

ENCOUNTER, TRANSFORMATION AND IDENTITY

Cameroon Studies

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Volume 1

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1500–1970*

Edwin Ardener. Edited and with an Introduction by Shirley Ardener.

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*Encounter, Transformation and Identity: Peoples of the Western Cameroon
Borderlands, 1891–2000*
Edited by Ian Fowler and Verkijika G. Fanso

ENCOUNTER, TRANSFORMATION AND IDENTITY

Peoples of the Western Cameroon Borderlands, 1891–2000

Edited by
IAN FOWLER AND VERKIJIKA G. FANSO

With a Preface by
MARTIN AND DOROTHY NJEUMA



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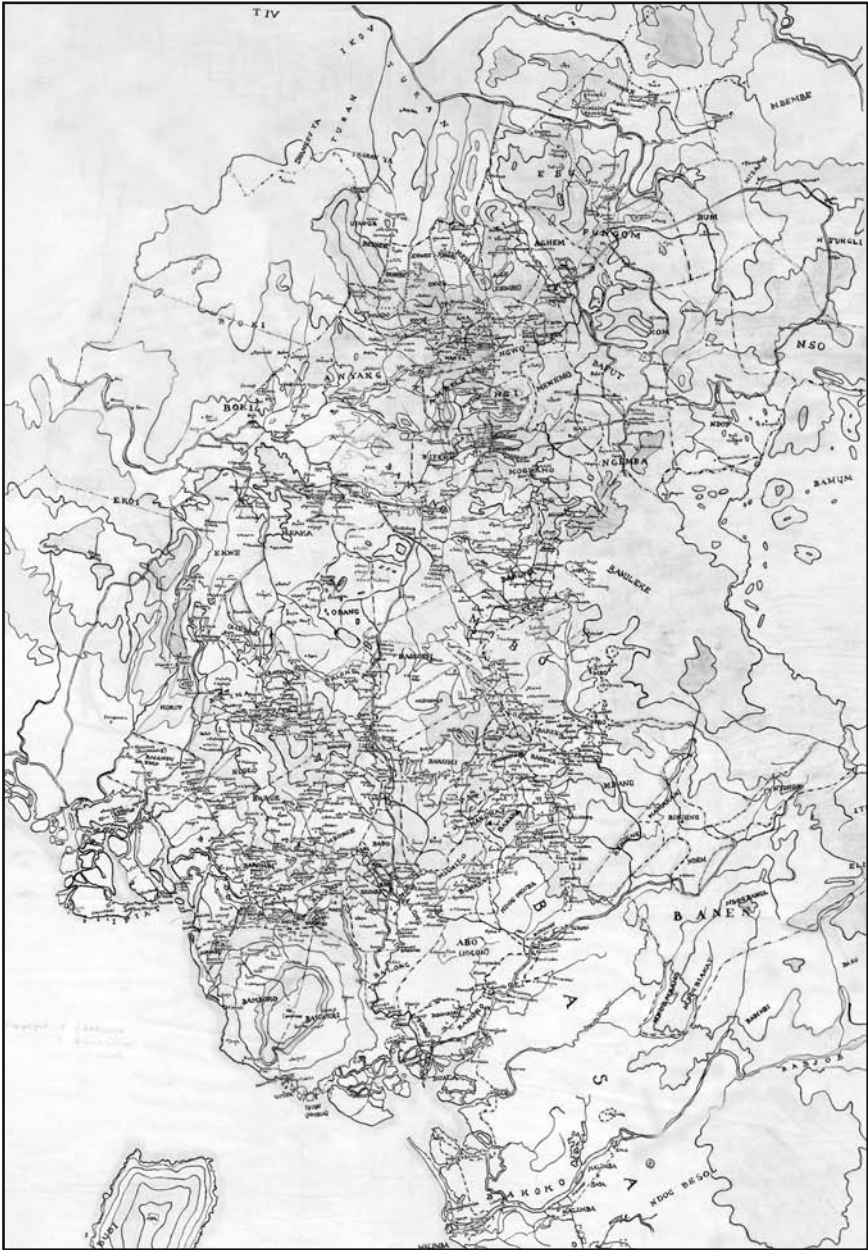
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Frontispiece: Edwin Ardener's handwritten (1966) map of Anglophone Cameroon © Shirley Ardener



For Shirley G. Ardener OBE

‘Iya Efosi’

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Foreword

Shirley Ardener: A Personal Note

Verkijika G. Fanso

My earliest knowledge of Edwin and Shirley Ardener¹ was through two of their publications, namely *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons* (1960) and Shirley's *Eye-witnesses to the Annexation of Cameroon, 1883–1887* (1968), which became invaluable sources to me in later years during my graduate studies in the United Kingdom. I had first come across these books when I was teaching at St Joseph's College Sasse, near Buea. To be honest, what I liked about the books was their titles, not so very much their content. At that time not much was written about Cameroon or African history, which, I was to learn later, some Eurocentric scholars claimed did not exist. Our school and college syllabuses then were laden with English and European history.

I began to read the works of the Ardeners with a lot more interest and understanding during my graduate studies at the Centre for West African Studies, University of Birmingham, in 1973–1974. My interest in Cameroonian and African history was much heightened. I was able to acquire my own copies of *Eyewitnesses*, as well as Edwin's *Coastal Bantu of the Cameroons* (1956) and E.M. Chilver and P.M. Kaberry's *Traditional Bamenda* (1968). I read everything on Cameroonian history that I came across.

