sill Apache Tribal Historian Michael Darrow, a communal dinner, and more Gourd Dancing. The Gahe Dancers again take control of the dance area soon after sundown and usually perform until sometime around midnight. Round Dances and Back and Forth Dances, both traditional song and dance forms of the Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache, follow the Gahe Dance.

The Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs tribal headquarters, the site of the annual celebration, is located on Route 2, just north of Apache in southwestern Oklahoma. A visitor to this multi-unit facility will notice on the north side of the grounds a gymnasium and the office building for the Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs Tribal Housing Authority. Across the asphalt parking lot and to the southwest of this structure is a

building housing a kitchen, communal area, and a small exhibit highlighting the historic saga of the Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache and the main offices of the tribal headquarters. Located just behind these structures is an Emergency Youth Shelter and, on the southeast portion of the complex, the dance area where the September Fire Dance unfolds annually.

Walking behind the youth shelter and into the dance area during the September celebration, the first-time attendee may be struck by a myriad of images. Circling the dance ground are numerous mini-vans, SUVs, and sedans of all varieties. Vendors set up booths and market their wares. On the south and north sides of the dance grounds, food sales are earned by pedaling such treats as sodas, cheese drenched nachos, and Indian fry-bread. Beadwork and other craft items are common. A booth selling t-shirts featuring the Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs name and a stylized depiction of a Gahe dancer, an image created by famed Fort Sill Apache artist Alan Houser, is usually located on the northwest portion of the dance ground. When the weather is cooperative, craftspeople unload their goods at a healthier pace than on the damper, more sparsely attended evenings of the dance.

Spectators to the event line the outer ring of the dance grounds, some perched on wooden benches beneath a long, slender semicircular arbor, others sitting in the open atop the ubiquitous foldout chair so common at Native American events in Oklahoma, or on blankets stretched out on the ground. There are many happy greetings, pats on the back, and reunions with visiting relatives. The event draws a diverse crowd. Though the English language—as opposed to the "complex" Apache, the "matter-of-fact" Comanche,

or the "sing-song, drawling" tones of the Kiowa noted by Harrington[1]—has emerged as the lingua franca among attendees, the demographic make-up of the yearly dance is still predominantly composed of visitors from area tribes.

Children chase each other; one year, a young boy clutched a younger counterpart with an unbreakable headlock, while the smaller victim wiggled in a vain attempt to escape. Teens often wander the outer perimeter of the dance ground dressed in Tommy Hilfiger clothing, baseball caps with meticulously curved brims, or spike haired and flair bottom pants, and the ever-present beeper-pager prominently displayed, sizing up the scene. Adults at the event may be dressed in regalia typical of the plains-based Gourd Dance, others in jeans, sweatshirts, cowboy hats, and miscellaneous traditional accessories. A significant portion of the audience sits quietly—big and small, young and old, Native American, Euroamerican, mixed Native-Euroamerican, University of Oklahoma exchange student and life long Okie alike—waiting for the main attraction as the pink and orange southwest Oklahoma sky yields to growing darkness and the emerging stars.

The Fire Dances personally witnessed by the author took place over a period from 1996-2002. The description that follows details the event witnessed during the September celebration in 1999. The event that year highlighted three separate and distinct groups of Gahe dancers. The first group was from the Mescalero reservation in New Mexico and was represented by three dancers and two Gray Ones. Based on the indicative four-pointed star on the chest and back of the Gahe, this group may have been descended from

[1] Harrington, "The Devil Dance of the Apache," 9; refer to Chapter 5, 69.

the Eugene Chihuahua tradition.[2] The second group was composed of local Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs dancers, from the Gooday family dance tradition. The performers representing this group included four dancers and three Gray Ones. Visitors to Oklahoma, the third group was, like the Chihuahua group, from the Mescalero reservation in New Mexico. Based on headdress style and body paint designs, this group may be descended from the Fire Dance tradition of David Fatty.[3] Four dancers and two Gray Ones danced representing this tradition. The Fire Dance as performed that evening can be seen as being composed of three sections: an introduction, a main body, and a conclusion. These three groups of dancers initiated the dance in an introductory segment during which each group entered the dance area, at separate times and completely independent of each other, and blessed the four directions.

Introduction of the Gahe/Blessing of the Fire

In addressing the introductory segment, the generalized pattern for the Introduction or Blessing of the Fire should be discussed. All Gahe dancers and Gray Ones entered the dance ground in a line from the East, moving towards the fire in a westerly direction. The Gahe entered first, followed by the Gray One(s). The group trotted toward the fire, stopping short by several feet, and let loose a typically short staccato cry ("ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!"). The Gahe then trotted backwards to approximately the

---

[2] Eve Ball to Gillette Griswold, 19 December 1965, Chihuahua, Eugene—biography file, Fort Sill Museum, Fort Sill, Oklahoma; more research on the transmission and history of Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache dance traditions is necessary before the lineage of this group can be definitively determined. Ball's correspondence addresses a group of photographs sent to Gillette Griswold who was, at that time, director of the Fort Sill Museum. In regard to one of the photos, Ball writes: "Eugene's dancers—distinguishing symbol, white four-pointed star on chest and back." A black four-pointed star is a typical body design of the Mithlo group of Apache, Oklahoma, a dance tradition that, coincidentally, also claims ancestry from the Chihuahua tradition. This design was noted at the September 1999 performance on a visiting dance group from Mescalero, the reservation of residence where the prominent Eugene Chihuahua spent the last years of his life.

[3] Morris Edward Opler, "Chiricahua Apache," in *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 10, Southwest, general ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983), 415.

same starting point. The process of trotting toward the fire and the call, were repeated two more times for a total of three repetitions. Upon the fourth advance on the fire, the group bent at the knees, swayed the upper body from side to side, and let out a longer, sustained cry ("ahhhhhhh!"). As the group drew upon the fire, the leader veered to the right, made a complete, tight circle, headed to the south and then circled all the way around the fire in a clockwise direction. All dancers followed the leader. After passing the eastern side, the group aligned itself to approach the fire from the south. This process was then repeated for each of the cardinal directions. All groups participating at the September 18, 1999 ceremony more or less adhered to this broad standard. There were, however, some differences that were unique to the distinct Fire Dance traditions.

The Mescalero group descended from the Chihuahua tradition was the first to emerge from the East. The dancers trotted towards the fire. As they approached the blaze they raised their arms from the shoulders until they were parallel to the earth, crossed their wands, and then flicked their wrists outwards as they let out their cry. Before approaching for the fourth time, the Mescalero-Chihuahua dancers crossed their wands, raised their arms in a circular motion into the "T" position, let out a longer, more legato cry, and moved toward the fire with bent knees and moving the upper torso from side to side. On the fourth approach, instead of immediately circling the fire, the Chihuahua dancers stopped in front of the fire. They then proceeded to once again raise their arms out in front of them, from the shoulder until parallel with the earth, cross their wands, and then flick their wrists outward, and let out a cry. The group then turned 90 degrees to the north and repeated the arm motion and cry. This was done to the east and south as well. The circular motion around the outside of the fire was only then

completed. The entire process was repeated for each of the cardinal points and a call was again made as the group exited to the East.

The Gooday dancers were the next to appear. Trotting towards the fire, the group crossed the wands in front of their lower body, and as they drew near the fire, raised their arms in a circular motion until they were extended from the shoulder in "T" position, with the wands pointing towards the sky. Their cry (a nasal staccato "ah-ah-ah-ah") coincided with this movement. On the fourth approach to the fire, they again raised their wands in a circular motion, while sounding a more legato call ("ahhhhhhhhh"). As they neared the fire, they made a sharp circular turn to the right. As they began to circle the fire, the legato cry gave way to one with a more staccato character ("ah-ah-ah-ah"). The process was repeated for each of the cardinal points. Once this was completed, the group gave a final call before leaving the field in the east.

Rounding off the introductory segment, the Mescalero Apache group entered from the east and trotted toward the fire. The wands were then crossed and raised to the head level, lowered in front of the torso, lifted once again to the head, and brought in a circular motion back to the sides. Their call, a softer, throatier expression ("uh-huh-huh-huh"), was coordinated with the circular throwing of the wands. After backing up for the fourth approach, arms were extended at the shoulder in a "t," knees were bent, and the group trotted forward bending the upper torso side to side. The call coincided with the approach, and was an elongated version of the previously employed staccato, guttural call. The group stopped in front of the fire, and in a manner similar to the Chihuahua Group, repeated the arm/wand motion to each of the directions by a 90-degree turn in place. The arm motions used are the same head/torso/head choreography used on the

first three approaches. As with their predecessors, the process was repeated for each of the cardinal points and a call was made as the Gahe exited to the east.

Main Body

After the introduction, all Gahe groups exited the dance grounds to the east. Drummers and singers moved into position near the western perimeter and seated themselves on a long bench made from cinder blocks and planks of wood. The drummers each cradled a small, round water drum, perhaps eight to twelve inches in diameter, in the crook of their left arm. In their right hand was held a drumstick of no more than six to eight inches. A hoop of approximately one to two inches in diameter adorned the tip of the stick. Their drumbeat provided the pulse for the duration of the evening.

As the musicians prepared for their task, female dancers formed a parallel line behind them. Groups of women lined up along the outer northeast and southeast perimeter, as well. Each female dancer was wearing a shawl laced with long fringe. Once the musicians and dancers were in place, the Gahe once again made their appearance.

The groups entered the dance ground in the same order of appearance as at the introduction. The Mescalero-Chihuahua dancers entered, made a full lap around the dance circle, blessed each of the four directions, and stopped on the western side of the fire immediately in front of the musicians. The Fort Sill and Mescalero dancers followed the same procedure, with the exception that these groups stopped on the northeast and southern sides, respectively.

A single voice broke through the air and was joined immediately by the others. The Mescalero-Chihuahua dancers, The Fort Sill Apache-Gooday dancers, and the

Mescalero each have a corresponding group of musicians with their own distinctive style and repertoire. These groups of approximately four musicians each rotated throughout the evening, sharing the responsibility of providing accompaniment for the dancers. All songs were composed of a straight quarter note rhythmic pattern, though the character of the beat determined the appropriate dance step.

Taking their cues from their lead dancer, the dancers were quick to join in. The dancers maintained their original order and group: (front to rear) lead dancer, remaining Gahe, Gray Ones. The leader of the troupe was the same throughout the dance and was not passed by the others in his dance group during the numerous rounds of the dance site. Moving in a clockwise motion around the fire, the dancers made sharp turns and struck dramatic poses. Sometimes moving toward the fire, sometimes away, the dancers often bent over at the waist, nodding their heads slightly. The percussive sticks on the headdress and bells on their kilts accented the rhythm of these movements. The dancers' wands were held in their palms, often pointed away from the body, or flipped back, resting on the forearms. At times, a dancer extended his arms from his shoulder toward the sky, and called out into the night.

The groups of women on the outer ring of the dance site moved slowly around the perimeter. Their left feet emphasized the downbeat. Watching the movement of their feet, holding a small child, or simply observing the dance scene before them, they shuffled clockwise around the ring.

The dance continued this way for some time, occupying the majority of the evening. Having started this segment of the dance at approximately 9:00 p.m., the dancing did not conclude until around midnight. If the women began to tire, they took a

break by unceremoniously walking off the dance area. The Gahe took frequent breaks, as well. If a male dancer wanted to take a break, he raised his wands as he exited on the east. At times, an entire group exited the dance area. The leader steered the group off the ground, with all dancers raising their wands together as a unanimous "ohhhhh!" was called out to the east. The musicians were not immune to the strains of performance either. After the completion of a song, a small pause was often observed before moving to the next. When this happened, the Fire Dancers suspended their dancing and trotted around the dance ground until the music was resumed.

Conclusion of the Ceremony

Not long after the midnight hour, it became obvious that many audience members had decided it was time to make the trek home. Chairs were folded, blankets stuffed in bags, and children rounded up as people began to make their weary way to the family car. Teens loitered in the parking lot, trying to decide what to do with the remainder of the evening. Many spectators were obviously in it for the long haul, but the musicians and dancers were feeling the wear of an evening's performance and made preparations to end the ceremony. The musicians stood up from their seats on the bench and moved in towards the fire. Standing in a circle to the immediate west of the fire, the musicians began to sing another song, and the dancers started to exit.

Again, it was the Mescalero-Chihuahua dancers who initiated the action. They circled the fire for the final time. As they approached the eastern exit, they paused, bent at the knees, swayed their upper bodies, and made their call for the final time before disappearing into the dark woods on the eastern edge of the grounds. The Gooday and Mescalero dancers exited in a similar fashion. After all of the dance groups left the dance

ground, the musicians performed a few more songs, and the ceremony moved into the Round Dance and Back and Forth Dances that often continue into the early hours of the morning.

VII. Fire Dance Music

The Fire Dance of the Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache is a complex performance practice because it is a ritual that rests at the intersection of religion and medicine, oral tradition and visual artistry, dance and drama, history and modern life. The use of music adds further depth to this dense mixture. Rather than simply ornamenting or embellishing the ceremony, the Fire Dance songs that typically accompany the dance, called *gahe biyine* in the Chiricahua language,[1] provide the rhythm and energetic drive for the event. It coordinates the angular movements of the individual dancers and Gahe groups, allowing for proper execution of the ceremony. While most Fort Sill Apaches no longer speak their traditional language fluently, the lyrical sections of Fire Dance songs are the most overt communicators to those event attendees equipped to decode its meaning—whether local Fort Sill Apache, visiting Mescalero or Western Apaches, or other closely related Athapaskan speakers. Music, though still only a component part of a greater whole, is the fulcrum around which the other elements elaborate.

Each Gahe group has an associated group of musicians. Time is kept on a water drum held in the crook of the arm. The drums seen at modern Fire Dance performances are often metal pots with a membrane stretched over the mouth acting as the drumhead. The rhythm for the dance, usually a straight quarter-note beat, is created by striking a drumstick with a small hoop on the distal end against the drumhead. Jingles, bells, and small wooden sticks adorning the dancers' headdresses also contribute to the rhythmic texture.

Though variation is common, the number of singers in a group typically ranges between four to six persons. Vocal melodies are heterophonic and rendered by a chorus

[1] Michael Darrow, personal interview by author, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Headquarters, 4 April 2002.

of male vocalists. Although subtle variations in form are apparent, the melodic organization of Fire Dance melodies analyzed by the author fall under two main categories: a binary strophic form (A B) and a strophic form (repeated A). These melodic sections are sung in vocables[2] and, in the most generalized form, are often alternated with a third section in which the chorus drops out and the head singer provides a sprechstimme recitation of text in the traditional Chiricahua language (A B/C or repeated A/B).[3] This third, sprechstimme-like section is treated separately from the main melodic sections throughout this study. Refer also to Appendix II of this study, which provides semiotic transcriptions of the *gahe biyine* discussed in this chapter.

Fourteen of the seventeen Fire Dance songs analyzed display the binary strophic form, but variation within this form is considerable. Of these songs, the formal phrasing of Fire Dance song No. 7 is too varied to discern an overarching pattern, though its melody is dyadic in construction. Two songs (Nos. 12, 17) contain a repeated A section (A A B/C) and No. 16, in similar form, extends the cadence of the A section in its second repetition (A A1 B/C). In contrast, the formal construction of song No. 9 displays the inverse form (A B B1/C). Song No. 15 is in repeated binary form (A A B B/C). Similarly, song No. 14 gives variation to this form with a slight extension in cadence during the second repetition of the B section (A A B B1/C). Three Fire Dance songs (Nos. 8, 10, 13) adhere to the most prominent variation on the form within the study (A A1 B B1/C). Song No. 6 almost fits into this same format (A A1 B B1/C), but the lyric recitation section is incomplete (A A1 B B1/C inc.). Also rendered with incomplete text recitation,

[2] The term "vocable" is often defined as sung syllables without dictionary definition.
[3] The slash between the melodic sections (A B or A) is used to emphasize the distinction between the sung melody and the sprechstimme-like textual sections (A B/**C** or A/**B**).

song No. 5 is in binary strophic form with an extended cadence (A A1 Bcc/D inc.).[4] Rendered without text recitation, only two are in strict binary strophic form (A A1 B B1) (Nos. 1 and 3).[5]

Three of the Fire Dance songs are of the strophic variety. Among these songs, Nos. 2 and 4 are in strict strophic form (repeated A), and song No. 11 alternates with text recitation in the B section (repeated A/B).

The Fire Dance songs in this study were transcribed from audiotape. While four of the seventeen songs are without text recitation, it may nonetheless be safe to generalize that text recitation is characteristic of a standard Fire Dance song. Regardless of song form (binary strophic, or strophic), the sung melodies of these four songs alternate with a third section. Rather than the expected text recitation, the performers cease singing for a significant period of time while the drumbeat continues. The sound of the dancers' bells, jingles, and characteristic Gahe calls can be heard in the background during this pause in the melody. The lead singer eventually begins the song again, followed by a quick second from the chorus. By pausing between verses, the musicians may be acknowledging the musical space normally occupied by the textual recitation. Based on personal observances at the annual Fort Sill Apache Fire Dance, silent observation of text sections is not unknown.

The general melodic contour of the sung verses of the *gahe biyine* is in a descending melodic direction (see *Figure No. 1*). All three of the strophic songs are of

---

[4] Because of its repetition and rhythmic independence, this extended cadence could be treated as an independent third section. Since the pitch material clearly emphasizes the tonic pitch, however, I have chosen to treat it as a cadential extension of the B section. Because of its consistent relationship with the B section of the melody, this cadential extension is notated in lower case as *c* (as in A A1 B**c**c/D inc.).

[5] It should be noted that, while the semiotic transcription indicates the repetition of one B section, the second repetition distinguishes itself with a different cadential rhythm. Whereas rhythmic analysis falls outside the field of this semiotic analysis, the second repetition is treated as identical to the first rendition within the transcription.

descending contour (Nos. 2, 4, 11), while five of the binary strophic songs display a general descent in both independent sections (Nos. 3, 5, 8, 13, 15). Fire Dance song No. 12 begins with a quick upward leap and general descent, followed by a meandering descent. Four of the binary strophic songs have a descending A section that contrasts with an undulating B section. Song No. 7 has a quick upward leap followed by descent in the A section, again contrasting with an undulating B section. The A section for Fire Dance song No. 17 is also of descending line and is contrasted to the least commonly utilized melodic contour within the study, an ascending B section. Fire Dance song No. 14 displays undulating contours in both the A and B sections, while the A section of song No. 9 has a quick upward leap and undulating line followed by an undulating contour in the B section.

Figure No. 1

Melodic Contour	***Gahe Biyine* Number**
Descending (Strophic)	2, 4, 11
Descending/Descending	3, 5, 8, 13, 15
Upward Leap and Descending/Meandering Descending	12
Descending/Undulating	1, 6, 10, 16
Upward Leap and Descending/Undulating	7
Descending/Ascending	17
Undulating/Undulating	14
Upward Leap and Undulating/Undulating	9

Some standard cadential formulas are characteristic of phrase endings in Fire Dance song structure. Since the predominant melodic contour of such songs is in a

descending direction, phrases are often marked by a downward melodic descent to what may be considered a tonic note, or tonal center. At the end of the first repetition of an A section in the binary strophic form, this note is typically emphasized through repetition of the tone with four quarter notes (Nos. 3, 5, 14, 15), sometimes with resolution to two quarter notes a minor third or perfect fourth below (Nos. 1, 6, 8, 13, 16). Final cadences for one complete repetition of the Fire Dance melody are often designated by two quarters notes followed by a half note, or by a half note followed by two quarter notes.

Within the framework provided by the song form, the melodies in this study utilize tetratonic, pentatonic, or hexatonic pitch material (see *Figure No. 2*). Represented in only one transcription, hexatonic pitch material is the least utilized within this study (No. 2). Represented in ten transcriptions, melodies based on tetratonic pitch materials are most commonly employed (Nos. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17), while pentatonic pitch materials appear in six transcriptions (3, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15).

Figure No. 2

Pitch Material	***Gahe Biyine* Number**
Tetratonic	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17
Pentatonic	3, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15
Hexatonic	2

Present within seven transcriptions, the most common melodic range for Fire Dance songs in this study is within an octave (Nos. 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 16; see *Figure No. 3*). A pitch range of a minor seventh, the second most prevalent range seen in this study, is evident in four transcriptions (Nos. 2, 11, 14, 17). Among the most economical in range, one transcription falls within the interval range of a major sixth (No. 9). Two other

transcriptions fall within the range of a minor tenth (Nos. 10, 13), while the remainder of the transcriptions are within the range of a major ninth (No. 4), a major tenth (No. 15), and a perfect eleventh (No. 12).

Figure No. 3

Melodic Pitch Range	***Gahe Biyine* Number**
Perfect Eleventh	12
Major Tenth	15
Minor Tenth	10, 13
Major Ninth	4
Perfect Octave	1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 16
Minor Seventh	2, 11, 14, 17
Major Sixth	9

The rhythmic make-up of Fire Dance melodies is typically composed of eighth note, quarter note, and half note rhythmic values. Some use of syncopation is evident within the melodies. In particular, an eighth-quarter-eighth note (short-long-short) rhythmic figure is the most recurrent example in the study.

Bruno Nettl's *North American Indian Musical Styles* (1954) is frequently cited as the most comprehensive comparative documentation of Native American musical/stylistic conventions. Within this book, Nettl proposes generalized traits he perceives within the Athapaskan[6] musical style. Many of his proposed standardized traits of this style are of some import to the study of Fire Dance song. He lists among the

[6] While *Athabaskan* is the spelling used by Bruno Nettl in his *North American Indian Musical Styles*, this study designates this cultural/linguistic group as *Athapaskan*. Both spellings are common in ethnographic discussion of Apachean groups, but the term *Athapaskan* is used within the context of this thesis for the sake of uniformity.

salient features of Athapaskan music an average pitch range of an octave; the predominant use of tetratonic and pentatonic pitch materials; prominent intervallic relationships of major and minor thirds, major seconds, and perfect fourths; the tonic is often the lowest tone in the range, occasionally a tone above the lowest (the latter being particularly true of *gahe biyine* at phrase endings where the tonic drops a perfect fourth, as indicated by Nettl, or a descending minor third as is seen within this study); and common use of introductory and closing formulae, often denoted by repetition of the tonic pitch. Each of these traits, many of which were discussed in some detail above, are evident in Fire Dance song form. At the same time, some traits discussed by Nettl maintain qualified relevance within this stylistic genre. For example, Nettl's assertion that most songs are "often composed of two alternating sections" is true enough, yet Fire Dance songs do not end on the first of the two (A B A) as his scholarship states is common. Instead, most Fire Dance melodies end on the latter section (A B A B, or A B/C A B for example). Nettl notes "the use of few (usually two) durational values" as common for music of Athapaskan origin.[7] Again, as discussed above, three rhythmic values are seen within this study of Fire Dance song: the eighth, the quarter, and the half note. Nettl also indicates that the rhythmic accompaniment for Athapaskan songs "is usually in even pulsing beats, usually correlating to the shorter of the dominant rhythmic values."[8] While it is true that Fire Dance songs are accompanied by even pulsating beats, they do not adhere to "the shorter of the dominant rhythmic values,"[9] or in this case, the eighth note. Instead, the rhythmic accompaniment for such songs is in an even, pulsing quarter note beat pattern.

---

[7] Bruno Nettl, *North American Indian Musical Styles* (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1954), 22.
[8] Ibid, 23.
[9] Ibid.

