

Feature Articles

Architecture and the Myth of Authenticity During the German Colonial Period

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It has been argued that at the beginning of the twentieth century German colonial officials and travelers created a myth about the Bamum Kingdom of Cameroon. Fed by innumerable invocations of the grandeur of Bamum architecture, this myth celebrated the kingdom as the long-sought paradisiacal “Africa” of the Western imagination. In this article I argue that the Bamum narrative did not exist in opposition to any identifiable reality or essential truth. Instead, I suggest that the Bamum narrative, like the similarly mythologized narrative of Mousgoum architecture, should be understood in relation to the ideological conditions of its production, including emerging tropes, theories, and methods of argumentation in German ethnology that were themselves complicit in colonialism.

One of the most frequently mentioned indigenous polities in the German colonial archive is the Bamum Kingdom of the Grasslands region of western Cameroon. The kingdom took its place in colonial discourse as a result of a widely narrated first encounter between colonial officials and the Bamum people in 1902, and because the Swiss-German Basel Mission Society established and maintained a station there from 1906 to 1916.¹ Knowledge about Bamum culture was disseminated through photographs and paintings created by German visitors, through their written descriptions, and through artifacts acquired from the Bamum people. Architecture featured prominently in all of these depictions, and thus contributed to the unique way in which the kingdom was portrayed. This article considers the significance of this focus on architecture in German knowledge of traditional West African cultures.

BAMUM IN CAMEROONIAN-GERMAN COLONIAL HISTORY

After a slow start, the German colonial empire expanded to include Cameroon in August 1884. Representatives of German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck signed treaties with

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the leaders of African states along an area of coast as yet unclaimed by Britain and France.² Since the predominant aim was economic exploitation with minimal metropolitan investment, German influence spread inland only haltingly, requiring numerous small-scale military campaigns to subjugate African states that stood in the way of German interests. Consequently, the German administration did not reach Bamum territory until 1902.

Like a truly savvy political leader, the young ruler of the Bamum, Sultan Njoya, responded strategically to diplomatic intelligence by choosing to cooperate with rather than oppose what was clearly a stronger military power. Njoya may have also perceived that building an alliance with the Germans would further strengthen his own position and Bamum's dominance of the Grasslands.³ In response, the German expedition and subsequent visitors accorded Njoya and his court a high degree of respect. German reports described Njoya's manner as elegant, educated, and proud yet humble.⁴ This was in contradistinction to other regional leaders and to Africans in general. In the words of one visitor, "He is definitively one of the rare negroes who has a pronounced intellectual independence."⁵

Not only did Njoya present himself as befitted a king, but his realm was well organized and showed evidence of high levels of cultural achievement. Together, these impressions contributed to the development of what the art historian Christraud Geary has described as a German myth that celebrated Bamum as one of the lost "paradisical and wealthy kingdoms in the interior of Africa."⁶ The most important ingredients of this myth were "historicity, wealth, Bamum superiority, and an emphasis on the exotic."⁷

MYTH, MYTHOLOGY, HYBRIDITY AND AUTHENTICITY IN ARCHITECTURE

The concept of "myth" certainly captures the constructed nature of Bamum culture and its portrayals. If the portrayal of Bamum was a myth, however, it did not operate in any simple sense of the term. There was no identifiable reality or essential truth against which the Bamum myth could be read. I propose that the Bamum narrative is more readily understood using Roland Barthes's concept of "mythology."⁸ Barthes defined a mythology as a system of signs whose goal is to transform the historical intention behind its existence into a natural justification and thus a fact.⁹ Rather than concealing, mythology distorts and impoverishes meaning. Unlike conventional myth, mythology is not fixed in any one object and is not "defined by the object of its message." Mythology does not, in fact, mark fixed cultural or ethnic meaning. According to Barthes, familiar definitions restrict myth to a primary level of signification, whereas mythology involves two levels. Thus, the usual arbitrariness of language (first-level signification) is channeled into a "semiological chain which preexisted it" (second-level signification), thus constraining meaning.¹⁰

A particularly apt example is Barthes's analysis of the cover of a French newsweekly showing a young black man in a French uniform saluting with eyes uplifted (possibly toward the French flag). The image can be read in at least two ways. First, it can be seen to generate complete meaning through first-level signification only — i.e., "the negro is giving the French salute."¹¹ Second, it can be read as part of a larger semiological system that combines a signifier (or several) already formed in the previous semiological chain ("the negro is giving the French salute") with the signified ("a purposeful mixture of Frenchness and militariness"¹²) and a third term ("the presence of the signifier through the signified"¹³). This leads to a distorted reading that must be deciphered by the mythologist. Is the image of the saluting negro a symbol of French imperialism? An alibi of French imperialism? Or "the very presence of French imperality"?¹⁴

As "depoliticized speech" with a specific motivation, Barthes argued that mythology is fundamentally allied with the ideology of the bourgeoisie, who have refused to be named as a political and ideological fact, yet have universalized their ideology and representations.¹⁵ Mythology specifically "transforms petit-bourgeois culture into universal nature"; and thus we come full circle to colonialism as an expression of European bourgeois culture and to Bamum-German relations in colonial Cameroon.¹⁶ Colonialism, as Roland Barthes has shown, was a well-established subject of mythology.¹⁷

As I have argued elsewhere, German colonial administrators, missionaries, travelers and anthropologists actually co-produced the mythology of a great Bamum civilization together with the Bamum leadership and the artists and architects who worked for it.¹⁸ Following a regional tradition of ethnic and cultural appropriation and integration, Njoya developed and applied an approach to visual and material culture that enabled the kingdom to enter into dialogue with multiple codes of representation, including European modes of representing the Other.¹⁹ One notable example was Njoya's patronage of several unusual new buildings for royal use (FIG. 1).²⁰ These structures were built from mud brick, stone, wood, thatch, and corrugated iron instead of the raffia palm ribs of previous palace buildings (FIG. 2). Such new materials required new methods of construction, including arches and vaults, and a new, more subtractive approach to creating space. As Figure 1 suggests, however, the character of previous royal architecture was retained in some of these new buildings through a linear organization of space and the use of additive roof forms. These new multistory buildings challenged German expectations about African buildings, as captured in the anthropologist Georg Thilenius's description of African house-building: "If one does not consider the shelves, platforms, etc. mounted on interiors in the space between roof and wall as a foreshadowing of a second story, then, as the majority of cases show, all [African] houses are built with one story."²¹ Thilenius noted exceptions to this rule in western Cameroon and Togo, where "two or more story buildings ap-

FIGURE 1. “Foumban: the King’s new palace, seen from the rear.” This was one of the new structures created under Sultan Njoya, ca. 1908/1909. Source: Basel Mission Archives / Basel Mission Holdings, E-30.32.018.