I met Shirley and Edwin Ardener for the first time in 1982 at a Cameroon Grassfields Studies Conference held at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. It was then that I was able to discuss *Eyewitnesses to the Annexation* with Shirley and tell her how much the primary material in it had helped me with my MA dissertation in Birmingham and how it remained useful in my doctoral studies. I also learned from the Ardeners about their contributions to the creation of the Buea Archives. We all regretted the dilapidated condition in which the archives were kept. I spent about a month in Oxford researching at Rhodes House and other libraries and drafting the chapters of my doctoral thesis under Sally Chilver's supervision. Once or twice I met Shirley at Sally's house, and she would talk about Buea and the many people they knew there.

My close contact with Shirley began in 1995 when I was appointed Director of Cultural Heritage in the Cameroon Ministry of Culture, with administrative

Note for this section appears on page xiii.

responsibilities over the services of archives, museums, monuments, national languages and historical sites and figures. I had gone to Buea to find out more about the archives and other services under my directorship and to report on the actual situation to the Ministry of Culture. It was there I met Shirley, who was visiting the University of Buea at the time and spending many extra hours at the Buea Archives with Primus Forgwe, Prince Henry Mbain (staff) and Pierre Djoumbissi (chief of service), trying to rescue the rotting files and repair the dehumidifiers, heaters and whatever else. She was delighted to discover that I was heading the Department of Cultural Heritage. That day we had lunch in Buea and discussed the condition of the archives. I told Shirley that because of the financial crises, which were hitting the Cameroon government very hard, there was nothing to hope or look for from the ministry for the archives.

Shirley and I became determined to do everything possible to find means of rescuing the Buea Archives. Having considered the embassies and the high commissions in Yaoundé that were likely to sponsor a project or projects to rescue the Buea Archives, we decided to approach the Dutch, the British and the Germans. We then drafted a project, estimated costs for each item and decided that both Shirley and I should go to the Dutch embassy and talk with them before submitting our application. We were very well received at the Dutch embassy and listened to, thanks to Shirley's great skill at negotiating, pleading and persuading.

Within a week of our applying for a grant, someone was dispatched from the Dutch embassy to come to Buea, see and evaluate the project and report to the ambassador. Towards the end of that year I was invited to the Dutch embassy to sign a contract for their contributions towards the rehabilitation of the Buea Archives worth over CFA 7 million. We were able to repair the leaks in the roof, restore a room that had been damaged by fire, fix the heaters and humidifiers, rewire the building, build three of the six large shelves, install four metal doors and five iron window protectors, restore the plumbing system, acquire a new photocopier and commence with the treatment and shelving of the thousands of documents that lay heaped on the basement floor.

In October 1995 Shirley and a number of us, including Primus Forgwe, Henry Mbain, Michael Cheke and Pierre Djoumbissi of the archives, Mike Rowlands of the University of London, and Peter Geschiere and Piet Konings of Leiden University, met in Buea and decided to form the Association of Friends of Archives and Antiquities-Cameroon (AFAAC). This would take care of archives and antiquities and protect and promote Cameroon's cultural heritage. I became the general president and Shirley the coordinator of the European and North American section. Under AFAAC, and again with Shirley's help, we were able to get further grants from the British High Commission and the German embassy for the complete rehabilitation of the Buea Archives; a second grant from the Dutch embassy to run a three-day seminar for archives workers in the Municipal Councils of the Centre Province in Cameroon; and another German embassy grant to rehabilitate the historic Bismarck Fountain in Buea.

In 1996, with the support of Shirley Ardener and Sally Chilver, I was awarded a Rhodes Chair Research Fellowship for four months at Oxford. Shirley and I have continued to work together as members of AFAAC, and as friends, to assist

in the protection of the Buea Archives and other archives in Cameroon. Whenever Shirley visits she spends much of her personal resources and time assisting the AFAAC helpers at the archives, where there has been no governmental worker since 2004. We correspond regularly by email about the archives and other related and academic matters.

Note

1. A full bibliography of Shirley Ardener's publications is to be found in Bryceson, Okely and Weber (2007: 279–283).

Preface

Shirley Ardener: Fortifying Cameroon Studies

Martin and Dorothy Njeuma

Scholars will never cease to tell and revise the story of the encounter between incoming Europeans and Black Africans. This is so because of increasing worldwide interest and improved conditions and techniques to pursue research, in the tradition of Leopold von Ranke, to the bottom of ideas and events that have transformed Africa and Africans into strong members of present world communities. Indeed, Africanists the world over have become deeply involved and committed and are not contented ‘merely to recount what has been, but to share in moulding what should be’, in line with the words of the renowned Cameroonian scholar Bernard Nsokika Fonlon.¹ Accordingly, new dimensions in research and writing in African studies are taking, indeed have taken, shape as indigenous sources from within African societies constantly emerge from the doldrums of ignorance and neglect. Evidently this is so because Europeans deployed greater means of compulsion that in large measure explain the revolutionary nature of the European transformations on both sides of the European and African continents. In another sense, this means that the sources at the disposal of scholars for study of the various episodes of African history now have a tendency to be recycled into beefed-up interpretations that enrich the transcontinental flow and production of knowledge and individual self-consciousness.