The sprechstimme vocal recitation sections are predominantly composed of an undulating melodic contour (Nos. 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16), while two songs display a mixture of undulating and ascending spoken passages (Nos. 15 and 17). Only in No. 9 does the lyric recitation move in a descending contour. These lyrical sections are composed primarily of recitation of text on a single note. In the broadest terms, lyrical phrases are often introduced by an ascent or descent of a minor third or perfect fourth to the tonal center. The text is recited predominantly on this pitch with an eighth note rhythmic pattern. Based strictly on musical features, completed lyrical lines may be marked by breaking the predominant eighth note rhythmic pattern with a quarter note. Lyrical verses are usually marked in a similar manner, with repeated quarter notes emphasizing the tonal center and sometimes utilizing triadic melodic material. It is common among the Fire Dance songs under study that there are four complete lyrical verses (Nos. 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16), sometimes with repetition of lyrical verses (Nos. 12, 14, 17).[10]

Hoijer's *Apache Texts* (1938) provides one translated example of a *gahe biyine* text that displays some traits typical of these sprechstimme passages. In a footnote to the translated text, Hoijer states:

> Songs . . . are sung by the shaman when he is preparing the dancers and while they are dancing. These songs function as a message to the Mountain Spirits to acquaint them of the aid required by the shaman. Since they are the songs which the Mountain Spirits themselves taught the shaman [or medicine man], it is believed that they must respond to them.[11]

[10] This contention must be treated carefully. While rhythmic, melodic, and cadential material seems to indicate that verses within some lyrical sections might be exact repetitions, only detailed analysis of the linguistic component of these songs can confirm this.

[11] Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 154.

Rather than being simply entertainment, Fire Dance songs have a very specific and important purpose, namely petitioning the Gahe for their blessings and assistance. The following verse, excerpted from Hoijer's work, provides not only an example of a few of the conventions that typify Fire Dance text, but also illuminates the manner in which the Apache seek assistance from the Gahe. Listed under the heading "Songs of the Mountain Spirit Ceremony," the English translation of the lyrical verse reads:

> In the east, the Big Blue Mountain Spirit has started toward us,
> He is the leader of the Mountain Spirits.
>
> In the south, the Big Yellow Mountain Spirit has started toward us,
> The leader of the Mountain Spirits started toward us,
> The holy Mountain Spirit has started toward us.
>
> In the west, the Big White Mountain Spirit,
> The leader of the Mountain Spirits, has started toward us,
> The holy Mountain Spirit has started toward us.
>
> In the north, the Big Black Mountain spirit,
> The leader of the Mountain Spirits, has started toward us.
> The Holy Mountain Spirit has started toward us.
> His home is made of the black mirage,
> The leader of the Mountain Spirits has started toward us.
>
> On the earth the ceremony has begun by means of the turquoise cross,
> He has started toward us.[12]

The preceding may represent one full, recited verse within a *gahe biyine*. Apparent in the above text is a common lyrical convention typical of many *gahe biyine* texts, namely the frequent reference to color/directional associations of the Gahe at the beginning of each line of text.[13] It should be noted that the color/directional associations listed above

[12] Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 53-54.
[13] Michael Darrow, personal interview by author, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Headquarters, 4 April, 2002.

diverge from the most commonly cited Chiricahua representation—black for the east, blue for the south, yellow for the west, and white for the north.[14]

The preceding text marks the eastern Gahe apart from the others through the phrase "he is the leader of the Mountain Spirits," perhaps out of respect for the importance of the direction; it is the eastern Gahe who initiates the dance with his approach from the east and who acts as leader of the others. The remaining cardinal points are treated as a group through the repetition of the phrase "the leader of the Mountain Spirits, [sic] has started toward us, the holy Mountain Spirit has started toward us." Hoijer interprets the passage to be symbolic of the approach from each cardinal direction, with the underlying implication that, through this approach, "disease and everything wicked are therefore necessarily driven away."[15] The passage addressing the black Mountain Spirit of the north adds a slight coda to the line in stating, "his home is of the black mirage, the leader of the Mountain Spirit has started toward us," a phrase Hoijer believes references the fact that the homes of the Gahe are often described in terms of clouds or mirages.[16]

The penultimate line, "on the earth the ceremony has begun by means of the turquoise cross," is perhaps the most concrete in meaning. With ceremonies such as the healing rite, it was common for the shaman to request ceremonial gifts. Among the most standard of these ceremonial gifts was the use of turquoise for remuneration. Hence, due to the payment of a turquoise cross, the shaman and dancers fulfilled their obligation to perform the ceremony among the Apache.[17]

---

[14] Michael Darrow, personal interview by author, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Headquarters, 4 April 2002; Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 154; Opler, *Myths and Tales*, 77 fn. 1.
[15] Hoijer, *Apache Texts,* 154; see also Michael Darrow, 4 April 2002 interview for further commentary on this interpretation of dance symbolism.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid; Michael Darrow, personal interview by author, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Headquarters, 4 April 2002.

Big Blue Mountain Spirit in the east,
The tassels of the earth are moving about with me,
Here, my songs have been created,

Big Yellow Mountain Spirit in the south,
Leader of the Mountain Spirits, holy Mountain Spirit,
He will ask for the good life for us,
Here, my songs have again been created,

Big White Mountain Spirit in the west,
Leader of the Mountain Spirits, holy Mountain Spirit,
For this reason, my songs have been created,

Big Black Mountain Spirit in the north,
Leader of the Mountain Spirits, holy Mountain Spirit,
My songs will go out to the four directions.[18]

Again, the repetition of the cardinal directions is apparent. In the second line, Hoijer interprets the phrase "the tassels of the earth" as synonymous in meaning to "the pollen of the earth."[19] Pollen is considered a ceremonial or sacred item, and thought to represent health and vigor, growth and vitality.[20] Larson extends the possible interpretations for the meaning of pollen within Apachean ceremony, noting that pollen is linked to the color yellow, and is linked to the ceremony by the yellow Gahe, or in the case of this lyrical example, the Gahe of the south. Further, pollen can represent the sun and, by extension, God or God's generosity.[21] Larson also ties the meaning of yellow/pollen to the female.[22] Due to the prominent use of pollen within the girl's puberty rite, it may be possible by scholarly extension to link the interconnected concepts to ideas of fertility. Hoijer states that the phrase, "here my songs have been created," is made in reference to the vision

[18] Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 154-55.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Larson, "Gahe/Gaan," 205.
[22] Ibid.

experience in which the songs were obtained,[23] the implication being that the songs have their origins with the Gahe, who taught the tradition bearer the rite.

In the section of the Mountain Spirit text addressing the yellow Gahe of the south, the Gahe is referred to as "leader of the Mountain Spirits, holy Mountain Spirit." Similar in phrasing to the first verse, repetition of these words appears to be a convention repeated throughout this specific Gahe text and is seen in this verse addressing the yellow/southern Gahe and each reference to the successive Gahe (or the Gahe of the west and east). Hoijer indicates that the phrase, "he will ask for the good life for us," refers to the intercession of the Mountain Spirits on the behalf of the Apache.[24]

In the preceding textual passage, the section addressing the western/white Gahe states, "for this reason, my songs have been created." Hoijer interprets this statement as a reference to the shaman's experience with the White Mountain Spirit in the west, for it was that experience that provided the songs for Apachean use.[25] At the same time, an alternate, subjective interpretation may point back to the verse addressing the Big Yellow Mountain Spirit in the south, and the statement, "he will ask for the good life for us." A possible way to understand this meaning is through the statement, "for this reason, *for the good life*, my song has been created." Such an interpretation may allude to the blessing aspects of the ceremony that are so relevant to the performance of the Fire Dance in southwestern Oklahoma.

---

[23] Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 154.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

VIII. Conclusion

Historical documentation and research on the Apachean groups over the past one hundred and fifty years has provided valuable insight into understanding the practitioners of the Fire Dance ceremony. The major focus of writers such as Angie Debo, Dan L. Thrapp, and John G. Bourke, research into the migratory, political, and military history of the Apache, with particular emphasis on this group during the final days of the American west, is by far among the most developed path of research regarding this cultural group. This approach within the scholarship provides a broad understanding of the sources of influence against which the Fire Dance practice is set. It places the Apache people within a broader cultural context of Athapaskan speakers, a linguistic family with their own distinct cultural and musical identity. Residence in Arizona, Mexico, and New Mexico, close proximity to Spanish culture in the region, and ties in cultural artistic practice to the masked ceremonials prominent throughout the American southwest reveal the exchange and adaptation of ideas between the linguistic culture and regional cultural influences. Exploration of the conflict between tribal groups, as well as frictions between local tribal politics and the national interests of Mexico and, particularly, the United States point toward not only the historical impetus for Chiricahua/Warm Springs movement from the desolation of the desert environments of the southwest to the travails of imprisonment on the east coast and in Oklahoma, but also reveals the longstanding perseverance of the cultural practice of the Fire Dance.

Research regarding religious belief and cosmology, which finds its most complex and eloquent development within the works of Harry Hoijer, Morris Opler, and more recently, Thomas L. Larson, narrows the focus from broader cultural, regional, and

political influences directly to Apache identity and belief. Only through an understanding of important Apache religious concepts is it possible to understand representations of values and beliefs within the dance movements and song accompanying performances of the Fire Dance.

The role of the Apache medicine man was an important one within traditional Chiricahua/Warm Springs society and in the maintenance and perpetuation of the practice of the Fire Dance. Developed at greatest length within the scholarship of Henrietta Stockel and John G. Bourke, exploration of this aspect of Chiricahua/Warm Springs culture aids in constructing an understanding of the influence of historical events and interactions specifically upon medical treatment, religious outlook and belief, and the resulting impact of larger political/cultural interactions upon this Apachean group's most prominent musical/artistic practice.

The recurrent discussion of the Fire Dance within early ethnological documents and in historical, religious, and medical texts is an indication of the centrality of the event to Chiricahua/Warm Spring Apache religious, social, and cultural identity. Though often generalized, representation of the ceremony within such historical documentation is important. These reports and writings establish the longevity of Fire Dance traditions and their attendant broad, salient components as expressed through the symbols, movement, function, regalia, and performers of the Fire Dance.

In general, however, the broad brush stroke used in portrayals of Apache artistic practice points toward a need for continued, localized and focused attention on the Fire Dance ceremony. Such an approach is necessary in order to counteract the generalized nature of ethnographic commentary on religious/artistic performance among the Apache.

The underdeveloped state of documentation pertaining to the Fire Dance is unfortunately symptomatic of a larger disjuncture between depictions of Apachean peoples and community perceptions of their own identity. Because the Geronimo, Chiricahua/Warm Spring, or Fort Sill Apache, as they are often interchangeably termed, have certainly been subject to outsider imaginations and interpretations of their own history and culture, the dissonance between the two extremes is easily understood. Aside from their depiction in ethnographic documents, their representation in film is particularly noticeable. Regarding the popularity of the Apache in Hollywood, author Rennard Strickland states:

> If our Indian ethnography were based only on the Hollywood studios we would believe that the Apaches were the largest tribe in the United States. Forget that the census reports show that Navajos and Cherokees combined constitute almost 20 percent of the United States Indian population. Instead, we have scores of films with titles like *Apache Warrior* (1957), *Apache Rifle* (1955), *Apache War Smoke* (1952), not to mention *Geronimo* (1939), (1962), (1990), and *I Killed Geronimo* (1950), and perhaps the most absurd of them all, just plain *Apache* (1954), in which Apaches learn to plant corn from the Cherokees who were taught this agricultural skill by the white man.[1]

The Apache, and in particular the Fort Sill Apache, occupy a space of prominence, or even notoriety, within the public imagination. The extent of their recognition in the American consciousness is indicated through popular depiction in film, historical text, and academic research. While public interest is good, imagination and depiction can be problematic. Within the titles listed by Strickland—*Apache Warrior*, *Apache Rifle*, *Apache War Smoke*—popular perceptions of the Apache people become clear through emphasized focus on the militaristic traits often associated with the tribe. The evocative nature of their tribal name is reinforced by the army helicopter that bears its name. Geronimo, the most prominent symbol of the Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Spring Apache

[1] Rennard Strickland, *Tonto's Revenge: Reflections on American Indian Culture and Policy* (Albuqueque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 19.

to outsiders, is treated similarly. Debo notes that Geronimo was the designation of underworld characters in Paris, that paratroopers in World War II evoked his name while jumping into the sky, and that Geronimo was frequently touted as a red-handed murderer "who ought to be hung" by western newspapers.[2] A similar interpretation of Geronimo even appears re-filtered into the native community in the 1998 movie *Smoke Signals*. The main character in this movie, Victor, claims during a basketball game on the Coeur d'Alene reservation that the best basketball player ever was Geronimo because "he was lean, mean, and bloody." These examples make apparent the predominant conception of what *Apache* means: subversion, ferocity, violence, and war.

Although film and popularly held conceptions of the Apache people may appear far afield from the realms of academic documentation, the distance between the two ends of the spectrum diminishes in light of adjectives such as "strange," "wild," "weird," or "fierce" used to describe the Fire Dance in historical documents. Depictions of the dance in this manner draw a portrait of something foreign, "other," or even barbarous, and reinforce the perceptions of danger or violence implied in other representations of the Apache.

Such depictions of Apaches are strongly contested by Fort Sill historian, Michael Darrow. Darrow's contrary image of the Fort Sill Apache stems, in part, from the fact that there is no word for warrior in the Chiricahua language.[3] Further, there are no established men's military societies, so common among Plains groups in Oklahoma, among the Fort Sill Apache.[4] He instead sees his tribe, both historically and in the contemporary sense, as a peaceful people. His interpretation is easily understood when

---

[2] Debo, *Geronimo*, 3.
[3] Michael Darrow, Annual Fire Dance lecture, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Complex,15 September 2002.
[4] Michael Darrow, personal interview by author, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Headquarters, 24 May 2002

one recognizes the character of modern Fort Sill Apache tribal members—hard working leaders and administrators for the tribal good, curious intellectuals and scholars, creative performers and artists.

Despite the problematic nature of many documents pertaining to the Apaches and their Fire Dance, historical documentation does *hint* at a deeper understanding of the Fire Dance. An interview with Michael Darrow, centering on the Hoijer Fire Dance text analyzed in Chapter 7, provides an interesting local interpretation of the meaning of the phrase, "Big Blue Mountain Spirit in the east/The tassels of the earth are moving about with me."[5] Hoijer, in his text, indicates that the "tassels of the earth" are synonymous with the phrase "pollen of the earth."[6] Darrow links the phrase to the properties of pollen—abundance, fruitfulness, and life.[7] He states further that if the "tassels of the earth," or pollen, were "moving about with" you, then "Everything in the world is… it's surrounding you and is causing everything to be that much better. There is goodness everywhere" (Ibid). From that point, the phrase is no longer simply a poetic line of text hidden in a sea of academic text, but a commentary on greater human existence. A statement reflective of the values embedded within Fire Dance text, it transforms into a message of doing good things, and creating good things, and carrying good ideals with you—having the tassels of the earth move about with you—so that things will be "abundant" and "goodness everywhere."

Such statements and their interpretation according to the individual who processes them are highly subjective. However, analysis of such facets of performance can be a powerful indicator of community meanings behind performance practice and the ability

---

[5] Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 54.
[6] Ibid, 154 fn. 42.5.
[7] Michael Darrow, personal interview by author, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Headquarters, 4 April 2002.

of that practice to transmit the ideals, values, and beliefs of that culture. This text, an optimistic philosophical statement recorded by Hoijer circa 1938, is likely the embodiment of the intellectual outlook of preceding generations and easily counteracts notions of the "eerie" or "gaudy" in Fire Dance performance.

While traditional academic documentation can hint at meaning, in this instance it took the input of a community intellectual to reveal a deeper understanding of the text. There is some debate within academia regarding use of local tribal sources for information, however. According to author Devon Mihesuah, many researchers agree with anthropologist Edwin Ardener's contention that oral histories are unreliable as source material because "the memory of past events has been totally restructured."[8] Mihesuah refutes this notion in the following statement:

> They [researchers, writers, anthropologists] refuse to use informants, believing modern Indians' versions of their tribes' histories are "fantasies." But are not some written records fantasy? Are not some writings of some army officers, missionaries, explorers, and pioneers who encountered Indians exaggerated and biased? ... Using the Native voice exclusively may not yield a precise picture of past events, but neither will the sole use of skeletal remains, midden heaps, or non-Indians' diaries, government reports, and letters.[9]

Both perspectives are indeed valid and should therefore be weighed carefully. Though logical enough, the underlying solution to the dilemma places considerable demand upon both the academic and the tribe. For researchers hoping to document the performance practice of a cultural group outside their own in the twenty first century, the reality is that a more balanced and accurate academic portrait can be established only through the thorough weighing and consideration of *all* available methods—including utilization of ethnographic archival material, traditional historical documentation, contemporary

---

[8] Ardener quoted in Devon A. Mihesuah, *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 2.
[9] Ibid, 2-3.

observation of that practice and incorporation of local tribal intellectual knowledge and memory.

Traditional academic research on the Apache Fire Dance has successfully built a foundation for understanding the history and background of the ceremony. After a broad framework has been constructed, the next logical step is to move toward in-depth and focused research on localized traditions. Once data has been collected on this level, then comparative analysis of the numerous distinct performance traditions is possible. Focused local research, however, can only be possible with the considerable assistance, support, and input of tribal members. Mihesuah notes that, according to Cahuilla thinker Rupert Costo, "There is a great and rich store of information still locked in the hearts and minds of Indians all over the nation."[10] The appendix of this thesis will utilize the "great and rich store of information locked in the hearts and minds" of the local Fort Sill Apache. Though providing only a brief glimpse, it portrays on varying levels a complex combination of emotions and ideas surrounding the Fire Dance (a mixture of ingredients likely passed down from the ancestors of the Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Spring Apache), namely the pulse, pride, and conflict attendant to the dance in its modern setting.

Through interactive research, writing, and analysis at a community specific level, a deeper and more revealing portrait of Apachean performance practice can be achieved. In regard to the Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Springs Apache and their complex ceremony known as the Fire Dance, academic truth likely lies somewhere in the middle of a spectrum, somewhere between the savage depictions (as per ethnographic accounts) and the ideal of the "tassels of the earth" (or, being surrounded by goodness everywhere)—a fact equally applicable to most, if not all musical and human cultures.

---

[10] Mihesuah, *Natives and Academics*, 2.

Appendix Ia—Interview Transcripts
Lupe Gooday, Fort Sill Apache Housing Authority/Fire Dancer
10 May 2002, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Headquarters

The following edited excerpt is from an interview conducted with Fort Sill Apache Vice-Chair, Tribal Housing Authority director, and Fire Dance performer Lupe Gooday at the tribal headquarters on May 10, 2002. It focuses on the broad history of the performance of the Fire Dance in southwest Oklahoma, local perceptions of its practice both amongst the tribe and within the greater cultural backdrop within the region, the aesthetic and emotional values surrounding its contemporary performance, and the art of being a performer of the Fire Dance.

Chris Aplin: You were a dancer before, right? [Lupe Gooday answers in the affirmative]. Did you spend most of your time associated with the Fire Dance as a dancer, or did you also do singing as well?

Lupe Gooday: Well, I think first of all, you observe at a very young age, you listen to the people that… they give you advice of what the dance is all about—the dance, the beat, the song, plus how you should act and how you need to perform—and from a very young age this was taught to us. We observed and then we danced with my grandpa's group and then we…

C.A.: What was your grandfather's name?

L.G.: Talbot…Talbot Gooday, and my dad was Robert… Robert Gooday. And some of our kin folks that we danced for was *A* and then his sons, *B*, *C* and then *D*, the brother.[1] They had their different group and they finally invited me to dance with them, so I danced with them. We treated the dancer with respect. The dance is whatever you want to put into it—there is the feel, you demonstrate your physical ability as far as dancing, plus you are putting on, not a show, but a program. You want the public to see your dance, you want the public to see, in one sense, how physical it is. But at the same time, you want them to feel like this is a dance that is very special to the people that dance. To us, that knows the dance and has been handed down to us, we respect it and try to do the best we can as far as the dance, because the songs make the dance. You can say, well… the dancer makes the program. It all falls into place. As a dancer from a young age—from probably age 11 until I quit dancing about four years ago, which was… off and on I have

[1] Throughout the interview portion of this thesis, letters are substituted for performers identities when permission for the use of their name has not yet been granted.

been dancing from age 11 to age 65—but now I'm at an age that I instruct our youngsters—sons, grandsons, probably great grandsons mostly about the dance and the songs and things like that... and plus, as it was handed down to me about how they should conduct themselves. That makes a difference. If you conduct yourself, like we would say, in civilian clothes... once you get into the costume as far as dancing, we try to carry that same respect on through.

I like to dance because it makes you feel good. If you come in off the job from 8 to 5, you have your meal, you start getting ready, and then you just dance for three and a half hours. But as you dance, you consider that you worked all through that day, but at the same time there is something within those songs, even with that costume on that takes your mind off how many hours you have been working, and stuff like that... you enjoy what you are doing. The music, the dance takes away fatigue, or whatever... you just don't think about it. It just makes you feel good. We are all taught that once you put the costume on, once you start warming up, once you go through the preliminaries, and then you get out there on the dance ground and you start performing, it seems like you want to dance all night—but there is just a certain amount of program time you have to perform. It's just like anything else... if you like something, [if you] enjoy it, you don't worry about time.

C.A.: The women also partake in that [the Gahe Dance] program. When the Gahe dancers are dancing, the women dance around the outside. Is there some way that the men actively take part in the larger part [of the dance]—it seems like you might have a couple of singers and a couple of dancers [performing for the Gahe Dance portion of the program], but it seems limited for male involvement. Traditionally, did and do the men continue to sing, to help out with the program in that way, or are they left out until it get to the Round [Dance] and Back and Forth Dancing?

L.G.: As a singer sang, they know what songs they are going to sing—whether it is going to be the straight step, the skip, or the high, the very high step dance—but at the same time as they dance, the women folks are made aware that the dancers have the right of way. In other words, if the dancers come close to the singers and the women dancers end up close to the singers, the women dancers usually yield the right of way for dancers to come before the singers as they dance, rather than have everybody get all congested around the singers. They respect that... they have that knowledge that they yield to the dancers as they come through. A majority of our women are aware of that activity because they were taught from their parents, their women. The women tell their children how to dance, and how to dress and things like that. A lot of them have different styles. Our older women have a different style of dance than the young ones. They sort of round dance... just as long as they are participating, that's good. A lot of people stay stationary during the dance, and you know they enjoy it.

Plus, when they do that, there are particular songs even the dancers like. Then they really put on a show if it's a song that they really enjoy. Same way with the women—if they hear a song that they heard many years ago, even elderly women, if they hear a particular song, and maybe they're handicapped, and dancing they just stand up and dance in place. Every tribe has that same knowledge about songs. In our particular dance, it's just favorite songs that they... maybe it's a family song that their grandpa or

dad created. So they know it. For instance, my dad has a particular song that we sing. Sometimes we reserve that particular song to close out our program because we recognize that this was handed down to my grandpa, to my dad. So we close with that particular song that my dad liked to sing because that was his favorite.

C.A.: Is it because of the melody of the song that you really like it—the tune of it—is it just something that you sing to yourself in the shower getting ready for work, or…

L.G.: It's just a song that, since my dad has passed on, you just take off and sing it. We sing it because he has been handed this dance through the family, so we sing the song to close out the program… or this portion of the program [the Gahe Dance].

C.A.: Does it always feel better when you sing that song? For some reason the singing just always feels strong? [Is it] just one of those songs that always resonates with you—the rhythm always feels a little more punch or edge to it, or something…?

L.G.: I think it adds to the feel of the dancers that this is grandpa's song, or this is dad's song, or this is great grandpa's song. Because, we have, our particular family, we have the sons in charge of the dance now. So at the present time, his grandchildren are dancing, and his great grandchildren are dancing—I'm referring to my dad [Robert Gooday]. If it was my grandpa [Talbot], it would be his great grandsons that are dancing now, and his grandsons that are singing—great grandsons dancing, grandsons singing, that's the way it is now.

To answer your question we recognize that this is grandpa's song and that it makes you feel better and makes you maybe dance a little harder. There are songs that we have heard that each dancer likes—that they really put all out. They like it, so they really want to put on a good show.

C.A.: How many people around here perform the Fire Dance songs?

