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# The Impact of Codeswitching in a Multilingual Speaker

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*Abstract*

The aim for this paper is to present the results of a research conducted to identify the impact of codeswitching in a multilingual speaker. The research was conducted via electronic since the participant and the researcher are not in the same country. The results were obtained by an interview where the participant share her experience by being a multilingual speaker in Germany. The results show the effect and how the participant feel regarding the phenomenon of codeswitching.

*Keywords*: code-switching, multilingual speaker, multicultural environment.

1. Introduction

Producing a language is a whole process that involves many aspects, and it is not always easy for the speaker. As it is known there are different theories and approaches that mentions its ideas of how a language is learn and produce. Those theories and approaches not only focus on the production or learning of a person's native language but also of a second or third language. When a person decides to learn a second or third language it is very likely that after acquiring it or them, the person will encounter phenomena such as the codeswitching.

Codeswitching as is already known is the adaptation on how the speaker decide to use the language, how does she or he will use the language structure, this phenomenon occurs between two languages. Mentioning the above codeswitching is an important element of the process of being bilingual and or multilingual, for this reason this research tempts to find out *to what extent does codeswitching influence the language production of a multilingual in Germany*. By sharing the results is expect to help more people to be aware of the influence and effects that codeswitching has in a multilingual person.

2. Literature review

2.1 *Codeswitching in social and grammatical perspective*

Many definitions can be provided to describe what does codeswitching is, its impact or even how it is performed depending on the perspective. Social and grammatical perspective are examples of the perspectives in which various research projects have been developed.

Myers-Scotton (1998) came out with the Markedness Model (MM) which mentions that within each language individuals are able to identify the linguistic variety and by whom the variations are used and in what context.

In Moyer's (2009: 173) work a codeswitching definition is provide in a grammatical perspective and it is described as "as the embedding of grammatical information/structure from two (or more) languages within the same syntactic unit, usually the sentence but also within intermediate and phrasal level constituents."

With the MM codeswitching behavior can be provide and with Moyer's (2009) definition a more grammatical idea of codeswitching is provided.

2.2 *Varieties of code switching*

According to Rose and Van Dulm (2006: 1): "Markedness model, according to which there are four types of code switching, namely marked, unmarked, sequential unmarked, and exploratory code switching."

Markedness model also stablish that all communities have different code varieties of language and the of them are marked and unmarked opposition. According to Myers-Scotton (1998) as cited in Rose and Van Dulm (2006) code marked is the variation that involves those norms that the community would not expect to be use and on the other hand the unmarked one are those norms that the community would expect to be used.

2.3 *Multilingual*

According to Edwards (2002: 11), multilingual can be defined "...as the use of three or more languages."

In their book Cenoz and Genesse (1998: 7) mentioned some of the reasons why multilingualism has been growing over the years; "there is a growing need for individual multilingualism as a result of increasing communications among different parts of the world and the need to be competent in languages of wider communication."

2.4 *Superdiversity*

Vertovec (2007), as cited in Hall and Nilep (2015), came up with a model call super-diversity. This model suggests that instead of following the multiculturalism, other aspects such as "ethnic, economic, gender, age, education, and citizen or immigrant statuses co-present in urban populations" (p. 30), should be take into account.

2.5 *Language policy*

According to Annamalai (2002: 2) "language policy is basically about deciding on the networking of languages." In Annamalai's work is also mentioned how is the network built and

according to Annamalai (2002): "The network is built on the functional relation between languages. Language policy, then, is not about a language but is necessarily about languages, about the functional (or ecological) relationship between languages" (p. 1).

### 2.6 *Emotions*

Marcos (1976) as cited in Dewaele (2012) "named the emotional detachment that bilinguals often have in their L2 as the "detachment effect." According to him, the L2 fulfills an intellectual function and is relatively devoid of emotion, whereas the L1 clearly expresses emotions" (p. 2).

### 2.7 *Predicting codeswitching*

According to Solorio and Liu (2008) "Predicting possible code-switching points can help develop more accurate methods for automatically processing mixed-language text, such as multilingual language models for speech recognition systems and syntactic analyzers" (p. 973).

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 *Research question*

As mentioned before this research tempt to provide an answer for the following question:

*To what extent does codeswitching influence the language production of a multilingual in Germany?*

### 3.2 *Qualitative research*

According to Saldana (2011) qualitative research is "an umbrella term for a wide variety of approaches to and methods for the study of natural social life" (p. 3).

In other words, qualitative research is the one who allows the researcher to obtain information about a certain topic in a more natural/ real way and since this research is intended to look for the experience of the participant qualitative research was done to obtain the result.

## 4. Case study

According to Gustafsson (2017: 2) "A case study can be defined as an intensive study about a person, a group of people or a unit, which is aimed to generalize over several units."

In order to obtain the results, the case study was used to identify the units based on the participant's experience. The participant for this research was a multilingual 30-year-old woman living and working in international human resources in Germany. She has been living in Germany for the past three years. Most of her daily life is.

### 4.1 *Inquiry tools*

According to Burgess (1984) the typical qualitative research interview has been described as a 'conversation with a purpose' (p. 102), as cited in Heigham and Croker (2009).

For the research an interview was design and applied to the participant in order to obtain the results. As mentioned before, the participant is not in Mexico that is why the interview was carried out in virtual way by using Microsoft team's platform.

5. Results and discussion

In this section, I present the results of the research to mention *the influence that codeswitching has in the language production of a multilingual in Germany.* The general results seem to indicate that codeswitching influences both language production and writing in the L3.

The participant was not aware of the term codeswitching, for me it was interesting to know this. When I explained the definition of the term to her, she mentioned that she was aware that sometime the phenomenon of codeswitching happened to her, but she did not know that it had a specific name. The participant mentioned that she considers that she notices the phenomenon pf codeswitching more from the social perspective.

She mentions that at the beginning this phenomenon was hard for her because she tends to feel a little frustrated since she was aware of the norms and structures of each language, but something occurs when she needs to write.

As mentioned before the research was conducted with a woman living in Germany, she can be considered as a multilingual person since as mentioned before in the literature review a multilingual person is the one who speaks three or more languages. In this case the participant speaks Spanish, English and German.

With participant's responses during the interview, it can be said that the participant feels more comfortable using her L1 that is Spanish in very specific contexts. She mentioned that when she needs to share their emotions and talk with her family, she feels more comfortable using Spanish. As mentioned before, multilinguals person feels more comfortable by sharing their emotions by using their L1. Based on participant's response and my own experience as a native Spanish speaker, I could say that this preference of using the L1 to express emotions is because Spanish is a more calid language in terms that for example if we want to say that we have a feeling of love in Spanish we have more options such as "te quiero", "te amo" unlike in English we only use the phrase "I love you" and for some people this phrases do not have a lot of difference but for Spanish speakers the phrase will depend of the context.

Another response that I want to highlight is that she mentions that it is more common to have codeswitching while writing in her work. She mentions that she uses German more usually in her work life and her daily life to develop activities such as buying her groceries or ordering in a restaurant. In her job she only uses German so when writing her emails, she identifies the phenomenon of codeswitching between English and German. She also mentions that she thinks that happens because some structures and words in German have an influence on English language. She also mentions that since English was her L2 learning German was kind of easier to her.

The participant also mentions that is not as common to have codeswitching between Spanish and English. She thinks this occurs because even tough Spanish is her native language, in her context is more usually to use English or German. As mentioned before, she makes use of Spanish when talking with her family and sharing her emotions, but the use of Spanish is less than the other two languages.

The participant mentions that the only type of codeswitching between Spanish and German is when she comes to Mexico and sometimes, she is codeswitching the sentence structure of Spanish and German.

