

# BENIN'S THREE PALACE SOCIETIES AND AFFILIATED GUILDS

## IWEBO

Personal attendants to the oba, including keepers of the royal wardrobes and regalia, as well as craft and performance guilds

1. Ogbelaka: Dancers and drummers
2. Ogbesasa: Royal shield bearers
3. Igun eronmwon: Brass casters
4. Igun ematon: Blacksmiths
5. Igbesanmwan: Ivory and wood carvers
6. Avbiogbe: Town criers or heralds
7. Owina n'ido: Weavers
8. Odionmwan: Ceremonial executioners
9. Ikpemba: Royal drummers
10. Ivbiosa/Ivbiosuan: Priests
11. Emadase: Oro dancers
12. Isekpoki: Leather workers
13. Igbuzebu: Royal dancers
14. Iwifemwen: Archers and manufacturers of arrow poison
15. Iwoki: Astrologists, meteorologists, and cannoneers
16. Iwogun: Keepers of specific shrines
17. Ukhegie: Keepers of specific shrines
18. Iguisi: Secret tasks for the oba
19. Iviekpen: Leopard hunters
20. Ivekpen: Leopard butchers and dividers
21. Various Guilds:
  - Enisen: Bead makers and royal storekeepers
  - Igbemaba: Drummers
  - Izpeziken: Royal flute players
  - Ikpakoen: Ivory horn blowers
  - Ifieto: Ritual path-clearers

## IWEGUAE

Personal attendants to the oba, including keepers of the royal household

1. Isienmweno: Bodyguards of the oba
2. Eben: Embalmers of deceased obas
3. Ebo/Ewaise: Royal physicians and diviners
4. Ihogbe: Priests and keepers of the shrines of the royal ancestors, court chroniclers
5. Efa: Priests and diviners
6. Emehe: Performers of tranquility- and peace-forging rituals for the royal wives
7. Ahorhan: Ritual land purifiers
8. Evbiemwen: Caretakers of the princes
9. Ikpokpan: Guardians of specific shrines and dancers
10. Oguanogbe: Witch diviners
11. Iwowa: Collectors of river taxes
12. Amufi: Acrobats and eagle hunters
13. Uhunmwidumwun: Guardians of the original site of Benin City
14. Unueru: Keepers of a medicine shrine
15. Idumwun Ivbioto: Keepers of medicines for ritual purification

## IBIWE

Personal attendants to the oba's wives and children

1. Ivbiemezi: Responsible for health and fertility of the oba's wives
2. Ogunimwenfo: Ogun priests
3. Ibieriye: Servants of the oba's wives
4. Iwehiaz: Responsible for specific prayers
5. Iriemila: Custodians of the oba's cattle
6. Iwenoga: Priests