L.G.: Well, my dad always said that whatever amount of people want to hear the songs, whoever wants to come and participate with you, allow them that time—no matter what tribe they are. At the same time, before they do that, there is a lot of orientation that is involved that we try to tell these people—this is what you do, this is they way we want you to perform, this is the way we want you to conduct yourself. We want to be proud of all of the people that dance with us. We want them to be the type of people that, if they go and tell their friends, "I danced with that group,"… but if this individual is not living according to guidelines or policies that we require, and then these people, his friends, might say, "well, if that's the case, you might need to conduct yourself a little better, because this is what I know about that dance…" And so, hopefully everybody that wants to dance, we allow them to dance. We have different tribes dance with us. We have different tribes dance with us dancing with the programs, dancing with my dad and grandpa. [Perhaps] they danced with them [Robert or Talbot Gooday] at one time and now they want their grandchildren or children to dance. That's kind of the way it is.

C.A.: Do you know the dancing side better than the singing side, or do you know pretty much all aspects of the Fire Dance?

L.G.: To me, in order for you to know the dance, you're going to have to know the songs, the music, and the steps… the beat and all that's involved in it.

C.A.: Do you have a core group of people around the Fort Sill… members of the Fort Sill Apache tribe, and beyond that, who come every year and sing for the Fort Sill group? Or is anybody allowed to go and perform those songs with those singers?

L.G.: We invite people to come out and dance and sing. We have kin folks at Mescalero and they come and help us. We provide for them. Anytime we ask anybody, we try to provide housing and food, lodging and different things. They know our limits. We try to provide them with a place to stay and clean up and things like that. Plus, they request what they want to do, too. If they want to come and camp out at the grounds, then we allow that. At the same time, we try to show them some hospitality about food and personal hygiene facilities for them. We try to create some activity while they're here—like tours; we have activities for children; we have a horseshoe tournament and different things like that. Plus we have an afternoon program with the Plains tribes where we perform and dance, also. So we try to show them something a little bit different. They have kin folks around here and they know people around here, so they don't have to go on tours, but they go visit other people around here. There are other types of activities for them to do. We want them to enjoy themselves. To some of them, it's sort of a long extended weekend—it may even be vacation time for them [the visitors] because they're bringing their families and stuff.

C.A.: When exactly did the Gooday family start dancing? Can you say "this is where the tradition began," or "this is the person who first started dancing," who first got the songs? Where did the Gooday involvement with the dance actually begin?

L.G.: My grandpa, he inherited the dance before I was… I really couldn't say, probably around maybe the late twenties or early thirties.

C.A.: Where did he get it from? Did he just learn it from other people among the Fort Sill [Apache] who taught it to him, or…?

L.G.: I think it was handed down to him, plus at the same time… I'll tell you what, I really don't know… I was just born…

C.A.: … and you just always had the tradition? The songs you sing, are they something that only the Gooday singers can sing and *only* the Gooday singers sing those songs, or does everybody have a common pool of songs that everybody sings from?

L.G.: Well, probably it's just like any other Native American tribe. Whenever they create a song, they want everyone to use it. Just like my grandpa, he had his songs. He had a number of songs that went along with this dance, this particular dance. There were

times that...he said there were songs that have meaning and it's up to you whether or not you want to use them—these songs were created by other people. There were times that we were even instructed not to use this particular song, or so-and-so's song due to the fact that they weren't really in good standing according to how he was given this [the Fire Dance] or how he was instructed to perform. There were a few restrictions. It's just like your modern day music, nowadays. There are some good songs you like—whether it be heavy metal, or whatever, country western, or oldies and stuff—but as far as our dance, we try to utilize the songs that we know that our grandpa or our dad enjoyed that went along with this particular group, this particular song.

We had a person [from Mescalero] that came down that used to perform with us with his group... from Mescalero. He knew a lot of my grandpa's songs. He knew a lot of my dad's songs. And when he came from Mescalero, he sang the songs that belonged to my grandpa and my dad. And he sings them for his... he had his own group, his own outfit, and etc. He used those same songs because he used to dance with my grandpa, he used to dance with my dad. He sang with them. That's where he learned, because he went to Fort Sill Indian School. He just used, he just created his songs and there's no doubt in my mind Dad and Grandpa probably visited and said, "Sure... use it [the songs]." Because that is what they had been composed for—to be used. If somebody gave you a song and didn't want you to use it, they wouldn't have made it... you know, that's the way I feel. Or they would say, "well, I'm going to sing this song, but I don't want you taping [recording] it." Just like the different tribes around here—there's family songs, but at the same time this family says, "any tribe around here that wants to use our family song, go ahead and use it, that's what we composed it for," and same thing with our songs.

C.A.: Is there a point where you hear somebody else singing one of your songs and you [say], "no, you're using that wrong. Don't use that song for that." Have you ever seen your songs misused in anyway? Even with those family songs, I have talked to people who have been at powwows and somebody started playing their family song, and they [say] "we didn't instruct that drum to play that... why are they playing that song?" I guess it's improper use. I'm not exactly sure how that works. Have you ever heard your songs misused in any way? Ways that you don't like seeing your songs used?

L.G.: As time passes, the younger generation probably have learned songs, but they alter them just a little bit. Just like anything else... if you hear a song and you might want to alter it just a little bit. That's their business; we can't criticize them for it. All we've done is compose a song for them to use. But hopefully, they would hear the song created [performed] the right way and then they would alter their song and change it. A lot of the songs that were composed way back there [in the past], they had a lot of meaning to them. As time has passed, those words and things have been altered. Plus, the language has been sort of done away with. We don't criticize anybody for how they sing the songs, or anything. We just hope that they would hear the song sung the correct way.

C.A.: In regard to the songs that you sing, they were given to Talbot by somebody else previously...

L.G.: See my grandpa Talbot was a medicine man, so he was probably the composer of maybe ninety… ninety five percent of his songs.

C.A.: So those songs were his… they started with him. It probably started about the late 1920s or 1930s or so when those songs first began to be sung…

L.G.: …when those songs were created. See… another thing too, is that our people when they were prisoners of war, even after they left Fort Sill, these different families used to go and visit. They'd just sit after supper and they'd just sing. They'd just sing songs. They would probably start out with our traditional Crown Dance or Spirit Dance, or what we used to call the Horn Dance… Fire Dance… first of all they would just start out with those songs. Then they would get into a Round Dance and then they would sing the Back and Forth.

C.A.: And these are just informal get-togethers? Where people would…

L.G.: …just visitations and…

C.A.: Would they actually perform the dance while they were singing, or would they just get together to sing the songs?

L.G.: No, they would just get together and sing. It was just a family get-together. My Grandpa and my Dad, sometimes they would get together… they [Lupe's grandparents] lived in Apache and we lived out in the country. We'd come in after the movie—the matinee in the afternoon—we would go to my grandpa's house and he and my dad might be sitting in the basement just singing. There were times that my dad would maybe ask him [Talbot], "well, there's a certain song I've been thinking about and I want you to give me the real interpretation. I want to hear it. I want you to sing it." They would just start singing… they would just pick it up.

C.A.: So they had these little [informal] get-togethers when you were growing up. How often did they perform the Fire Dance, where they had the dancers…?

L.G.: It was just basically based upon the families—if there was something good happened to them, if there was a need for the dance—then they would request grandpa to dance. After he passed away, my father would grant the different families wishes and dance. They would just come and they would just announce, "well, were just going to dance out at the house." So they would just dance out there and people would bring a covered dish, or something and sit and they would just dance.

C.A.: There is some early documentation of the dance in the late 1800s and then there is a period at Fort Sill, especially around 1900, that is fairly famous because they tried to imposed some kind of a ban on it… then after 1912 to 1980, it seems to be sketchy as far as far as what was happening with the dance. How often did these informal get-togethers, occur? Particularly with the ones where you would just get together and sing, is that

something you did every weekend? Or is that something you did every month, every few months?

L.G.: In some cases, we had family around here that would get together every weekend. On this particular lot right over there behind that building over there [indicates field northeast of tribal complex]... we would sit... families would go sit and just sing. I've got tapes of those and you can hear doors slamming, kids playing and screaming...

C.A.: How often did those [bigger performances] occur, where you actually had the dance and the singing? Was it every year? Every five years?

L.G.: Well, I think it was maybe twice a year. We used to dance over here on a creek. We used to dance over here at my grandpa's place, over northeast of town. At times, those were pretty good-sized celebrations. I think they used to go the full four days.

C.A.: Did you have a lot of fun at those kinds of events?

L.G.: I was too small to remember.

C.A.: Really. One of the things I'm trying to be able to do is to describe to people what the event *is*. It does have religious elements, or a religious mood or tone to it, but at the same time it is also very social. What are the elements that are important? Would you describe going to the event over here, during the September celebration, if a newcomer was to walk over to the dance ground, how would you describe it to them? Would you say that it was a very reverent atmosphere—a quiet, calm, hushed atmosphere? Or would you say that it was a very sociable, lively event? Would you say it was social? Would you say it was sacred? Would you say it was religious? How would you describe it to somebody?

L.G.: To me, since I grew up around it, it's all included. It's all included, to me. We were taught to respect it. We were taught that, at one time, this particular dance was performed when people were sick—they were sick enough that people were almost on their deathbed when this dance was performed... and that they danced for these people and these people were healed. At that same time, there are some instances where there were just certain people who had had this dance, and that they were also advised that since you have this dance, that this dance was only for single people to possess this particular dance. So in order for people to inherit it, there are certain sacrifices and things that you had to go through in order to maybe take away... to protect your family. Just like anything else... if you work on skyscrapers and you didn't look at the safety of yourself, then you... supposedly you have no business out there—the same way with this dance. There is a lot of things... a lot of unknowns about everything in our world today. I would tell the people that we want you to come out, our dance is a celebration for all of us to come together. Whenever people come together, that's celebration... because we come together to enjoy ourselves. We come together to get acquainted with people. We come together to, not only expose our dance, but we come together to share our meals. To me,

it's just a fellowship. At that same time, we need to understand that this particular dance was used at one time to do these different things.

The footnote of our dance is—if you write a book—the footnote of our dance is that the story was given while our people were in a violent moving on, but there were two elders left because they [the Apache tribe] couldn't provide for them, because if they provided for them, they [the elders] would slow them down and the enemy would have caught them. What it says is that they were left food and water. The main party left them, so these two individuals were left behind. One was a blind man, the other was a crippled man, he didn't have any legs. So as they waited, this [Mountain] Spirit, this dancer appeared to them and told them to build a fire. You blind man, you take crippled man and put him on your back. You build a fire and jump over it four times for the four directions. I'm going to give you these songs. After you do this, when you leave this, you're going to be provided for and you are eventually going to get caught up with your main party. So they done this. The story goes that the blind man, after they had done this, the blind man was able to see and the crippled man was made able to walk. When they joined up with the main party, they told this to the people, that this Spirit told them to do this. He was going to give them this—"you use this... you use these songs... you do this... in fours—songs four times through, the four directions, your four seasons, everything you do in fours," every part of your costume, four, if you have a point, four points, if you have a rattle, four rattles. But that's the story of our dance.

And so, we look it from a standpoint saying, well, if that's the case that was used back there... because as it was handed down to people, there are certain things that you have to, in order to protect your family and everybody, certain things that were done to it to alter it to protect them. So I would tell my visitor [to the annual celebration] if he doesn't know the history of our dance, he needs to find out. At the same time, all we're saying is that, respect what we are doing, enjoy what we are doing, because this is *our* dance. No other tribes can do this. It's only within our tribe... if somebody comes out to view our dance, they need to know a little bit about it, not only about the dance, but the tribe—the history and stuff like that—to get the full picture of what our tribe is all about. But that's what they read whenever we go and perform, is that's [the previous story] how this came about.

C.A.: Because you are talking about "this is our dance," and it is a very unique experience for Oklahoma, southwest Oklahoma in particular, have you ever talked to any other people, like Kiowas or Comanches... talked to them about their impressions of the dance? Or what they thought of the dance? Or did they already have a pretty good idea of what the dance is about?

L.G.: All of our Native neighboring people, they... there's no doubt in my mind, that they have all critiqued lots of different tribes, and traditions, dances and stuff like that. There's a lot of people still curious about our dance. They enjoy it. It's something different. They come and they enjoy it, they enjoy the fellowship due to the fact that they knew all of our people... we're no strangers to all these families, the Kiowas, Comanches, the [Kiowa] Apaches... even C&A's—the Cheyenne Arapahos—or even the WCD's—the Witchita, Caddos and Delawares. They all know of us. They know the families. They know the Goodays and know that they are part of the dance.

C.A.: For some reason it [the dance] does seem to be fairly popular in the region. Going through the Western History collection [at the University of Oklahoma], this guy... a Kiowa, spends a few moments describing the Fire Dance. Then going in Ruey's office and [there is] a picture by a descendent of Quannah Parker[2] who had done a picture of a Fire Dancer, which isn't from his own [background or] tradition. It's interesting that, it does strike me as a very powerful event. I think it gives a very strong first impression. I was wondering, as someone who grew up around it, do you have an earliest memory of the Fire Dance and watching those dancers dance and what your first impressions were of what they were doing? Or how they were behaving?

L.G.: When I think of the dance and start thinking back to the time... a young period of time, I never did... all the dancers, they start from the back and gradually work up—from the clown to the dancer and, you know... but there are a couple of dancers in mind, that if I had [video] tapes on them—just watching them dance—I could probably just sit there and watch for hours. They had so much motion and strength and knowledge about what they were doing along with the songs. It was unbelievable. It was just like a professional ballet dancer. Those people are so precise as far as their dance—that's the way these two individuals were. I tell you what it just... it's amazing. We've seen other tribes from Mescalero come here to Fort Sill, we seen some out there at Mescalero... the older ones way back there. They were the same caliber of dancers as the two... the three people we had here in Oklahoma.

C.A.: Who are the ones you really remember watching dance?

L.G.: Probably *A*, and *B*, and *C*.

C.A.: How about at Mescalero?

L.G.: There were several, but they all passed away now. Plus, there were singers. There were singers—the old timers that sang—they were all medicine men. To hear them sing, I think that... in some ways, those singers, those individuals, because they were medicine men, their songs and everything, to me, it just kind of affected you. You talk about people getting their second or third wind... those songs that they sung, they just felt like they gave you an instant second and third wind to perform. And the same thing applies, here. There are certain songs that they sing that just pick you up. And sometimes you say, "well, I just want to dance like him... I want to get the motions like him." You might even say, "I want to pump iron to get in shape." Whenever you perspire out there and that paint starts to run, you start to shine and glow, and your motions and everything is all together, you just feel like those guys are supernatural...

C.A.: ...they just keep going and going and going...

L.G.: When those guys start to shine and their paint and everything is running, you know they are putting everything they got into that dance... well, you just can't describe

[2] Quannah Parker was a famous leader of the Comanche in the late 1800s.

it. To me, if I met a dancer on the creek... just by walking and then all of the sudden he appears to me, there are ways that we have to address him and not get scared. We were taught to address these... in other words we were taught to respect his dances.

But that's what I see whenever I... even when he's singing, just like a couple of nights ago... you see our young people dancing in front of us... you just close your eyes and you know what motions they are making. I guess it's just something that you just forget about the activities of the day and then you concentrate on what these guys are doing and how they are performing.

C.A.: ...everything just drops away and that becomes the focus, is the event. It's powerful, that hushed calm over everything. But I don't know if they are watching the fire, because fire is very mesmerizing to look at, but also...

L.G.: You can watch the fire, too. There are even times when you get around that fire... sometimes that fire, you can see that fire point at you. You can see that fire waving at you. You can see that fire... sometimes there, you can see the streamers that you [the Gahe dancers] in that fire.

C.A.: We talked about the dancers and the ones you thought were really good. How about the singers? Are there any that you really looked up to as a kid and thought "I really want to be able to sing like that guy?"

L.G.: I wish I had the volume of my grandpa and my dad, I wish I had the volume of *X*, *Y*, *Z*. Even though they had different tones of voice, sometimes it was just fitting the way they hear. It's a different tone, it's a different song, but at the same time you really know what is going on.

C.A.: So it's the projection qualities that you really look at?

L.G.: That, too. Plus, the emphasis they put in their song.

C.A.: Can you describe your dad's or your grandfather's singing styles?

L.G.: They were real loud and clear. They just... it was like they had a microphone right there. All these people I described that's the way their voice... we didn't have microphones. They led the song and people filled in, but you could still identify who was singing.

C.A.: When you say it's loud and clear, does that mean it's just a very, pure, clear, smooth sound, or...

L.G.: You could just hear them. You would get different people in a choir, but there is a certain person in the choir and you could just identify them. Even if you don't see them, you can hear them. Just like a musician, you could hear a particular instrument.

C.A.: How about growing up, how many Fire Dance groups were associated with the Fort Sill Apache? I guess the Fort Sill Apache weren't called the Fort Sill Apache until 1976, when they got tribal recognition. Did you guys have a pretty definite...

L.G.: Yeah. Around here, probably four different groups.

C.A.: I was just wondering whether or not you had anything you wanted to say that you thought was important for other people to know—about the dance, regarding the dance, or what it means to dance and sing, or what it means to be at the event, or why the dance is important to you? Just anything off the top of your head that you thought was important for others to know?

L.G.: In order to follow through with anything, it's probably important to get an idea for the tribe. At the same time, it's different than the Plains peoples dance. You need a little background. Just like the Kiowa Gourd Clan. At one time it was a law enforcer for their Sundance that was outlawed at one time, because they thought it was taboo. The law outlawed it, but it came back and ended up being the Gourd Dance. Then the people said, we don't want to do that anymore, so we're going to create songs to keep it going. We want to tell the people of all tribes that this dance is for them. If you want to dance it, use it, use these songs. Getting back to our dance, we want the people to come and learn a little bit about our dance. Our main concern is, recognize the fact everything we do is to remember that God created the heavens and the earth. He created the sun, moon, the seasons. We use the moon—we use the half moon. We use the [number] four. We use the lightning. Everything we do is in fours. So we incorporate that within the... we sing our songs four times through, everything is four. Native American Church is the same way—four. Once again, we recognize the creation and who created it.

Our visitors need to know the reason for the fire is because the [Mountain] Spirit, when he gave this or introduced this to these two crippled people, that this is what he done... he built a fire for them. And he told them to do this... sing. There are places in old Mexico where people go to fast [and] there are pictures of the dancers carved in the rock. There are pictures of dancers [at Fort Marion] when the United States Army shipped all these people to Florida... where our people carved the dancers into the wall.

C.A.: Was there ever any one dance that you were watching the dancers, hearing the singers, and the hair on the back of your neck was standing up, and everything just felt right" The musicians were going to town, the dancers were feeding off the musicians, you could tell the audience was just riveted on what was going on... have you ever been to an event that you just felt was a really powerful experience?

L.G.: Our [annual] dance. There were times when I led our family group that—I don't know whether it was excitement or whatever—but a person is just anxious to go on [and] get out there and start dancing. Hair does stand up on your back. Sometimes I get to thinking, "why are you doing that? Why is it happening?" As I grew older, I got to thinking, well, maybe that's that spirit giving me the blessing to go out there and perform... maybe that's what he's telling me.

There are times when you are dancing when you just open your hand and [the wand] this is still in your hand, just attached to you. You never lose it. Whenever you get tired, or whenever you get stiff or something, you go around [near] the fire and the fire will heat you up. To me, once again, when it happens like that, you're not concentrating on the song. Whenever you get your mind away from what you are doing, that creates a problem—to me and the way I think— that's what creates that tightning up feeling. You're not really focused. And it happens in all sports, you fail to concentrate and you're going to mess up—football, baseball. If you're not concentrating on that ball, you're not going to hit it. If you're not concentrating on that grounder that's coming towards you, you're going to mess up. When things start happening like that [mistakes], the person really needs to think about it. "Why did this happen? Why did that happen?"

As we teach my son and grandsons, we tell them about all these different techniques. But the main thing that we tell them is, "this is your dance. You give it all you have. This is *your* dance." You are showing those people out there [in the audience] that this is your dance. [You are saying], "This is *my* dance and I have control of it." That's the way I feel. If you want to put a little extra in your steps, go ahead and do it, because this is your dance. There are times that, even when we dance out here, you'll be dancing out there and you get to feel that you are really into it and even the audience knows you're really into it. When you go in front of them, or you dance by them [they applaud]. They get the same feeling you do because they say, "hey, I don't know who that guy is, but he's putting everything he has into that dance." And they enjoy it, they can sense it, they can see it. We do the same thing at parade time up there at the [Annual American Indian] Exposition [in Anadarko], on Monday and Saturday, and even in front of the grand stand. There are times that you dance close to the fence [in front] and you're really putting it on. People in the audience really start clapping… it's just like a concert. They [the audience] get involved in it, it's so good.

C.A.: Do you [perform at] the exposition every year?

L.G.: [answers in affirmative].

C.A.: How long have you been associated with that?

L.G.: I've been dancing up there since I was about ten or eleven, dancing with my dad's group.

Appendix Ib—Interview Transcripts
Michael Darrow, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Historian
4 April 2002, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Headquarters

The following edited excerpt is from an interview conducted with Fort Sill Apache Tribal Historian Michael Darrow at the tribal headquarters on April 4, 2002. It focuses on the symbolism inherent in the dance, issues pertaining to academic and ethnographic documentation of the Fire Dance ceremony, and the aesthetic and emotional values surrounding its contemporary performance.

Chris Aplin: [Quoting from Hoijer *Chiricahua Texts*] "The conception is that the mountain spirits approached from all directions. The implication is that disease and everything wicked were therefore necessarily driven away."[1] And he says that in reference to this one, "The holy mountain spirit had started towards us." So through that actual movement [of the Gahe] towards the fire, is that supposed to symbolize the driving away of bad spirits or wickedness, as Hoijer puts it?

Michael Darrow (Fort Sill Apache Tribal Historian): No.

C.A.: No? (laughing) Okay. Yeah. Well, do you understand how I kind of arrived at that sort of an interpretation? Does it sort of make sense within the framework [of the text]? And if you disagree with it, how would you phrase it, do you think?

M.D.: Well, that number two, right there, doesn't refer specifically to that line, but to this whole section.

C.A.: Okay. I can understand that.

M.D.: Okay. The stuff about driving things away is another sort of thing that I've only heard from a non-Indian point of view.

C.A.: Yeah. Non-Apache?

M.D.: Non-Apache point of view. I've never heard anybody who was Apache specifically say that that's what it's supposed to be doing.

C.A.: Um hmm. So do you think it's just a matter of people looking at that particular...

---

[1] Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 154, fn. 42:2.

M.D.: In order for that to be what is occurring, it has to be... there has to be a concept of some sort of embodiment of disease and wicked things that are capable of being treated as discrete beings. And I'm not sure that concept exists. For Apache... It's sort of convenient for anthropologists when they're describing it, but...

C.A.: Yeah. So you mean the concept of wickedness not necessarily...

M.D.: Existing as a discrete being—Spiritual, or otherwise... That's what bothers me about it. That would be like saying, oh, the United States has. . . . has something-or-other really do something concerning freedom, and trying to embody freedom as a...

C.A.: As something tangible...?

M.D.: Being.....as a tangible sort of a being. It doesn't really work like that.

C.A.: Do you think that there is any form of symbolism in that particular movement, or is it just a matter of somebody looking at it and perhaps reading a bit too much into it?

M.D.: Yes, there is symbolism... there is significance. I wouldn't say it has anything to do with the driving away of evil spirits, as is popularly stated. But there is significance there, and it has to do with making sure you have full coverage when you're doing the ceremony. I'm not sure quite... how to phrase that.

C.A.: Having full coverage when you perform the ceremony.

M.D.: What powers exist... that they're all around you. The powers that exist in the world are all around you, and what can... what good there may be that can be invoked from these things is to be invoked from each direction, because by doing that, you ensure that you're fully covered... that you haven't missed out on anything.

C.A.: Okay. Covering all the angles.

M.D.: Okay, what was the next one?