Regarding to language policy, the participant mentions that the government does not force the population to only speaks German, she mentions that it is very common to hear different language when you are in the subway because there are many foreign populations. She is surprised that even though Germany is a country with superdiversity, the immigrants and some of the travelers use the German language to communicate in places such as restaurants and when buying tickets in transportation service stations.

Thanks to the interview and participant's experience it was easy for me that her codeswitching affects her language production but in a more social perspective, since the phenomenon of codeswitching occurs more often in her work life. The advantage that she mentions is that she has the support of her husband to help her when the phenomenon appears, with this I can support my idea of codeswitching in her life as a more social perspective.

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Appendix

Participant interview:

1. How old are you?
2. Where are you from?
3. Which is your native language?
4. What other languages do you speak?
5. Which of them do you use more?
6. Which of them do you prefer to share your emotions? Why?
7. With which of them do you feel more comfortable while speaking?
8. With which of them do you feel more comfortable while writing?
9. Which one is easier for you?
10. When is more common that codeswitching appears?
11. How do you feel with codeswitching?
12. Do you thing codeswitching affects your language production?
13. In Germany does the government force the population to speak only German?

# Cultural Routes in Cappadocia –
# Suggestions for Tourist Development

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*Abstract*

This study aims to promote the special cultural monuments of Cappadocia and their organization in cultural routes, in order to promote and use them for touristic purposes. Cappadocia as a destination is a journey of life in the East. It has a strong Greek element, unique landscapes, such as the famous rock formations, the underground cities and the Byzantine cave churches. Its history is linked to the multicultural roots of different people, who have left their mark on the region. The special morphology, the volcanic rocks, as well as the rock formations, led to the creation of cities and neighborhoods with special natural beauty, functioning as a pole of attraction for tourists. Suggestions for the use of caves and cave churches could follow the example of Matera and Spinalonga.

*Keywords*: Cappadocia, rock formations, underground cities, cultural routes.

## 1. Introduction

The geographical area that makes up Cappadocia has been influenced by great civilizations, which, during the conquest and occupation of the aforementioned lands, penetrated into the life and culture of the inhabitants. The Greek element is still visible today. The conquest of Cappadocia by the nomads Seljuk Turks (late 11th AD), put an end to any strong population influx from Greece. After the Minor Asia catastrophe, some of the Greek populated villages had to be abandoned, in light of the "population exchange agreement" that had been organized through diplomatic means, thus marking the end of the Minor Asia war. Today, any remaining Greek element for the visitor to embrace can be found mainly in the remaining Greek communities. (Logothetis-Merlier, 1977).

## 2. Literature review

Since the middle of the 7th century BC, Greeks began to establish colonies throughout Minor Asia, something that was expected in ancient history. Cappadocia is not left out of this cultural expansion and is quickly becoming a special area of literature and art. Of course, the subsequent acceptance of Greek elements by the Persian king also contributed to this.

In the years of Christianity, Cappadocia helped a lot in spreading the gospel message. Today, it is full of places of great religious importance. Hellenized Jews were the main factor of spreading Christianity in Cappadocia. This was an easy task, as there was a lot of religious

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diversity, the Greek language was predominant and the people at that time were quite financially distressed, so they relied on the Christian faith. The place where Cappadocia is located was consecrated by many Saints. The Apostle Paul together with Barnabas taught there on their third tour (Koukoula, 2022).

The Cappadocians received the gospel message very early on, while many were led to believe in Christ from the very first apostolic years. That is why many of the great fathers of the church come from Cappadocia. Greek was the main language used in the area. In the second century, Caesarea became an episcopal see as Christian communities grew. With the establishment of the patriarchate of Constantinople, Caesarea became the first place in the episcopal see and had the title of Protothron. Basil the Great strengthened the prestige of the church in Cappadocia. It has always been and still remains an important area for Christianity and is associated with desert and monastic life. It is comprised of a mosaic of Turkish, Greek, and Armenian populations, a unique example of multiculturalism and multilingualism (Megalommatis, 2022). Cappadocia is considered the most enchanting region of Turkey. It is a strategic, commercial and cultural passage. Built on a plateau of 1000-15000 meters, between the rivers Euphrates and Alis/Halys, with caves that hosted people from prehistoric times and even then/when houses were built, many continued to live inside the monoliths, out of love for their land. Today many caves have become hotels in the rocks, as is the case in Matera, Italy (Manola & Tsatambassoglou, 2021). Tourists have the opportunity to find themselves in one of the "most beautiful landscapes of the planet", according to Maya Tsokli (2001), and to admire "the sculpture of the earth." Houses in caves, fantastic views, historical places, balloons in the sky, underground cities, valleys, and special rock formations are all part of the trek. The Greek element in the area is very strong and there are points that are manifested in a very special way. Soil erosion has created caves that people have turned into homes and businesses (Liberi 2012). Several cultural elements from each culture are preserved. This place combines historical, religious and natural sights. The Greek element in the area is evident mainly in the religious and architectural context. Some Greek villages still retain the Greek dialect as a second language. The existence of the Greek element encourages the interest of Greek tourists. According to relevant research, the cultural points of the greatest touristic interest are the following.

### 3. Research on motivations and preferences monuments

Looking for the motivations of Greek visitors to Cappadocia, we interviewed a qualified guide in a travel agency group called "Thyamis", who mentioned the following (Sarris, 2022):

> "The ages we meet in the groups of 52 bus seats are 40 people over 60, 6 people around 40 to 50 and the rest (6) is under 40. The reasons and motivations of the first age group are to visit the land of their ancestors, since they are descendants of the Hellenism of Cappadocia; the rest are casual tourists. The reasons for their visit are emotional and a large percentage is informed in detail about the location of houses that used to belong to their families before 1922."

According to the TripAdvisor and the comments regarding each attraction, the ranking of the most popular cities is as follows:
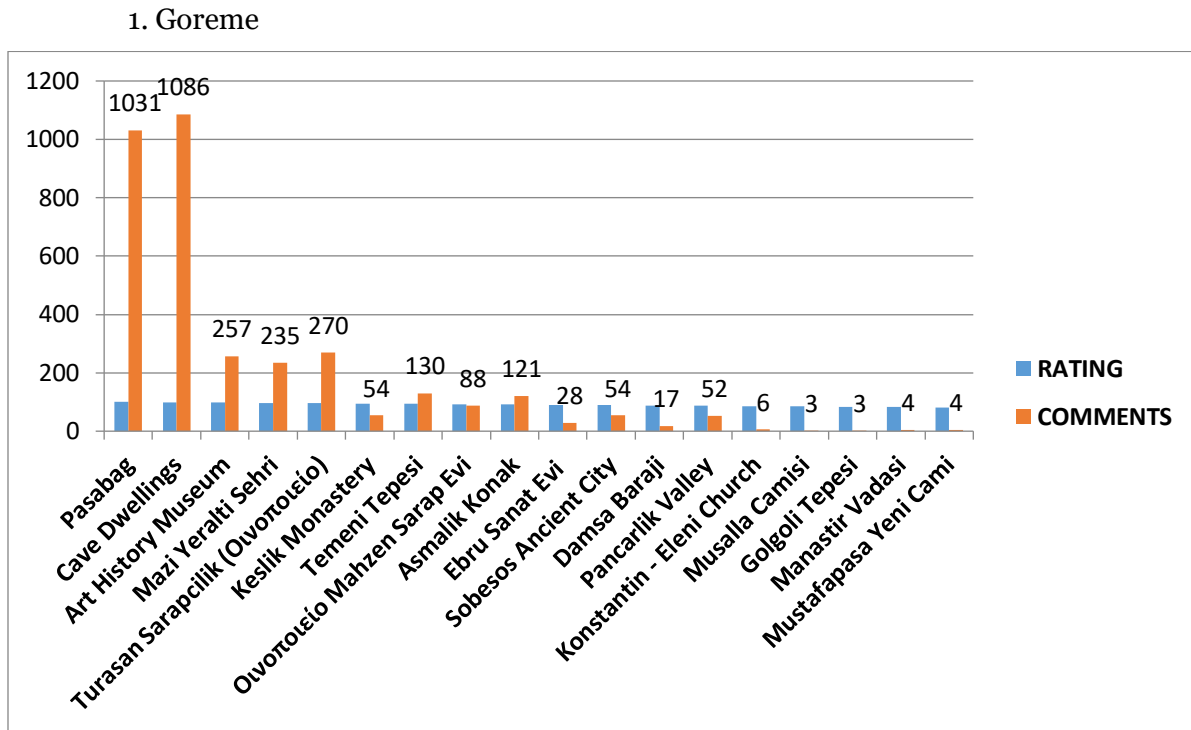
1. Goreme



