

Bambui Arts and Culture

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By

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To the memory of MAMA NGWENGHEH and MAMA FEHKIEUH

CONTENTS

Foreword	ix
Acknowledgement	xi
List of Objects	xiii
List of Tables	xvii
Introduction	1
Chapter One.....	7
The Name, Geography, Location and History	
Geographical Location	
History	
Chapter Two	17
Bambui and Other Ethnic Groups	
The Nsongwa in Bambui	
The Bambili in Bambui	
The Baforkum in Bambui	
The Finge in Bambui	
The Bamoum in Bambui	
The Wimbum in Bambui	
The Mbororo or Cattle Fulani in Bambui	
The Kungi in Bambui	
The Baba II in Bambui	
Chapter Three	31
Social Organisation of the Kingdom	
Customary Societies and Administration in Bambui	
Social norms in Bambui	
Chapter Four	45
Traditional Ceremonies in Bambui	
<i>Nto-oh</i> or the Palace	
<i>Ngong</i> or Village Assembly	

Childbirth and Twin Celebration in Bambui	
Death, Burial and Coronation of a King	
Death and Burial in Bambui	
Second Funeral or Death Celebration for Men and Women	
Succession	
Traditional Religion	

Chapter Five	67
--------------------	----

Categories of Art in Bambui

Some Categories of Objects	
Drinking Horns	
Architecture	
Statues	
Throne Object	
Masks	
Traditional Dress	
Music and Musical Instruments	
Other Objects, Containers, Pipes, Staffs, Gourds	
Painting in Bambui	
Artists and Patrons in Bambui	
Bambui Styles	
Bambui Aesthetics	
Motifs and Meaning in the Bambui Palace Objects	
Human Representations on the Objects	
Multiple Representations on the Objects	
Geometric Representations on the Objects	
Animal Representations	
The Python Motif on the Objects	
The Buffalo Motif on the Objects	
The Elephant Motif on the Objects	
The Leopard Motif on the Objects	
The Lion Motif on the Objects	
Functions of the Objects	

Chapter Six	111
-------------------	-----

Conclusion: Bambui Today

Endnotes	119
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References	123
------------------	-----

FOREWORD

Bambui Arts and Culture is a fascinating account of the historical art and culture of the Bambui Kingdom in the western Grassfields of Cameroon. Based on fieldwork conducted in Bambui and also on his personal experience as a native of the western Grassfields, Mathias Fubah examines the historical art and culture of Bambui, and highlights some of the changes that have taken place in recent years. As an ethnographic study, the author digs deep into some of the fundamentals of the traditional art and culture of Bambui, and as a result unveils important aspects which may in some cases be taken for granted. By focusing exclusively on Bambui, one of the less dominant kingdoms in the western Grassfields, the author opens up new ideas and questions for debate on Grassfields and Cameroon art.

Zelio Zecha Charles,
University of Bamenda

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The history of the arts and culture of Bambui which has emerged in this book is the fruit of many years of discussions with Bambui traditional authorities, colleagues, and my personal experience as a native of Bambui and the western Grassfields. Traditional authorities who have assisted me in the realisation of this book include: Fon Angafor Momboo III of Bambui, Tah Mukezang, Pa Bonu, and Pa Fubah Joseph. In terms of traditional institutions, I am indebted to members of *kwifor* or the regulatory society, *takumbeng* and the many masks groups that were kind enough to open their doors to me and to share valuable information that is sometimes difficult to access. Some of these ideas have been discussed in publications, most of which I hope I have successfully referenced. I wish I could say the same of the many ideas that have sprung from student dissertations on Bambui. Some have been credited but others have not. Dr Rose Norman and Ms Patricia Crain proofread the manuscript and I am thankful for their input. Lastly, members of my family, my wife, Miranda, My daughters, Agnella and Angel, my son, Agnel and my parents deserve special appreciation for their unflinching support.