C.A.: The next one was... he says here, "On the earth the ceremony has begun by means of the turquoise cross." And this is number 4.[2] In his footnotes, [Hoijer talks] about the fact that with the ceremony, quite often an item such as turquoise is requested, and that references to turquoise items are common in ceremonial imagery. And that's what my interpretation was of it. And I was wondering whether or not... what your thoughts are on how Hoijer interpreted it, but also, as well, what ideas of that particular stone or that particular idea or concept brought to your mind?

M.D.: That's probably a pretty good interpretation about some of these... these, specifically, familiar with that ceremony. He was... probably would be a bit difficult to

---

[2] Ibid, 154, fn. 42:4

specifically say that that's what it was referring to. But that's probably a pretty good interpretation.

C.A.: Would you say that turquoise is a ceremonial or religious item, or…?

M.D.: It is. It's what would. . . .it might be called a sacred substance. It is used a lot in ceremonies, turquoise and abalone shell. Pollen, usually cattail pollen, used for, let's see…

C.A.: It is something that's used a lot, and it is a ceremonial item of sorts. Does it evoke any adjectives or ideas or concepts, as far as…I don't know, what kind of qualities does turquoise have?

M.D.: Well, its primary quality is that it's blue. And there seems to be some association with the sky. Insofar as anything further and more specific than that, it's a little more difficult to pin anything down as to why it is specifically thought of as sacred. Turquoise is used for protection. Insofar as reasons why they are used for protection…that's probably a bit beyond the information I would have. Just something that's easy like that.

C.A.: Okay. The other thing that stuck out to me was right here, at the beginning of the next verse, number 2. "The big blue mountain spirit in the East, the tassels of the earth are moving about with me."[3] Hoijer also indicates that "the tassels of the earth" is equivalent with the "pollen of the earth." And that's [footnote] number 5, right here at the bottom of page 154 [in Hoijer's *Chiricahua Texts*]. The phrase "tassels of the earth" are also translated, "the pollen of the earth." And also, I was just wondering what sort of associations does pollen have, or do you have any insight into possible meanings for understanding or interpreting what pollen means?

M.D.: I suspect so. Pollen, once again, is another one of those things that's considered a sacred substance. It's associated with life and abundance and fruitfulness and things like that.

C.A.: Okay. It's kind of a poetic phrase, "the tassels of the earth." Do you have any speculation on where that [phrase] might have come from? Or have you ever heard that phrase used at all?[4]

M.D.: It's not something that ever comes up in casual conversation. The concepts are there, however. I can see on these paintings of the dancers [indicating photo of Gahe dancers on wall of Fort Sill tribal headquarter], when they have their outfits, they're very specifically made with a great. . . . they have a great deal of detail in their significance, relevance for every part of their outfit. It represents something and has a reason for being there. And… the women's dresses, the ceremonial-type buckskin dresses, all of those, when they're put together, there is a very specific significance for each part of them, differently, what they're supposed to represent. The fringes that are on these things are

[3] Hoijer, *Apache Texts*, 54.
[4] The implication being, is it an idiomatic expression?

the. . . .would be. . . . is the. . . . tassels, and I guess you might be able to think of it as sort of symbolic, as a transfer of power, like the power of the sun coming to the earth. Or the correlation of pollen is the power of pollen to cause things to be fruitful or full of life, is being transferred from one thing to another. There are all sorts of significances there.

C.A.: Okay. So you're saying that the tassels of the earth are moving about with, and you have that sort of life within you, things are abundant and good.

M.D.: Yes. Everything in the world is, it's surrounding you and is causing everything to be that much better. There's goodness everywhere.

C.A.: Yeah. I think that is usually only found in song... but it's a nice idea. Okay. I don't know if you had any other input, anything you wanted to say, regarding anything that we had previously or anything within this [conversation].

M.D.: You can see the... one of the things in here is, you can see very strongly, is structured in four parts, usually. That is not really just with the words, but with the songs themselves. And unfortunately, what has happened with our tribe, with the songs, is that the younger people—I guess that would mean anybody who wasn't born before 1915... just about everybody—don't know the language, and so then those who can sing... sing the songs... sing through them. Most of them don't know what the songs are saying or don't know whether they're pronouncing it correctly, or don't have the... don't know what the songs mean. And then there's that first generation of people who don't know the language, who have some idea of what the songs are about, but subsequent generations, they don't even realize that these are sacred songs, that these have some religious significance. Some of the people who did know the songs were either frustrated or careless, insofar as just transferring that information to younger people. And I remember some people saying, "Well, we don't know what we sing... We don't know what the words are." And them being told, "Oh, don't worry about what the words are, just sing the days of the week, and as long as it's in time with the music, it's all right," which isn't really all right. But only if, I guess... but only if you're not considering these to be sacred or significant songs, just a bunch of sound that you're jumping around to, then that would be fine. But it seems to be losing a lot of the significance with time. That's something also, that's probably not being passed on from generation to generation—the regard and respect for these things that are supposed to be sacred and significant.

C.A.: Sometimes, it seems like out here [indicating the dance grounds to the southeast of tribal headquarters], that they have the sung parts, and then they have those spoken sections where they put in the actual text or the lyrics, I guess, or the words. But sometimes it seems like the sung sections are set against an area of open space in which the drums continue, and people continue to dance, but nobody's really doing any recitation of the lyrics. Is that in part because—and I could be wrong about that, and correct me if I'm wrong—but is that in part because of people losing that language, or...?

M.D.: A lot of that is probably because the only person who knows the words is the main singer. And it might be that he's not singing them very loud, so all you can hear is the drum, during that section, and nobody else knows the words well enough to be able to sing that portion along with him, so they just drop out for that section.

C.A.: So it's just quiet because one person can't really project.

M.D.: Unless you have a person who's particularly good at projecting.

C.A.: Yeah. So, traditionally, was that what happened—everybody sang those kind of sung verses, and then everybody also recited the lyrics during the lyrical sections?

M.D.: Yes.

C.A.: The entire chorus did?

M.D.: Yes.

C.A.: Yes. Because most of the recordings that I do have, and that's the way that I've come to accept fire dance songs, everybody singing during the verse, and then a main guy, or somebody taking over the lyrical sections in the middle. Because you can hear the texture thin out when one person did it. And I wasn't sure if that…

M.D.: That has happened because most of the other people don't know what the words are, and can't sing that part. It used to be that everybody knew the words, and they would all sing them. But that's another thing you can check to see if that's what other people's ideas are, also. They may think that it's always been like that. I don't believe that to be true, but some people might.

C.A.: Yeah. Okay. I have a recording of some Western Apache Fire Dance songs and you notice a tendency for the chorus of people to sing the lyrics in between the two verses. Is the maintenance of the tradition easier out there because of the reservation?

M.D.: They're all located in one area, and there's something like 10,000 people in San Carlos, and 10,000 more White Mountain Apaches. And when you have that many people, and they're all located in one area, it's a lot easier to maintain that, than with us—wherein we're only a few hundred people, and we're scattered all across the United States.

C.A.: …we were talking last time about the atmosphere and the mood or the feeling that you got from the dance, the meaning of the dance. You were talking about the fact that it seemed to you to be the day of the year where you could really enjoy being Apache. And I was just wondering if you could talk about that a little bit more, about what sort of a… I don't know. How does it make you feel? Do you look forward to it eagerly like a kid waiting for Christmas, or just when it comes, [do you think to yourself] "thank God it's here," like a long-awaited weekend?

M.D.: Well, if it was something we could just sit back and enjoy, it might be something along those lines. Over the years, there have been dissentions and frustrations... and so much other work to get done accompanying the event that it's somewhat detracted from the event.

C.A.: Okay. Well, how about the mood with... did you have another thought on the tip of your tongue?

M.D.: The term I was thinking of was validation. All these other tribes, all these other groups in the vicinity—not just American Indian—have their various events and activities and things where they are sort of expressive of themselves, wallowing in their own culture. And there's very little of anything that is... that occurs that's equivalent to that for Fort Sill Apache. And for this event that we have, it's the closest we can get to that... something that we can do that's for us. Everything else is always somebody else's. And I'm not sure that most people are aware of what it's like to be existing in a world where everything is somebody else's. And the connection is different than what might be done with... or what might exist in a situation where you can be surrounded by things that you feel more of a connection with.

C.A.: Um hmm. So do you think it's, in some ways, a little bit of a point of pride—the popularity of the ceremony within this region, the way that other people react to it? Because I've said before and *you* talked about the fact that it's what people focus on a lot. I think you've said that quite often, there will be more Comanches and Kiowas at this event than the number of Apaches. But because it really does seem to draw people and capture part of the imagination, I guess that's something to be pretty proud about.

M.D.: To a certain extent, there's that. It's also a little bit annoying, because it's also superficial for them. All they see is the flashy part of the ceremony. They have no concept of the significance.

C.A.: Well, getting back to the idea of the atmosphere and mood of the event, I'm not sure if I asked this last time or if you came to a suitable answer, at least an answer that I was capable of comprehending. But, how would you describe the mood at the event? Do you see it as being a very... based on the actions of the audience members, do you think it's one of those things where people sit down and become actively engaged in the actual event? Do you think that [the dance] is the central focus and for some reason, people really focus on it, or do you think it's more of a social event for most of the people that are there, or do you think that people get a feeling at that event, [perhaps] a quiet reverence or... just how would you characterize it? Would you characterize it as lively or reverent or sociable, anything like that?

M.D.: Probably all those things mixed up. I think it's probably to varying degrees in each individual. Some people are there and they're very reverent. Some people are there just for the socialization, some people are there just for entertainment value. Some people are there for various combinations of those things... and that's all right.

C.A.: Being at the event sometimes, I've looked around and I've tried to gauge what's going on. You know, you have kids on the outside—little brothers and sisters fighting with each other or whatever—but you look around and there are all sorts of different folks. You've got your foldout chairs and your Pendleton blankets, and everybody's sitting out having a good time in the evening. But at the same time, sometimes I'll just look around and it'll seem remarkably quiet to me for that number of people. And it seems like a lot of them really are just sitting there, focused on what's going on in front of them. And to me, in some ways, it does seem that there's this moment where there's almost this reverent air that just hangs over the crowd. I'm not sure where that stems from or why, or whether you agree with it, you know, because of course there are numerous things going on, you know. Just, how do you describe it to somebody else... to get at the heart of the event, for somebody else who doesn't understand what it's about?

M.D.: I'm not sure there's anything equivalent in standard American culture. You know, to have something... well, it's profoundly religious and it's social and entertainment at the same time. It's just like something else. Like you said, it's difficult to explain.

C.A.: As far as the music is concerned, reading early ethnological manuscripts and things of that sort, and you can hear it... by the way, I talk about this a little in my thesis, but you can hear it all the way up into the words of [Woodward H.] Skinner. He did it [his work] in 1986, or whatever. He describes it [the Fire Dance] as... [paraphrasing] "the sound of the singers singing loudly at night, the coyotes from the ridges adding to the din, making a noise suitable for pandemonium," or something like that. So he does describe it as being a fairly energetic and lively event. And there are a lot of different ways that people can embody religious thoughts with music. You know, in an Episcopal church, it tends to be sort of introverted, four part harmonies where people kind of lay back. But then again, you go to a Gospel church, where people are singing out and going... you know, just really belting it out and really getting into it. Do you think it was probably a mischaracterization on his part, or do you think that perhaps they were that lively, it's just he kind of misread other aspects? Do you perceive it as being that lively out here [at the tribal grounds]?

M.D.: I think that probably what you observe out here [indicating tribal grounds to south east of tribal headquarters] is exceedingly similar to what would've been occurring 100 years, 150 years ago. There wouldn't be an awful lot of difference. The main difference in the historical account is who's doing the account. Most of these people have never experienced anything like that before, and also have no experience attempting to describe anything like that.

C.A.: So it comes off very shallow, and...

M.D.: It depends on, yes, as a matter of fact... It does come across as shallow and naive, and the result of what they're doing is trying to convey their own ideas to their reader. And if it was something that was bizarre and foreign to them, they're going to portray that to their reader, that this was something bizarre and foreign... this is something wild

and dangerous, whereas somebody who's familiar, more familiar with it, and they know what's going on, would be entirely puzzled by that sort of an interpretation. I think that most of the accounts that have been done—early ethnographic accounts—have been done by people who have no concept whatsoever of what they're seeing and so they're just providing lurid descriptions for the readers.

C.A.: So you think that there's a pretty strong vein of continuity between the performance then and the performance now?

M.D.: Yes.

C.A.: Okay. But again, I'm curious about the different characters and different local singers. To some [performance groups] I feel a little bit more drive or a little bit more edge. With others, you get this laid back quality, a little bit less edgy, I guess, in the rhythm. Being able to understand that and their relation to each other, I think, would be useful, but unfortunately, I don't think that we're going to be able to tackle that here. I'm going to have to attend more performances.

M.D.: There is different singing for different groups and different people. Some, when they sing, it seems crisp and bright and lively, whereas others seem, I guess, dull and ponderous—not so much the songs they sing, but themselves, as the people who sing the songs—the way they sing them. It makes a great deal of difference.

C.A.: Yeah. The last thing I wanted to go over is some terms. And also, I was wondering if I could just get a recording of you saying them, so that I could be sure... so that I could have the proper way for them to be said on tape. And the first one being that word right there.

M.D.: That word would be *Chazhaada*. Sometimes it sounds like it has a "j" on the front, *jazhaada*, Instead of the *ch*. It has a little bit more of a tendency toward the C-H.

C.A.: Yeah. I think John Anthony Bourke, the way he spells it within his book on the Apache medicine men is more like that. I don't know if that was his own, *cha-ja-la*. I think it's the way he wrote it. But it seems to be some form of a derivative.

M.D.: I'm not real sure about that, because I've found that a lot of these people who, in early days, were writing things down had their own reassigned letters to mean what they wanted them to mean. And so even though it was exactly the same word when it was pronounced, when it was written down, it went in weird directions. And so, if you read novels, there's sort of a characterization of certain Apache words that are used in novels and occur in history books and such, that are supposed to be Apache words, that "We know these are Apache words because they've occurred everywhere." And some of them are... that one you may have seen, and that one, and that. [writes *enjuh/nzhu* and *pindah likoyee/indaa ligai* on piece of paper]. Which, if you try pronouncing them like they're written, they don't come out anything like what they're supposed to be.

C.A.: This word [*Chazhááda*], what does it denote?

M.D.: Generally, it's referring to those dancers.

C.A.: Okay. And it translates [as] "pointed hats?"

M.D.: Not really.

C.A.: Not really. A lot of people…

M.D.: That's a potential interpretation, but it's not a generally accepted interpretation. According to another source, that's the name of some specific sort of a bird that lives out in New Mexico and Arizona that is supposed to make a sound similar to the sound these dancers make when they're dancing.

C.A.: Okay. That's an interesting connection. But neither of those is widely accepted?

M.D.: The second version is probably a bit more widely accepted than the first would be. Neither would be specifically the first thing somebody would think of when the word was said. You heard the word, then that's what you would think… it's a euphemism that is used to keep from using the specific term [*Gahe, Gaan*], which is considered disrespectful to use.

C.A.: Okay. If you say the term to somebody, first thing that would probably come to mind would be the dancers…

M.D.: Yes.

C.A.: …that we kind of spent most of our time talking about. And then secondarily, both of those are possible interpretations.

M.D.: Trying to be a bit more specific and find out exactly what the word means.

C.A.: Yeah. But perhaps it's more prevalent that some people would accept the bird interpretation as opposed to the pointed hats.

M.D.: Probably.

C.A.: Okay… something along that line. And that's the word that we're trying to avoid saying by using that terminology [or, *Gahe*]. Is that correct?

M.D.: Yes. That would be *Gahe*. Another variation on that would be *Gaan*.

C.A.: Okay. Is that term [*Gaan*] typically used by the Chiricahua or is that a term more [common] out West [in New Mexico and Arizona]?

M.D.: There is no East-West difference in the use of the terminology. Some guy who did some presentation decided he was going to compare one with the other and assign Western Apaches using one, and Chiricahuas and Mescaleros as using the other. That's his own creation, rather than the way it actually is. Both groups would use each term… the term *Fire* [as in *Fire Dance*], that's something else you might want to investigate, because that's not something that's translated directly from Apache to English. It came from somewhere… but I'm not sure exactly where it came from. It may be from non-Apache origins. The other tribes that have this—the people who are at Mescalero, and those in Arizona—who have these ceremonies, don't use that term [*Fire Dance*]. It's just Fort Sill Apaches.

C.A.: What do they call it out there [among the groups in New Mexico and Arizona]?

M.D.: The Western Apaches have a tendency to refer to them in English, as "crown dancers." And you'll find that term a little bit among the Mescalero. You don't generally hear that term here. You'll hear the term, "mountain spirits" here. You'll also hear that in Mescalero, but in Mescalero, you'll also, you'll hear "mountain gods," which you don't hear here. Both of these terms that are used for them don't say anything about spirits, and they don't say anything about mountains, either. Actually, "mountain spirits" is something Morris Opler came up with… and it's not really accurate.

C.A.: Okay. Do you think it's the same out with the western [Apachean groups]? Do you think that locals who had seen the dance began calling it [the Crown Dance], and it was an easy term that people could communicate with… that it got accepted somehow that way?

M.D.: Those who had to communicate in English and had to have the terminology to…

C.A.: To describe it…

M.D.: …to say it, because there's not really any way you can translate *Gahe*. You have to tell them it's something. And they came up with something to use in English. That's probably how it came about. There are also all sorts of odd little names that have come up like that regarding terminology. Something I hadn't heard until just about 10 or 12 years ago was that… those people who are not Fort Sill Apaches who are familiar with our dance—enough to know that there's different types, different variations in there—there's something that in our language would be referred to as a high step, but they have come up with the term "skip dance" to refer to that. I had never heard of that until I had heard somebody who's not one of our tribal members mention something about that to me, and it took me a while to figure out what he was referring to. The inside, inside… the inside-insiders don't use that term, just the outside-insiders do.

C.A.: (laughing) …that do? That becomes very shaky ground.

M.D.: Yeah.

C.A.: So much said in one word… Okay. I think that's pretty much all I need to go over today.

Appendix Ic—Interview Transcripts
Ruey Darrow, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Chair
4 April 2002 Fort Sill Apache Tribal Headquarters

The following edited excerpt is from an interview conducted with Fort Sill Apache Tribal Chair Ruey Darrow at the tribal headquarters on May 2, 2002. It focuses on the broad history of performance and performers of the Fire Dance in southwest Oklahoma, local perceptions of its practice both amongst the tribe and within the greater cultural backdrop within the region, and the aesthetic and emotional values surrounding its contemporary performance.

Chris Aplin: I'm interested in your knowledge of the history of the dance. There are certain elements of it that have been documented throughout time. One of the most famous that you find in the literature deals with a period in 1900-1901 at Fort Sill where they banned it for a short period, or at least tried to impose a ban on it. But there is not much information as far as performance of the Fire Dance during that period… and then particularly between 1912 and the period that you began the annual dance in association with the tribe there is not a lot of information, so I was wondering if you had any personal knowledge on how often it was performed?

Ruey Darrow: It was fairly rare. I can think of two instances that I was aware of… that I was old enough to know about. One of them happened over at Talbot Gooday's house, which is over… actually I guess it's west of here a ways, and the other was over at Robert Gooday's house, which is west of Apache.

C.A.: Those were the two events that you remember? Do you remember approximately what year that was?

R.D.: The old one was in the 1930s, I think… with old man Gooday. I think we had one here at the *X* place [indicating field to northeast of Apache Tribal HQ], too. Robert's must have been somewhere in the 1940s. The one here [the *X* performance] was probably earlier than that. It must have been in the '30s, but I can't remember that date, because I wasn't even aware of time [too young to be aware of date].

C.A.: Yeah, but you remember them? Sometimes people have a moment of awareness when they are first around [exposed to] something. Like this dance, it gives a lot of different first impressions. I told you a little about my first impressions—I'd never seen anything like it, but also I felt that it was communicating something beneath it. I saw one of my students from class up here at the Fire Dance in September. I was talking to her,

and I [asked], "you having fun?" She [said] "yeah, but my cousin," or my niece, or something like that... she said, "she's still too young, she gets scared by them [the Gahe]." So, it has different effects on different people the first time they see it. Do you have any recollections or memory of your thoughts or impressions the first time you remember seeing the dance?

R.D.: No, because I grew up with it... I was taken as a baby and there was never anything fearful about it. You are not supposed to go around the dancers... at least for the women. We're not supposed to go around them at all. That was a kind of a taboo. I was going to say it was never frightening... because it's a part of our life. I can see how people might be frightened by it. One of the things that is striking me most is... a man, his niece, his granddaughter had gotten a t-shirt with a [Gahe] dancer on it. And he went to some church and when they walked in there, they [the fellow church members] were shocked and horrified. And this was just in the past year or so... saying that he was a devil worshipper, like this... and they had all this laying on of hands stuff to exorcise whatever it was that was bothering him... or bothering his shirt. But I was taken aback by that because I never, ever could think that they would look at it like that.

C.A.: You have a memory of three different dances that happened, according to your memory between 1930 and 1980. Do you remember for what reason any of those were held? Were they held just for people to get together, or were they held for a specific purpose?

R.D.: I know old man Gooday's was held for a reason, but I can't remember what the reason is right now. I think somebody was sick. And Robert's, I'm not sure about that... but I feel pretty sure that old man Gooday had his because someone in the family was sick.

C.A.: The yearly performance of the Fire Dance began for the tribe in 1980, is that correct?

R.D.: [nods in the affirmative].

C.A.: Why was it decided that it should become an annual event? What kind of circumstances...

R.D.: Well, it became kind of a homecoming, you know, because that was the only time the tribal members could get together to reassure themselves about who they were. And it just continued... that's really about what it is. All the [Apache] people who attend now did not grow up in a time where it was used for much more than... this is just what we have here. Some people say that it [the yearly dance] is just for show, but it's not because when we dance, we have a reason. Out west they go ahead and use it for when they have puberty ceremonies—in fact, they're having a tribal blessing this coming weekend... or the weekend after this at Mescalero, and we might stop for that when we're there [at

Mescalero][1]—but, for a lot of things like that. And I think that they're [the people at Mescalero] going to start having an annual blessing for the tribe. And that's essentially what ours [the annual Fire Dance] is, too.

C.A.: A little bit off the subject, but since you brought up Mescalero and since it's been so long since we had that conversation… I believe one of the first times I came in to talk to Michael, you came in and sat down next to him and we talked a little bit. I remember something you said and because it is out of context it might not make sense, or I may not be quoting you correctly. But, I thought that you had said something about the fact that Mescalero had gotten their dance from the Fort Sill Apache.

R.D.: Their dance had lapsed because of their situation, because they were kept prisoners with the Navajo at the camp there. Things were bad kind of for them in that era.

C.A.: So, were they held at Fort Sumner with the Navajo? Or was that different?

R.D.: Not as many Mescalero as the Navajo, but they were there. It kind of subdued a lot of their activities. So when our people got out there with them, they started dancing again. But we actually did not start [or introduce the dance]… they had their own version before.

C.A.: I had heard there was a ban at Mescalero between 1880 and 1910 or so, roughly around the same time that the Fort Sill Apache split. A large proportion went out there [to Mescalero]. You think that [event] was a pretty big influence in them continuing the dance?

R.D.: Yes, because we had really strong leaders here at Fort Sill. We had Naichi [Naiche], and Geronimo of course stayed here, but his son [Robert Geronimo] went out there, and old man Chihuahua, and these really strong leaders. And they were all really into the dance and so they took it out there [to Mescalero, New Mexico].

C.A.: When you were growing up, you mentioned a couple of names particularly associated with those dances that you remembered being performed—you mentioned the Goodays and the *X* [tradition]. When you were growing up, were these the only people known to have a Fire Dance tradition here in southwest Oklahoma?

R.D.: Yes.

C.A.: And the *X* tradition is no longer performed?