Figure 1. First popular city - Goreme

Third popular city

2. Urgup
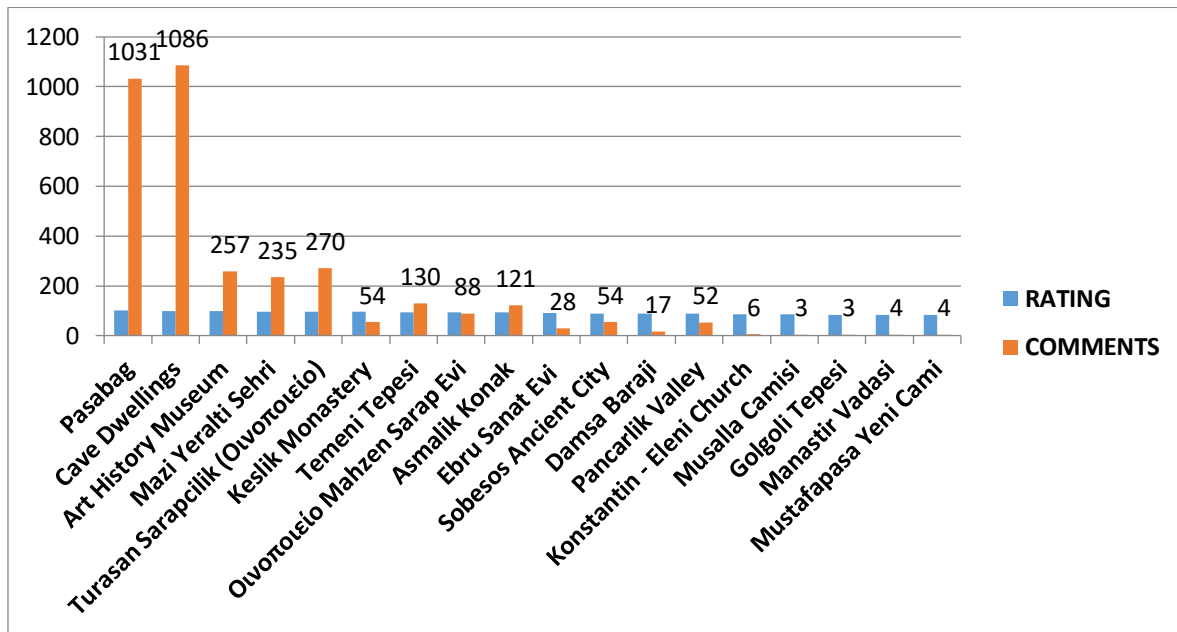


Activities/attractions are ranked using Trip advisor data, including reviews, ratings, photos, and popularity.

Figure 2. Second popular city – Urgup

3. Avanos



Activities/attractions are ranked using Trip advisor data, including reviews, ratings, photos, and popularity.
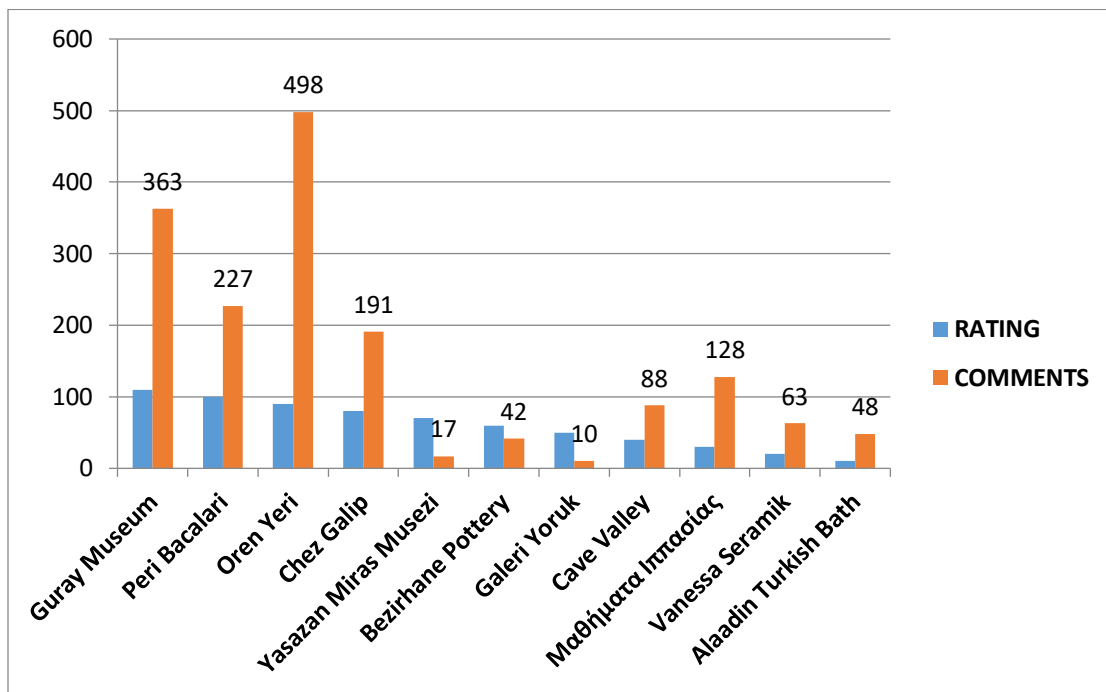
Figure 3. Second popular city – Avanos

4. Uchisar

Activities/attractions are ranked using Trip advisor data, including reviews, ratings, photos, and popularity.
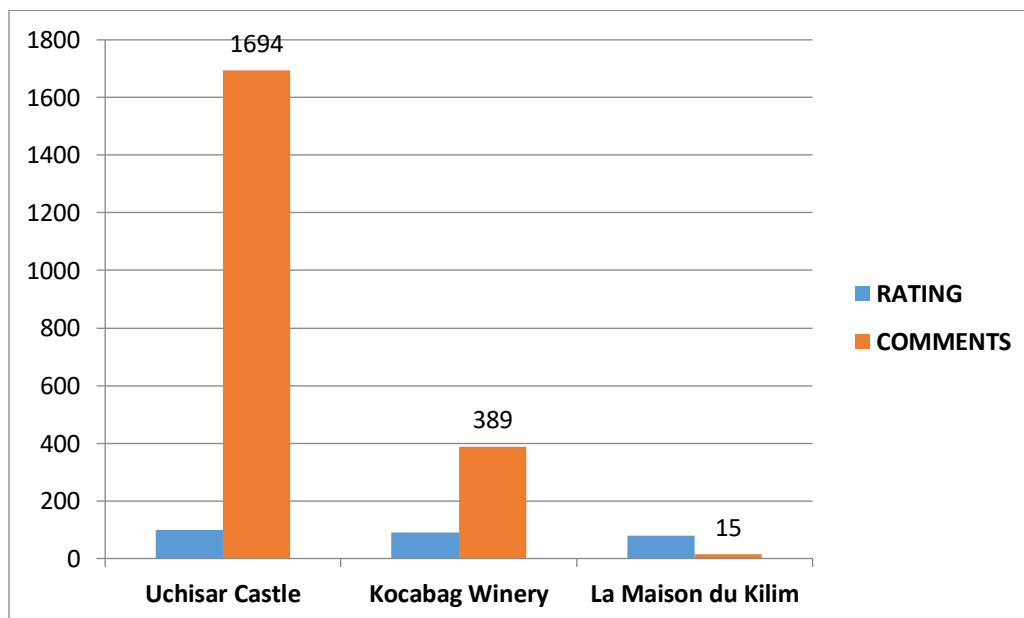