LIST OF OBJECTS

Chapter One

- 1-1 Map of Bambui

Chapter Three

- 3-1 The Bambui *fon*, Angafor Momboo III, on his royal throne surrounded by notables and his many wives
- 3-2 The Bambui *fon*, Angafor Momboo III, surrounded by some of his notables and wives during the second funeral celebration of a sub-chief
- 3-3 The Bambui *fon*, Angafor Momboo III, surrounded by his notables while he pours palm wine into the palms of a newly empowered titleholder
- 3-4 Traditional priests responsible for protecting Bambui spaces
- 3-5 *Nko-oh* and *Nikan* on stage during the second funeral of a sub-chief

Chapter Four

- 4-1 *Akwonsinevie* or pre-celebration rite
- 4-2 *Akwonsinevie* or pre-celebration rite
- 4-3 The second funeral celebration of a sub-chief
- 4-4 The newly crowned sub-chief is ushered in during second funeral of his late father
- 4-5 *Manjong* Matula-ah during *mandele* celebration

Chapter Five

- 5-1 Newly carved buffalo horn drinking cups.

5-2 *Atsam* in the Bambui Palace

5-3 A royal statue of the *fon* or king and notables serving him palm wine from a calabash

5-4. The Bambui *fon*, Angafor Momboo III resting his hand on the statue of the lion, one of the royal animals in the Grassfields

5-5 The Bambui *fon*'s throne decorated with cow horn drinking cups

5-6 *Nko'oh* is one of the most important masquerades that is performed during second funeral celebrations of Bambui notables and elites

5-7 *Nko'oh* and *Nihkan* performing at the second funeral celebration of a Bambui sub-chief

5-8 Masquerades and a Bambui priest preparing to open the second funeral of a sub-chief

5-9 A wooden helmet mask that represents the head of a man

5-10 Bambui notables in traditional attire during *mendele* celebrations

5-11 Larger xylophones being played alongside other musical instruments in preparation for a masquerade performance

5-12 Traditional elites opening the second funeral celebration with the sound of the iron gong

5-13 The slit drum on display at a traditional ceremony

5-14 Royal staffs. Bambui Royal Collection

5-15 A royal bowl used for storing snacks such as kola nuts

5-16 Wall paintings depicting the late *fon* of Bambui, Amungwafor II and his successor, Angafor Momboo III

5-17 The Bambui *fon*'s open living room for guests

Chapter Six

- 6-1 A cow horn drinking cup decorated with facial image of renowned actor, Bruce Lee
- 6-2 Cow horn drinking cups used by members of youth associations across Bambui and Bamenda
- 6-3 Cow horn drinking cups used by members of youth associations across Bambui and Bamenda
- 6-4 One of the leaders of the Bambui Youth Beginners Association pouring palm wine into his cow horn drinking cup decorated with the facial image of Bruce Lee

LIST OF TABLES

3-1 Genealogy of the <i>fons</i> of Bambui.....	26
3-2 Genealogy of the <i>fons</i> of Bambui.....	27
3-3 Quarters in Bambui	28
4-1 Some Bambui shrines.....	44
5-1 Artists and patrons, objects and uses.....	65

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this book is the historical and contemporary art and culture of the Bambui Kingdom in the western Grassfields of Cameroon. It is based on ethnographic research conducted in Bambui and the western Grassfields in 2004 and 2005, and again during intermittent visits in 2009, 2010 and 2015. In particular, the book examines the social organisation as well as the traditional religion of the Bambui Kingdom as the foundations upon which its historical art and culture are built. It presents the various categories of art and highlights aspects of innovation and change in the art of the kingdom. In doing this, the book aims to narrow the gap in the scholarship on African and Grassfields art by introducing Bambui as a kingdom with a rich and diverse artistic and cultural heritage that has the potential to contribute to the on-going scholarship and debates on African art.