R.D.: No. They all sort of died out. They had the dance just right over here… in the trees there [to the east of headquarters]. It just died out after one of their… see they had several boys… [*thought interrupted by office noise*] But they, the *X* tradition came from Cochise. That was *Y*'s Grandfather, and Naiche was her father and they were all well

[1] Ruey Darrow and Michael Darrow were at the time of the interview preparing for a trip into Arizona and New Mexico on tribal business.

integrated into the Fort Sill Apache tradition, or the Apache tradition, not [just] Fort Sill [Apache]. They're the ones that had the dance down at Fort Sill.

C.A.: When was the last time the *X* tradition was practiced?

R.D.: I don't know about the last time. But I know the last time that I was aware of when they danced around here was when the came here and danced for us; it was probably 1980s. *Z* had the group.

C.A.: So it's fairly recently disappeared? How about the Gooday tradition, do you know anything about future plans as far as what's in store for that and how long that tradition will be able to be maintained?

R.D.: No, I don't... but people don't usually plan like that. The Apaches don't, they just let it go however it will go. Probably, if anyone wants it, it will probably be one of Cloyde's sons or his grandsons, because he has his grandsons and great-grandsons dance for him, and they are actively involved. I'm not sure about beyond that.

C.A.: We already talked about your first memories of the dance. Are there any performances that you have seen in your life that you felt were particularly powerful, that you really felt moved by the event and what was happening in front of you, or around you, or inside of you?

R.D.: There have been a few out at Mescalero. After the *X* [tradition] died—and the Gooday's are doing a good job—but after the *X* [tradition] died, those were my premier dancers. And you could see them, they were outstanding—the postures and everything was really great. A particular dance doesn't do that much as far as being outstanding. I would have to say that most of them were outstanding because it's something that we don't do very often... and we don't participate very often. So when we have the dances it's usually very exciting. I mean, your heart doesn't race and your blood pressure rise or anything, but that you are going to be hearing your songs and seeing the dance is a big thing.

C.A.: So there was something to the way that the dancers moved that made the *X* [tradition] particularly striking to watch.

R.D.: Yes.

C.A.: How about the music that accompanied [the dance]?

R.D.: Well, the music they sang then is pretty much the music they sing now. The songs were made by different people—most of them are older people, from the older generation—but those songs are still sung now. And that's one of the nice things about it, is because you recognize those songs and they're very familiar, very soothing.

C.A.: When talking about the songs, they are the same songs that are sung, but I imagine that different singers have different ways of singing those same songs, or different attitudes, or characters. Everybody is a personality and in some ways that often shows up in the way that you sing or perform.

R.D.: One of the things I see about all of this is their singing. But nobody sings different, or adds any personality into their song as such that I can see, or that I can hear. They change some of their… how they sing the song itself, but everything is **very, very much the same** [emphasized] all the time. And that's how you get your continuity. You sing just like they did one hundred years ago. You don't make changes.

C.A.: So there is no singer that you hear and you think "oh, his voice is interesting"? Because voices have different qualities sometimes—a voice can be very smooth and shimmering and some voices can be kind of rough edged.

R.D.: Most of the voices… there really isn't all that much softness about it. The language is kind of harsh sounding. And when they sing, it's the same thing, unless it's a lullaby which they won't do it like that. But there is nothing really soothing about the songs that they sing with the dance group. They're very nearly static in a way, because they sing songs in the same way like my father used to sing them all the time.

C.A.: Did your father [Sam Haozous] have his own tradition of Fire Dance? I have heard him sing on that Willard Rhodes Library of Congress album and they did a Fire Dance song on there. Do you know the origin of that song?

R.D.: I can't remember what it is, but a lot of them we do know their origins, and most of the origins of the Gooday's songs, or the ones that we use now are from the Fort Sill group that was down here.

C.A.: Which group was that?

R.D.: The group over at Fort Sill [during the prisoner of war era]… or as far I know.

C.A.: How many groups—I don't know if you know this, this may be more speculation than anything—While everybody was still located on Fort Sill, do you know how many groups were performing at that time? Or do you have any estimate, or any way to know?

R.D.: No, I don't know exactly, but I know of two groups down there. One was old man Chatto and Naiche. I don't know of any others.

C.A.: How about when you go to see a Fire Dance performance today? If you compare it to the way you remember hearing it when you grew up, are there any things that you see have changed that you don't like as far as the singing, dancing or that way that people are performing it today? Are there any sort of pet peeves that you feel people do through performance, or whatever…?

R.D.: Well, there are a lot of things that are different. They don't show the same avoidance respect that they used to in regard to the dancers, because there was a big thing about that... Originally, from my first memory, everybody sang. Everyone that wanted to would go and sing with the group. Now, in Mescalero, they're doing this now: each leader, each medicine man will have his own group of singers and they won't sing with the others, and they won't allow others to sing with them. And that seems like such a shame, because one of the best things that I remember about our people is that they always stayed together. There was no jealousy, no fighting for supremacy or anything. And I'm not sure why it is, but for some reason they started doing that and they do it when they come here and I think that kind of is a poor way to do business. They get along with us and that's fine.

C.A.: If I'm to write into words what the dance is about out here, it's a hard thing to pin down. You have people selling goods—t-shirts, nachos, and frybread—and you have kids running around having a good time. But also to a certain extent... there almost seems to be a quiet reverence towards what is going on out there. It's not an easy thing to do, to pin down or characterize what the dance is like. If you had the opportunity to try to tell somebody else what it was like at the actual dance, would you say that it was an atmosphere of reverence, or do you think it's a social affair, a sort of family reunion?

R.D.: No, it's reverence, because there are things, you know... the kids running around outside is all right. On the [dance] grounds, they should never be there. But, I think it's reverence, because that's what we've always felt for it. We have always felt like this was something that is distinctive that belongs to the Fort Sill Apache... *all* the Apaches actually, not just the Fort Sill people. A part of their song is a prayer. They sing the chorus—the vocables—and then they go into this prayer thing and then go on with the vocables. Most people are aware that is what they [the songs] are doing, or at least *we* know—I'm not sure if I ever told anyone before this. But that brings a special essence to the dance, or to the song. Each singer or each leader will have his own prayer portion there which he develops himself.

C.A.: I talked to Michael before, and he was telling me that often, at that [annual] dance, there would be more Kiowas and Comanches than there would be Fort Sill Apache present there. It's interesting, because I did pick up to a certain degree, this atmosphere of reverence... It seems as though people almost become fixated on the fire and movement of the dancers, and what is unfolding in front of them—there is sort of a hush hanging over everything. Do think that it is just the power of the ceremony that makes people do that, or do the Kiowas and Comanches who attend just understand the etiquette of the event, or do you think that the music is so powerful that it forces a person's focus into what is going on—[forces the audience into] that plaintive, reverent mindset?

R.D.: Well, most of the people who come to our dance have a great deal of respect for us. I don't think that they are necessarily into the music as such, but it is just the atmosphere that is projected from the dancers and the songs that they feel. And they feel a part of it because they feel it, too... just like a lot of us.

It interests me to hear you say the impressions you get, because I have no concept of what someone else might think about it. It is so much a part of who I am. Everybody thinks that if you reverence the dance, then you're not Christian, you're not this or that. But that's not true—they are two separate things. It's just a means of worship just like the Catholics, and the Jewish, and the different Protestant ways of worshipping because it's all one God. It's how people prefer to do things, I guess. The Apaches were never one to force any kind of belief on anybody, we just grew up believing it and that is how it was.

C.A.: So it is a very religious event for you?

R.D.: Yes. It always has been for me. All of my life I have gone and stayed until it was over. As I have gotten as old as I am and as tired as I get, I can't stay very long at these things, but I would so like to.

C.A.: As a young girl, did you participate in the dance as well? Because they always have the women dancing around the outside...[2]

R.D.: We always danced. Always.

C.A.: Is there a particular name for that dance?

R.D.: No. No, not that I can think of ... well, one is a Round Dance and one is a Back and Forth, and other than that...

C.A.: Well, I'm familiar with Round Dances and the Back and Forth, but during the actual Gahe Dance, they have women dancing along the outside of the circle.

R.D.: No. I've never heard anybody say anything about that... it's just part of the dance.

C.A.: You took part in that anytime you were at a dance?

R.D.: Yes. Always. When we were in Mescalero, when I was a young girl, we would dance all night and feel glorious the next day. We had a lot of fun doing that.

C.A.: What did it feel like? If you went to a dance back in those days, how would it begin? I guess sometime around sundown they would light the fire and the Gahe would come out and then you would begin dancing.

R.D.: Um hmm.

C.A.: About how many hours would that last? Would it [the Gahe Dance] last until around 12 [midnight], or so?

---

[2] Women dance in a clockwise direction on the outer perimeter of the grounds during the Gahe Dance.

R.D.: They used to last until about 11:00 [p.m.], or something like that. Then they would start doing the Round Dance, and then after that they did the Back and Forth until morning.

C.A.: And you partook in all of those performances?

R.D.: Yes. We were there all night. The Navajos used to come... this was out at Mescalero... the Navajos used to come down there. Once you got to the Back and Forth, you [the women] asked the man to dance. He can't leave you without giving you something. He danced with you all night, or he has to give you something to pay you to get to leave. We used to dance with the Navajos and they would give us jewelry...

C.A.: [laughter] [You were] just picking the Navajos [out of the crowd] so that you could get jewelry out of them?

R.D.: [laughing] Pretty crass. But we used to have a lot of fun.

C.A.: But there is no one event [you remember]... there's no memory like "that one night, we danced all night and never got exhausted," or "oh, that one night, everything went wrong"... it was everything one of those dances shouldn't have been?

R.D.: No, it has never happened. I have always enjoyed most of everything. It is rare that I find something that I don't really like. But most of those dances are something that, when I was younger, I wouldn't miss it for the world. Not only because of the events that were happening, but that's how you get to meet your boyfriend and all this kind of stuff.

There's a term, "blanket partners." I have a friend in Albuquerque and she was talking to her husband about somebody being a blanket partner. And he thought, well, "what kind of a game is this you play?" But you usually danced with some friend, or a boyfriend, or something like this and you danced in the same blanket—and that's what she was talking about. I never liked people to touch me that much and so I would dance with a woman together under a blanket, but I didn't dance with many boys alone, because we always did things together.

C.A.: All the prayers in the songs, are you able to understand what they are saying?

R.D.: Most of the time. When I'm not around it, it takes me awhile to regain the understanding as quickly. But for the most part, I usually understand without having to interpret it, or anything. When my parents would say something [in the traditional language], I knew what they were saying without having to stop and think.

C.A.: It's interesting... it does sound like a very religious event, but at the same time it sounds like a very fun event, especially being a youth [growing up] around it. It makes it hard to discuss... well, it doesn't make it that hard to discuss, I think it is kind of a natural component. I just haven't found the right parallel with Christianity and other religions, but I imagine it to be quite similar. While it is focused on religious ideas, there is always... often this social element that goes with it.

R.D.: Well, with the Christian church they have a lot of things that are parallel. Like when they have their church service, they'll have a youth meeting, or something like this, where they will get together and visit and socialize, and maybe have something to eat and drink, or something like that. We didn't have anything like going off to skating parties, or having dances, because this was all integrated into a family activity.

It is difficult to describe that because I have become so familiar, now, with the separation of the different age groups. They are always trying to see if they can't get the 10-12 or 8-12 age groups to go do something together, or they have the teenagers go do something together. This is not... this is the Christian churches... and Protestants... I guess the Catholics do the same thing. We didn't do much of that, you know, everybody just did things together.

C.A.: I asked you about that song that I have recorded of your father. You said that he probably got it out at Fort Sill. When these songs are created are they meant to be sung specifically by one person?

R.D.: [emphatically] No. They are always shared. You learn something... you make a song and the first time you sing it, the others try to join in the chorus or something like that. So they all learn it. It is not something exclusive to one person.

C.A.: A lot of the songs still performed around here by the Goodays perhaps reach [historically] all the way back to [the] Fort Sill [period], and some of the different songs of the different groups *everybody* had, and you can't really trace who created that song and why?

R.D.: Some of the church songs we do, but not the dance songs.

C.A.: One last question I did have, is there anything that you thought was really important that you would like to communicate to others about the dance, or about what they should know about the dance? Somebody who has never been around it, or seen it, or just wants to know a little more about it, is there something that you feel is important that they know about?

R.D.: The meaning involved with this—the essence of the dance—is a combination of the songs and the posturing of the dancers, and it is all in reverence to our one God, the one by whom... whose teachings we follow, or by whom we live. Because that is his name, it's not God, but it is the one we follow, like good and bad, and evil and all this. It's not something you write down, it is something you know. You talk about lie, cheat, steal... well, that goes on in many cultures, but it is very strong in ours, too. That dance just represents all that is good and all that is holy about us and our people. I feel very strongly about it because I have grown up and I was taught that way. I guess if you don't know and you come to look at them, this dance... but I still believe in the old taboos. It bothers me if I see somebody doing something that they shouldn't be doing... let's say a long time ago something that they shouldn't have been doing. But now they have relaxed

a lot of the rules and I want people to see this [the Fire Dance] as something that is truly a reverent and spiritual exercise.

C.A.: Do you feel that by watching them [the Gahe Dancers] that you learn something about yourself? Do they teach you lessons by which you guide your life? Do the songs communicate those sorts of things to you? Or are the prayers in the dance mainly given in a form of thanks, I guess?

I don't know. I imagine people go to church for introspection—to think about who they are and what they need to do to make their life better. I think that a lot of times people look at [for example] the bible and get inspiration from it. I'm a scholar and academic. I look at music and think about the ways that other people think about music, and then I think about "how can I learn from this to make me a better person," to a certain extent. Do you get the same sort of inspiration, do they tell you the correct way to live through either the songs or actions of the dancers?

R.D.: You know that is a very difficult question to answer. You do learn things from the dances, but then I think those things are taught at home, or taught in your associations with others and they are reinforced by the dancers. I don't know exactly how to explain it. I taught my children to be respectful of the dance and for it to be a part of them, and they do... but I am not sure my grandchildren will do so.

This is the essence of what I believe, but it doesn't say what you believe... it doesn't say you believe in this, and this, and this, and this. There is no specific doctrine involved, in other words. It's all kind of an emotional feeling and I think probably now that the Mescaleros are getting more involved in who's going to dance when and where and how and who is going to sing... to me they're trying to change it. I realize that life changes and that's the only way I can live, is because I know this. But things are always going to be different with a different group of people, because if it wasn't, we'd have the same experiences. Nobody associates with the same people. Consequently, as they grow they develop their own principle and their own attitudes for different facets of living. I have a great deal of respect for people doing that. That is why I won't argue. Because if somebody is happy, I let them be.

I'd like for our people to know what we're doing here and how we're doing, but if they don't embrace it, then I don't really feel sorry for them. I just feel like we've lost a lot, because there is... it's very important to believe in our ways.

Appendix II—Semiotic Transcriptions of Fire Dance Songs (*Gahe Biyine*)

The following semiotic transcriptions are included to supplement the discussion of Fire Dance melodies, or *gahe biyine*, in Chapter 7. Rather than focusing on the modes of creation (the *poietic*) or listener's response (the *esthesic*), semiotic analysis as employed in this study explores the *neutral level*, or those patterns or signs apparent only in the written score.[1] This approach to song analysis removes all rhythmic content from the songs and instead focuses on the broad salient features of the melody. Such an approach is useful in exposing the larger organizational structures such as scale, melodic line, and cadence.

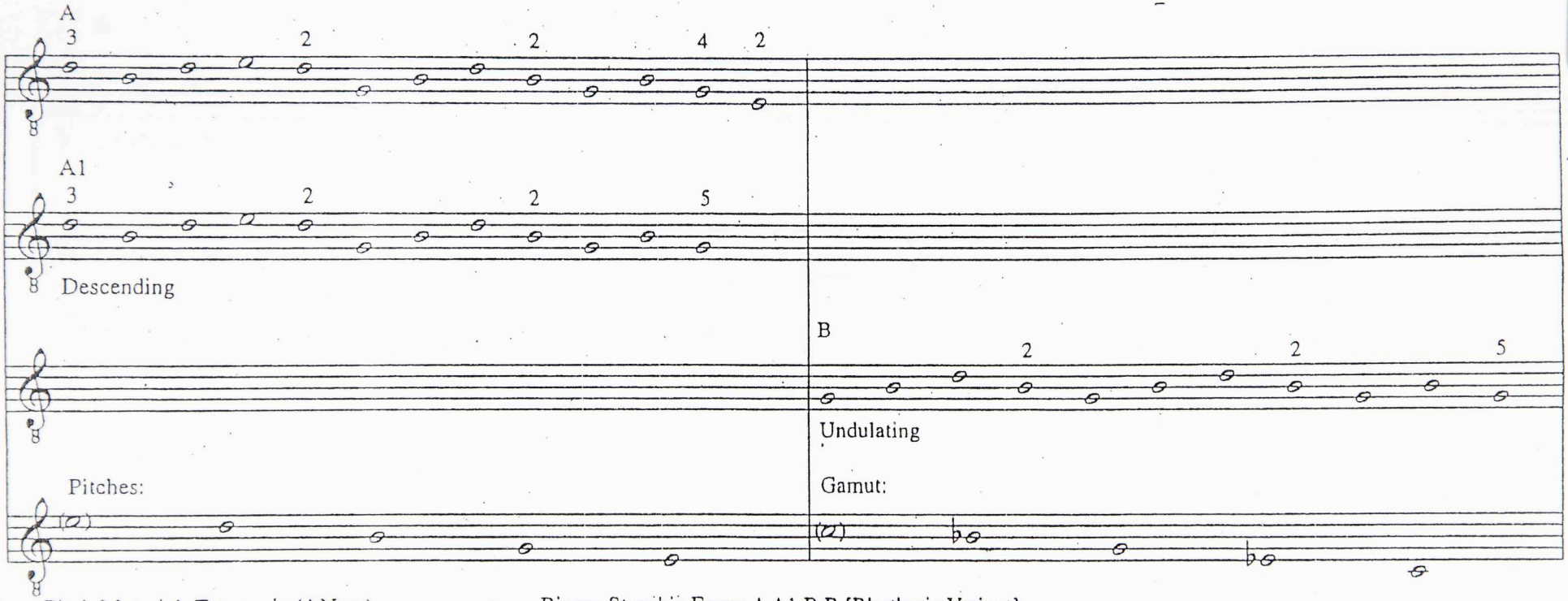
Sung melodies within the transcriptions are denoted by whole note values and are divided into two categories: the strophic, labeled *A* within the transcriptions, and the binary strophic, in which the two distinct melodic sections are labeled *A* and *B*, respectively. Melodic phrases are often repeated (A A/B or A A B B/C) and variation is often present within repetitions of binary strophic sections (A A1 B B1/C), primarily in the form of alteration to cadential formulas at the end of phrases.

The aforementioned melodic sections are sung in vocables and, in the most generalized form, are often alternated with a third section in which the chorus drops out and the head singer provides a sprechstimme recitation of text in the traditional Chiricahua language. The contrasting sprechstimme sections are denoted by quarter note values without the stem and labeled *B* in the strophic song form (A/B), or *C* in the binary strophic form (A B/C).

---

[1] Naomi Cumming, "Semiotics" in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, executive ed. John Tyrell, 2nd edition, vol. 23 (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 2001), 67; Jean Jaques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 11-12. Primary focus on the *trace*, or *neutral level* within the context of this study is not intended to deemphasize the importance of the *poietic* and *esthesic* levels of analysis. Nattiez notes that "the *essence* of a musical work is at once its genesis [*poietic*], its organization [*trace/neutral level*], and the way it is perceived [*esthesic*]" (1990), ix. The interactive nature of Nattiez's tripartite theory of semiotic analysis is recognized, yet full analysis on all levels—or description of the full "essence" of the work, to use Nattiez's words—is not currently possible within the parameter of this study.

4A-1

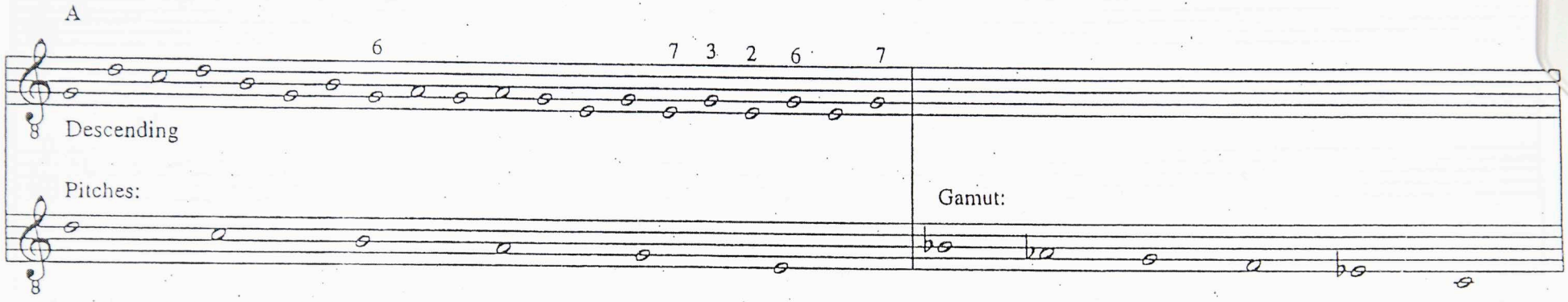


Pitch Material: Tetratonic (4 Note)

Binary Strophic Form: A A1 B B [Rhythmic Variant]
A A1 B B [Rhythmic Variant]
A A1 B B [Rhythmic Variant]

APPENDIX II
Gahe Biyine #1

6A-1

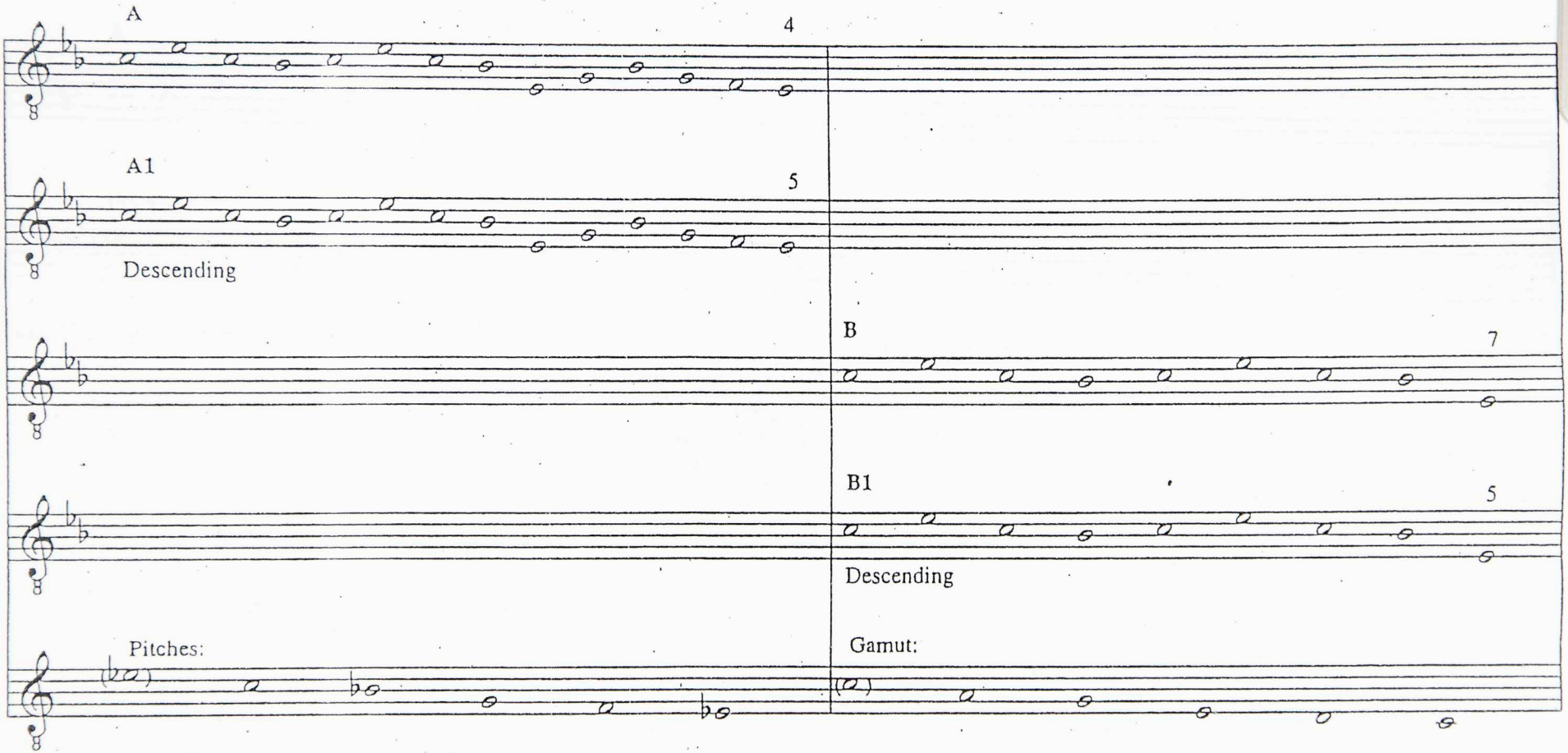


Pitch Material: Hexatonic (6 Note)