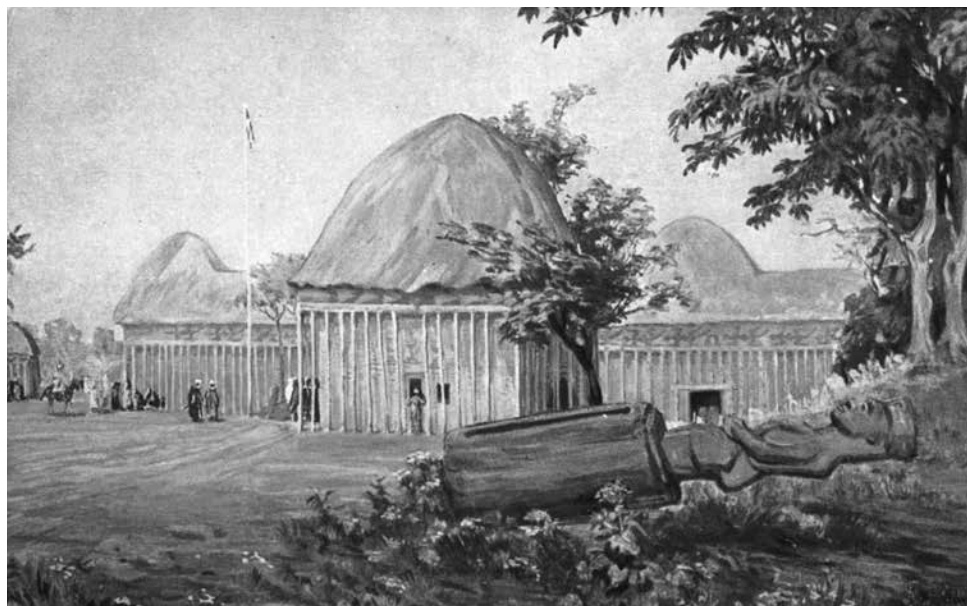


pear where material allows and a need exists.” Indeed, ethnic groups to the north and west of the Grasslands, including the Batammaliba (Tamberma), the “Ssola” in northern Togo, the Somolo in the “Black Volta,” and the Hausa in northern Nigeria, used mud-brick construction to build arched openings and multistory structures.²² Njoya had certainly been exposed to some of these practices through travel, encounters with travelers, and Arabic texts, and he and his builders may have drawn on them in their designs for new royal structures.

Apart from these neologisms, encircling verandahs, deep eaves, and carved wood posts were among several elements present in the new structures as well as in previous

royal Bamum architecture. Yet German commentators insisted on interpreting Njoya’s new buildings as products of European influence. Marie Pauline Thorbecke, an artist who accompanied her geographer husband on an expedition to Cameroon in 1911–1912, compared these houses favorably to others she had seen in the colony. At the same time, she saw them as symptoms of a larger problem — the abandonment of old cultural forms, customs, and morals and the transformation of Bamum into a European “mimic state.”²³ Thorbecke’s ambivalence suggests that Njoya was trapped in a web of disingenuous colonial discourse that simultaneously promoted the assimilation of the colonized and argued that

FIGURE 2. “4. The palace of Njoya and the Basel Mission Church.” From a watercolor by Ernst Vollbehrr, ca. 1912. Source: Basel Mission Archives / Basel Mission Holdings, QE-30.017.0008.



by their very nature, the colonized were incapable of fully absorbing European modes of thinking and being.

Homi Bhabha has famously analyzed this discourse on mimicry.²⁴ As he has pointed out, it opened up cracks in the authority of colonial power because of its proximity to mockery, and because it revealed the instability of cultural difference. As a process that produced identity, mimicry could also lead to the creation of entirely new transcultural forms and subjectivities in the colonial contact zone. These hybrids captured the symbiosis of the colonial experience even under conditions of unequal power. Like mimicry, hybridity could be advantageous or problematic depending on the subject's position within the colonial order. Hybrid forms could deprive colonial discourse of authority by undermining its claim to its own authentic (and superior) forms and eroding its attempt to fix certain cultural practices and forms as authentically indigenous. It was necessary to have this power to fix the authentic because a certain definition of the indigenous as static was imperative for the initial and continued justification of colonization.

Were the hybrid forms of Njoya's new buildings produced as a result of the colonial encounter? Or were they simply expressions of an ever-evolving "authentic" culture? In order to explain the success of Njoya's unusual buildings while maintaining a critical attitude toward mimicry, Thorbecke conjured up the argument that despite their seemingly hybrid exterior form, essential elements of Bamum culture had been distilled into these buildings. Indeed, there was, according to Thorbecke, something fundamentally African (in a racial sense) about them:

*The way in which the brown wood walls of the upper floor rise out of the white plaster of the stone wall below . . . attests to a natural artistic instinct that the negro could never ever learn from whites, an instinct that lies in his blood through the inheritance of generations.*²⁵

This contradiction epitomizes architecture's role in colonial-era ethnographic discourse: though it had the potential to liberate observers from overdetermined frameworks, it often bolstered these selfsame positions.

Aware of the interpretive difficulties caused by his actions, Njoya claimed intellectual ownership of these buildings on multiple occasions.²⁶ And he appropriated and extended this colonial logic to a crisis point by arguing that these buildings were solely a product of his own intellect:

*The house was more beautiful than any other, and resembled a house of a 'White'. Yet, the king had never seen any of their houses at the time he built this one. The entire design was a product of his own imagination.*²⁷

Thus, Njoya was able to generate and maintain a reputation as an indigenous innovator and progressive African

leader even as he sidestepped some of the limits imposed by colonial discourse. Ultimately, the king and his court developed an array of innovative cultural forms, from new approaches to architecture to experiments in cartography, scription, and clothing design, that belie any claims to a fixed "authentic" Bamum culture.²⁸ By so doing, they actively inserted themselves into colonial discourses about mimicry and hybridity and selectively challenged or embraced their premises and implications. And, together with colonial admirers of Bamum culture, they transformed Bamum's rise to prominence and Germany's suzerainty into a mutually agreeable mythology.²⁹ As understood by German colonial observers, both mimicry and hybridity implied authenticity — in the form of a single, fixed, indigenous subjectivity expressed in pure, unhybridized cultural forms. In the remainder of this article, I illustrate the entrenchment of these ideas in German approaches to African architecture during the colonial period.