We seek here to recount one such case of improving understanding in the history of Cameroon, that of Shirley G. Ardener and the pathways she has followed to become a leading figure in Cameroon studies today.² By destiny and, less so, by design, she and her husband, Edwin William Ardener (now of blessed memory) have projected the Bakweri onto the world stage. For more than half a century they have articulated and sustained research and publications, leading up to the 1996 volume *Kingdom on Mount Cameroon: Studies in the History of the Cameroon Coast, 1500–1970* by Edwin Ardener, edited and with an introduction by Shirley Ardener. In 2002 Shirley went on to publish *Swedish Ventures in Cameroon 1883–1923. Trade and Travel, People and Politics: The Memoir of Knut Knutson*. This volume, published by Berghahn Books (New York and Oxford), reflects Shirley’s lifelong commitment to research in the region and follows her earlier (1968) *Eye-*

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witnesses to the Annexation of Cameroon 1883–1887. Above all, it portrays the history and culture of the Bakweri at a period for which authentic documentary evidence is scarce, and it has revolutionized both oral and documentary-based research in Cameroon by privileging the ideas and activities of local actors. In this way, the book serves not only as a resource for academicians in schools and universities, but also as a literary confidence-building tool for those curious minds interested in knowing the stories of how naïve or clever their ancestors were in their dealings in cross-cultural settings.

Early Pioneers

When one reflects on the emergence of Cameroon studies, practically all scholars (foreign and indigenous) who had research interests in Western Cameroon from around the 1960s interacted with four British scholars, either directly in person or indirectly, through their publications and third-party informants. We are referring to Phyllis Kaberry, Sally Chilver, and Shirley and Edwin Ardener. Their individual attitudes and approaches to scholarship exhibited shared traits of temerity, commitment and persistence throughout their association with Cameroon, its peoples, cultures and historical transformations. Chilver and Kaberry concentrated their attention on the Western Cameroon Grassfields. Chilver subsequently supported the creation of the Kaberry Resource Centre in Bamenda (Nwana 2004: 13–14). The Ardeners also carried out fieldwork in the Grassfields, in Esu, but their interests became focused more on the coastal regions of Cameroon from the pre-colonial to postcolonial periods. A befitting testimony is the degree to which they and their studies have served as references in Cameroon studies. What immediately comes to mind is their participation at major international conferences that concern Cameroon and have considerably advanced Cameroon's historiography in the English and French traditions.

The conference that took place in Paris in 1973 was amongst the foremost. The purpose was to investigate 'the contributions of ethnographical research to the history of Cameroon cultures' (Tardits 1981, 1996: 141–164). The conference provided an occasion for discussion of feedback and fieldwork methodologies between several older and younger scholars. Over thirty years have passed since then, and Shirley Ardener and Sally Chilver remain active in revisiting, and seeking to tie up loose ends between, disciplines in Cameroon studies. Presently they see the fruits of their labour in their students, in whom they instilled the same desire to make and remake knowledge in their fields of study.³

Our own activities as historians and ethnographers of Africa lead to the production of knowledge that has dual currency in academic and political realms ... In her works, Sally incorporates processes of reanalysis and reflection not usually carried out by one individual. For a considerable period, her work has problematised the relationship between ethnographic knowledge and cultural and political representations of identity. (Fowler and Zeitlyn 1996: xix–xx)

A Three-legged Race

Shirley and Edwin Ardener started this long march when they met as two bright students at the London School of Economics in the second half of the 1940s. As soon as they were married, destiny whisked them off to Eastern Nigeria to begin a long career in research under the auspices of the famous Nigerian (formerly West African) Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER), based at the then University College of Ibadan. This was in 1949, a time when Nigeria was experiencing radical changes and its Western-fabricated elite was experimenting with new strategies of integration into the colonial orbit of power. In British colonial circles, political think tanks thought that colonial policy guidelines should take into account impartial studies that focused on real local problems of the overseas countries and their peoples. This called for more applied or policy-oriented research involving grassroots fieldwork in Nigeria and the Cameroons. Therefore, recruiting agencies hunted for and appointed many young British graduates with solid academic training to the colonial administration, or recruited them to pursue careers in African research. The Ardener couple fitted this profile well. Financed by a series of research grants, through WAISER/NISER, Edwin's research interests remained focussed on the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria. The creation of the Cameroon Development Corporation in 1947, the decision to make it an effective instrument for socioeconomic progress and the need to conduct policy-oriented research brought the Ardeners into the Cameroons, which at the time constituted part of the British political set-up of Nigeria.

Shirley's own career and research history, as distinct from Edwin's, has two remarkable phases:

- (1) 1949–1987: working in partnership with Edwin up until his premature death in 1987.
- (2) 1988–present day: mobilization and creation of structures for sustainability, durability and perpetuation of their works and involvement of successors.

We are here talking of fifty-five years of continuous commitment to research on the coast of West Africa. Sheer longevity in this field of studies, and the blessings of good health and memory, have made Shirley a true encyclopaedia of Cameroon studies.