Monomelodic Strophic Form: AAAA
AAA
AAA
AAA
AAA

APPENDIX II
Gahe Biyine #2

5A-1

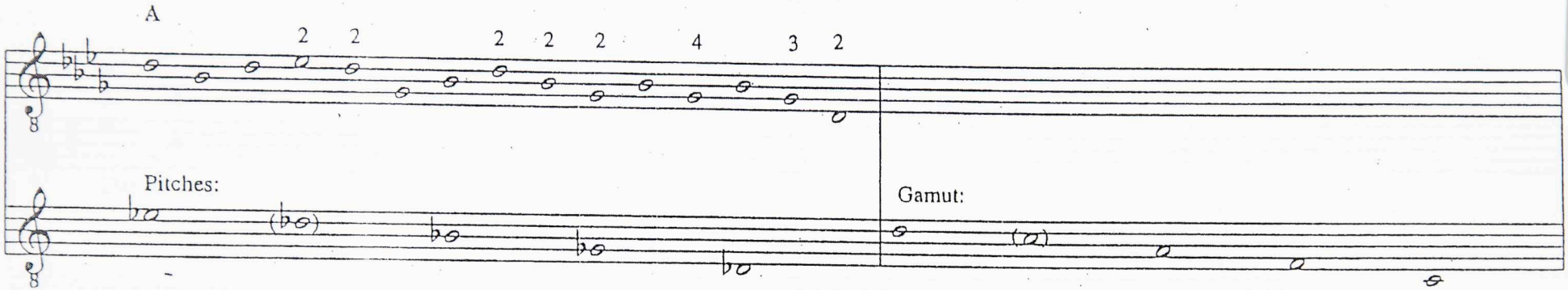


Pitch Material: Pentatonic (5 Note)

Binary Strophic Form: A A1 B B1
A A1 B B1
A A1 B B1
A A1 B1 B B B
A1 B B1
A A1 B B1
A B B1
A B B B1
A A1 B1
A1 B B1
A1 A1 B1
A1 B B1
A1 B B1
A1 B B1

APPENDIX II
Gahe Biyine #3

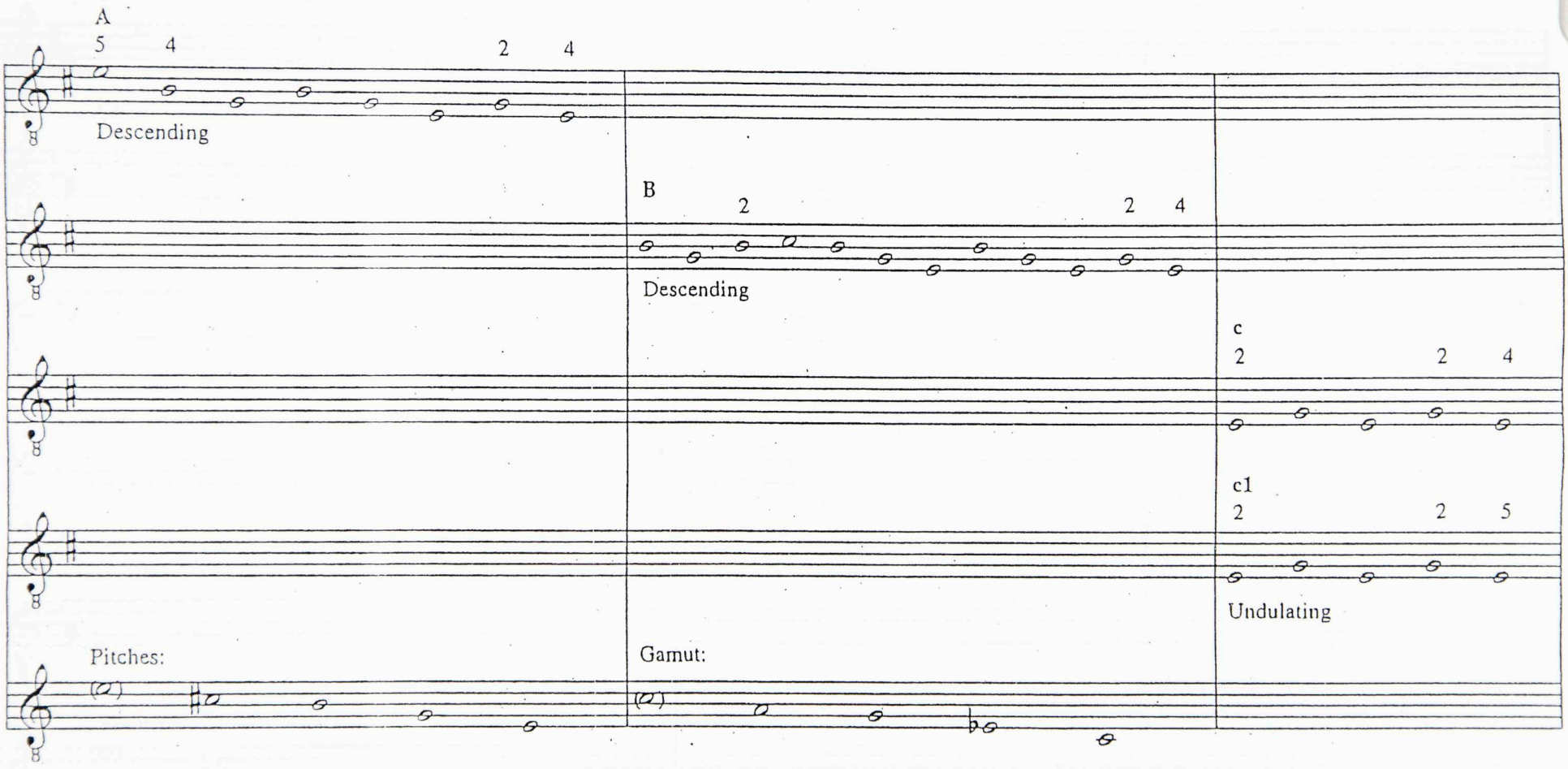
4B-1



Pitch Material: Tetratonic (4 Note) MonomelodicStrophic Form: AAAAAAA [inc.=incomplete]
A (inc.) AAAAA
AAAA
A (inc.) AAAA
AAAAAAAA
AAAA

APPENDIX II
Gahe Biyine #4

4C-1

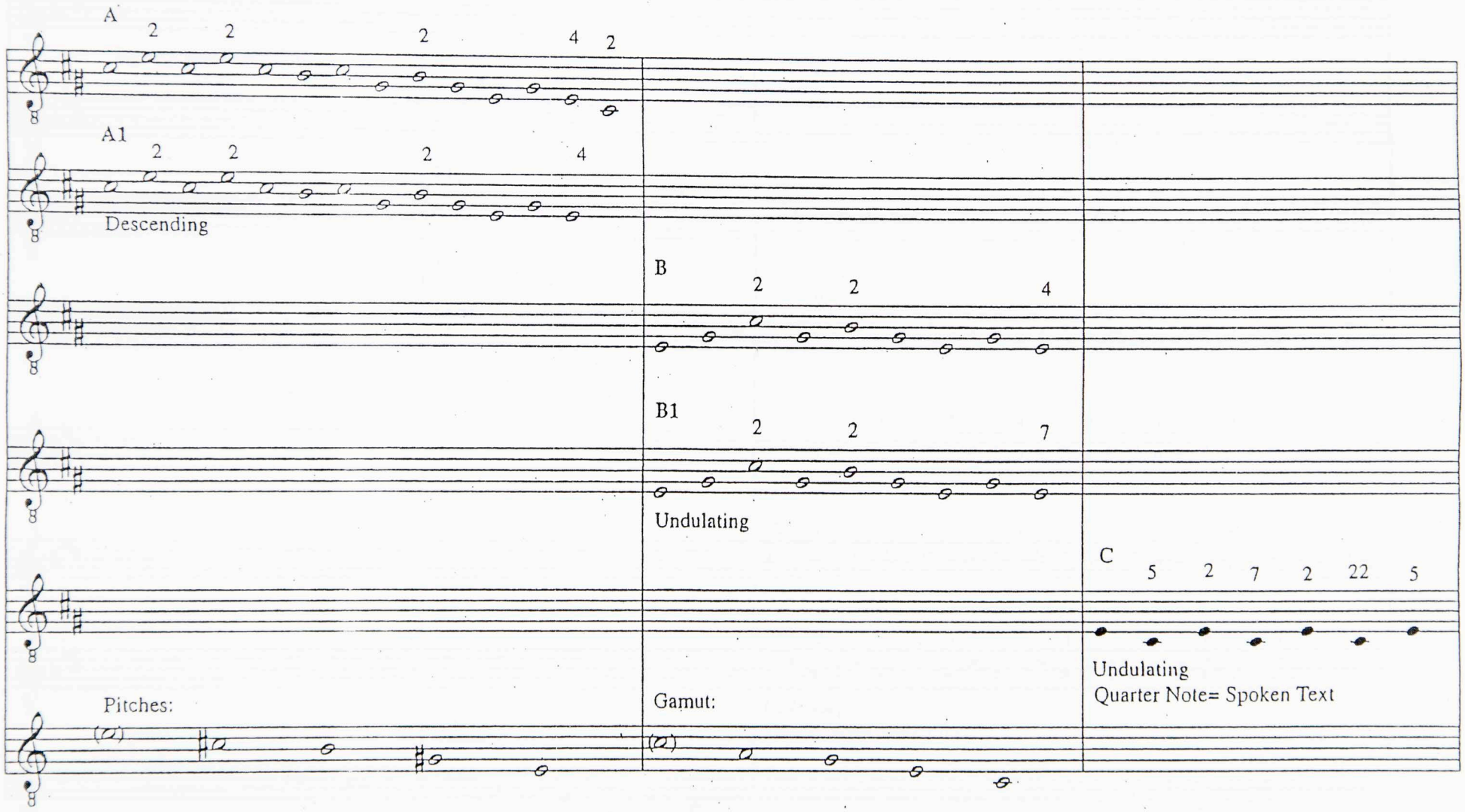


Pitch Material: Tetratonic (4 Note)

Binary Strophic Form with Extended Cadence: A A B c c1
A B c c1
A A B c c1
A A B c c1
A A B c c1

APPENDIX II
Gahe Biyine #5

4D-1

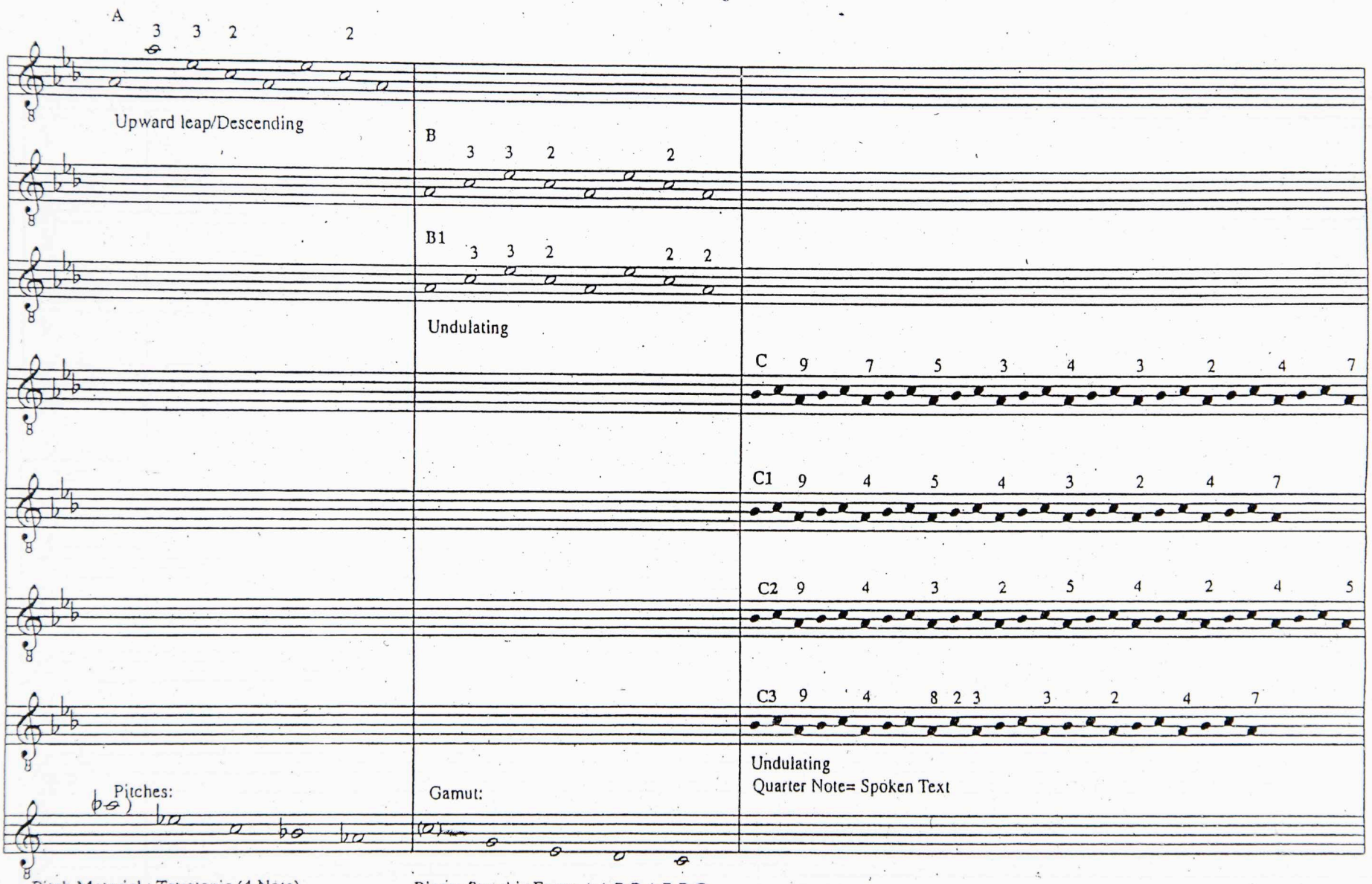


Pitch Material: Tetratonic (4 Note)

Binary Strophic Form: A A1 B B1 C
A A1 B B1
A A1 B B1
A A1 B B1

APPENDIX II
Gahe Biyine #6

4E-1

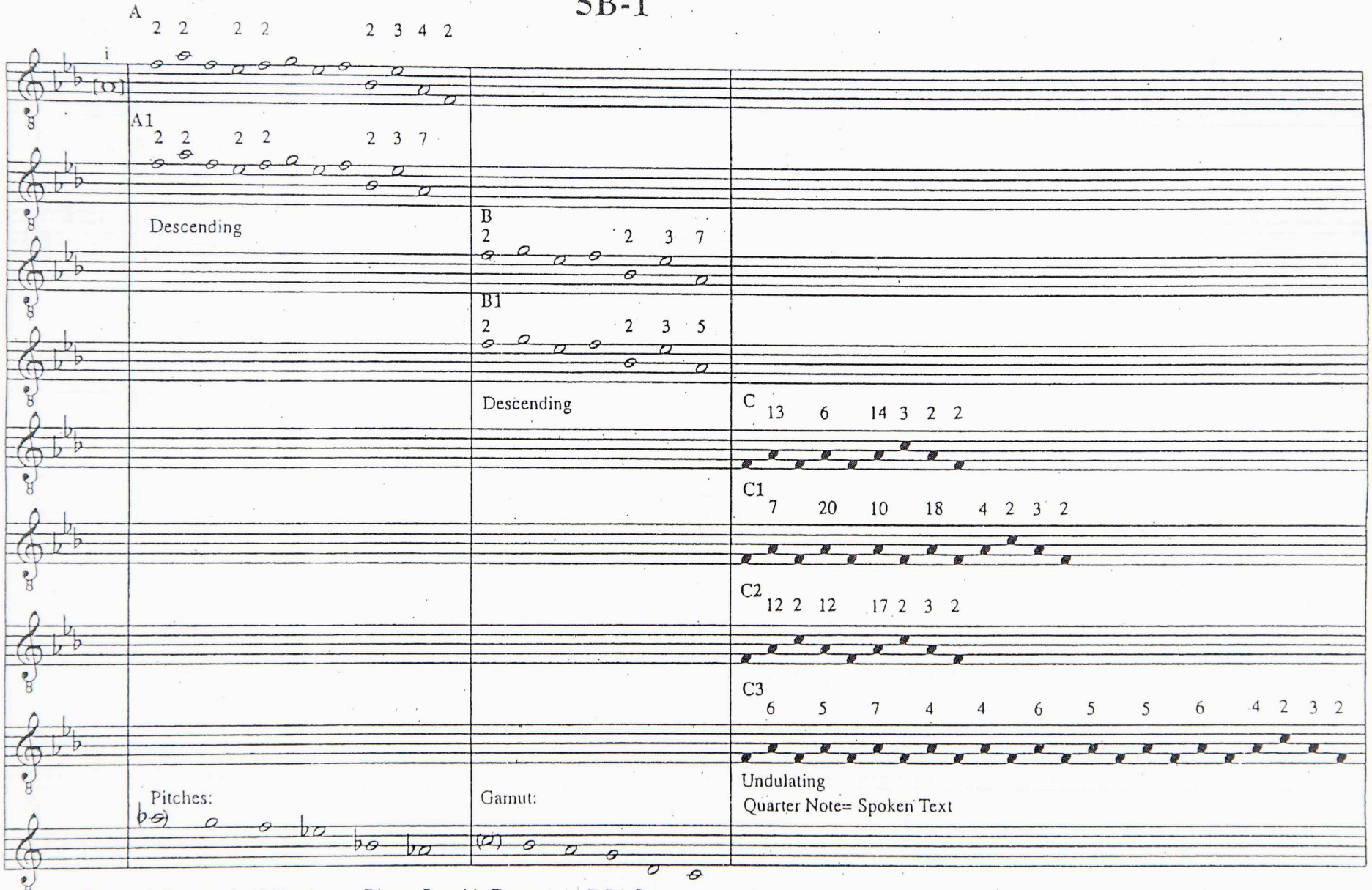


Pitch Material : Tetratonic (4 Note)

Binary Strophic Form: A A B B A B B C
A B B A B C1
A B B A B B A B B C2
A B B B C3
A B B

APPENDIX II
Gahe Biyine #7

5B-1



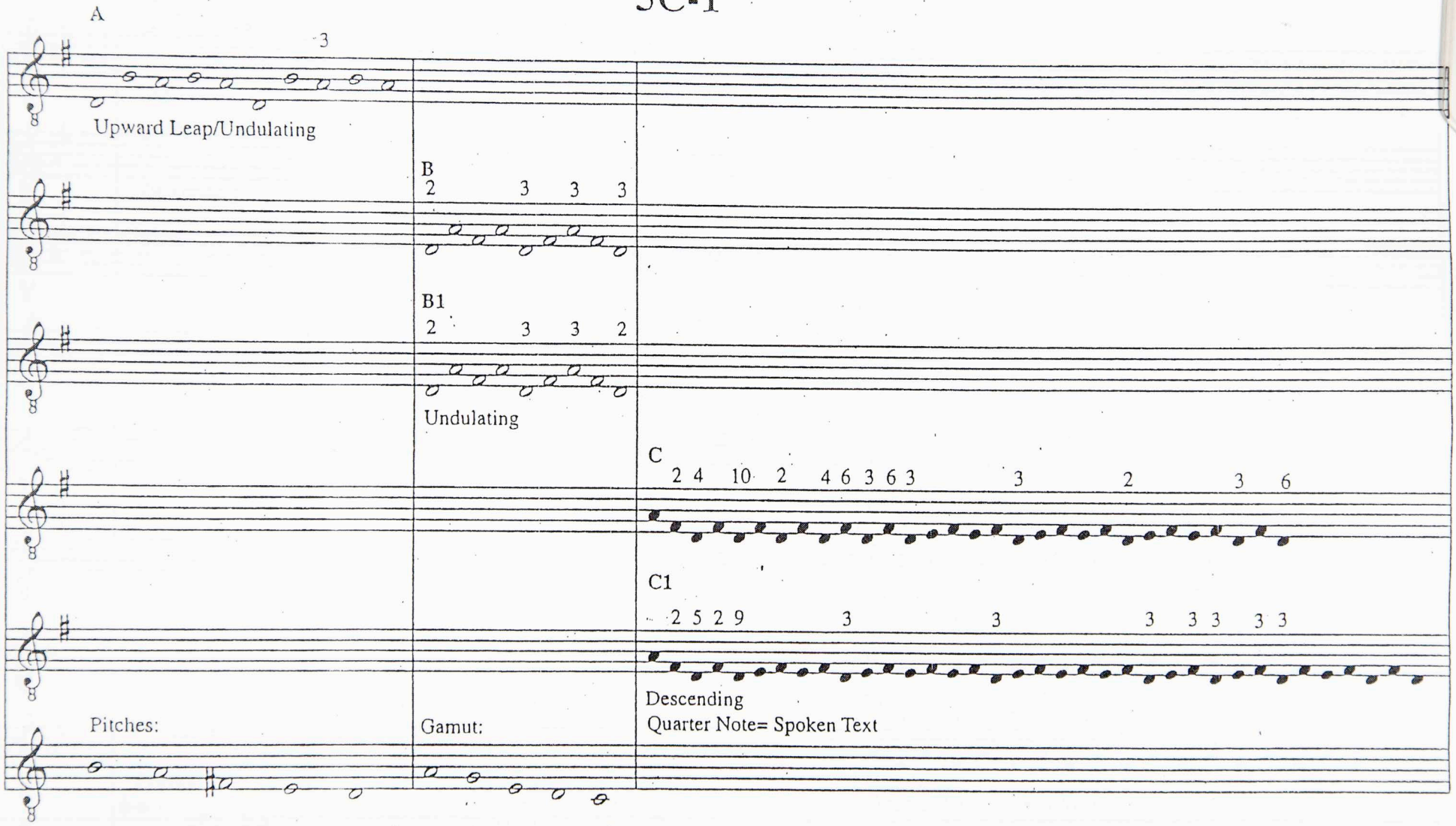
Pitch Material: Pentatonic (5 Note)