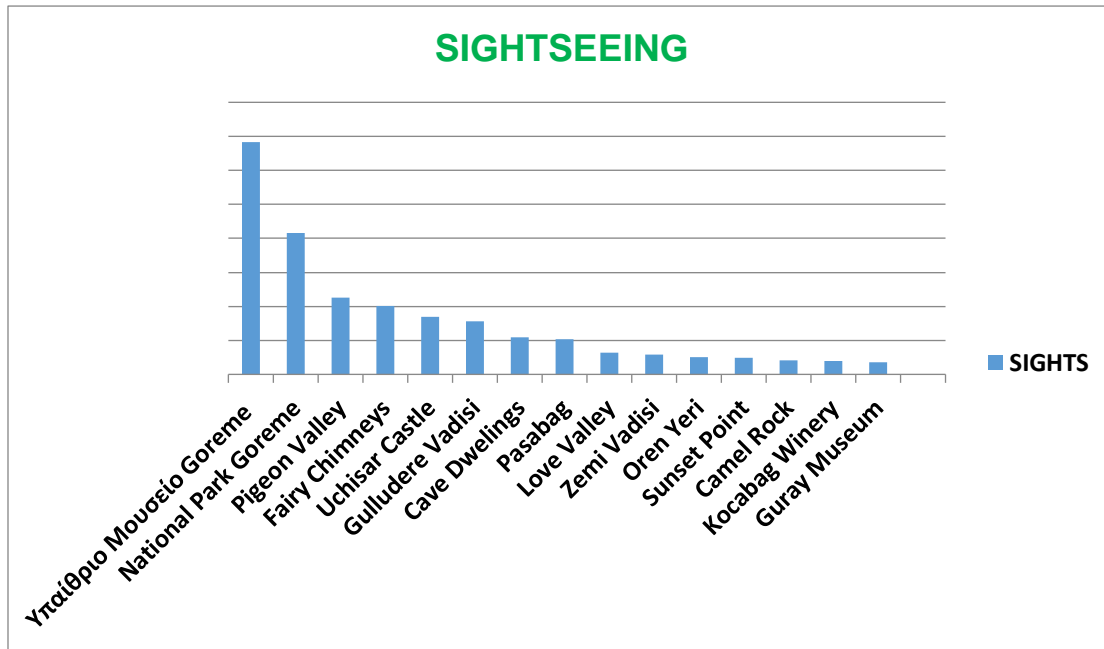Figure 4. Second popular city – Uchisar

Figure 4. General table for sights

4. Results

70.6% of tourists in Cappadocia have emotional reasons to visit, as they are descendants of Greeks in the area.

Also, according to the TripAdvisor page and descriptive analysis of attractions in Cappadocia, the city of Goreme comes first in the preference of visitors/tourists followed by the cities of Urgup, Uchisar, and Avanos.

5. Suggestions/proposals for the creation of themed cultural routes in Cappadocia

The highlighting and utilization of the cultural resources of Cappadocia could be achieved through the creation of cultural routes, with a common reference point. The aforementioned routes could be centered on the monuments of greater interest, which then could be connected with special interest points via thematic routes, since both the monuments and the points are revolving around a common theme. The thematic routes are usually predefined. Their main objective is the experiential approach of the activities, so that the user is actively involved in any event; thus, they aim to create an overall experience for the visitor, not just informing him/her (Gkelli, 2017). Every cultural route should have a starting point, intermediate stops, as well as a finish point. This effort aims, both to extract the modern citizen out of his/her individual reality, and to create and highlight a cultural product that will benefit the tourism industry (Loupa, 2009). We present the cultural products of Cappadocia and suggest a few themed cultural routes.

5.1 *Underground cities – Cave temples*

Due to the Christian persecutions, a relevant organization had to be formed and structures were created with underground churches and facilities, which are now characterized as underground cities. Their creation is due to volcanic activity, while the majority of them consist of

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many rooms. The construction and preservation of Cappadocia underground buildings over time excites researchers and is the subject of study in today's universities.

Derinkuyu was also the first to be discovered in 1963 and could serve more than 20,000 people. They vary in size, but all consist of many underground floors and countless rooms. The underground cities hosted the population of the area in times of persecution and raids and were shelters for Christians.

Petromonastira and cave Monasteries: Below the ground there are also the Petromonastira and cave monasteries as well as temples of Cappadocia. "In the more than 100 'stone monasteries' (cave temples) of Cappadocia, one can look for Byzantium in all its glory," says Maria Kazamia-Chernou, Associate Professor of Byzantine Archeology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Chatzigeorgiou, 2013). They date from the time of the Phrygians and the Hittites, who used them as shelters to protect themselves from foreign invaders. Also, today there are small churches, such as that of St. Nicholas of Basköy, whose frescoes are modern, a fact that further proves and certifies the existence of a local laboratory, whose activity is certified in other temples of Cappadocia. The frescoes of the Monasteries verify the presence of a relatively prosperous Greek and Christian population in the Turkish-occupied area. The Cappadocian Christians used them in hiding during the times of persecution, but later, when Christianity prevailed, they became places for their worship needs. The Cappadocians lived in this natural environment until 1924. Of course, after 1850, their way of life improved as the Tanzimat reforms enabled them to build churches and houses above ground. These temples continue the high architectural tradition of Cappadocia, are a testament to the strength of the Greek element in the region during the 19th century, as well as important monuments of Christianity and Hellenism and, located in the wider framework of the modern ecclesiastical architecture, demonstrate the unity of the Greek space at this time (Hatzigeorgiou, 2013).

The Göreme Valley: It contains many temples, where the visitor finds that their capacity does not exceed 10 to 20 people. They are also protected by UNESCO. Caves located in remote places did not have the same fate and protection. Some of them have been turned into warehouses, while others are endangered by tourism and Islamic fundamentalism. Well-known monastic complexes in the Göreme valley are the following: The church of scandals. The church of the buckles. The church of apples. The black / dark church. The hidden church, as it was unknown (Augustyn, 2022).

The fairy chimneys, a special creation of nature, is located in Cappadocia and is the chimneys of fairies. They are just 3 km from Göreme. These are intricate conical tower-like rocks with a height of up to 40 meters, resembling chimneys with a basalt cap on top. They were created by the erosion of volcanic rocks in the area, due to rain and natural phenomena during the 4th geological period and are today still unprotected, resulting in new damage (Athanasopoulou, 2016).

### 5.2 *Museums - cities with carved rocks*

The traveler will find hagiographies on rocks, but also many churches, chapels and monasteries with Byzantine frescoes or hagiographies, such as Agios Onoufrios or Agios Georgios. The 2nd museum is located in the Goreme area or in the Koramata valley, as named by the Christians, which has been voted as the most beautiful village in the world. Here are the most famous churches, such as the "Dark Church, which stands out due to the image of Christ the Almighty in its dome (mixanitouxronou, 2022).