The book was inspired by the author's on-going research and interest in the art and cultures of Africa, particularly that of smaller kingdoms in the western Grassfields, such as Bambui, that have received scant attention in the literature. As in other regions and kingdoms on the African continent, the historical art and culture of the Grassfields and the Bambui Kingdom are under threat of extinction. This is partly due to the forces of change, such as education, religion and tourism (Fubah 2008). This means that if something is not done now, these forces of change may destroy the rich artistic and cultural heritage of Bambui, leaving us without a trace and without sources to consult.

Recently, cultural and development agencies designed and implemented artistic and cultural heritage documentation and preservation initiatives in Cameroon and the Grassfields, but this has not benefited the majority of the kingdoms whose art is under threat. Moreover, these initiatives, such as the palace museum project in the kingdoms of Mankon, Babungo and Bafut, were implemented without the necessary grassroots consultations. Hence, while there may be structures in place for the preservation of the history, art and cultures of some kingdoms, they do not fully reflect the views of the common people. If properly identified and documented, as well as promoted and preserved, art and culture can serve as an important tool for shaping individual behaviour and attitudes, as well as enhancing social cohesion. The study of historical art and culture can

promote new and previously neglected research into the rich oral traditions and customs of Bambui and the Grassfields.

As an ethnographic study, it provided the author with the opportunity to immerse himself in the fundamentals of the art and culture of the Bambui Kingdom, and as a result unveiled important aspects which are, in some cases, taken for granted. For instance, the use of art objects, such as drinking vessels, to transfer “power” from the dead before they are buried, is one notable aspect of Bambui art and culture that only had meaning for the author through his close engagement with the local community (Fubah 2014). This book is an attempt to highlight these salient aspects, especially in relation to arts and culture.

Art has been defined as a diverse range of human activities which create visual, auditory, or performing artefacts (artworks) that express the author’s imaginative or technical skill, and are intended to be appreciated for their beauty or emotional power (cf. Vogel 1988; Blier 1988). In their most general forms, these activities include the production of works of art, the criticism of art, the study of the history of art, and the aesthetic dissemination of art. Culture, on the other hand, is defined as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Taylor 1974). Alternatively, in a contemporary variant, “culture is defined as a domain that emphasises the practices, discourses and material expressions which, over time, express the continuities and discontinuities of the social meaning of life held in common” (Seymour 1960). Art and culture are two things that most definitely go together. Works of art created by a society are products of the culture that prevail within that community, in this context Bambui. Therefore, we can see that art and culture are definitely interlinked. It is important, however, to discern the many differences between these two concepts in order to understand what they stand for in this book. Culture is the ensemble of social forms, material traits, customary beliefs and other human phenomena that cannot be directly attributed to a generic inheritance of a religious, racial or social group (Baker 2004). Art is the creative expression of one’s experiences, emotions and qualities. In the context of this book, art is viewed as one aspect of Bambui culture which is heavily influenced by Grassfields culture, and as a by-product of these cultures it reflects some of their customs, beliefs and values.

A large number of artifacts from the Grassfields—and most likely Bambui—found their way into German and European museums as early as the German era (1884–1915) in Kamerun.¹ They were assembled by explorers, such as Eugen Zingraff, Bernhard Ankermann, and Franz and

Marie Pauline Thorbecke, all German colonial officers; administrators, such as Hans Glauning, Wilhelm Langheld, Hans Caspar Edler zu Putlitz, Leopold Conradt; and traders, such as Gustav Conrau, Rudolf Oldenburg and Adolf Diehl (Koloss and Homberger 2008). Yet, in spite of this, very little is known about Bambui art, both in Cameroon and in Europe.

These Grassfields artefacts (which were taken to Europe in large quantities at the time) were popular not so much for their aesthetic value as for their status as trophies and curiosities, or as material for cultural-historical documentation. They were acquired through gift exchange and as spoils of colonial war.² While there was interest in collecting as many as possible, at the time collectors had no idea that their value would increase astronomically over time—at least the artistic value of the most important works (Koloss and Homberger 2008, 15). Notwithstanding, a well-organised art trade developed in the Grassfields, and in other regions of Africa, by the end of the nineteenth century. From then onwards, the Grassfields and most parts of the continent witnessed an increase in the production of artefacts, especially for sale to Europeans. Koloss and Homberger note that “a flourishing market for souvenir art developed” (2008, 12).