Binary Strophic Form: A A1 B B1 C
A1 B B1 C1
A1 B B1 C2
A1 B B1 C3
A1 B B1 A1 B B1

i= incipit

APPENDIX II
Gahe Biyine #8

5C-1

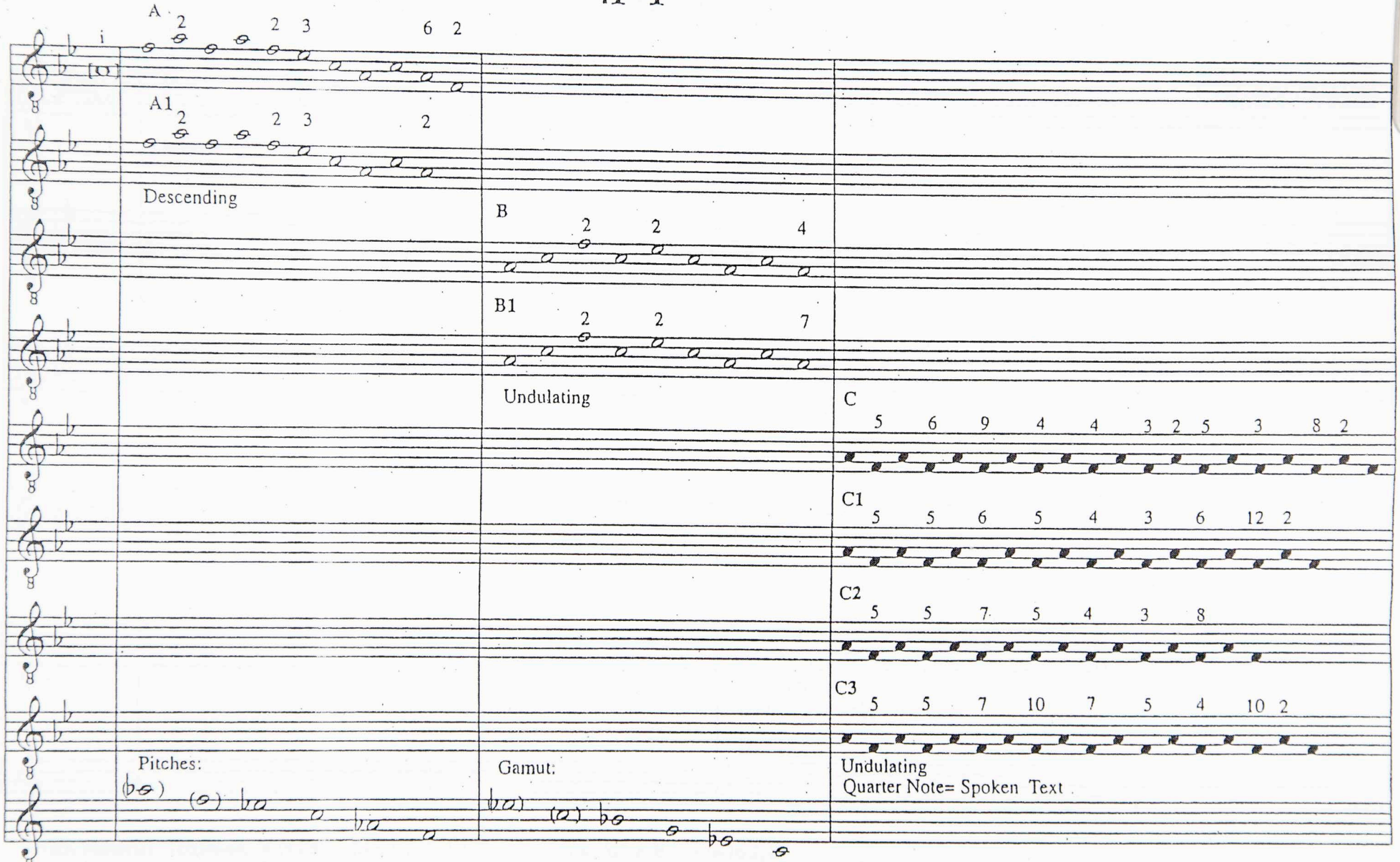


Pitch Material: Pentatonic (5 Note)

Binary Strophic Form: A B B1 A B B1 C
A B B1 C1
A B B1

APPENDIX II
Gahe Biyine #9

4F-1



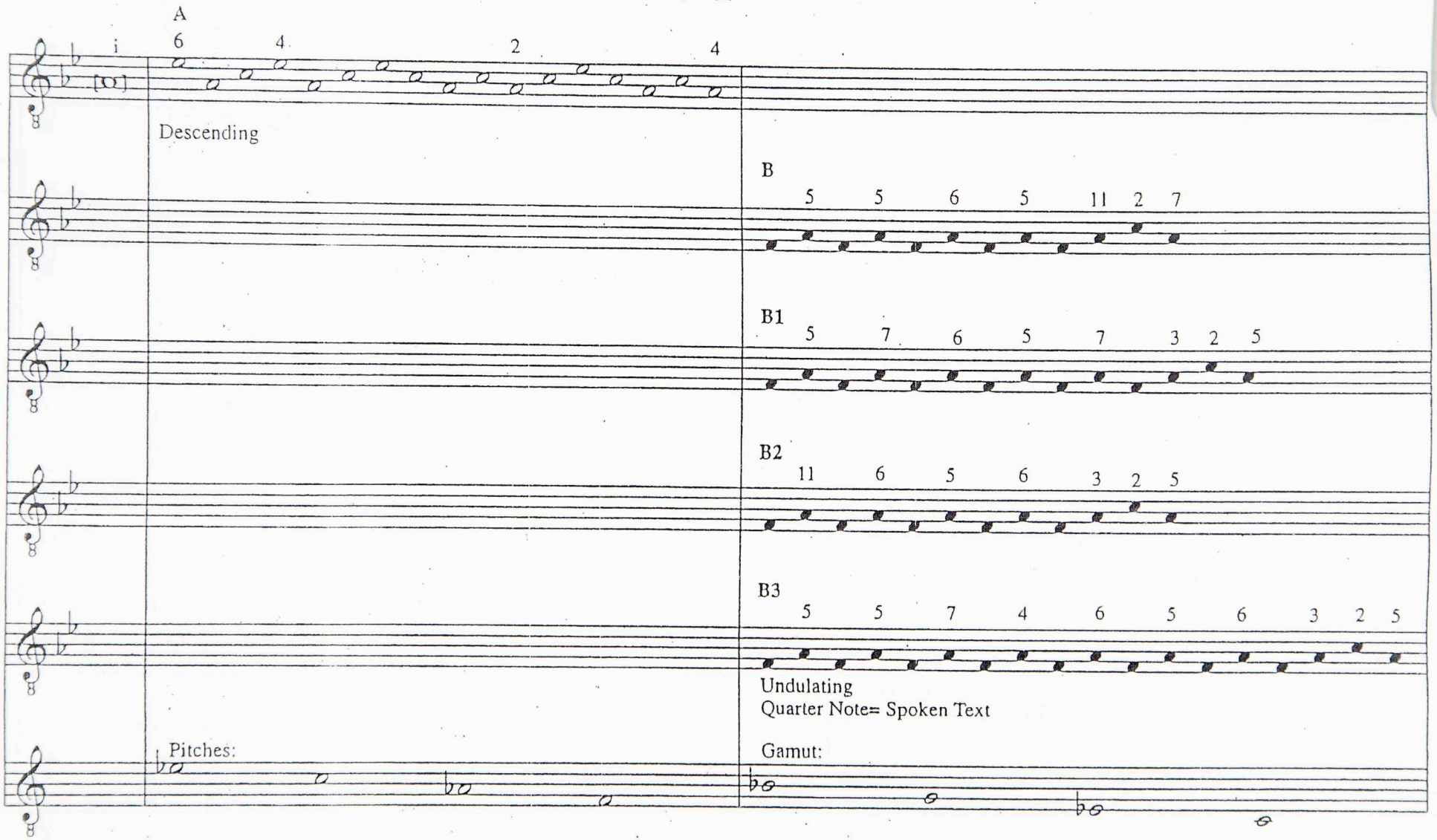
Pitch Material: Tetratonic (4 Note)

Form: A A1 B B1 A A1 B B1 C
A A1 B B1 C1
A A1 B B1 C2
A A1 B B1 C3
A A1 B B1

i= incipit

APPENDIX II
Gabe Divine #10

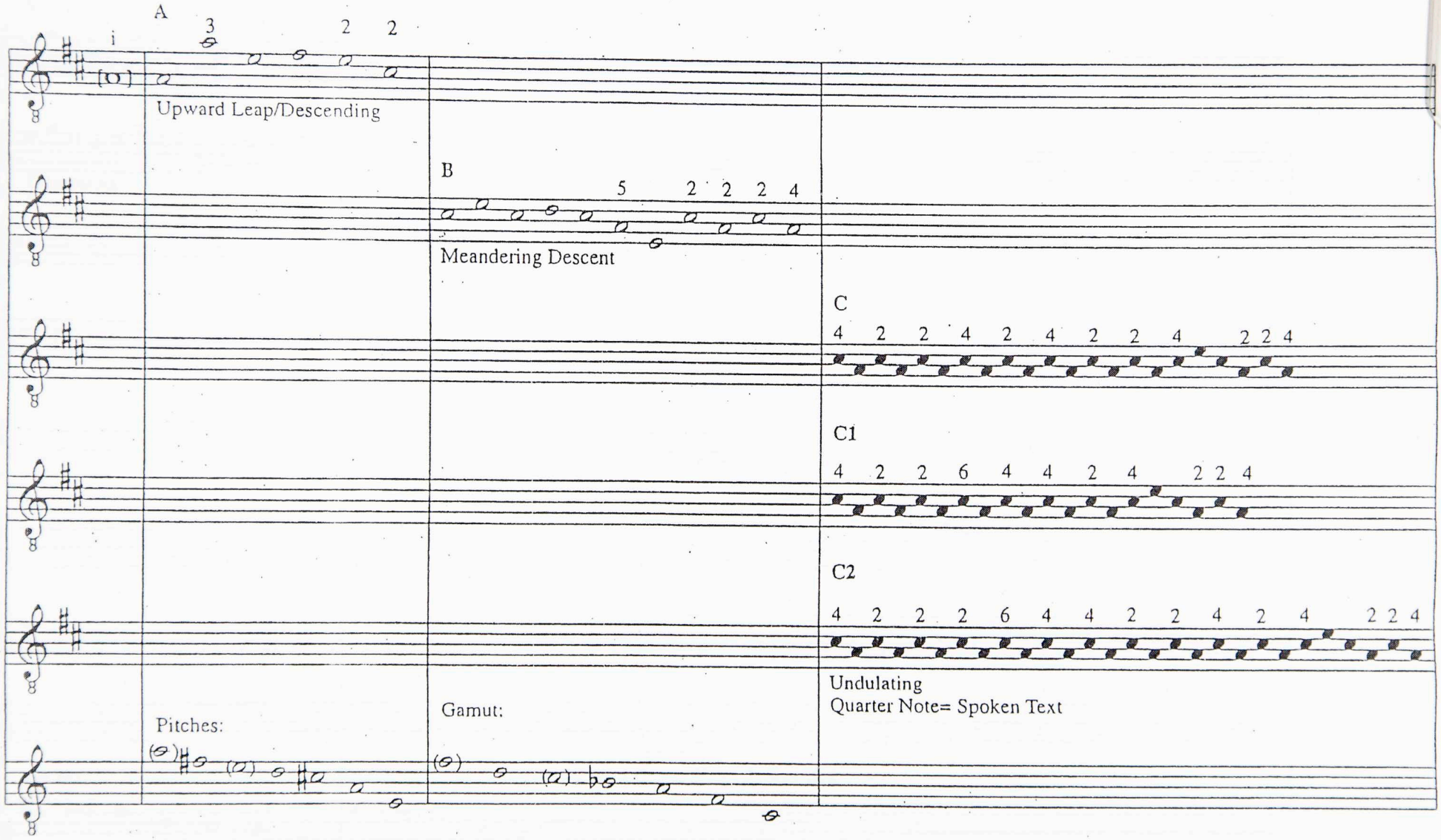
4G-1



Pitch Material: Tetratonic (4 Note) Monomelodic Strophic Form: A A A B i= incipit
A A B1
A A B2
A A B3
A A

APPENDIX II
Gahe Biyine #11

5D-1



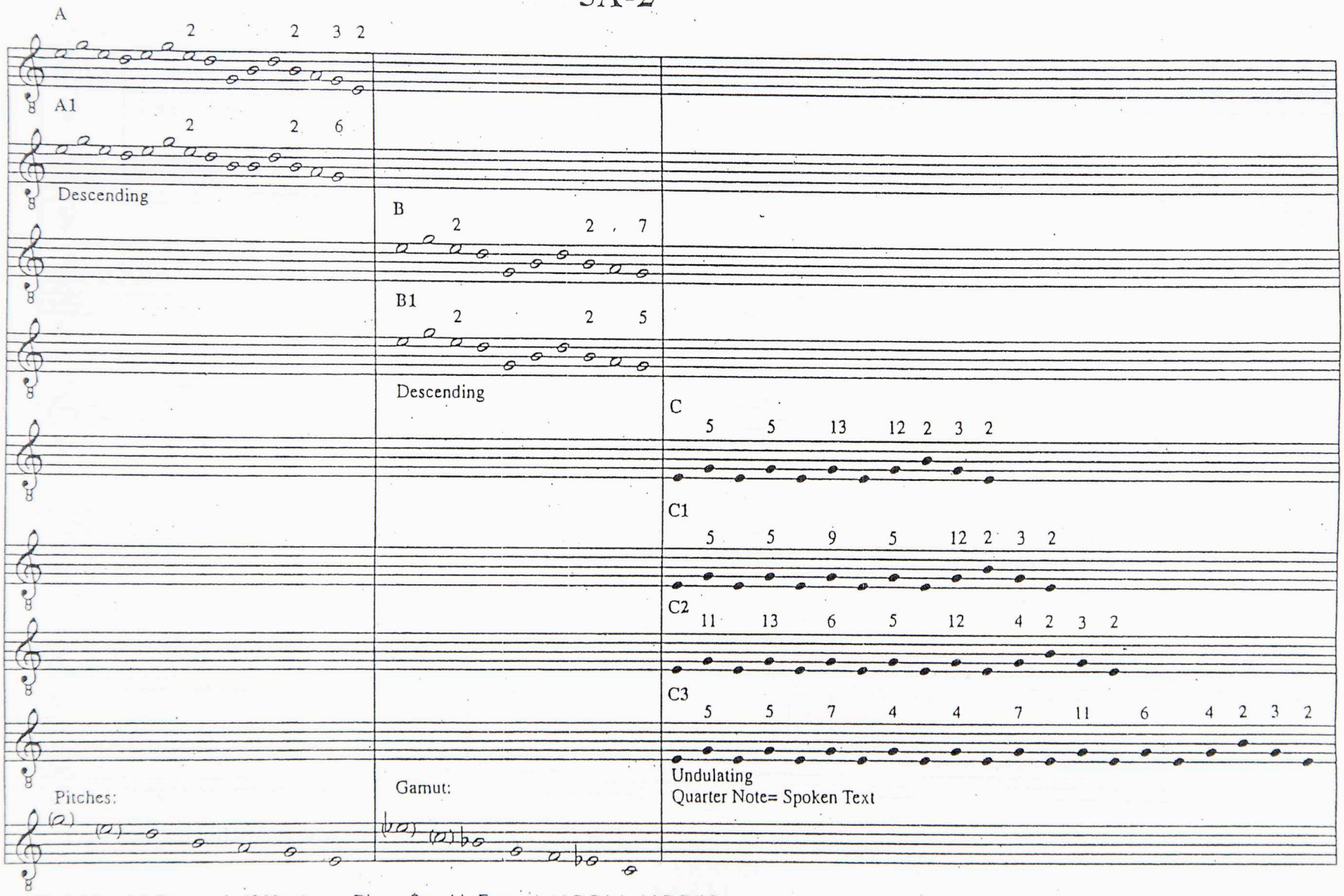
Pitch Material: Pentatonic (5 Note)

Binary Strophic Form: A A B A A B A A B C
A A B A A B C1
A A B A A B C1
A A B A A B C2
A A B A A B

i= incipit

APPENDIX II
Gahe Biyine #12

5A-2

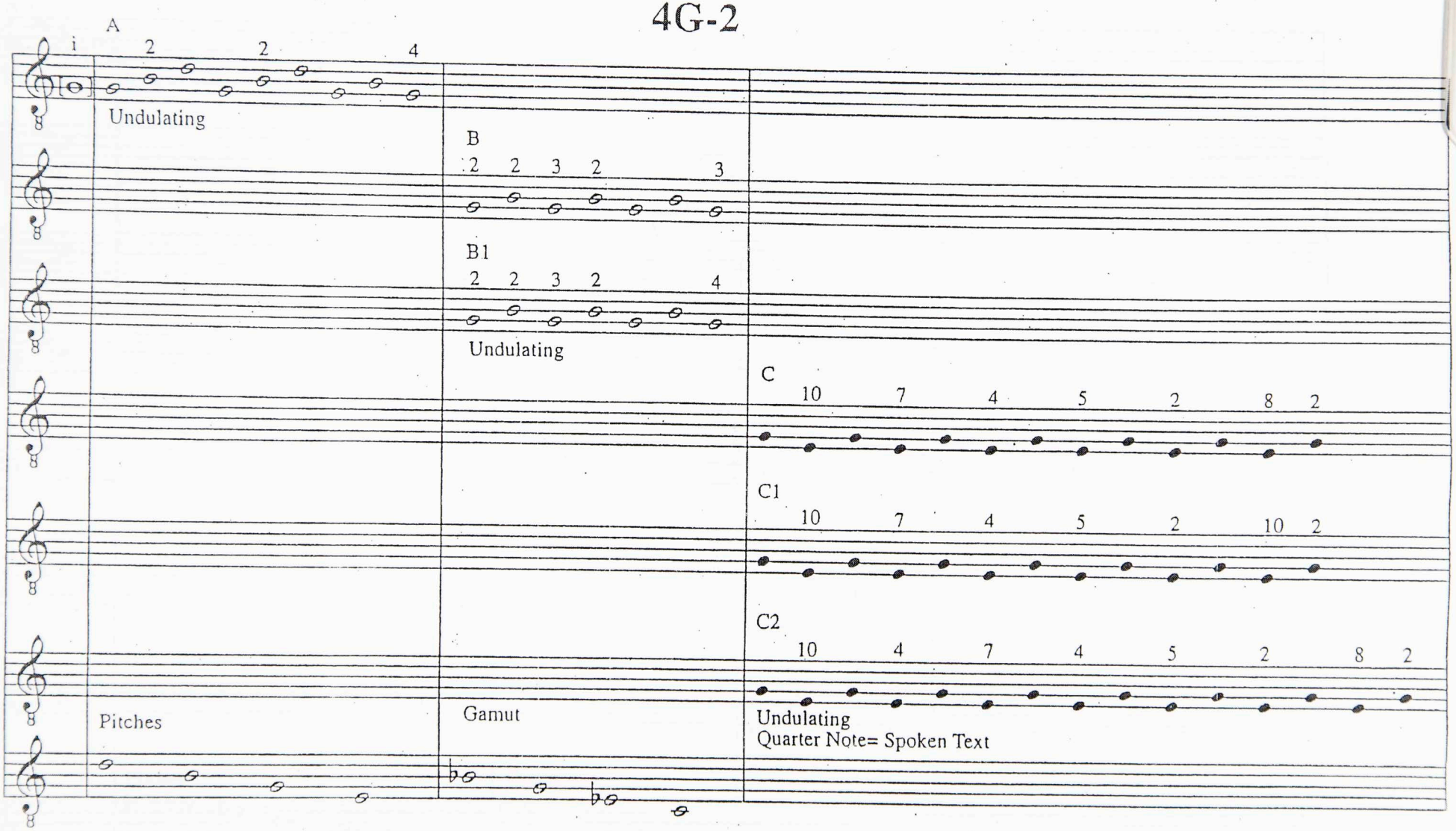


Pitch Material: Pentatonic (5 Note)

Binary Strophic Form: A A1 B B1 A A1 B B1 C
A A1 B B1 C1
A A1 B B1 C2
A A1 B B1 C3
A A1 B B1

APPENDIX II
Gahe Biyine #13

4G-2



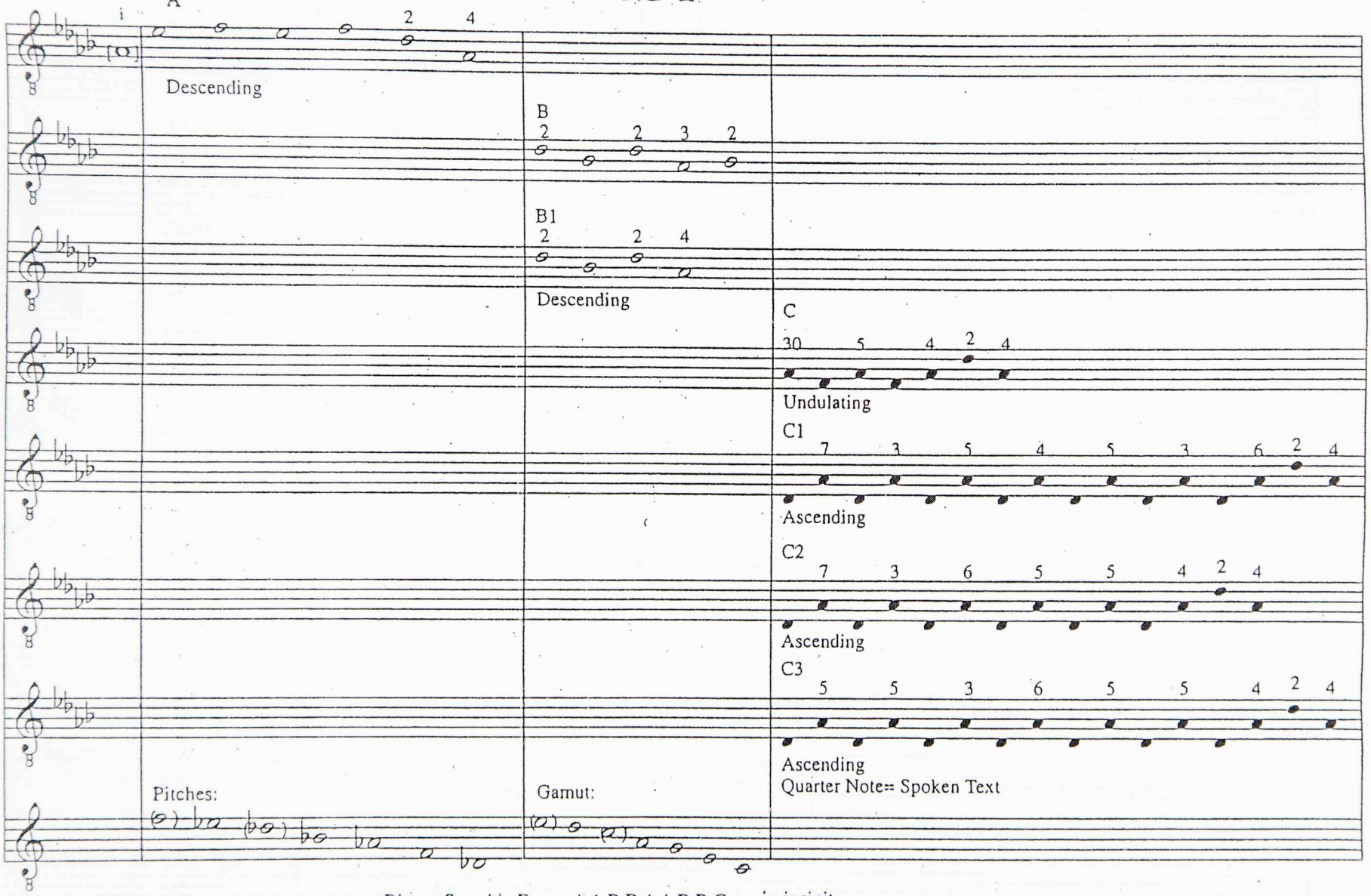
Pitch Material: Tetratonic (4 Note)