*Urgup or Prokopio.* At this location there are well-known Christian churches, as well as monuments from the Ottoman era, where cultural events are often held. This was also the area of life and martyrdom of St. John the Russian. The homonymous church in the village of Prokopi

in Evia took its name from the Greeks, who ended up there due to the exchange of populations in 1924. The village was formerly called Osiana because the locals considered it to be the city of Osia and the Turks, as they could not pronounce that name, renamed the area "Urgiup" (mixanitouxronou, 21/12/2022)

*Greek Sinasos*. It is one of the eighteen Greek-speaking villages of Cappadocia and is considered the "Athens of the East". The majority of the inhabitants were Greek and Christian Orthodox (Rizos, 2007). Today, there are many Orthodox churches that are accessible and, once a year, a Mass is held in the most important church, dedicated to St Constantine and St. Helen. Also, there are many mansions from ancient times, 100 of which are considered maintainable (Papatsoni, 2022). In this area the Greek element still exists today, while according to Guinness (1991) before the Asia Minor catastrophe, the area hosted 81 Greek settlements.

*Uchisar Castle*. The castle, located in the city of the same name, consists of a series of huge carved rocks whose top is one of the best places in the area, due to the unique view. Travelers can visit this spot and hike to the top, wander the caves that have been carved into the rocks and the rooms that used to be inhabited by people. At the moment, it is not allowed to enter the interior of the castle due to danger, but the view of the city from the top rewards the choice of destination (Troodostravel, 2020).

### 5.3 *Valleys*

In the region of Cappadocia there are many places and special valleys for walks, hiking and for travelers to enjoy the special morphology of the city, the soil and the peculiar rock formations. Some special and well-known examples are the following:

- *Valley of love*. The Valley of Love is a quiet area of unique beauty located near the town of Goreme. The landscape is characterized as spooky. Crossing it, the traveler can encounter neighborhoods with churches and museums. These particular formations have been caused by volcanic eruptions, where magma wears out and different forms are created. Visitors have the opportunity to cross the valley on foot, either individually or with the help of a local guide, or inside a hot air balloon, thus viewing the area from a different perspective. Due to Puritanism, the Turks do not promote and have not exploited the valley of the phalluses as it is called alternatively. (Liberi 2012)

- *Valley of the Pigeons*. This valley occupies an area of 4,100 meters and extends from the Uchisar area to Goreme. It is known for its special formations that in earlier times functioned as hermitages of monks and cells of Saints rock caves for farmers, while its current name came from the pigeons that were fed and stood on the carvings. It is a beautiful route away from the city and anything artificial. The rocks are white, intense and there is sparse vegetation that gives life to the landscape. (Troodostravel, 2020)

- *Red Valley*. The Red Valley is one of the most beautiful places where the traveler can enjoy the sunset. The rocks of the valley, at sunset, become colorful and a very intense color landscape is created which causes great awe and great pleasure to the traveler for the spectacle he/she enjoys. In the valley there is a 5 km trail, which is ideal for lovers of hiking, cycling or horse riding. The walk lasts at least 1 to 2 hours. It is located between the Goreme and Cavusin areas and allows visitors to access from both points, a unique fact.

*Settlement – Ihlara Valley*. It is located in a gorge that crosses the river Melendiz. In the past, due to the location and the natural shelters that existed, it served as a settlement of the first Christians during the period of persecution.

5.5 *Christian churches and mosques*

In these societies, the only means of livelihood were agriculture, trade, and the arts. This resulted in the construction of a large number of churches dedicated to Christianity. Some of these churches still operate today with the permission of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. One of the churches that still operate in Sinasos is the one dedicated to St. Konstantine, St. Eleni, Karvali and St. Grigorios (troodostravel.gr, 2020). Some examples of churches are the following:

- *The Dark Church*. (Karanlik kilise), part of the Byzantine churches, was built in the 11th century AD and is dedicated to the "Ascension of the Savior". It is built inside the rocks. The hagiographies depicted inside have been characterized as works of art which, due to certain special factors, have been preserved in a very good condition and are of the best examples of Byzantine frescoes. The colorful angels beautifully adorn the pillars and vaulted ceilings, which are accompanied by scenes such as the birth of Jesus. The lack of light in the church contributes to the good maintenance of the representations that continue to look fresh and lively after 1000 years. Testimonies about the frescoed churches in the areas around Prokopi (Urgrup), Goreme and Soganli, as well as a touristic description of the history and the sense of loss of a familiar culture can be found in Seferis (2005). Today, they are part of the open-air museum "Göreme", where the traveler visits both internal and external sights.

- *Mosques*. In addition to churches that have been converted into museums, a significant number of them have been converted into mosques that still function today with Muslim services. Some examples are the church of St. George in the Karacaören neighborhood of Bünyan, where both the original gate and a bell tower were preserved.

- Church of St. Georgios in the same area was also converted into a mosque in 1966.

- A former church that has now been converted into a mosque in 1906 in the area of Taşlık near Vatzvatan.

- An Armenian church in Melikgazi area which is open today, dedicated to St. George with its last renovation taking place in 1996.

5.6 *Underground cities*

There are about 40 underground cities, with Kaymakli being the most prominent one.

*Kaymakli*. It is one of the deepest underground cities in Cappadocia. It housed about 3,500 people and was used by Christians during the attacks by the Arabs in the 8th century A.D. It is located on 8 levels below the ground. Inside it hosts a castle of the time, as well as wine, grain and auxiliary warehouses. Its inhabitants could live with relative comfort, while the air supply was ensured by an air duct system which reached the top floor at 80 meters high. Today guests can explore only four of the eight levels and tours are available (Mutlu, 2008).

*Derinkuyu*. The city of Derinkuyu retains similar characteristics to the example of Kaymakli, with the difference that it has greater depth, larger corridors and rooms but also more open points and skylights. It is located on eleven levels. It housed the inhabitants in order to protect themselves from the attacks of the Arabs and other conquerors in the 8th century AD. The above two examples (Derinkuyu and Kaymakli), are two famous attractions for tourists in this category (Mutlu, 2008)

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6. Conclusions – Suggestions

The main source of tourism is the organized trips that are carried out under the auspices of the tourist offices. Many of them start by road from Turkey or abroad or even using the compatible airports and guide the groups to the open-air museums, the underground cities, some villages and other attractions. The visitor can embrace, through these programs, all the influences existing in the specific geographical area of Cappadocia, while enjoying the landscapes and cultural attractions offered.

The phenomenon of religious tourism that has been presented in the area, gives life to the place as there is growth, due to the tourists. The chain reaction has helped the Greek element to remain in the area as "Greek taverns" or other restaurants that have dishes inspired by the Mediterranean kitchen are located in the area. The hotels that have been built in these areas and specifically those that have been operating for a long time, are reminiscent of inns of the Roman period.

The region of Cappadocia as a city with a biblical atmosphere and has all the prerequisites to develop into a unique cinematic destination, if it is properly screened and there is favorable legislation for filmmakers. If the cinematic scene is developed and utilized as it was done in Matera, Italy and Spinalonga, Crete, it could attract tourists but also greatly increase the income through movies and gain worldwide projection and interest (Manola & Gioka, 2021).

It could also become a cultural capital to gain more life by projecting itself as a sample of an underground city in the wider Mediterranean region.

To be subsidized and restored as a World Heritage Site and to acquire more cultural value.

To create the conditions for the inhabitants to return to the traditional soils and to become "fashionable" as in Matera the residence in the underground cities (Manola, 2020).

To create cinematic routes and literary parks from the films such as in the Basilicata of Italy where more than 60 films have been shot, whether dramatic, historical, biblical, etc. and in fact by very important directors such as Taviani, Gibson, Jenkins (Manola & Tsatambassoglou, 2021). They could also be returned to Cappadocia as a multicultural underground city since the geographical part of Cappadocia has passed into the hands of many conquerors, from the ancient colonies to the Persians and the Ottomans.