The development of the art market, however, did not necessarily imply Africa and the Grassfields were selling their culture. Instead, most of the artefacts that were sold were easily reproduced and replaced. In the Bambui Kingdom, for example, more than four hundred pieces—ranging from masks, statues, drinking vessels, musical instruments, staffs, and related paraphernalia which are still used during rituals and commemorative celebrations—have been found. In Oku, there are over five hundred masks (Koloss 2000) while the Mankon Kingdom has more than five hundred objects, most of which form part of the permanent exhibition in the Palace Museum (Notue, 2000).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, African and Grassfields artefacts were honoured as artworks, as opposed to curiosities and ethnographic evidence, by European artists such as Vlaminck, Derain, Braque, and Picasso. For most of these artists, the expressive art of the Cameroon Grassfields, including Bambui, was of great importance and had a decisive influence on the development of the pictorial language of expressionism that they created (Koloss and Homberger 2008). Several works by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, for example, were produced following the model of Grassfields art (Koloss and Homberger 2008). As important as African and Grassfields art was for expressionism, the general public, with a few exceptions, have paid little attention to it up to the present day, African and Grassfields art remains relatively unimportant as a discipline

at universities and in the art world in general. In instances where Grassfields art is given attention, focus is placed mostly on art from the dominant kingdoms, such as Bamoum, Kom, Mankon, Babungo, Oku and others, rather than on that from Bambui, Bambili, and Baforchu, which are smaller and less dominant kingdoms. This book attempts to bring Bambui into the limelight of art and culture in the western Grassfields.

Methodology and Contextual Framework

This study is part of a bigger project focusing on art and culture in smaller kingdoms in the western Grassfields of Cameroon. The data were assembled through qualitative research methods. Qualitative methodology uses multiple methods involving an interpretative naturalistic approach to the subject matter (Lichtman, 2009). Such methods included data collection through various kinds of interviews, group discussions, photovoice action research and archival sources. Qualitative methods allowed the researcher to unpack the history, social organisation, institutions, and the arts and culture of Bambui, and assisted in the development of the six chapters of the book (Macleod and Tracy 2009). Key informant interviews were conducted with selected Bambui elites, such as the *fon*, notables, male and female group representatives, and heads of youth institutions.

The research design incorporated a cross-section of major quarters, and included a diverse range of artistic and cultural institutions. As a qualitative study, the aim was not to generalise, making a representative sample unnecessary.

In line with the aim of the study, the research followed a participatory research model (also known as Participatory Action Research). This model originated in Paulo Freire's (1973, 1985 and 2000) work on education for critical consciousness. It prioritises processes of empowerment, including consultation, participation, self-mobilisation, information sharing and exchange, in order to facilitate the documentation of history and culture that can have an impact on the Bambui community. With this in mind, various stakeholders, in particular those charged with the promotion and preservation of the arts and culture of Bambui, were consulted (Kumar, 2002).

Moreover, the works of other Grassfields scholars, both local and foreign, were consulted to give a general picture of Bambui and other neighbouring ethnic groups in the western Grassfields. Amungwa (2012, 6) argues that, "books are inadequate for expressing the people's history, culture, and traditions with respect to such aspects as music and dance

which can only be appraised by being present to see, hear, and feel the sound of the people's culture in action." Hence, despite the research on other works, the project is based largely on first hand experience of the activities associated with Bambui art and culture.