LEO FROBENIUS AND AFRICAN ARCHITECTURE

At the beginning of the twentieth century the German ethnologist Leo Frobenius was arguably the consummate maker of mythologies about Africa. Frobenius was a maverick who started his career when German anthropology had abandoned its liberal humanist roots to embrace racial and nationalist imperatives.³⁰ Going against the grain of then-current evolutionary thinking, Frobenius argued that culture originated in one region, from which it was disseminated through "exchange, imitation, or conquest."³¹ Once customs, myths and artifacts had arrived in a region, they cohered into autonomous cultural units. Careful decoding could help ethnologists identify *Kulturkreisen* (cultural complexes), or geographic areas with shared "stylistically-defined and historically-related" cultural features, and trace their transmission and transformation.³²

Thus, Frobenius pioneered the integration of ethnology with material-cultural analysis. He argued that material culture was inextricably linked to materials available in any particular region, and could therefore offer the ethnologist important clues about cultural diffusion. Implicit in this approach was the idea of single (or multiple) ur-culture(s). Frobenius devoted significant intellectual and material resources to identifying these ur-, primordial or authentic cultures.³³

Africa as a whole, and West Africa in particular, played this role for Frobenius. The area seemed less tainted by external influences and had been excluded from the purview of Western historiography. Using what contemporary scholars characterize as a combination of sound ethnological analysis and rabid speculation, Frobenius formulated theories about African ur-culture even before his first trip to the continent in 1904. One of the more outlandish examples was his declaration in January 1911 that he had found the lost continent of Atlantis in the hinterland of German Togo.³⁴ Through a merger of Greek myth and West African material-cultural

evidence, he formulated a global history that linked an ur-West African Atlantis to the Mediterranean.³⁵ What emerged was a wildly conjectural history that, like much of Frobenius's other work, bore the trappings of mythology.

Frobenius realized a life-long dream when he visited the Belgian Congo from 1904 to 1906. In 1907 he visited Gambia, French West Africa, and German Togo. During his expeditions, Frobenius visited numerous ethnic groups, observed their cultures, and collected myths, songs, photographs, drawings, artifacts, and other evidence. He saw all of these cultural forms as repositories to be mined in a quest for "true" human history.³⁶ Furthermore, he had been commissioned to collect artifacts by the museums in Berlin and Hamburg that funded his journeys. Indeed, Frobenius's finds form the cores of several important collections in Germany today.³⁷

Architecture was of critical importance to Frobenius's *Kulturkreisen* theory, since, by its very nature, architecture was less mobile and less susceptible to change than other material-cultural forms.³⁸ Frobenius identified two ur-African cultures: the "telluric," "sedentary-agrarian culture south of the Sahara" ("Ethiopian" culture); and the "chthonic," "nomadic-hunting culture north of the Sahara" ("Hamitic" culture). He then associated each culture with distinct building types. Buildings on pilings were typical of the "Ethiopian" type, while "silo buildings" were found in the "Hamitic" culture.³⁹ The two building types embodied different relationships between ethnic groups (and racial types) and their environments, and thus they expressed different worldviews: buildings on pilings emphasized a vertical link between heaven and earth, while silos were connected to the growth of roots within the earth and to earth-bound animal forms.³⁹ Frobenius devoted considerable resources to pinpointing the origins and diffusion of these building types and correlating them with specific ethnic groups and geographic locations (FIG. 3).

It is clear that Frobenius's proclivity for Africa had multiple origins. On the practical side, he saw in the continent his own professional salvation. Intellectually, the ethnologist was convinced that Africans were "living documents of an otherwise unrecoverable universal human past" — though only traces of this past remained in contemporary African societies as a result of foreign contamination.⁴⁰ Although Frobenius's emphasis on preserving authentic cultural forms contained anti-imperialist elements, he never explicitly condemned the colonial system. He may have acquired a passion for past African cultures, but he nevertheless subscribed to one of colonialism's most pernicious tenets — the contemporary superiority of Europeans.⁴¹ Frobenius thus formulated a new Barthesian-type mythology — one that valorized the victims of colonialism and their cultural artifacts even as it continued, in the words of Denis Dutton, to "perpetuate acts of imperialism, appropriation, and ethnocentric insensitivity . . . in the name of enlightened, magnanimous liberalism."⁴² This new mythology was positioned (on the surface) in opposition to an older mythology that directly and unapologetically justified co-



22. The post bed.



23. The post granary.



24. The post dwelling house.

FIGURE 3. (a,b,c). Telluric-Ethiopian Cultural Traits in Architecture. Source: Leo Frobenius, "Early African Culture as an Indication of Present Negro Potentialities," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol.140 (November 1928), pp.153-65.

lonialism through “racism, contempt for ‘childish’ artifacts,” and evolutionist thinking.⁴³ Both mythologies, however, distorted precolonial developments as well as the historical facts and intentions behind European colonization of Africa.

It seems likely that Leo Frobenius developed his ideas about architecture through collaboration with his father, Hermann Frobenius.⁴⁴ After retiring from the army as a lieutenant colonel and “fortress-builder,” Hermann Frobenius launched a new career writing about the architecture of Africa and Oceania.⁴⁵ His military engineering background enabled him to combine detailed technical analyses of buildings with an ethnographic theory influenced by his son. This method was captured in the title of his earliest known publication on the subject, *Afrikanischen Bautypen: eine ethnographisch-architektonische Studie* [*African Building Types: An Ethnographic-Architectural Study*], (1894). Hermann clearly shared with his son a diffusionist theory of culture and a conviction that buildings were highly reliable sources of ethnographic data:

*The functional building practices of the domicile and its comfortable arrangement characterize the way of life of the tribe. A certain form and certain fittings are typical of it; the tribe migrates with these when forced to leave its home, and where it gains a foothold again, where it finds a favorable grazing ground for its flocks, or where the ground promises to yield a rich harvest, there the tribe builds its huts in the accustomed form and manner. The tribe does not always find the same materials that were at hand in its previous homeland and differences in material may force it to make small alterations, but it will never invent an entirely new form.*⁴⁶

Synthesizing existing ethnographic studies and travel narratives, Hermann Frobenius mapped the geographic distribution of building types in Africa through a detailed analysis of formal, structural and aesthetic elements, which he then correlated with ethnic and linguistic categories. In summary, he identified three basic types: 1) a “Bantu type” consisting of a tectonic frame with infill and cladding; 2) a “saddle roof” type in which space-enclosing components were built separately, connected to the ground, and then attached to each other and clad with clay; and 3) a “Sudan style” that combined both the frame-infill system and the “saddle roof” system. Likewise, he categorized floor plans as circular (generally Bantu and Sudan types) or rectilinear (generally saddle roof type).⁴⁷ Using these categories, Frobenius culled away elements created under foreign influence to reveal the formal, structural and material essences of the built structures of each group.⁴⁸ The dominant motifs of this approach were biological and cultural authenticity, hybridity, and displacement. These motifs appeared repeatedly in discussions about indigenous architecture in the German colonies.⁴⁹

I want to suggest that the Bamum narrative emerged in this intellectual climate and was shaped by it both in form

and content.⁵⁰ Following the methods of the Frobeniuses, Bamum was interpreted by correlating material culture (including architecture) with geography and ethnicity in a search for authentic African forms and ur-African cultures. By most European accounts, visiting the capital of the Bamum Kingdom, Fouban, was like entering a fairyland. The basic elements of the tale were repeated frequently in military reports, ethnographic analyses, travel narratives, missionary field reports, fiction, etc. Those elements included a description of Fouban, which emphasized its scale, the fact that it was fortified, the legible (to European eyes) organization of its buildings and spaces according to function, and the grandeur of its buildings.⁵¹ All of these qualities were presented in contradistinction to other African towns and villages. Anna Gehler achieved this contrast by describing the wild, untamed landscape before Fouban: “You must climb many mountains and drag yourself through many hot valleys. You must wade through rivers swarming with crocodiles and hippopotamuses, and in this manner you must continue onward.”⁵² Thus the journey to Fouban was figured using the trope of discovery had long been used in travel writing.