It is also an important condition to have empathy in the tourism industry and care for the environment and monuments (Manola, & Papagrigoriou, 2020) for a sustainable tourism in the city of Cappadocia.

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# The Bamilekes and Geo-architecture in the Mechanisms of Defense and Security: An Attempt at a Historical-Anthropological Study Based on the Alignment of the Buildings and Structures in the Grassfields Chieftaincies of West Cameroon Between the 15th and 19th Centuries

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*Abstract*

The sudden and massive arrival of the Bamileke on the highlands of West Cameroon between the 15th and 16th centuries A.D. through spontaneous, sporadic and sometimes disorganized migratory waves, marked an unprecedented change in the socio-cultural evolution and political configuration of the region. Indeed, this had led not only to the progressive populating of the entire plateau, but also to the beginning of the first real organized and structured political entities, namely the chiefdoms. The matrimonial social system of Bamileke polygamy generated an exponential demographic growth inherent to a strong uncontrolled dynamic that systematically exerted enormous pressure on the exploitation of natural resources, which in addition to being already scarce was also static. The Bamileke in a survivalist spirit tried to control vital spaces such as water, land, hunting grounds, etc., which unleashed the hegemonic impulses and antagonistic bellicosity of these tribes; one against the other thus plunging the whole region into a turbulent atmosphere characterized by conquest struggles and raids. Indeed, the Bamileke, faced with the permanent challenges of instability and insecurity, in a logic of survival, will appeal to geography to protect themselves. This article aims to demonstrate the contribution of geography in Bamileke architecture as a basic defensive and security support. A genuine interest was noted in the involvement of geography in the development and elaboration of defense and security techniques and strategies in Bamileke land. The study revealed that geography had always played a decisive role not only in the migratory path of this people but had also punctuated the choice of their position at altitude on the plateau, including that of their spiritual conception. This research combined both documentary analysis and oral source approaches.

*Keywords*: Bamileke, geo-architecture, defense and security mechanism, Chieftaincy.

## 1. Introduction

Since the dawn of time, man has been aware of the importance of his immediate environment on his existence and it is in a measure of survival that he established and wove bonds of coexistence. Thus, the question of survival has always intervened in the first rank of security concerns. The natural resources coming from its environment have therefore always been the ticket on which the equilibrium and survival of humanity rested, as they have led to the visible

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beginnings of the latter's action through the emergence of technical advancements in defense and security intended to protect him from the antagonistic and bellicose velleities of each other. After settling on this plateau, the Bamilekes were confronted with problems of survival due to the recrudescent and continuous scarcity of natural resources in the face of an exponentially growing demography inherent in strong uncontrolled dynamics that caused and altered crises in the region. In other words, it was the scarcity of land, the density of the population and even the irregular methods of land appropriation that made the living space precious and obliged the chiefs to conquer and/or preserve it even at the cost of their lives and above all by force of arms. Thus, in a survivalist logic both warlike and secure, they would have developed a defense mechanism taming their immediate geographical environment, that is to say making use of nature in the development of techniques and methods of defense and security. Indeed, it was therefore quite right that Hubert Deschamps declared, I quote, "traditional societies were closed worlds that only had relations with their neighbors and most often to wage war against them" (Deschamps, 1970: 11).

A report recent to the period of study from the chief administrator of the Bamileke region in 1949 outlining the political situation of the area gives us a picture of what might have been of this plateau in previous centuries, for it says, "The Bamileke had to participate constantly in wars…on which the life of his clan depended in the material form of a piece of land that had to be maintained or conquered by cultivation, which was necessary for a very dense and growing population" (ANY, IAC, 1949). The facts established by this report concerning the omnipresence of wars in this locality allow us to glimpse and above all to conceive with sufficiency that the Bamileke region was once a powder keg of conflict given the impressive number of inter-tribal wars such as: Bangou-Bangang-Fodji in the 16th century (Toukam, 2008: 45), Bemendjou-Bansoa 16th century, Bamendjou-Bangam, Bamendjou-Baham 19th century, Bandenkop-Bangou just to name a few.

The Bamileke ethnic group is a people of Central Africa who live in the region of West Cameroon located between latitude 50 30 north and longitude 100 30 east covering an area of about 13,936 km$^2$ which corresponds to 2.98% of the national territory. In West Cameroon, this ethnic group constitutes the people of the high plateaus who together form the Bamileke land located between the 5th and 6th degrees of north latitude covering an area estimated at 8,200 km$^2$. These people are grouped and organized into a multitude of chiefdoms composed of 126 tribes, each of which corresponds to a kingdom, i.e., a proper and autonomous political entity headed by an assiduous chief and assisted by a relatively centralized traditional administration, highly structured and absolutely devoted to the sovereign management of its territory. It is this cultural institutional trait that characterizes them that is the key element that justifies and consolidates their bond of consanguinity with their Bamoun and Tikars brothers through their common ancestors, their similar social structures and their languages. Indeed, due to their ideological and cultural singularity, the diversification of rites and ancestral practices that characterize them and distinguish between tribes at the level of traditions with circumstantial variable geometry, the tumultuous history that governs their trajectory and migratory processes, their capacity of adaptation and the dynamism of foundation and consolidation of the chieftaincies make of this ethnic group, a mythical and mystical people, complex and paradoxical, both individualistic and solidary, materialistic and expansionist, proud and disciplined and above all very dynamic. This people of the highlands of West Cameroon share borders to the north with the Grassfields of the northwest, to the south with Bassas, to the west with Bakweris, to the east with Bamoun, to the northeast with Tikars (Adamawa region) and to the southeast with Eton.
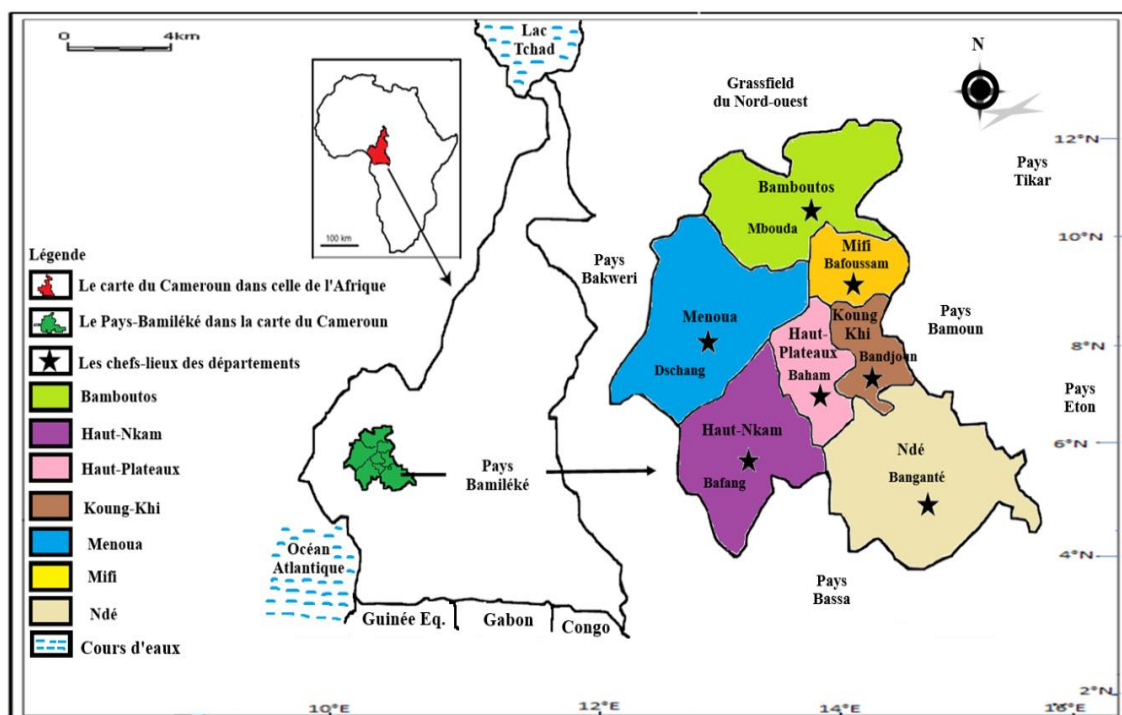
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Figure 1. Location of Bamileke Country on the political and administrative map of Cameroon