This book comprises six chapters. The six chapters convey the story of the history of the Bambui Kingdom as well as that of its arts and culture, both in the past and at present. The central argument is that, like most African and Cameroon Grassfields kingdoms, Bambui has a history; and it has arts and culture that are both unique and distinctive to the region, the country, and the continent. To this end, the chapters seek to give voice to the kingdom's historical depth by pushing the boundaries of Grassfields artistic and cultural heritage resources beyond the larger kingdoms whose histories have dominated Cameroon and Grassfields scholarship for years.

Chapter One covers the environment and history of Bambui. It presents the historical background of the kingdom of Bambui and its arts and culture, and highlights the Bambui migration from Tikar through the Ndop Plain to the present site. The chapter goes on to describe events between Bambui and neighbouring Bafut following German punitive expeditions in the late nineteenth century, and the eventual allied defeat of the Germans in the First World War.

Chapter Two considers the various ethnic groups that settled in Bambui and highlights the contributions they made to the history of Bambui. The chapter contends that while some of these ethnic groups settled permanently, and were eventually assimilated into Bambui, others stayed only temporarily before leaving. The chapter maintains, however, that in both cases the story of Bambui arts and culture would not be complete without their input.

Chapter Three lays the foundation for the study of Bambui arts and culture by presenting the social organisation of the kingdom. In doing this, the chapter aims to show that knowledge of the social organisation of Bambui is central to understanding its arts and culture. The chapter further demonstrates that Bambui art is inextricably tied to its social organisation, and this is facilitated by the fact that each title, function and benefit in the kingdom is attached to a specific symbolic or cultural object of prestige. These can be statues, drinking horns, costumes or masks.

Chapter Four is about traditional religion and associated practices. Here, the chapter identifies and describes selected traditional religious sites and practices in order to show their place in the arts and culture of Bambui. It demonstrates that, contrary to popular perception, the older art objects have power, but newly produced Bambui art objects do not. Rather, it is through their use in sacrifices that they gain power, but they

may also be activated by an event or performance, or by the application of traditional medicine. In their original context, the chapter maintains, art is meaningless, this being the reason why Bambui art is inseparable from its traditional religious practices—the two must be used together in order to give the art objects meaning and power.

Chapter Five focuses on some of the major categories of art produced in the Bambui region. Here, the chapter introduces, describes and interprets the rich and diverse artistic and cultural heritage resources of Bambui. It does this by focusing on the huge collections of Bambui, including the Royal Collection housed in the palace, as well as smaller and private collections in the homes of the elite and members of the general public. Given that style and aesthetics are common features in the arts of the western Grassfields, the chapter describes the style and aesthetics associated with Bambui arts, and ends with a summary of the functions of the historical art of the Bambui kingdom.

Chapter Six, the concluding chapter, focuses on some of the issues associated with change in the artistic and cultural practices of the kingdom. Essentially, the chapter highlights some of the changes that have taken place and presents some of the new categories of arts that have emerged across the Grassfields, and Bambui in particular, as well as their producers and patrons. It ends with a reflection on the future of Bambui arts and culture.

This book is unique in that while it covers many different aspects associated with the historical arts of the Bambui Kingdom, it opens up questions for future humanities research in present-day Grassfields and Cameroon. Instead of a subject that concerns itself with the arts and culture of dominant Grassfields kingdoms, such as Kom, Mankon, Bali, Nso and Oku, the book contends that each and every kingdom has its own way of life, no matter how small it might be. Rather than a synthesis of existing scholarship, this book opens up new ideas and questions for debate.

There is a strong emphasis in the book on traditional arts and culture, but it is also concerned with questions of contemporary art in the Bambui Kingdom and its prospective future in a broader context. In particular, the book should appeal to those who have an interest in African and Cameroon Grassfields art. One of the main strengths of the book is that it is written by someone who has lived the experience being narrated. The book will be invaluable in university teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in Cameroon, Africa and the world, as well as for museums and public libraries.