The relation between Shirley and Edwin, as two researchers, requires a brief comment. In the first phase, both of them conducted research as if by a *Pact Concordia*, turning their four legs into a three-legged machine by firmly strapping one left to one right leg to create a middle leg without distinction as to who was in control. They made and developed a common course of research, with both influencing the outcome and being a part of each other's efforts. Malcolm Chapman, who knows the Ardeners well, refers to the combination of the dimensions of 'simple assistance' and 'active collaboration': 'Much of Ardener's work was assisted by his wife Shirley: in particular, a collaborative study of the social and economic effects of the plantation system in what was then the Southern Cameroons, which

resulted in the volume co-authored by the Ardeners and W.A. Warmington, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons* (1960)' (Chapman 1989: viii). This remark further recognizes Shirley's independent academic prowess, motivations and commitments, even while her husband was alive. Shirley could climb rocky volcanic hills and descend valleys without the aid of a walking stick, as long as there was need to reach a desired target. She and Edwin had the same objectives and worked in near-perfect partnership, Shirley participating in whatever Edwin did and vice versa.

Furthermore, the sheer immensity, and the new and often unpredictable nature, of fieldwork in remote towns and villages was so demanding to this young couple that they could not afford to work separately. The local, and sometimes global, environment imposed, otherwise. It was very much a matter of getting on with the task at hand. One typical incident occurred at a top-level meeting in Buea just before the 1959 general election in the Southern Cameroons: 'In 1959 (2nd January) the Secretary of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjold, stopped in Buea to meet separately members of the government, (Dr Foncha, S.T. Muna and A.N. Jua) and members of the two main opposition parties (Dr E.M.L. Endeley, P. [sic] Mbile and P. Motombi-Woleta) to ascertain their intentions. As the recording machines were not working properly, she (Shirley) was asked to take notes in the meeting.'⁴ The meeting was rather stormy as the main protagonists (the Kamerun National Democratic Party and the Cameroon People's National Congress) were at daggers drawn and would not budge from their positions. It was therefore not at all easy to take down coherent minutes that would satisfy all sides. However, Shirley did make a difference. All sides approved her account of the proceedings as a true record of this crucial encounter in establishing a common stand on the political future of the Southern Cameroons. Peter M. Efange, Chief of Small Soppo until September 2006, and other Bakweri elite who were prominent in the government at the time, including the octogenarian Chief Liwonjo of Mapanja, confirmed these local perceptions of the nature of Shirley's services.

Return to Britain

Britain went on to grant independence to Nigeria on 1 October 1960, leading to the administration of the Cameroons under United Nations Trusteeship in its own right. Naturally, this influenced the research strategies of the Ardeners. It was also the case that the colonial fund for research, having lost its *raison d'être*, largely dried up, and the Ardeners had to return to Britain in the first few years following independence. Reluctantly, Edwin took a teaching assignment at the University of Oxford on the understanding that he was to spend his vacation periods continuing the numerous research projects that they had initiated, and whose outcomes they had felt so passionately involved with, while they lived in Cameroon.

The primary concern now, it would seem, was to influence local Cameroonian intelligentsia to take up research as a career. In order to attain these goals, the Ardeners initiated seminars and group discussions in Bamenda and Buea. It was through their inspiration that many students of our generation, such as Elias

Nwana, Simon J. Epale, David Atogho, Francis Nkwain, Benedicta Ngu, Tambi Eyong Mbuagbaw, Ben Simo, Gwen Burnley, Patrick Sine and Dan Akwo Mengot, developed the interest and appetite to pursue postgraduate degrees overseas, and then careers in research and teaching. Before then only European academics and some from Nigeria and the Gold Coast (Ghana) had recognized the importance of such capacity building in research. Like a miracle, Cameroonians too were now emerging in the arena and an intellectual history was coming into place, whose details would themselves become the concern of future historians.

What happened at these initiation seminars, or discussion get-togethers, was that the group asked a number of people to present a subject or a feature of their research findings on a given day. Discussions, comments and observations followed in such a way that every participant had an opportunity to talk. The principle was to encourage understanding of, rather than to defend, a point of view. Because those from England were usually only visiting and thus had a packed programme, the meetings were few. However, when they did take place they produced great moments of intellectual exchange and creative thinking, and above all they taught us how to take the floor in an academic forum, and how to become familiar with research terminologies. Sometimes the meetings happened spontaneously, when a few interested persons in regular attendance met at the Mountain Club in Buea for a drink. One can again testify, for the interest of specialists on the history of African students in Britain and the U.S., that when most of us eventually travelled to Britain and elsewhere for further studies, we easily integrated ourselves in the social and academic milieu because the prevailing atmosphere was quite familiar.

The Ardeners have been prolific in their publications. We do not wish to address their publications here because Malcolm Chapman and Shirley herself have extensively done so in *The Voice of Prophecy and Other Essays* and in the *Cameroon Studies Series*. Our intention is merely to mention some functional aspects of the publications. The publications, both joint and individual, are the best illustration of the nature of the intellectual partnership that Shirley and Edwin maintained and the approach that gave birth to their first major publication in 1960: *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*. At the time of publication, it was a tremendous revelation, a reference study of the first order of the economic and social life in the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC). Edwin had already published *Coastal Bantu of the Cameroons* in the International African Institute series in 1956. Shirley also had earlier published a leading article in the same conference proceedings of the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (Ibadan) entitled 'Banana Co-operatives in the Southern Cameroons'. Though the methodology was predominantly sociological, the paper highlighted a major Bakweri entrepreneurial activity since the Second World War and shared the same research orientation as the *Plantation* volume. The joint nature of Shirley and Edwin's efforts, rendered more effective by their strong linguistic competence⁵ in Bakweri, is exemplified in their writings by frequent references to 'us' rather than to the first person singular.