## 2. Geo-architecture: the migration and foundation paradigm of Bamileke chieftaincies

Geo-architecture is made up of two words, "geo" and "architecture". The term "geo" is a prefix and word of Greek origin that means "the earth". The term "architecture" simply refers to the art of constructing buildings (LaRousse, 2022). The synthesis of these two words refers to the art of designing, transforming and constructing buildings and outdoor spaces according to aesthetic criteria following social, economic, environmental and technical rules on a soil or space or an environment previously determined to needs. But in this study, the notion of "geo-architecture" is quite different, that of studying the influence of the physical geographical elements; terrestrial and aerial on the architectural orientation in Bamileke land so as to elaborate mechanisms of defense and security in order to protect oneself from ambient hostilities. With regard to the study of migratory trajectories, as far as we go back in time, geography was at the forefront of the most prodigious factors that there is and would have undoubtedly determined the framework of survival, security and defense of civilizations, as well as that of the Bamileke people throughout their history and evolution up to the present day. It is in this sense that Diarra had declared, "It is difficult without doubt to separate African history from the geography that served as a framework and support" (Diarra, 1980: 346). Thus, since the Belgians of the Nile in pharaonic Egypt, passing through Sudan, Chad until Cameroon in Adamawa and then in Bamoun country, the course of this people in an existentialist measure was haloed and punctuated by geography which served as a compass and a lantern.

In fact, in an existential logic, the Bamileke had to make use of geographical elements a weapon of survival; hills and mountains, rivers and forests were for them respectively in a warlike and secure quietude a defensive and offensive tool for protection and at the same time a nourishing breast as well as an instrument of reference and orientation for their displacements during their migratory trips. Therefore, yesterday as today, of all the data that make up history,

geography is and remains the constant datum. This simply mean that, the contribution of geography on communities or peoples responding to their needs or sociological realities allowing them to ensure their survival and development would be almost the same everywhere despite geographical variations. Certainly, a reality that the Bamileke would not have escaped.

### 2.1 *Theses on the origin and name of the Bamileke people*

The question about the origin of this mythical people remains enigmatic since then until today, as it still remains a mystery for many, a detail that did not escape E. Ghomsi when he declared, "These populations whose we believe we know the customs and manners…still remain an enigma…a shadow still covers the pre-colonial history and the post-colonial history is not very well known either" (Ghomsi, 1972: 2). Indeed, while remaining an enigma, the origin of this people has become an intriguing and topical subject in the scientific world between researchers and men of science of all stripes, namely: Claude Tardits (Tardits, 1960), Jean-Claude Barbier (Barbier, 1976), Eldridge Mohamadou (Eldrigde, 1971), Enow Kwayep (Kwayep, 1960), etc., causing a lot of ink to flow given the impressive number of works dealing with and covering various themes and parts of their history.

Many of these authors or scientists, in their attempt to demystify the origins of this people in a cartesian, logical and rational manner, have demonstrated interdisciplinarity by making wise use of other disciplines such as: linguistics, cultural ethnography, archeology and of course oral traditions. In some respects, the results of these researchers have been haphazard, leading to controversy and dissension in the scientific community. Nevertheless, the majority if not almost all of these scientists succinctly attribute the Tikars land as the place of origin of this so-called Bamileke people. Some, such as Dieudonné Toukam, with a different point of view on the subject, have even gone further by locating Pharaonic Egypt as the place of origin of the Bamileke (Toukam, 2008: 10). However, in general, according to the oral traditions and several epic stales of historical character collected within the chieftaincy institutions, several of which are centuries old, the synthetic aspirations expressed and continued are those of a quasi-singular claim to a very ancient belonging to Pharaonic Egypt, which dates back to the ages.

The name of this ethnic group, as well as its origins, has remained somewhat of a mystery: a subject of debate and dissension, with several theses and hypotheses on the question of its origin. But according to Jean-Louis Dongmo, this name is in fact the work of an administrative term, a neologism, which appeared and was very quickly widely used during the colonial period, resulting from the distortion of the local expression *mbalékéo*, both misunderstood and mispronounced, which means in the Bali language "the people from below" (Dongmo, 198: 57). One of Ramsay's reports quoted by Jean-Pierre Notué in 1930 confirms this explanation when he states: "Tradition reports that one of the German explorers, astonished and impressed by the very humanized landscape he saw from the heights of Mount Bamboutos, asked his guide-interpreter, a native of Bali, what the people of this region were called. The guide immediately replied: "*mba-lékéo*", which means: "They are the people from below" (Ramsay, 1903). Obviously, this name is generally more related to the geographical area that this people occupy and precisely to the type of relief that it covers or that characterizes it, than to the glorious history that has always preceded them. According to this analysis, we can observe the influence of geography on this people as well as its prevalence on the toponymy. The geography would be by essence the unifying element of first plan that would have determined the cultural anthropology of this people; politico-militarily, socio-religiously, psychologically, etc.

### 2.2 *Dynamism of the foundation of Bamileke chieftaincies*

The dynamics of migration and the formation of Bamileke chieftaincies in the highlands of West Cameroon are as complex as the anthropological traits that characterize this people in a singular and systematic way. The Bamileke, already occupants of the area, had to face repeated incursions and raids either from their own tribes or from their neighbors such as the Bamoun. However, feeling constantly insecure due to the demographic pressure and the assaults of their neighbors and Bamoun cousins and many others were forced to be in perpetual movement. These internal movements took place through sudden, sporadic and sometimes disorganized migratory waves that gradually populated the entire plateau, which following the conquest of new lands gave rise to the creation of the first forms of political entities, not often organized. It was only later, following a conquest and submission to the control of a powerful leader, generally an ambitious hunter or adventurer, that these political entities were truly structured militarily, economically and socio-culturally and took the name of chiefdoms. This is how almost all of the first great chieftaincies of the region and those that followed came to be. Therefore, the multitude of existing chieftaincies in this region of the sunset of Cameroon was the result of a long process of accelerated disintegration and continuous fragmentation of the mother chieftaincies, i.e., first chieftaincies creating others throughout their anthropological evolution. In short, the differences that existed between their period of intrusion and the process of formation of these chieftaincies constitute one of the key elements that distinguish them alongside ancestral traditional practices as separate and autonomous unit within a set of unitary entities that is the ethnic group.

### 2.3 *Chieftaincy: Etymology of its name and prerogative*

As for the definition of chieftaincy, even here opinions are divided and varied regarding its origins and roles depending on what angle each author conceives it vis-à-vis its prominent presence in our society. According to Pérrois and Notué, the chieftaincy is "the fundamental religious, political and social unit in the Grassland… it is a kind of small nation-state with a well-defined territory and population. The supreme power is in the hands of a single person, the chief, named *fo*…" (Perrois, 1984: 4). As for Hurault, the chieftaincy is "…the hamlet of the chief. There live his wives, the servants who make up his staff and his representatives; there are kept the skulls of the chief's ancestors and the sacred objects; there are gathered the customary societies which constitute the frameworks of the country" (Hurault, 1962: 60). According to our observations drawn from its structural organization and daily missions in the political sense, the chiefdom would be a public administrative center that brings together and unites a people around its chief and institutions at the political, economic and socio-cultural levels. In general, and at first sight common, when we refer to the chieftaincy, we mean the village, intuitively disregarding the chief and all the governing bodies. In this way, the chieftaincy in Bamileke land would be a place of reference of individual and collective identification as a whole, for it is a mark of belonging that connects and federates the individual to his or her original stock, to his or her people and to the authorities that govern them. Summarily, the chieftaincy is the seat of all the decisions made by a legitimate, quasi-divine chief who ensures his regal management, continuity and enjoys a relatively absolute notoriety over his people in a well-defined territory.