CHAPTER ONE

NAME, GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND HISTORY

The name Bambui simply means the people—“*Ba*” in the Mungaka language of the Northwest Region of Cameroon and is translated as “the people”—of Mbui (Amungwa 2012). The literature on the Cameroon Grassfields also refers to Bambui as “Bambwi” (Warnier 1985), but the correct spelling remains the former. The name Bambui is an appellation dating back to the German era in Cameroon. It was coined by interpreters from the neighbouring Kingdom of Bali Nyonga who were assigned to assist German colonial officers, and they introduced the prefix “ba” from their local language, Mungaka. The prefix stood for the “people” of a particular place or area, such as Mbui, hence “Ba-mbui” for the people of that area. Prior to the addition of this prefix, the Bambui were known as *Mbeuh*, or “tough people” (Bonu 2012; Amungwa 2012). Bambui legend attributes the name *Mbeuh* to the physical prowess and brilliance of the founding fathers and mothers of Bambui. The name is also associated with the knowledge and skills of the Bambui people in indigenous or traditional medicine, an aspect that survives today. Following the introduction of “ba” as a prefix, the names of Mbui and many other kingdoms in the Cameroon Grassfields were modified, for example, to Bafut, Baforchu, Bamendankwe, Bamoun, Bambui, Bangante, Bamali, Bamunka, Babessi, Babanki, and Bambili.

Geographical Location

The Kingdom, or Fondom, of Bambui is located in the Tubah Division of the Northwest Region of Cameroon. It lies between longitude 10° 13" E and 10° 15" E within a sub-equatorial climatic region characterised by two distinct seasons: the wet and the dry. Estimates suggest that Bambui had a population of about one thousand six hundred at the turn of the nineteenth century (Warnier 1985). Bambui is one of the kingdoms located adjacent to the Bamenda Plateau, together with other kingdoms of the Cameroon Grassfields such as Moghamo, Meta, Ngi, Ngwo, Bambili, the Menchum

Valley and Upper Ngemba (Amungwa 2012). These kingdoms form what some Grassfields scholars call a “historical unit” because of their structure and interdependence in terms of local economic specialisation and trade with various parts of the Bamenda Plateau.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the kingdom of Bambui was located between the kingdoms of Bafut and Bamessing due to the trench that surrounded the settlement (Amungwa 2012). This location was strategic, because it facilitated cultural and commercial exchanges between the kingdoms of the Ndop Plain and those of the Bamenda Plateau and Widikum. Today, the kingdom of Bambui is situated on the flanks of the Bamenda volcanic highlands, along the range that consists of the Oku and Bamboutos Mountains, which are on the main Cameroon fracture line oriented southwest to northeast. The region is an important frontier, rich in water resources—its crest line corresponds to part of the geographical boundary between West and Central Africa—and is the continental divide between the large drainage basins of the Niger and Congo Rivers (Nchangong, Pers comm., December 2015).

Present-day Bambui shares boundaries with Bafut to the west, Kedjom Keku (Big Babanki) to the north, Kom (Boyo Division) to the northeast, Kedjom Ketingo or Small Babanki (with the Sabga settlement) to the east and southeast, Bambili to the south, and Nkwen to the southwest (see Figure 1-1). It stretches along 3.8 kilometres of the Bamenda Ring Road, which is the principal highway of the region, and 8.1 kilometres of the Bambui-Fundong Road.



NB: Not drawn to Scale

Morphologically, Bambui is divided into three main regions, namely: the Bambui plains in the west; the low plateau in the centre; and the high lava plateau in the east and northeast. The lowest altitude in Bambui is about 1050 m on the plains, which corresponds to the valley of the Fengwang River (a tributary of the Menchum River). The highest point is 2400 m on the northeastern extreme of the high plateau. The high lava plateau is separated from the low plateau by a west-facing escarpment. The high plateau has dense patches of indigenous forest interspersed with savannah vegetation. Bambui legend informs us that the forest used to harbour plenty of wildlife—including elephants, monkeys, buffaloes, lions, chimpanzees, and antelopes—right up to the 1920s. Most of the wild animals are now extinct because of indiscriminate and uncontrolled hunting, destruction of the forest, and cattle grazing.