Binary Strophic Form: A A B B1 C
A A B B1 C1
A A B B1 C
A A B B1 C2

i= incipit

APPENDIX II
Gahe Biyine #14

5E-1



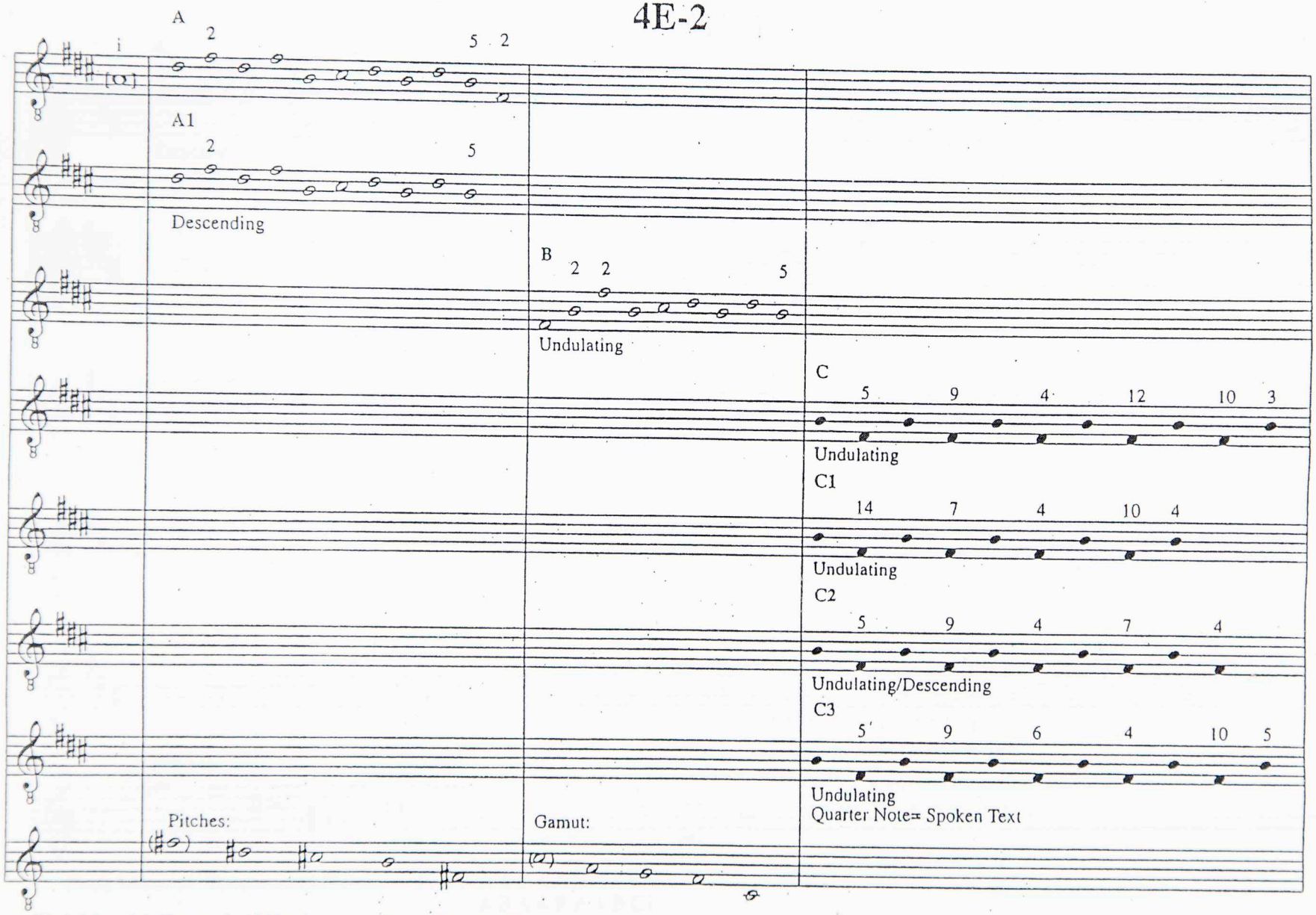
Pitch Material:Pentatonic (5 Note)

Binary Strophic Form: A A B B A A B B C
A A B B C1
A A B B C2
A A B B C3
A A B B

i= incipit

APPENDIX II
Gahe Biyine #15

4E-2



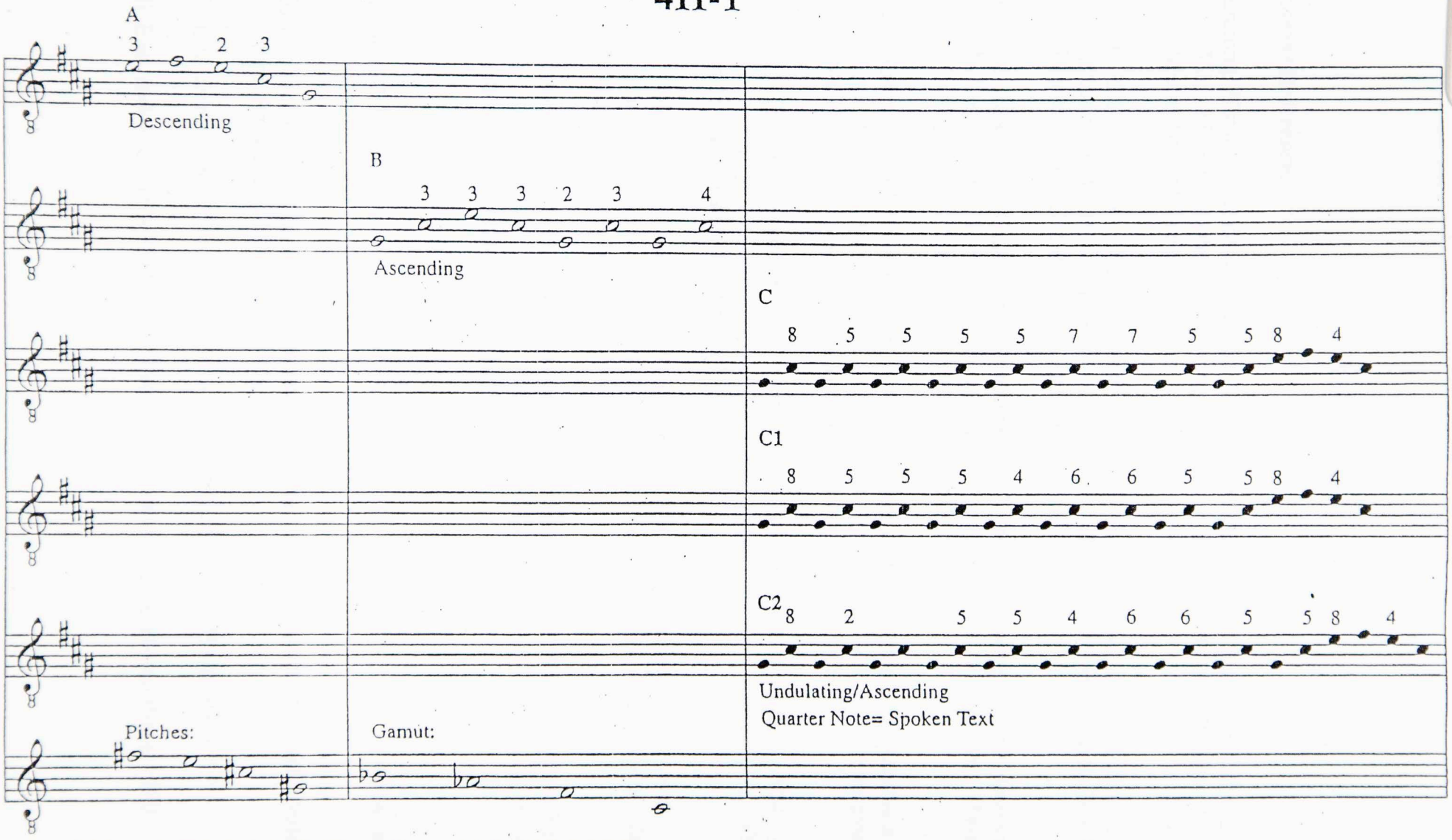
Pitch Material: Tetratonic (4 Note)

Binary Strophic Form: A A1 B C
A A1 B C1
A A1 B C2
A A1 B C3
A A1 B

i= incipit

APPENDIX II
Gahe Biyine #16

4H-1



Pitch Material: Tetratonic (4 Note)

Form: A A B A A B A A B C
A B A A B A A B C1
A B A A B A A B C2
A B A A B A A B C
A B A A B A A B A A B

APPENDIX II
Gahe Biyine #17

Bibliography

General Reference:

Cumming, Naomi. "Semiotics." In *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. 23, ed. Stanley Sadie, executive editor John Tyrell, 66-69. New York: Macmillan Publishers, 2001.

Griffith, James Seavey. "Kachinas and Masking." In *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 10, *Southwest*, general ed. William C. Sturtevant, 764-77. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983.

Lamphere, Louise. "Southwestern Ceremonialism." In *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 10, *Southwest*, general ed. William C. Sturtevant, 734-63. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983.

Opler, Morris Edward. "The Apachean Culture Pattern and its Origins." In *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 10, *Southwest*, general ed. William C. Sturtevant, 368-392. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983a.

----------. "Chiricahua Apache." In *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 10, *Southwest*, general ed. William C. Sturtevant, 401-18. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983b.

----------. "Mescalero Apache." In *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 10, *Southwest*, general ed. William C. Sturtevant, 419-39. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983c.

Young, Robert W. "Apachean Languages." In *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 10, *Southwest*, general ed. William C. Sturtevant, 393-400. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983.

Books:

Annerino, John. *Apache: the Sacred Path to Womanhood*. New York: Marlow and Company, 1998.

Baldwin, Gordon C. *The Warrior Apaches: a Story of the Chiricahua and Western Apache*. Tuscon: D.S. King, 1965.

Ball, Eve. *In the Days of Victorio*. Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1970.

Ball, Eve. *Indeh: an Apache Odyssey*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980.

Basso, Keith. "To Give Up on Words: Silence in Western Apache Culture." In *Western Apache Language and Culture: Essays in Linguistic Anthropology*. Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1990.

----------. *Western Apache Witchcraft*. Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1969.

----------. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.

Betzinez, Jason and Wilbur Sturtevant Nye. *I Fought with Geronimo*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987.

Bourke, John G. *Apache Medicine Men*. Ninth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1887-88, 1892. Reprint New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1993.

----------. *An Apache Campaign in the Sierra Madre*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987.

Boyer, Ruth McDonald and Narcissus Duffy Gayton. *Apache Mothers and Daughters*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

Cole, D.C. *The Chiricahua Apache, 1846-1876: from War to Reservation*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988.

Collier, John and Ira Moskowitz. *American Indian Ceremonial Dances*. New York: Bounty Books, 1949.

Debo, Angie. *Geronimo*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976.

Denman, William. *Fire Dance of the Apache Indians*. San Francisco: Grabhorn Press, 1954.

Dutton, Bertha. *American Indians of the Southwest.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983.

Eskind, Andrew II, ed. *Index to American Photographic Collections*, 3rd ed. New York: G.K. Hall and Co., 1995.

Farrer, Claire R. "Singing for Life: the Mescalero Apache Girl's Puberty Ceremony." In *Southwestern Indian Ritual Drama*, ed. Charlotte Frisbee, 129-159. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1980.

Ferg, Alan and William B. Kessel. *Western Apache Material Culture: the Goodwin and Guenther Collections*. Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1987.

Fergusson, Erna. *Dancing Gods: Indian Ceremonials of New Mexico and Arizona*. New York: Alfred A. Kopf, 1931.

Fleming, Paula Richardson and Judith Luskey. *The North American Indians in Early Photographs*. New York: Harper and Row, 1986.

Frazier, Patrick, ed. *Many Nations: a Library of Congress Resource Guide for the Study of Indian and Alaska Native Peoples of the United States*. Washington: Library of Congress, 1996.

Ganteaume, Cecile R. "White Mountain Apache Dance: Expressions of Spirituality." In *Native American Dance: Ceremonies and Social Traditions*, ed. Charlotte Heth, 65-81. Golden: Smithsonian Institution/Fulcrum Publishing, 1992.

Haley, James. *Apaches: a History and Culture Portrait*. New York: Doubleday, 1981.

Haskell, J. Loring. *Southern Athapaskan Migration: A.D. 220-1750*. Tsaile: Navajo Community College Press, 1987.

Hoijer, Harry. *Chiricahua and Mescalero Apache Texts: with Ethnological Notes by Morris Edward Opler*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938.

John, Elizabeth A.H., ed. *Views from the Apache Frontier: Report on the Northern Provinces of New Spain by Jose Cortes, Lieutenant in the Royal Corps of Engineers, 1799*. Translated by John Wheat. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989.

Lieder, Michael and Jake Page. *Wild Justice: the People of Geronimo vs. the United States*. Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1997.

Lockwood, Frank C. *The Apache Indians*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1933.

Mails, Thomas. *The People Called Apache*. Engelwood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1974.

Mihesuah, Devon A. *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.

Nattiez, Jean Jaques. *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Nettl, Bruno. *North American Indian Musical Styles*. Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1954.

Opler, Morris Edward. *An Apache Life-way: the Economic, Social, and Religious Traditions of the Chiricahua Indians*. With introduction by Charles R. Kaut.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941. Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996.

----------. *Myths and Tales of the Chiricahua Apache Indians*. With forward by Scott Rushforth. American Folklore Society, 1942. Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994.

Ove, Rev. Robert S. and H. Henrietta Stockel. *Geronimo's Kids: a Teacher's Lessons on the Apache Reservation*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997.

Perry, Richard J. *Apache Reservation: Indigenous People's and the American State*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.

Roediger, Virginia M. *Ceremonial Costumes of the Pueblo Indians: their Evolution, Fabrication, and Significance in the Prayer Drama*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941.

Rushforth, Scott. "Introduction to the Bison Book Edition." In *Myths and Tales of the Chiricahua Apache Indians*, by Morris Edward Opler, vii-xvii. American Folklore Society: 1942. Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994.

Schaafsma, Polly. "Introduction." In *Kachinas in the Pueblo World*, ed. Polly Schaafsma, 1-6. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994.

Scully, Vincent. *Pueblo: Mountain, Village, Dance*. New York: Viking Press, 1975.

Skinner, Woodward B. *The Apache Rock Crumbles: the Captivity of Geronimo's People*. Pensacola: Skinner Publications, 1987.

Stockel, H. Henrietta. *Chiricahua Apache Women and Children: Safekeepers of the Heritage*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000.

Stockel, H. Henrietta. *Survival of the Spirit: Chiricahua Apaches in Captivity*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1993.

Strickland, Rennard. *Tonto's Revenge: Reflections on American Indian Culture and Policy*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997.

Sweeney, Edwin R. *Making Peace with Cochise: the 1872 Journal of Captain Joseph Alton Sladen*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

Tedlock, Dennis. "Stories of Kachinas and the Dance of Life and Death." In *Kachinas in the Pueblo World*, ed. Polly Schaafsma, 161-74. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994.

Thrapp, Dan L. *The Conquest of Apacheria*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967.

Thrapp, Dan L. *Victorio and the Mimbres Apaches*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974.

Turcheneske Jr., John Anthony. *The Chiricahua Apache Prisoners of War: Fort Sill 1894-1913*. Niwot: University of Colorado Press, 1997.

Utley, Robert M. *A Clash of Cultures: Fort Bowie and the Chiricahua Apaches*. Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1977.

Vanstone, James W. *Athapaskan Adaptations: Hunters and Fishermen of the Subarctic Forests*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1974.

Vogel, Virgil I. *American Indian Medicine*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970.

Waters, Frank. *Masked Gods: Navaho and Pueblo Ceremonialism*. Chicago: The Swallow Press, 1950.

Worchester, Donald E. *The Apaches: Eagles of the Southwest*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979.

Wright, Muriel H. *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986.

Young, M. Jane. "The Interconnection Between Western Puebloan and Mesoamerican Ideology/Cosmology." In *Kachinas in the Pueblo World*, ed. Polly Schaafsma, 107-120. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994.

Congresses, Proceedings, and Festschriften:

McAllester, David P. "The Role of Music in Western Apache Culture." In *Men and Cultures: Select Papers of the 5th International Conference of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, September 1-9, 1956*, ed. Anthony F.C. Wallace, 469-72. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960.

Theses and Dissertations:

Coppersmith, Clifford Patrick. "Cultural Survival and a Native American Community: the Chiricahua and Warm Spring Apaches in Oklahoma, 1913-1996." Ph.D. diss., Oklahoma State University, 1996.

Larson, Thomas LeRoy. "Gaan/Gahe: the Art and Performance of the Apache Mountain Spirit Dancers." Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1996.

Lasko, Steven B. "A Strong and Humble People: an Ethnicity Study of the Apache Tribe of Oklahoma." Masters Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1997.

Nettl, Bruno. "American Indian Music North of Mexico: Its Styles and Areas." Ph.D diss., Indiana University, 1953.

Pollard, William Grosvenor. "Structure and Stress: Social Change Among the Fort Sill Apache and their Ancestors." Masters Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1965.

Samuels, David William. "A Sense of the Past: Music, Place, and History on the San Carlos Apache Reservation." Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1998.

Wood, Jessica Lynn. "Dancing for Life: the Sunrise Dance of the White Mountain Apache." Ph.D. diss., Texas Women's University, 1996.

Manuscripts:

Library of Congress:

Papers of Hugh L. Scott. Manuscript Archives. Indian Affairs: January–December 1912, Box 47.

National Anthropological Archives:

Andrews, E. Manuscript 1093, Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives.

Gatschet, Albert Samuel. Manuscript 1567, Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives.

Gilbert, Carl Grove. Manuscript 3244, Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives.

Harrington, John P. Microfilm 69-530-001, Part 4; Southwest, Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives.

Higgins, N.S. Manuscript 180, Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives.

Mooney, James. Manuscript 1909, Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives.

Mooney, James. Manuscript 3785, Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives.

Scott, Hugh L. Manuscript 4525, box 4, Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives.

White, John B. Manuscript 179 cited by number in R.H. Ogle, Federal Control of the Western Apaches, 1848-1886, Historical Society of New Mexico, Publications in History, Volume IX, 1940, Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives.

National Archives:

Allyn Capron, 2nd Lieutenant, 7th Cavalry, to Adjutant General, Department of the Missouri, December 14, 1896; File 689, microfilm roll 199; National Archives, Washington, DC.

Farrand Sayre, Captain 8th Cavalry in Charge of Apache Prisoners of War, to Adjutant General, Department of the Missouri, June 30, 1902; File M689, microfilm roll 202; National Archives, Washington, DC.

Colonel Hugh L. Scott to Chief of Staff, War Department, Washington, DC, November 3, 1911; File additional BAG 1808991 filed with 445841; AGO Document File, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Record Group 94; National Archives, Washington, DC. {Box 3134}

Proceeding of Conference with the Apache Prisoners of War on the Fort Sill Reservation, Fort Sill Oklahoma, 2 p.m. Fort Sill Oklahoma, September 21, 1911; File AG 1808991; AGO Document File, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Record Group 94; National Archives, Washington, DC.

Fort Sill Museum:

Eve Ball to Gillette Griswold, December 19, 1965; Chihuahua, Eugene—Biography file; Fort Sill Museum, Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Periodicals:

Magazines:

Bartoli, Jane Fortescue. "The Apache Devil Dance." *Musical Courier*, Vol. CLII, No. 8, (December 1995): 8-10.

Densmore, Frances. "Importance of Rhythm in Songs for the Treatment of the Sick by American Indians." *The Scientific Monthly*, Vol. 79, No. 2, (August, 1954): 109-112.

Harrington, M.R. "The Devil Dance of the Apache." *The Museum Journal* (University of Pennsylvania), Vol. III, No. 1, (March 1912): 6-9.

Hooper, Bruce. "Two Forgotten Photographers of Arizona's Gilded Age." *Cochise Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 2, (Summer 1993): 25-34. Cochise County Historical and Archaeological Society: Douglas, Arizona.

Huff, J. Wesley. "The Mountain Spirits Dance at Gallup." *New Mexico Magazine*, Vol. 26, No. 7, (July 1948): 13-15, 41, 43.

Kane, Henry. "The Apache Secret Devil Dance." *El Palacio*, Vol. XLII, Nos. 16-18, (April 1937): 93-94.

Nicholas, Dan. "Mescalero Apache Girl's Puberty Ceremony." *El Palacio,* Vol. XLVI, No. 9, (September 1939): 193-204.

Opler, Morris E. "Mountain Spirits of the Chiricahua Apache." *The Masterkey*, Vol. XX, No. 4, (July 1946): 125-131.

----------. "Remuneration to Supernaturals and Man in Apachean Ceremonialism." *Ethnology*, Vol. VII, No. 4, (October 1968): 356-393.

----------. "The Sacred Clowns of the Chiricahua and Mescalero Indians." *El Palacio*, Vol. XLIV, Nos. 10-12, (March 1938): 75-79.

Russell, Frank. "An Apache Medicine Dance." *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XI, No. 12, (December 1898): 367-372.

Newspapers:

"Apache Ceremonial to Honor ex-POW's." *The Lawton* (Oklahoma) *Constitution*, 26 September 1996.

"Apache Girl Participates in Puberty Ritual." *The Lawton* (Oklahoma) *Constitution*, 31 May 1994.

"Dance, Song Highlight Apache Celebration." *The Lawton* (Oklahoma) *Constitution*, 9 September 1995.

"Gooday Chosen Indian of the Year for Annual Expo." *The Lawton* (Oklahoma) *Constitution*, 8 July 2000.

"I Followed Geronimo." *The Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City), 19 May 1957.

"The Medicine Dance." *The Mobile Register* (Mobile, Alabama), 14 June 1887.

"Puberty Ritual Starts at Sunrise West of Cyril." *The Lawton* (Oklahoma) *Constitution*, 25 May 1994.

Unpublished Interviews:

Darrow, Michael, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Historian. Lecture, 28 February 2001, School of Music, University of Oklahoma. Notes in possession of author. University of Oklahoma, Norman.

Darrow, Michael, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Historian. Lecture, 15 September 2002, Annual Fire Dance, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Complex, Apache, Oklahoma. Notes in possession of author. University of Oklahoma, Norman.

Darrow, Michael, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Historian. Interview by author, 4 April 2002, Apache, Oklahoma. Tape recording. University of Oklahoma, Norman.

Darrow, Michael, Fort Sill Apache Tribal Historian. Interview by author, 24 May 2002, Apache, Oklahoma. Notes in possession of author. University of Oklahoma, Norman.

Darrow, Ruey, Fort Sill Chiricahua/Warm Spring Apache Tribal Chair. Interview by author, 2 May 2002. Tape recording. University of Oklahoma, Norman.

Gooday, Lupe, Director Fort Sill Housing Authority. Interview by author 10 May 2002, Apache, Oklahoma. Tape recording. University of Oklahoma, Norman.

Unpublished Manuscripts:

East, Omega. Apache Prisoners in Fort Marion, 1886-1887. United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, January 1951.

Welsh, Herbert. The Apache Prisoners in Fort Marion, Saint Augustine, Florida. Office of Indian Rights Association, Philadelphia, 1887.

Videorecordings:

Goodwin, Neil. *Geronimo and the Apache Resistance*. Directed by Neil Goodwin. 58 minutes. WBGH Educational Foundation, 1988. Video Cassette.

This volume is the property of the University of Oklahoma, but the literary rights of the author are a separate property and must be respected. Passages must not be copied or closely paraphrased without the previous written consent of the author. If the reader obtains any assistance from this volume, he must give proper credit in his own work.

I grant the University of Oklahoma Libraries permission to make a copy of my thesis upon the request of individuals or libraries. This permission is granted with the understanding that a copy will be provided for research purposes only, and that requestors will be informed of these restrictions.

NAME [redacted]

DATE [redacted]

A library which borrows this thesis for use by its patrons is expected to secure the signature of each user.

This thesis by THOMAS CHRISTOPHER APLIN has been used by the following persons, whose signatures attest their acceptance of the above restrictions.

NAME AND ADDRESS	DATE

OU–138