# International African Library 7 General editors: J. D. Y. Peel and David Parkin

## I COULD SPEAK UNTIL TOMORROW

In affectionate memory of Elvania and Pio Zirimu

### International African Library

#### General Editors

J. D. Y. Peel and David Parkin

The International African Library is a major monograph series from the International African Institute and complements its quarterly periodical Africa, the premier journal in the field of African studies. Theoretically informed ethnographies, studies of social relations 'on the ground' which are sensitive to local cultural forms, have long been central to the Institute's publications programme. The IAL maintains this strength but extends it into new areas of contemporary concern, both practical and intellectual. It includes works focused on problems of development, especially on the linkages between the local and national levels of society; studies along the interface between the social and environmental sciences; and historical studies, especially those of a social, cultural or interdisciplinary character.

#### Titles in series:

- 1 Sandra T. Barnes Patrons and power: creating a political community in metropolitan Lagos<sup>†</sup>
- 2 Jane I. Guyer (ed.) Feeding African cities: essays in social history<sup>†</sup>
- 3 Paul Spencer The Maasai of Matapato: a study of rituals of rebellion<sup>†</sup>
- 4 Johan Pottier Migrants no more: settlement and survival in Mambwe villages, Zambia<sup>†</sup>
- 5 Günther Schlee Identities on the move: clanship and pastoralism in northern Kenva
- 6 Suzette Heald Controlling anger: the sociology of Gisu violence
- 7 Karin Barber I could speak until tomorrow: oriki, women and the past in a Yoruba town\*
- 8 Richard Fardon Between God, the Dead and the Wild: Chamba interpretations of religion and ritual\*
- \* Published in the USA by the Smithsonian Institution Press

**Editorial Consultants** 

Kofi Agawu Pierre Bonte John Comaroff Johannes Fabian Paulin Hountondji Ivan Karp Sally Falk Moore

<sup>†</sup> Published in the USA by Indiana University Press

## I COULD SPEAK UNTIL TOMORROW

Oriki, Women, and the Past in a Yoruba Town

Karin Barber

# EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY PRESS for the INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN INSTITUTE, London

#### © Karin Barber 1991

Edinburgh University Press 22 George Square, Edinburgh

Set in Linotron Plantin by Koinonia, Bury, and Printed and bound in Great Britain by CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham and Eastbourne

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data Barber, Karin

I could speak until tomorrow: Oriki, women and the past in a Yoruba town. –(International African Library. 7)

1. Nigeria. Yoruba. Cultural processes

I. Title II. Series 305.89633

ISBN 07486 0210 0