Bambui has a dense network of streams. The main streams that drain the village are the Ntsa Fengwang, Ntsa Saakeu, Ntsa Tunui and Ntsa Ntie, which run along the Bambili frontier, and Ntsa Mbeuh and Ntsa Mbee, which run along the Bafut frontier in the west. The principal watershed is the Alegefor and Mending hills, to the east and northeast of the Bambui Fondom. Specifically, there are three sub-watersheds: the Mbeuh, Alegefor and Ntahmbang. All the streams, except for the Tunui and Mbee, have their sources in these watersheds, and flow towards the

lowlands to the west and northwest. It is hypothesised that the Ntsa Tunui originates from a spring which is believed to be an outlet of Lake Bambili. It is an unusual regime with high discharge recorded during the dry season. Interestingly, all the streams eventually flow northwestward to merge with the Fengwang, which feeds the Menchum River. From the highlands, most of the streams cascade as waterfalls, with the Meya-ah waterfall being the most notable. There are also dozens of springs all over the area, with one hot spring at Atuoh (Felie Quarter) that flows into the Mbeuh Stream—evidence that the area is of volcanic origin. These diverse physical attributes offer many opportunities for economic and social development, especially in the area of tourism, but most of them are yet to be fully exploited.³

Bambui is located about thirteen kilometres northeast of Bamenda Town, the provincial headquarters of the Northwest Region, and extends on both sides of the Bamenda-Fundong and Bamenda-Nkambe roads, which form part of the Ring Road. Bambui is one of the major centres of learning in the Northwest Region, with a large number of public and private institutions, including: the University of Bamenda, the Regional and Technical College of Agriculture, the University of Dschang Antennae, Saint Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary, Capuchin Friary, Saint Dominic Convent, Sisters of Christ, the Presbyterian Rural Training Centre, Fonta-ah, Government High School, Government Technical College, and Comprehensive High School. The 1998 census puts the population of Bambui at about twenty-five thousand people. It is anticipated that now this figure has increased above thirty thousand inhabitants. For traditional administrative purposes, the Bambui Kingdom is divided into forty-four regions, which are referred to as “quarters.”

History

The history of the kingdoms of the Grassfields, including Bambui, is written largely in terms of the geographical position of each kingdom in relation to other kingdoms of the region. This is important, because history focusing on a single kingdom, without assessing the position of such a kingdom in relation to neighbouring kingdoms, may tell only a partial story (Nkwi and Warnier 1982). The history of Bambui, especially as it relates to other kingdoms, has been written by Bonu (2012) and Amungwa (2012). Here, it suffices to focus only on those aspects that relate to Bambui’s art and culture.

Bambui oral tradition tells us that the Bambui, or people of Mbeuh—like those from the other kingdoms—came from the Upper Mbam River

area. This is the region of the sacred lake usually referred to as Kimi or Rifum, home to present-day Tikar. Hawksworth (1926, cited in Amungwa 2012), associates the origin of Bambui with Ndobo-Tikar, the region which extends from the Upper Mbam River to the Upper Noun River in present-day Adamawa Province, Cameroon. While at Ndobo, the people of Bambui lived in a locality called Nyamboya, which is today the Bankim sub-division of the Adamawa Province. Amungwa (2012) identifies Nyamboya as a locality that lies between longitudes 11° 30" E and 6° 30" E in the Upper Mbam River region of the Tikar plain, south of the Mambila Mountains. At Nyamboya, the inhabitants of Bambui lived as a well-organised community for an unspecified period before being forced to move to their next settlement, the Ndop Plain. Famine, succession squabbles, and threats from warlords have been advanced as some of the reasons for their departure from Nyamboya. They were led out of Nyamboya by one of their first leaders, Zehtingong (Bonu 2012; Fubah 2014).