Marie Pauline Thorbecke explained that, in actuality, all the great nineteenth-century expeditions had bypassed Bamum.⁵³ Its discovery was therefore understood as a consequence of the German colonial project. After describing the wondrous sights encountered on her arrival, Thorbecke launched quickly into a discussion of ethnic origins and dissemination: “The Bamum people are without a doubt on the highest cultural level of all the tribes of the Grasslands. . . .”⁵⁴ Ethnic and cultural commingling were her next topics: “Bamum culture is without question a mixture of elements of the West and East Mbam lands. . . . Culturally, the best and most important have been maintained from each of the two elements.” Material culture provided the necessary evidence: “Settlements and house-building display the same type seen in the other Grassland territories in the Dschang and Bameda district, except that they [Bamum] are consistently more beautiful and resplendent.”⁵⁵ Close observation of building construction revealed its sophistication in comparison to other “negro huts.” As the accompanying photograph illustrates, the walls of the Bamum house were first built on the ground out of raffia palm ribs (FIG. 4). Once completed, these were then raised and tied together, and a ceiling was constructed to support the heavy domed grass roof (cf. Frobenius’s “saddle roof” category). Lastly, walls were daubed with red laterite. In the house of the patriarch of a compound, a long gallery with a saddle-shaped roof typically connected two such domed structures. This method produced buildings whose immense width and height amazed Thorbecke and other observers.⁵⁶

These qualities were understandably pronounced in King Njoya’s traditional palace complex. Like the houses of other Bamum dignitaries, carved wood posts supported the eaves of the roof. Between the eaves and the post was a polychromatic frieze whose patterning was created by in-

FIGURE 4. *Building a house in Bamum. Source: Basel Mission Archives / Basel Mission Holdings, E-30.33.019.*



laying burned grass into a dried-grass background (REFER TO FIG. 2). According to Thorbecke, these friezes were patterned with stylized animal figures, which in the case of Njoya's palace included an "age old but now recurring lizard motif."⁵⁷ Thus Njoya's palace was authentic because of the presumed antiquity of elements like the lizard motif. Here was the ethnological argument that cultural motifs recur and can thus be used to trace cultural mobility and origins. It was in part the fact that German visitors like Thorbecke placed so much value on recurrent cultural elements that made their absence in hybrid buildings like the two at the back of Njoya's palace so difficult to bear. This sense of loss merged easily into an accusation of mimicry.

ANOTHER PARADISE? MOUSGOMU ARCHITECTURE IN NORTHERN CAMEROON

Myth and authenticity featured in discourses about the architecture of several other ethnic groups under German colonial rule. The Mousgoum, who reside on the border between northern Cameroon and Chad, were one of these groups. As in the case of Bamum, Mousgoum architecture

was regularly invoked in German colonial writing to produce effects that were at once similar but different. In his book *From Cameroon to Paris: Mousgoum Architecture in and out of Africa*, Steven Nelson has masterfully analyzed the quintessential Mousgoum house, the *teleuk* (plural, *teleukakay*), as a bearer of Mousgoum culture, from its representation in mid-nineteenth-century explorer's reports to its appearance in a twentieth-century film set and in travel guides and other ephemera from the colonial to the postindependence periods. The *teleuk* is a large parabolic clay dome structure that was first noticed by Europeans in the nineteenth century, fell out of favor from the 1930s until the mid-1990s, but has experienced a revival in recent years (FIG. 5).⁵⁸ Nelson has argued that the *teleuk* was not always recognized as a singular embodiment of Mousgoum cultural identity in the way that it is today. Archival evidence indicates that the Mousgoum built rectangular and thatched-roof structures as well. Nelson has also argued that the emblematic status of the *teleuk* is a direct result of Mousgoum agency in molding their cultural identity in their engagement with modernity, and of Western intervention in historicizing the Mousgoum.⁵⁹

This narrative of the Mousgoum, in which architecture played a critical role, certainly predated the German colonial

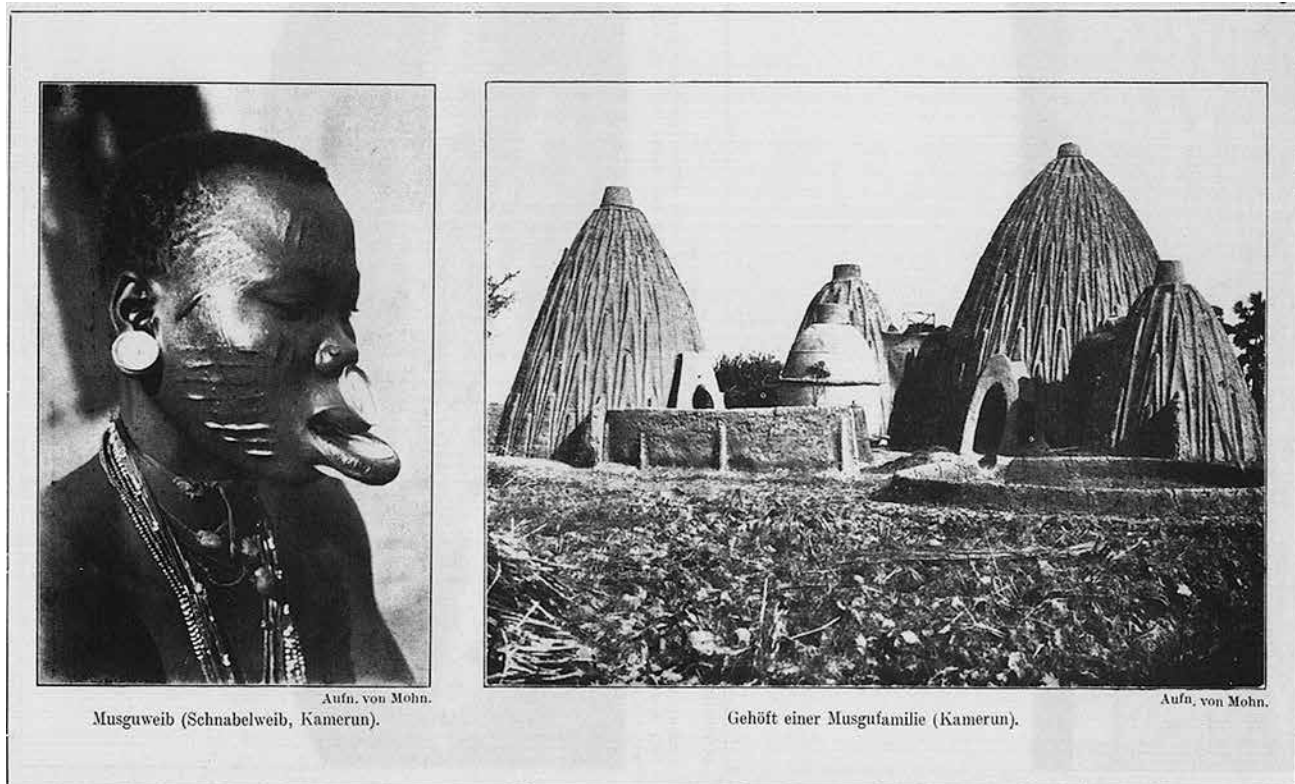


FIGURE 5. Mousgoum "castle." Source: *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon*, Tafel 142.