Their activities reached far beyond sustainable capacity-building and publications of research findings, extending also to the arduous and technical tasks

involved in founding the Cameroon National Archives at Buea. Evidently, the edifice of the archives and its contents, and what these represent, constitute the greatest legacy that the Ardeners have left for Cameroon as a joint effort. It all started as a simple idea that glowed from within them: that a people without memory of its past is doomed to live with mistakes forever. An authentic Cameroonian eyewitness to the efforts that the Ardeners deployed and the sort of risks they undertook to make a dream come true, the late Dr S.J. Epale, who held a PhD from Oxford University, recalled their accomplishments in getting the archives to function as follows:

This couple (Shirley and Edwin) painstakingly gathered bits and pieces of weather beaten German and English files from the moth-infested attic of the old German-built Secretariat in Buea and set up the present provisional archives in Buea, which today [1987] is crowded with young Cameroonians either preparing for higher degrees at overseas and Yaoundé universities or trying to develop the history of their country in order to rediscover their cultural heritage and build up new values that are in keeping with the present realities of the country ... The country owes the Ardeners a great debt for bequeathing this storehouse of information about its past. (Epale 1985: xviii).

Indeed, they carried out their actions within a rather specific context. In 1961–62, a powerful UNESCO delegation visited the newly created Federal Republic of Cameroon to survey possibilities of setting up a university, or universities, to respond to the bicultural educational systems that reunification had just created in Cameroon. A long-range vision expressed optimism in the imminent creation of the Anglo-Saxon University in West Cameroon (later the North West and South West Provinces). The founding of an archive would fortify the foundation of such an academic culture, which would be valid grounds for locating the future university in Buea.

In this capacity, Iya Efosi and Mola Lyonga (aka Mola Ngombe) – respectively, the Bakweri names for Shirley and Edwin – were welcome in Cameroon any time and could visit the country as they liked. Their names figured in the State Protocol with all that this implied. In return, they conducted government business as it related to the archives and offered general and benevolent consultancy. It stands to their credit that the Rules and Regulations they drafted in the early 1960s on archives and the protection of antiquities are still in force. For example, the *Guide for the identification and protection of antiquities and the export of prohibited artefacts*⁶ enabled the Fon of Kom in the 1970s to demand the repatriation of the sacred Afo-a-kom statue from the Furman Art Gallery in New York.⁷

Striving to Attain: The Years of Mobilization

When Edwin passed away unexpectedly in October 1987, Shirley had the choice either to retire early, or to strive bravely to finish their difficult but exalting work. Like a Bamum under spiritual inspiration to ‘pursue to attain’ (Tardits 1996: 141), i.e. to commit oneself totally to reach a target, Shirley put on the mantle of an intellectual crusader, pen and torchlight in hand, so that the world’s academic com-

munity, particularly Cameroonian and Nigerian, could profit posthumously from nearly all of Edwin's research materials. Two familiar proverbs reflect her guiding spirit: firstly, 'one hand does not tie a bundle, many hands do'; and secondly, that 'whenever a great man passes away, a new one springs up'. Such a spirit of optimism is an imbedded feature in Bakweri culture. Under the influence of Shirley, two significant groups were founded to tie up the loose ends of the bundle and face the challenges of Edwin's disappearance.

She could not do it all alone; she turned to friends and interested scholars around and about her immediate surroundings in Oxford. Thus, in 1996, a small but deeply committed group of indomitable scholars founded the *Cameroon Study Series* with Berghahn Books, a highly reputable publishing house in Oxford, in order to extend and expand understanding of the Ardener sources and Cameroon Studies in general. So far, the series has produced seven separate volumes; *Swedish Ventures* is the fourth in the series. This is thanks to the assiduity of the series editors, the indefatigable Sally Chilver, Shirley Ardener and Ian Fowler.

The second initiative, which applied the same 'bundle theory' to generate collective action, was to found and render benevolent services to the Association of Friends of Archives and Antiquities-Cameroon (AFAAC). The Association has its headquarters in Buea with a registered number from the Ministry of Territorial Administration.⁸ Its motto is 'The Key to the Past.' AFAAC took off rapidly. It drew up a constitution and internal regulations, and in quick succession held successful general assemblies at two prestigious locations in Buea and Yaoundé, respectively at the Alliance Franco-Camerounaise complex and the National Conference Centre, as well as at Oxford. Membership now stands at over 200, and the list is not closed. Under the able and selflessly devoted leadership of Founding President Verkijika G. Fanso, currently Professor of History, University of Yaoundé I, and formerly Director of Cultural Heritage overseeing National Archives and Museums with residence in Yaoundé, the association has received institutional support from many sources. These include the Cameroon Ministry of Culture, the British Council, the German and Dutch embassies, the British High Commission, Alliance Franco-Camerounaise in Buea, the universities and Fako-ship Company Limited, Cameroon.

The most recent initiative by Shirley's friends at the University of Buea has been the creation of a research project entitled 'Multidisciplinary Project on the Historical, Social, Psychological and Material Culture of Mount Cameroon Peoples'. Its significance is that it has created a forum for reflection between town and gown to perpetuate the scholarly traditions that have endeared the Ardeners in the region. The expected output includes research papers, public lectures and an exhibition of cultural artefacts, as well as a photographic exhibition of materials collected in Cameroon but now in overseas collections.