Grassfields history holds that the Bambui people left Tikar alongside the people of other present-day Grassfields kingdoms, including Bafut, Bamendankwe, Nkwen, and Kom, and that they settled in different areas of the Ndop Plain before moving to their present sites. While at Ndop, the people of Bambui settled temporarily in present-day Bamali before natural disasters forced them to move again (Amungwa 2012). Bambui legend further attributes their departure from Ndop to inter-tribal wars, slave raids, and language difficulties. They were guided out of Ndop and Bamali by their long-time leader, Zehtingong.

From Bamali, the people of Bambui passed through Bamesing, then ascended the Sabga Hill and were immediately attracted to the vast plain ahead of them. Their interest in the vast low-lying plain prompted them to split into groups in order to ensure that they occupied as much land as they possibly could. Amungwa (2012, 21) notes that this strategy “was meant to avoid any surprises and possible subjugation of the whole group by an aggressive group.” In spite of this strategy, Amungwa (2012) goes on, one group of Bambui people migrated beyond the plain to land already occupied by a neighbouring village, Bafut. This group of Bambui is today vaguely remembered as Babadji—but not much is known about them.

The Bambui groups that finally settled on the Bambui plain were certainly not the first people to arrive on the land. A man called Nchu’uh-mbaa, with his wife and son (called Tar’ntoh), were already living on the land when they arrived. He was discovered through a unique sound which, most likely, came from a musical instrument that he played in his hut. Without this sound, people believe Nchu’uh-mbaa would have been

discovered much later, because his hut was quite hidden and surrounded by wild palms (probably for protection from enemies and migratory groups). Because of the uniqueness of Nchu'uh-mbaa's instrument, it was taken and added to the things of *Kwifor*, or the regulatory society, in exchange for a mask known as *Ntu'u*. To further reward Nchu'uh-mbaa for the instrument, he was awarded the traditional title of *Kha'chui* (*Nka'ashie*), which literally translates as "the pioneer settler" on the Bambui land (Amungwa 2012).

While Nchu'uh-mbaa might have been identified as the first person to settle in present day Bambui, it remains uncertain whether the various ethnic groups that migrated from Tikar and eventually settled in their present locations, including Nchu'uh-mbaa, found the land virgin or unoccupied (Jeffreys 1964; Ritzenthaler 1966; see also Amungwa 2012). Most Grassfields scholars believe that the region was largely covered by forest and that it has seen uninterrupted occupation for about four hundred and fifty years (Notue 2000; Notue and Bianca 2005). Those who inhabited the region before the arrival of the present-day settlers were most likely their ancestors. Nkwi and Warnier (1982) further observe that agriculture and animal husbandry were not common in the period preceding the arrival of the present-day Bambui and other Grassfields ethnic groups. As a result, most of the ethnic groups that migrated from Tikar to the Grassfields depended on hunting and the gathering of wild edible fruits for survival.

Amungwa (2012) notes that the various ethnic groups of the Bambui people met each other at a place called Phedieuh, or Mobue'h Ntsangi. Resting at this venue, the *fon* (or leader), sent one of his closest aides, Formanju, to a nearby valley to fetch water for him to drink. While in the valley, Formanju noticed that it had raffia plants, one of which had been pushed down, presumably by a wild animal. Curious to know what it was and how it tasted, Formanju collected some of the liquid in the leaf of another local plant and brought it back for the *fon* to taste. After drinking his water, the *fon* tasted the white liquid offered by Formanju and realised it was sweet. Given the sweet taste, the raffia farm was named after Formanju, the person who discovered it. Moreover, a decision was made that the *fon*'s palace, or residence, be constructed at Phedieuh, near the raffia bush. The majority of the Bambui population then decided to cluster their huts in that vicinity, while others migrated downward to Manduba (Fubah 2014) or Meurndubhe (Amungwa 2012), some kilometres away from Phedieuh.

After some years at the Phedieuh hillside location, the Bambui leadership and the population decided to move to a new site. While no