period. Heinrich Barth was perhaps the first European to formulate the terms of this narrative during his 1852 trip through northern Cameroon. Barth's dual role as an agent of British imperialism (the British government funded the expedition in order to open trade routes and discourage slavery) and newly minted geographer and "Africa researcher" must be remembered here, however.⁶⁰ His was therefore not a neutral, but an ideologically loaded, scientific agenda.⁶¹ In 1897, well into the German colonial period, and in a manner that illustrates the intertextuality of ethnographic authority, Hermann Frobenius synthesized reports by Barth, Gustav Nachtigal, and other explorers and framed them in terms of the *Kulturkreis* outlook that he shared with his son Leo. As I show here, the Mousgoum were discussed in ways reminiscent of the (later) treatment of the Bamum.

Nelson has commented on the significance of the literary strategies Barth used to present his first view of Mousgoum buildings to his readership: "Having piqued his reader with the peculiar and the strange, the explorer then leads her or him into the ruins of the residence of Mousgoum chief Kabishme."⁶² This strategy of building up anticipation in order to emphasize difference was also used in the mythology of Bamum. Barth's valorization of Mousgoum architecture was prefigured in and supplemented by descriptions of the people themselves as well as other aspects of their culture. Thus, one of Barth's first encounters with the Mousgoum

occurred when, in a strategic action calculated to protect his domain from attack, the Mousgoum chief, A'dishen, accompanied by a group of horsemen joined Barth's party. As the men approached, Barth observed that they were on horseback — a characteristic that he associated with higher-level cultural achievement. Without saddles and bridles, however, these Mousgoum horsemen had not taken full advantage of this tool to human progress. They ended up presenting a "most barbarous and savage spectacle."⁶³

Barth proceeded to describe Mousgoum buildings, which he found extremely interesting in their form and mode of construction. In fact, in his description of the ruins of a Mousgoum homestead, Barth indulged in just the kind of speculative reconstruction of architectural form in relation to topography, regional history, and ethnicity that would later be institutionalized in the work of the Frobeniuses.⁶⁴ According to Barth, Mousgoum buildings showed such great care in their construction that they stood in for the culture as a whole and showed it to be more developed than the advanced culture of the long-lived Bornu state to the north. Relative to their more immediate neighbors, with whom they had a common origin, the Mousgoum have achieved "a higher state of civilization." The only things undermining this otherwise glowing picture were internecine warfare among Mousgoum groups and "fetish" worship.⁶⁵ There is, of course, little acknowledgement of the contingent nature of these interpreta-

tions, which were framed by particular attitudes toward race and human achievement, Western scientific training, and British imperialist ambitions — all of which were contained in existing chains of signification (horseback riding as a sign of “civilization,” internecine warfare as the opposite, etc.) to constitute a mythology.

Hermann Frobenius maintained some of Barth’s celebratory quality despite his more technical interests. He reported that Barth, Nachtigal and Vogel had all observed the dominant use of clay in Mousgoum buildings. Typically, these were round “huts” with conical thatched roofs, but the parabolic all-clay structures that would soon be transformed into icons of Mousgoum culture were present as well. Paraphrasing Barth, Frobenius described a four-cornered Mousgoum compound with ogival structures, “like the top half of our [German] artillery shells,” at each corner.⁶⁶ Each conical building was around 2.5 meters (8.2 feet) in diameter, “a considerable span,” and was approached by a projecting portal as high as 1.8 meters (5.9 feet).⁶⁷ In one case, an unwallled but roofed curvilinear space was connected to the conical building. For Barth and Frobenius alike, this arrangement suggested a seasonal use of Mousgoum spaces that had originated in an earlier split between Mousgoum winter and summer houses. Synthesizing Barth’s descriptions with other reports, Frobenius argued that the ogival building with a vaulted roof (not the more common, round “hut” with a conical thatched roof) was the primordial Mousgoum winter house. He repeatedly acknowledged the speculative nature of Barth’s thinking but confirmed its content. Accordingly, Barth was “not too far off” in his supposition that thatched roofs were a later arrival, and that earlier Mousgoum roofs were clay vaults. After all, as Frobenius reminded his readers, Mousgoum granaries proved familiarity with dome construction, and, “the termites, which, with their multiform domical and conical structures that rise to mighty heights and are to be found in all places in Africa, offer a model for such a use of the plastic soil.”⁶⁸

Comparisons to the architecture of related ethnic groups like the Logone and correlations with known histories of migration and conquest bolstered Frobenius’s arguments.⁶⁹ Working backward from his hypothesis of an ur-Mousgoum form, he identified the cultural complex of the Mousgoum and confirmed that they, along with the Logone, Kotoko, Ketere-Ketere, etc., were the original inhabitants of this region. Thus, Frobenius invoked components of *Kulturkreis* theory and used a strategy of attaching value to architecture on the basis of the purported authenticity of specific elements.

Repeatedly invoked by commentators and engaged by the Mousgoum themselves, this narrative assumed an element of fact. Each successive visit by a German observer seemed to confirm and amplify the Mousgoum narrative. Thus, Captain Hans Dominic, who conducted the German military campaign to pacify the northern reaches of the colony from 1901 to 1903, described entering Mousgoum land as an

otherworldly experience: “It was as though one had arrived in another world.”⁷⁰ Dominic glowingly described a strongly fortified compound with a series of “spacious, dome-shaped clay huts capped with straw, which were arranged in a circle and worked clean with great care.”⁷¹ Like Barth and Frobenius before him, Dominic negated cultural difference by emphasizing the familiar and evincing empathy in his description of the Mousgoum.⁷² He spoke of the “heated beds” and “proper ovens” inside Mousgoum buildings, which made their interiors as admirable as their exteriors.⁷³ From architecture, Dominic then transitioned easily into a discussion about work habits and products, from which he hypothesized about the biological makeup of the people and projected a profound bond between architecture and civilization. Mousgoum men were “Herculean” because of their untiring work with the unproductive soil of the Logone. Their industrious character was embodied in the degree to which they processed their goods: their tobacco “was even fermented before it was smoked!”⁷⁴