By way of conclusion, it behoves us to mention that at the time of writing, Shirley's strategies of tirelessly encouraging the coalescence of efforts and interests have succeeded in keeping the National Archives in Buea afloat and respected both inside and outside Cameroon. AFAAC already has a global affiliation and an NGO status, which will facilitate sponsorship for many proposed linked projects, such as the extension of the Reading Room to cope with the soaring flow of stu-

dents from Cameroon's six state universities and especially from the University of Buea. Systematic collection, coding and classification of documents from ministries and parastatals (especially the oldest, the Cameroons Development Corporation 1947–2004), recruitment and training of professional staff and purchase of equipment have been the priorities of the staff of the archives. AFAAC continues to have a solid base to stand by in the institutional framework of a copyright library and archival landscape.⁹

Notes

1. Note on inside page of all issues of *ABBIA, Journal of Cameroon Cultural Review*.
2. It is therefore not surprising that, whenever and wherever Shirley puts her feet in Bakweriland today, more than two generations of local people greet this soft-spoken heroine in ways that underline familiarity and well-earned affection.
3. See recent publications in the series *Cameroon Studies*, Berghahn Books, series editors Sally Chilver, Shirley Ardener and Ian Fowler, vols. 1–7.
4. National Archives, Buea, Comprehensive File S.S. 567 E. Ardener, Technical Cooperation Adviser on Archives and Antiquities: Report, May 1963, p. 12. For a more general appreciation, see Patience Tatah, *The National Archives of Buea (NAB) and Nation Building in Cameroon, 1959–1996*, long essay, Department of History, University of Buea, April 2004.
5. See Edwin's *Mòkpé (Bakweri) English Dictionary*, based on his card index and notes on grammar, edited by Bruce Connell (1997).
6. Government Press, Buea, 1968, sponsored by the Ministry of Primary Education and West Cameroon Antiquities Commission.
7. For the ritual significance of the Afo-a-kom sacred statue and the story of its peregrinations to and from the U.S., see Walter Gam Nkwi (2004) and Isaac A. Ndambi (2004: 176).
8. Reference number 063/G.37/D 14/1/VOL. X11/946 (OAPP).
9. Tatah (2004) devotes a chapter to the history of AFAAC.

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Abbreviations

AFAAC	Association of Friends of Archives and Antiquities-Cameroon
BLACOM	Bakweri language committee
CCCRW	Centre for Cross Cultural Research on Women
CDC	Cameroon Development Corporation
CFA	Currency
CPDM	Cameroon People's Democratic Movement
CPNC	Cameroon People's National Congress
CWU	Cameroons Welfare Union
CYL	Cameroons Youth League
DKG	Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft
D.O.	District Officer
GNK	Gesellschaft Nordwest Kamerun
HEL	British Council Higher Education Link
IGS	International Gender Studies Centre
KNDP	Kamerun National Democratic Party
LECA-USA	Lebialem Cultural Association
NISER	Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research
NYM	Nigerian Youth Movement
SWEDA	Development Association of the South West
WAISER	West African Institute for Social and Economic Research
WGS	Department of Women and Gender Studies
UB	University of Buea
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
/UNITWIN	/University Twinning and Networking

Contributors

Edwin Ardener was, for a period spanning four decades, an inspirational influence on scholars in Cameroon and anthropology students at Oxford. He studied anthropology at LSE in Malinowski's former department and later undertook substantial periods of fieldwork in Eastern Nigeria and West Cameroon with his wife, Shirley. Edwin's work in Cameroon on history, politics, language and identity is still very highly regarded by local scholars and area specialists. A bibliography of all his writings can be found in *The Voice of Prophecy and Other Essays* (Blackwell 1989; second edition Berghahn Books 2007); those just on Africa are listed in *Kingdom on Mount Cameroon* (Berghahn Books 1996). Edwin Ardener was also Advisor on Antiquities to the West Cameroon Government. Perhaps his greatest legacy to Cameroon was, in partnership with Shirley, to set up the Archives for West Cameroon – later to become the Cameroon National Archives – at Buea. In 1962 he was appointed to a lectureship at Oxford, where he helped to establish the Human Sciences degree and chaired the Institute of Social Anthropology, and where he held a Fellowship at St John's College. Edwin died unexpectedly at the age of 59 in 1987.

Fiona Bowie studied anthropology in Durham and Oxford. She is currently Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Bristol. She has conducted fieldwork in Wales and Cameroon, and with Cameroonians living in the U.S. and Europe. Her interests are mainly in the areas of religion, kinship (especially the circulation of children), Welsh language, ethnicity and identity. Publications include *The Anthropology of Religion* (Blackwell 2000/2006), *Cross-Cultural Approaches to Adoption* (ed., Routledge 2004), *The Coming Deliverer* (ed., University of Wales Press 1997) and *Women and Missions: Past and Present* (ed., with D. Kirkwood and S. Ardener, Berg 1993).

Sally Chilver undertook extensive ethnographic work in Cameroon in 1958, 1960 and 1963 together with the anthropologist Phyllis Kaberry. In 1964 Chilver was made Principal of Bedford College, London University, and then in 1971 she moved to Oxford to become Principal of Lady Margaret College, Oxford University. She has published widely on the history and ethnography of the Bamenda Grassfields and on Cameroonian history in general. In 2001 she published *Cameroon's Tycoon: Max Esser's Expedition and its Consequences*, vol. 3 in the *Cameroon Studies Series*, edited together with Ute Röschenhaler. Sally is known

affectionately to the Cameroonist community as ‘Mama for Story’, and she has encouraged and promoted Cameroonian scholarship over two generations.

Joyce Bayande Mbongo Endeley is Chair and Associate Professor of Gender Studies and Agricultural Extension Education in the Department of Women and Gender Studies at the University of Buea, Cameroon. She is also the Director of Academic Affairs. Her teaching, research and outreach activities have focused on gender/women and agriculture, empowerment, credit schemes and impact assessment of development programmes in and out of Cameroon. She has several publications to her credit, is joint editor of a new book series titled *Issues in Gender and Development Volume One: New Gender Studies from Cameroon and the Caribbean*, printed and distributed by the African Books Collective (ABC), and serves as a consultant with various international and national bodies.

Verkijika G. Fanso is Professor of History at the University of Yaoundé I. He has played a key role in promoting the culture of Cameroon and supporting the Cameroon Archives at Buea. He is a member of the Nso’ History Society and the Cameroon Academy of Sciences, and is President of the Association of Friends of Archives and Antiquities-Cameroon (AFAAC). His posts have included Vice Dean in the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences, University of Yaoundé I, and Director of Cultural Heritage in the Cameroon Ministry of Culture. He received a Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD) Scholarship in 1989 and a Rhodes Chair Committee Fellowship in 1996, and was a Fulbright Senior Scholar-in-Residence in 2005. He has published very widely in international journals on African political history and Cameroonian history and culture and is the author of the two-volume Macmillan series *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*. His current research interests include genetic history – specifically, using Y chromosomes of contemporary populations to determine paternal relationships and migrations – Nso’ landlordism and problems of multi-patriarchy in sub-Saharan Africa.

Ian Fowler is a lecturer in social anthropology at the Oxford Brookes University. He has carried out fieldwork in Cameroon over a thirty-year period. He is a general editor of the *Cameroon Studies Series* and has published on material culture, art, ethnicity, history and politics in Cameroon. His current research interests include material culture, ritual, death, witchcraft and twins in the Grassfields of Cameroon.

Peter Geschiere is Professor of African Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam (earlier at Leiden University). Since 1971 he has undertaken historical-anthropological fieldwork in various parts of Cameroon and elsewhere in West Africa. His publications include *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Post-colonial Africa*; *Globalization and Identity: Dialectics of Flow and Closure* (with Birgit Meyer) and *The Forging of Nationhood* (with Gyan Pandey). He has also written numerous essays on various aspects of economy, society and culture in West Africa.

Caroline Ifeka is Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of Anthropology, University College London, and has taught social anthropology at various higher education institutions. In the mid 1990s she established, with friends, a conservationist nongovernmental organization (NGO) based in Cross River state, Nigeria, and carried out fieldwork on indigenous cosmologies, gender and land among the Anyang and Boki peoples of the Nigeria-Cameroon border. In 2006 she established an NGO to tackle pastoralists' extreme vulnerability and abuse of their human rights by settled majority groups. Currently, she is investigating popular youth cultures in 'hot spot' areas in North and South Nigeria, where 'restive' (unemployed) herdless pastoralist and landless farmer youth engage in vigilantism, armed robbery and other informal cultures of force.

Ludovic Lado is a Jesuit priest. He holds degrees in philosophy and theology. He has recently completed his PhD in social anthropology at ISCA (Oxford University) with a focus on the localization of charismatic renewal in African Catholicism. He has now taken up a teaching post in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Management of the Catholic University of Central Africa in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Nalova Lyonga is Professor of English specializing in African Literature and Gender Studies, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academics at the University of Buea, Cameroon. Her areas of teaching and research cover feminist theories, African and African American women, especially the sources of empowerment in African women's oral tradition and literary criticism on modern African literature. Other interests include distance education.

Michael Mbapndah Ndobegang teaches history at the Ecole Normale Supérieure of the University of Yaoundé I. He gained his Bachelors and Maitrise degrees from the then University of Yaoundé, and continued as a Fulbright Fellow at Boston University, where he obtained MA and PhD degrees in 1980 and 1985 respectively. His doctoral dissertation on the role of chiefs in Cameroonian politics was carried out with a grant from the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies. From 1997 to 2002 he served as an Opposition Member of Parliament in the Cameroon National Assembly.

Margaret Niger-Thomas is a social anthropologist lecturing in the Department of Women and Gender Studies, University of Buea, Cameroon. She is the Provincial Delegate of 'Women's Empowerment and the Family' in the South West Province of Cameroon. She obtained her PhD in social sciences from Leiden University in 2000. She is Founding President of the Manyu Women's Self-Reliance Foodstuff Co-operative, and Chairperson of the Women's Information and Co-ordination Forum (WICOF), a provincial NGO based in Buea, Cameroon.