By 1914 the *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon* [*Encyclopedia of German Colonies*] had distilled the Mousgoum mythology to its essential components: the Mousgoum were to be admired because they cultivated useful crops like wheat, herded cattle, reared horses, “artfully decorated their clay huts,” built “enormous” clay silos for food storage, and produced “higher-level” handicrafts. Furthermore, “their fields [were] even fertilized.”⁷⁵ The degree of similarity between these and other descriptions of the Mousgoum by other German visitors from the period, like Ernst Heims and Gunther von Hagen, is astounding.⁷⁶

Ultimately, however, what distinguished these depictions of Mousgoum from portrayals of Bamum was the degree to which the positive was counteracted by the negative: lip-boring was common among women, skin was scarified, and teeth were clipped. Furthermore, the Mousgoum did not clothe themselves adequately and did not organize themselves centrally even in the relatively large walled villages of Mousgoum and Mala. This strategy of counteracting positive with negative evaluations made it possible to continue to justify colonization while acknowledging cultural achievement. Though architecture seemed to suggest different possibilities, it only served to bolster, through complex machinations, the intellectual underpinnings and practical dynamics of the colonial project.

AN ENDURING MYTHOLOGY

In conclusion, there were some fundamental differences between the Bamum and the Mousgoum that produced divergent results out of a common framework for interpreting culture. The location of the Mousgoum in the far north put them almost outside the orbit of regular colonial activity. At the date of German incursion the Mousgoum were still pagans who were under constant threat from the Muslim Fulbe who dominated the region and regularly raided the Mous-

goum to obtain domestic slaves.⁷⁷ The Mousgoum therefore posed little threat to the German colonial administration, and their political position contrasted significantly with that of the powerful Bamum Kingdom to the south.⁷⁸ Likewise, the lack of centralized organization among distinct Mousgoum groups meant that the German colonial public could not project its imaginings onto a single individual who, like King Njoya, would engage with the terms of colonial discourse through architecture and other means.

Nevertheless, a comparison between Bamum and Mousgoum is apt.⁷⁹ As this article has shown, German colonial commentators paid close attention to Bamum and Mousgoum architecture, employed analogous tropes (discovery, technical and aesthetic accomplishment, purity and mobility of architectural forms, etc.), and used comparable argumentation strategies to make claims about architecture in relation to cultural origin, and about Africa's place in history. Lending further support to this comparison is the way in which claims about Bamum and Mousgoum culture have continued to resonate. As early as 1931 Foumban hosted two museums that promoted Bamum arts and crafts. One of them, the Palace Museum, was housed in Njoya's final hybrid building, built in 1917.⁸⁰ As Geary and Nelson have argued, the exis-

tence of these museums illustrates the use of art as an element in modern Bamum identity formation.⁸¹ Bamum works at major museums throughout the West also "speak" despite the ways in which their meanings have been constrained. Foumban itself, through Bamum agency as well as Western intervention, has also become an important tourist destination and capital of Cameroon's artisanal industry.⁸²

Further to the north, the Mousgoum village of Pouss has similarly become the locus of a growing tourist economy. As Nelson has suggested, the rebirth of the *teleuk* in recent mural painting, in the official stamp of the Lamido of Pouss, and in the new construction of actual *teleukakay* not only illustrates Mousgoum industriousness in catering to the tourist market, but also their self-conscious reappropriation of cultural heritage. Mousgoum's contribution to a unified postindependence national identity is captured in the appearance of the *teleuk* on Cameroonian currency, where it has served as one of several symbols representing the diverse ethnicity of the nation.⁸³ Similarly, Bamum, Njoya, and his palace continue to form a mirror through which Cameroon's past and present, ethnic, regional, national and global identity can be refracted — as Patrice Nganang's poignant new novel *Der Schatten des Sultans* [*The Shadow of the Sultans*], illustrates.⁸⁴

REFERENCE NOTES

1. See P. Jenkins and C. Geary, "Photographs From Africa in the Basel Mission Archive," *African Arts*, Vol.18 No.4 (1985), p.60; and C. Geary, "Impressions of the African Past: Interpreting Ethnographic Photographs from Cameroon," *Visual Anthropology*, Vol.3 No.2/3 (1990), p.306. In addition to official reports, this encounter was elaborated upon repeatedly in both Bamum and colonial German publications. See, for example, A. Gehler, *Der Negerkoenig Ndschoya* (Basel: Verlag der Basler Missionbuchhandlung, 1913), online at <http://sophieold.byu.edu>; and Sultan Njoya, *Histoire et coutumes des Bamums*, P.H. Martin, trans. (Pl. A-E. Dakar, 1952); and C. Tardits, "The Kingdom of Bamum," in E. Beumers and H.-J. Koloss, eds., *Kings of Africa: Art and Authority in Central Africa* (Collection Museum fuer Voelkerkunde Berlin; Maastricht, the Netherlands: Foundation Kings of Africa, 1992), pp.43–55.
2. R.A. Austen, *Middlemen of the Cameroon's Rivers: The Duala and Their Hinterland, c.1600–c.1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.96.
3. Geary, "Impressions of the African Past," p.300; and K. Schestokat, *German Women in Cameroon: Travelogues from Colonial Times* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), p.57. Bamum was established in the sixteenth century but flourished in the nineteenth century through territorial expansion by virtue of military power.
4. Oberleutnant Hirtler, "Bericht des Oberleutnants Hirtler über eine Expedition nach Bamum," *Deutsches Kolonial Blatt*, Band.XIV No.18, p.491. Other markers of "civilization" were noted, including the fact that Njoya and his people were clothed and rode horses with saddles and bridles.
5. M.P. Thorbecke, "Bamum," in F. Thorbecke, ed., *Im Hochland von Mittel-Kamerun*, 1. Teil, Die Reise: Eindruecke und Beobachtungen, Abhandlungen des Hamburgischen Kolonialinstituts, Band XXI (Hamburg: L. Friederichsen & Co., 1914), p.20.
6. Geary, "Impressions of the African Past," p.300.
7. C. Geary, *Images from Bamum: German Colonial Photography at the Court of King Njoya, Cameroon, West Africa, 1902–1915* (Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), p.38; and Geary, "Impressions of the African Past," p.307.
8. Barthes defined mythology as the study of a very particular type of speech known as myth. However, in order to differentiate the Barthesian myth from conventional definitions, I will use the term "mythology" to refer to Barthesian myth. See R. Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Vintage Books, 2009), p.131.
9. *Ibid.*, pp.154,168.
10. *Ibid.*, p.137.
11. *Ibid.*, p.140.
12. *Ibid.*, p.139.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, p.152.
15. *Ibid.*, pp.153,163,169. I take ideology here to refer to the "body of ideas and practices which defends the status quo and actively promotes the values and interests of the dominant groups in society." See J. Storey, *An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1993), p.78.
16. D. Dutton, "Mythologies of Tribal Art," *African Arts*, Vol.28 No.3 (1995), p.34. Cf. Barthes, *Mythologies*, pp.163–68.
17. Barthes, *Mythologies*, pp.139,169. Also see Dutton, "Mythologies of Tribal Art," p.34.
18. I. Osayimwese, "Architecture with a Mission: Bamum Autoethnography during the Period of German Colonialism," in N. Berman, K. Muehlhahn, and P. Nganang, eds., *African, Asian, and Oceanic Negotiations of German Colonialism: Interactions, Resistance, and Memory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, forthcoming 2013).
19. On the role of art in political process before the German colonial period, see C. Geary, "Art and Political Process in the Kingdoms of Bali-Nyonga and Bamum (Cameroon Grassfields)," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol.22 No.1 (1988), pp.11–41.
20. Marie Pauline Thorbecke referred to two structures, one for Njoya and one for his mother, which were added to the