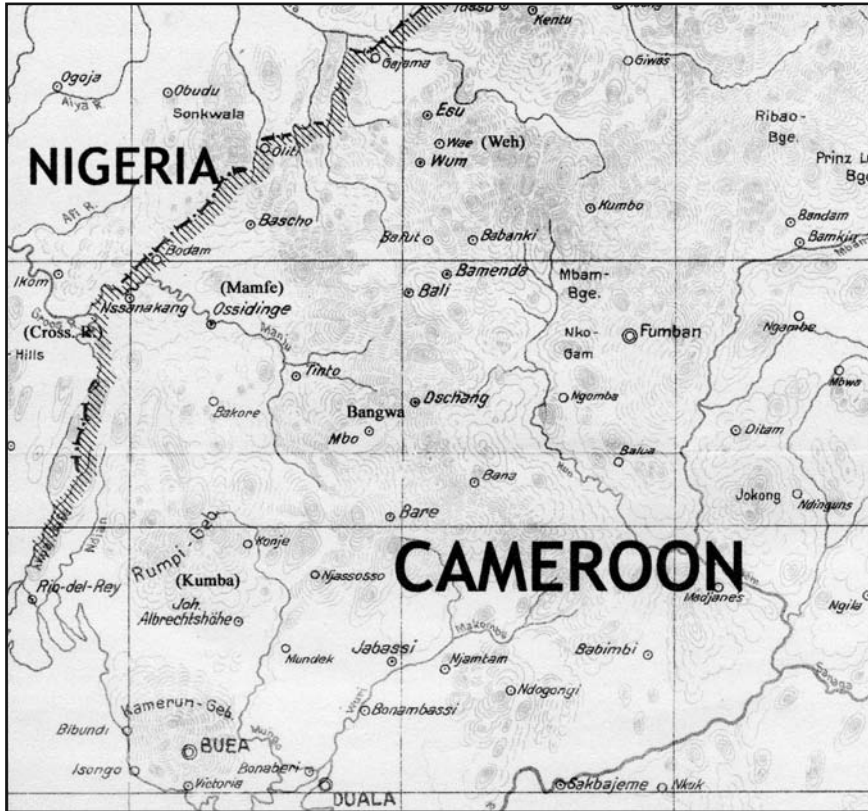
Dorothy Njeuma is currently Rector of the University of Yaoundé I. She was formerly the pioneer Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buea, having previously served as Director General of the Buea University Centre and technical adviser to the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research. She is a graduate

of Brown University and the University of London, where she gained her PhD in zoology. Dorothy Njeuma has published widely in the field of higher education, especially education policy in Cameroon.

Martin Zac Njeuma gained his PhD in African history at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and went on to teach at the University of Yaoundé. He took on the roles of Maitre de Conférences and Research Coordinator before becoming Head of the History Department and later Dean of the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences. He was the pioneer Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the Anglophone University at Buea. He has published widely on African history and founded the Association of African Historians. Martin is currently Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Buea, Cameroon.

Ute Röschenthaler lectures in anthropology at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University of Frankfurt, Germany. She has conducted field research in Cameroon, Nigeria and Mali. Her research interests are intellectual property, women's and men's associations, diffusion of culture and media anthropology. Her publications include *Die Kunst der Frauen* (Berlin 1993, with Jürg Schneider and Bernhard Gardi, eds.); *Fotofieber. Bilder aus West- und Zentralafrika: Die Reisen von Carl Passavant 1883–1885* (Basel 2005); and 'Translocal Cultures: The Slave Trade and Cultural Transfer in the Cross River Region', in *Social Anthropology* 14(1) (2006). She is currently completing *Purchasing Culture: The Dissemination of Associations in the Cross River Region*.

Map 1.1: Cameroon-Nigeria Borderlands (adapted from Detzner 1923)



Voicing Identity

Ian Fowler

This volume presents key historical and innovative ethnographic essays that adopt critical and analytical approaches to the production of ethnic, political, religious and gendered identities for the peoples of the South West Province of Cameroon and the Nigerian borderlands (see Map 1.1). It draws together insider and outsider voices reflecting on these issues and is intended to honour the work and person of Shirley Ardener, a pre-eminent Cameroonist scholar and friend of Cameroon.

Fittingly, we offer for the first time a major work by the late Edwin Ardener. His chapter presents a critical analysis of the axes of oral tradition and emergent administrative identities for a significant ethnographic region, the Mamfe ‘Over-side’, which till now (see chapters in this volume by Ifeka, Röschenthaler and Niger-Thomas) has been relatively unlit. This region played a major role in the later slave trade and was crucial to the emergence of surrounding, broader ethnic groupings – Efik, Tiv and those of the Bamenda Grassfields. It is an example of Ardener’s meticulous handling of written and oral sources, enhanced by his linguistic competence and lightened by a gentle humour. This significant work provides a valuable basis for further ethnohistorical and ethnographic research. Originally it was to be part of a broader (sadly unrealized) extensive ethnographic project¹ that would have included the work of Chilver and Kaberry (1968) on the adjacent Bamenda Grassfields² and that of Claude Tardits (1980) on the Bamum. As a supplement and historical backdrop to Edwin’s chapter we include here previously unpublished selected extracts from Sally Chilver’s epitome of Hermann Detzner’s 1923 published account of the joint Anglo-German boundary commission that established the boundary between Nigeria and Kamerun, from the ‘Alantika Mountains to the Cross River’, between September 1912 and March 1913.

The themes raised in the first part of this volume are picked up by contemporary insider and outsider, Cameroonian and Cameroonist voices. Martin and Dorothy Njeuma, Peter Geschiere, Ute Röschenthaler, Michael Ndobegang and Verkijika Fanso, in their various contributions, deal with historical, external en-