- existing palace complex (Thorbecke, "Bamum," p.17; and Schestokat, *German Women in Cameroon*, p.60). The Basel Mission Picture Archive includes an image of a school with block walls and a thatched roof built between 1908 and 1914 (E-30.31.075). The king also commissioned an entirely new palace (as opposed to individual buildings within an older palace complex) circa 1917, which may be depicted in QE-30.025.0001. The Basel Mission Picture Archive includes a similar photograph described as Njoya's "palace on the sea" and "summer residence in Mantoum" (BMA E-30.32.019).
21. G. Thilenius, "Hausbau der Eingeborene," in H. Schnee, ed., *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon*, Vol.2 (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1920) p.46f, online at <http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Lexikon/lexikon.htm>.
22. See BMA QD-30.029.0007; H. Frobenius, *Die Erdgebäude im Sudan* (Hamburg: Verlagsanstalt und Druckerei A.G. (vormals J.F. Richter), Königliche Hofbuchdruckerei, 1897), pp.21,27; L. Frobenius, *Das unbekannte Afrika* (Muenchen: Frobeniusinstitut, 1923), pp.95–97,102; L. Frobenius, *Kulturgeschichte Afrikas: Prolegomena zu einer historischen Gestaltlehre* (Zurich: Phaidon, 1933), p.613; and Thilenius, "Hausbau der Eingeborene," p.46f.
23. Thorbecke, "Bamum," p.18.
24. H. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.86.
25. Thorbecke, "Bamum," p.18.
26. *Ibid.*; and Njoya, *Histoire et Coutumes*, p.66. After a period of experimentation with European cultural elements, Njoya went to lengths to dissociate himself from them. See C. Geary, "Patterns from Without, Meaning from Within: European-Style Military Dress and German Colonial Politics in the Bamum Kingdom (Cameroon)," *AH Number 1* (Boston: African Studies Center, 1989).
27. Njoya, *Histoire et Coutumes*, p.65. It should be noted that Njoya made these particular claims after the fact — that is, upon writing *Histoire et Coutumes*.
28. Osayimwese, "Architecture with a Mission."
29. On Bamum's nineteenth-century history, see Njoya, *Histoire et Coutumes*; and C. Tardits, "The Kingdoms of Bamum," pp.43–45.
30. S. Marchand, "Priests among the Pygmies: Wilhelm Schmidt and the Counter-Reformation in Austrian Ethnology," in H.G. Penny and M. Bunzl, eds., *Worldly Provincialism: German Anthropology in the Age of Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p.296. Much of this discussion of Frobenius's life and career is drawn from S. Marchand, "Leo Frobenius and the Revolt Against the West," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.32 No.2 (1997), pp.153–70. Also see J. Jahn, *Leo Frobenius: The Demonic Child* (Austin: African and Afro-American Studies and Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin, 1974).
31. See Marchand, "Leo Frobenius," p.155.
32. See Marchand, "Leo Frobenius," p.158. Also, M. Nguepe, *Leo Frobenius als Kunst und Literaturvermittler* (Berlin: dissertation. de - Verlag im Internet, 2006), p.115.
33. Marchand, "Leo Frobenius," p.155.
34. "German Discovers Atlantis in Africa," *The New York Times*, January 30, 1911.
35. Marchand, "Leo Frobenius," p.161.
36. As opposed to universal histories in the Hegelian manner (Marchand, "Leo Frobenius," p.154).
37. M. Oberhofer, "Zwischen, Tradition und Innovation. Die Geschichte der Bamum-Sammlung des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin," <http://www.about-africa.de/kamerun-nigeria/108-tradition-innovation-geschichte-bamum-sammlung-berlin/>; - ZÜ-2009FT-II; 2009.
38. Cf. H. Frobenius, *Afrikanische Bautypen: eine ethnographisch-architektonische Studie* (Dachau: F. Mondrian, 1894), p.4.
39. See, for example, Frobenius, *Das unbekannte Afrika*, pp.81–92; Leo Frobenius, "Early African Culture as an Indication of Present Negro Potentialities," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol.140 (November 1928), pp.159–164; L. Frobenius, *Kulturgeschichte Afrikas*, p.215; and Nguepe, *Leo Frobenius als Kunst und Literaturvermittler*, p.117.
40. Marchand, "Leo Frobenius," p.159.
41. On Frobenius's seemingly contradictory position on colonialism, see Jahn, *Leo Frobenius*, pp.17–18.
42. Dutton, "Mythologies of Tribal Art," p.34.
43. *Ibid.*
44. Cf. "German Discovers Atlantis in Africa," *The New York Times*, January 30, 1911. This article mentions Leo's collaboration with his father, Hermann.
45. Jahn, *Leo Frobenius*, p.6; and L. Wildenthal, *Else Frobenius: Erinnerungen einer Journalisten zwischen Kaiserreich und zweiten Weltkrieg* (Koeln: Boehlau, 2005), p.128.
46. Frobenius, *Afrikanische Bautypen*, p.4. All translations from Hermann Frobenius's works are by the author of the present article.
47. *Ibid.*, pp.52,66.
48. *Ibid.*, p.53.
49. See, for example, Thilenius, "Hausbau der Eingeborene," p.46f. C.G. Buettner had emphasized the connection between form, materials, geography and ethnicity as early as 1887 in "Ueber das erbauen von Haeusern fuer Europaer im inneren Afrikas," *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, Vol.1, p.18.
50. This thesis is supported by historical fact, since Bernhard Ankermann, who produced the earliest ethnographic description of Bamum and collected Bamum artifacts for the Berlin Ethnological Museum, publicly acknowledged his intellectual debt to Frobenius in 1904. See J. Zwernemann, "Leo Frobenius and Cultural Research in Africa," *Research Review from the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana*, Vol. 3 (1966–67), p.17; Marchand, "Priests among the Pygmies," p.296; and B. Ankermann, "Bericht über eine ethnographische Forschungsreise ins Grasland von Kamerun," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Vol.42 No.2 (1910), pp.288–310.
51. C. Geary, "On the Savannah: Marie Pauline Thorbecke's Images from Cameroon, West Africa (1911–12)," *Art Journal*, Vol.49 No.2 (1990), pp.150–58; Gehler, *The Negro King Njoya*, pp.1–3; Passarge-Rathjens, "Bamum," in Schnee, ed., *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon*, Vol.1, p.126f; Schestokat, *German Women in Cameroon*, pp.55–63; Thorbecke, "Bamum," pp.15–21; and E. Vollbehr, *Bunte Leuchtende Welt: Die Lebensfahrt des Malers Ernst Vollbehr* (Berlin: Verlag Ullstein, 1935), pp.115–17.
52. Gehler, *The Negro King Njoya*, pp.1–3.
53. Thorbecke, "Bamum," p.18. Ankermann ("Bericht über eine ethnographische Forschungsreise ins Grasland von Kamerun," p.288) reported that in 1889 Eugen Zintgraf was the first European to visit the Grasslands.
54. One of the tropes of this discourse is the contrast between the indigenous peoples of the coastal and forested areas and the Grasslands polities. Other Grasslands cultures were accorded a similar treatment, but it appears less consistently in the colonial archive. See, for example, A. Seidel, *Deutschlands Kolonien: Koloniales Lesebuch fuer Schule und Haus* (Leipzig: Reprint Verlag, 1913), p.120.
55. Thorbecke, "Bamum," p.16.
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Ibid.*, p.17.
58. S. Nelson, "Writing Architecture: The Mousgoum Tôlék and Cultural Self-Fashioning at the New Fin de Siècle," *African Arts*, Vol.34 No.3 (Autumn 2001), p.39.
59. S. Nelson, *From Cameroon to Paris: Mousgoum Architecture in and out of Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).
60. *Ibid.*, pp.52–56.
61. It is now well accepted that scientific exploration was always ideologically driven. See, for example, M.L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).
62. Nelson, *From Cameroon to Paris*, p.57.
63. H. Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa: Being a Journal of an Expedition Undertaken Under the*

Auspices of H.B.M.'s Government, in the Years 1849–1855, Vol.3 (London: Longman, Borwn, Green, Longmans & Roberts, 1857), p.175.

64. Cf. Nelson, *From Cameroon to Paris*, pp.64–67.

65. Barth, *Travels and Discoveries*, p.179.

66. Frobenius, *Die Erdgebäude im Sudan*, p.25.

67. *Ibid.* Cf. Ernst Heims, who gives a dimension of 35 feet (height) for a *teleuk*, and 6 feet (long) by 5 feet (high) for its connecting passage. See E. Heims, "From Lake Chad to the Niger," in A. Friedrich, ed., *From Congo to the Niger and Nile: An Account of the German Central African Expedition of 1910–1911*, Vol.1 (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969 [1913]), p.125.

68. Frobenius, *Die Erdgebäude im Sudan*, p.25.

69. *Ibid.*, p.26.

70. H. Dominic, *Vom Atlantik zum Tschadsee: Kriegs- und Forschungsfahrten in Kamerun* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler u. Sohn, 1904), p.261, online at <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433082450705>.

71. *Ibid.*, p.261.

72. Nelson, *From Cameroon to Paris*, p.62.

73. Dominic, *Vom Atlantik zum Tschadsee*, p.261.

74. *Ibid.*, p.262.

75. Passarge-Rathjens, "Musgu," in Schnee, ed., *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon*, Vol.2, p.602.

76. In 1910–1911 Ernst Heims described Mousgoum buildings as the "most curious houses" he had ever seen in Africa. The richly ornamented interiors and heated beds of "these primitive Musgums" defied logic. See Heims, "From Lake Chad to the Niger," pp.125–26; and Nelson, *From Cameroon to Paris*, p.22. Gunther von Hagen's description of the same date was downright

celebratory: "The most wonderful things are the houses. If one comes hither down the river from the Logone sultanate and sees the buildings for the first time, one would believe that he has been placed in a fairyland." Nelson, *From Cameroon to Paris*, p.195, quoting G. von Hagen, "Einige Notizen über die Mousgoum," *Baessler Archiv* 2 (1911), pp.117–22.

77. H. Weiss, "The Illegal Trade in Slaves from German Northern Cameroon to British Northern Nigeria," *African Economic History*, Vol.28 (2000), pp.185,189.

78. The German colonial administration had barely penetrated Mousgoum territory before a November 1911 treaty divided the Mousgoum region between German Cameroon and French Chad. Indeed, the treaty divided Mousgoum territory equally between Germany and France and granted the two largest Mousgoum settlements to France (Passarge-Rathjens, "Musgu," p.602). Earlier, Captain Dominic had described his 1901 expedition as one of the first major German encounters with the Mousgoum (*Vom Atlantik zum Tschadsee*, pp.261–62).

79. In light of the significant interest in the Bamum and the Mousgoum displayed by other observers, it is surprising that they do not feature prominently in Leo Frobenius's work. Bamum architecture is depicted in two images in Frobenius's *Kulturgeschichte Afrikas* (1933). Frobenius credited the photograph to Ankermann, with whom he shared the *Kulturkreis* approach, and whose work on the Grasslands may have obviated further work by Frobenius. Similarly, Frobenius may not have been interested in investigating the Mousgoum precisely because they had already been "discovered." In his account of his 1910 expedition, Frobenius recounted a meeting

with Duke Adolf Friedrich of Mecklenburg who was returning from exploring Lake Chad. During the encounter, Frobenius was informed that "the north-eastern boundaries of the French and German Cameroons had been thoroughly investigated ethnologically, so that the supplementary examination of South and West was an essential task which it was considered desirable should be undertaken by me." L. Frobenius, *Voice of Africa: Being an Account of the Travels of the German Inner African Exploration Expedition in the Years 1910–1912*, Vol.1, R. Blind, trans. (New York and London: Benjamin Blom, 1968 [first published 1913]), p.663.

80. S. Nelson, "Collection and Context in a Cameroonian Village," *Museum International*, Vol.59 No.3 (September 2007), p.23.

81. C. Geary, "Art, Politics, and the Transformation of Meaning: Bamum Art in the Twentieth Century," in M.J. Arnoldi, C.M. Geary, and K.L. Hardin, eds., *African Material Culture* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1996), p.298; and Nelson, "Collection and Context," p.29.

82. Geary, "Art, Politics, and the Transformation of Meaning," p.298; and M. DeLancey and H.M. Mokeba, *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Cameroon* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1990), p.37. Foumban also hosted the Foumban Conference in July 1961, during which preliminary work on the constitution for the Federal Republic of Cameroon was accomplished (DeLancey and Mokeba, *Historical Dictionary*, p.97).

83. Nelson, "Writing Architecture," pp.46,49.

84. P. Nganang, *Der Schatten des Sultans [The Shadow of the Sultans]* (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, 2012).