3. The influence of geography as a support for defense and security in the Bamileke chiefdoms of West Cameroon through the architectural alignment of buildings and structures

3.1 *The defensive and security impact of geography on the alignment and construction of buildings in chieftaincies*

The aim here is to highlight the impact of geography on the development of defense and security techniques and strategies based on the architectural mode of construction. In order to understand the influence of geography on the anthropology of defense and security in Bamileke land, it would first be necessary to go back in time, to analyze the dynamism of the trajectories and migratory processes that have characterized the history of this people from Pharaonic Egypt to the highlands of the western region of Cameroon. Indeed, throughout their migratory transit, and even after their sedentary settlement on this plateaus, the Bamileke faced eminent challenges of insecurity, that of physical confrontations and food insecurity that expressed a desire to control vital spaces due to an exacerbated recrudescence of natural resources that continued to dwindle in the face of a growing demography in full swing. In response to a repeated cycle of hegemonic spirit and bellicosity, this people in phase with their immediate environment had opted and made use of geography in the elaboration of defense mechanisms in order to protect themselves against possible attacks or incursions of other tribes.

The geography through the element of mountainous relief dotted with valleys that characterizes this plateau is what in a survivalist security quietude both tactically and strategically would have obviously played a determining role in the construction of the Bamileke chiefdoms as well as their spiritual conception. The optimal use of the relief in the whole Bamileke region and more precisely in the chiefdoms had established and defined the strategic bases of the defense and security system of the architectural mode of construction in the valleys or the lowlands sheltered by a grove. From then on, the construction of a chieftaincy obeyed a rigid architectural style: defensive and offensive, so its complexity, took into account the choice of its site, the layout and the utility of the openings in a most realistic and adapted security measure. The chiefdoms, in conformity with this security ideal, adopted an architectural model of construction in the valleys where the buildings followed a descending rectilinear order, i.e., from the top to the bottom on uneven ground. Generally, in chiefdoms of the Bamileke land, from the main entrance to its enclosure and the hut of the *fo*,[1] there was a descending march on a long corridor that could extend for hundreds of meters depending on the size of the chiefdom. The image below gives us a glimpse of what was once and still is for some of this type of chiefdom building pattern.

The rectilinear and descending alignment of the buildings in the Bamileke chieftaincies was strategic, as it permitted them to protect and defend themselves against external attacks. In the face of a major threat, the rectilinear position of the buildings gave the chief and the chieftaincy army a tactical advantage in many respects: it allowed them to see the advancing enemy from a good distance, to analyze and appreciate their actions and to determine the course of action to be taken as they descended the long passageway that led to the chieftaincy enclosure. The two main gates that served as entrances to the chieftaincy housed two gigantic drums, one on each side. According to the traditional orality, the drum was one of the most widely used communication tools of the time, which made it possible to communicate and broadcast very long-range messages, either of joy or distress (Tchinda, 2020). But in times of war or conflict, in the face of an attack, it was used to transmit special information to the allies; the type of aid, strategy and tactics, etc., and to the whole village with a view to receiving reinforcements respectively for immediate mobilization (Wambo Kamdem, 2020).

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[1] *Fo*, name generally designating the chief in Bamileke country.

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Chefferie Bafoussam · Chefferie Baham · Chefferie Bahouan
Chefferie Bamendjou · Chefferie Bandjoun · Chefferie Bapa

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Figure 2. Position and decreasing rectilinear arrangement of huts
from the entrance to some chiefdoms in Bamileke Country

Responding favorably to the call, the threat could nevertheless either be neutralized or defeated, depending at least on the objective of defense against the adversary and the mitigating realities of the moment. As for the various rectilinear buildings built on both sides, all along the corridor or path leading to the enclosure of the chiefdom from the entrance for the most part, served as armories housing weapons of all kinds, ranging from hunting tools to those of farm activities, all war instruments varying respectively from throwing weapons to hand-to-hand weapons such as: spears, slingshots, rifles, arrows, swords, machetes, clubs and all kinds of daggers (Kuenou, 2021: 75-80). These structures allowed the chief and his army to intercept the threat (the enemy) before it went further into the chieftaincy and the situation got out of control. In so doing, these edifices were set up as military poliorcetics i.e., acted as real barriers or fortifications in the Bamileke sense of the term. During an eminent attack, the narrowness of the long corridor that punctuated the various chieftaincy buildings from the top to the bottom of the chieftaincy forced the enemy to concentrate in one place and thus limited the efforts of the chieftaincy army to divide up and fight simultaneously in dispersed ranks in several places at once. More importantly, this posture made the enemy's strength negligible, because the corridor reduced their mobility and prevented them from organizing themselves, unlike the chieftaincy army, which could surround and take them by surprise between the small intervals of those buildings. Thus, the enemy could neither retreat nor advance and had no choice but to fight or simply surrender.

In the same vein, the multitude of buildings built within the chieftaincy were strategic in nature and did not only meet the needs of accommodation, but also of security. Indeed, their positioning and alignment fulfilled this belief of mirage, as they generally linked the corridor leading to the large enclosure and the courtyard or simply led nowhere. Serving as a mirage to the enemy, they allowed to confuse them. In times of invasion, this allowed the chieftaincy army to set up surprise ambushes for the enemy who did not see the danger coming due to the multitude of openings (Kamgué, 2020). The paramount chieftaincies of Bandjoun, Bamendjou, Bafou,

Batoufam, Bafoussam, etc., were pioneers of this strategic defense architectural mode of construction.

### 3.2 *The defensive and security contribution of geography at low altitude: The case of lowlands*

As a reminder, the West Cameroon region is being characterized by a mountainous terrain with steep slopes, hills and valleys. This region has a characteristic vegetation of grassy savannah with the plains and lowlands as fertile areas due to erosion that washes the sediments from the top to the bottom, fed either by torrential rains or simply by the water circuits from the mountains. As paradoxical as it may be, by being a little curious and by studying the geographical environment of the Bamileke more closely, one finds that it is easier to defend oneself down, in shallows than up, on the hills because the means of survival and security were more operational and optimized than one might think and believe. At the back of the Bamileke chiefdoms were the shallows located in the upper forest below the chiefdom, which served as barracks (Gaïma Djoukeng, 2020). When the chieftaincy was attacked, this place, which served as barracks, allowed the chieftaincy army to retreat (Gaïma Djoukeng, 2020). The existence and choice of this location was taken into consideration when establishing a chiefdom as an avant-garde measure of prevention. The operational utility of this place was amplified and magnified by the fact that it brought together in a one place all the possible natural resources such as: water, forest and fertile land that could allow the chief and the chieftaincy army to supply themselves with food and water respectively in a systemic and continuous manner through the practices of fishing, hunting, gathering and agriculture while waiting to receive reinforcements or to prepare a plan of action for reconquest.

In a nutshell, this place was a rear base that housed almost everything essential and vital to ensure the survival of the resistance in times of crisis. In this strategic position, they could face the enemy and hold out for a very long time if need arose. It is also important to note that this place was a two-edged sword in the sense that if it happened to fall under the control of the enemy, it was the chief and the chieftaincy army that would suffer the wrath of the place. Thus, it was imperative for the survival of the chief and the entire chieftaincy that this link never fall into the hands of the enemy, who, having everything at their disposal, would make life difficult for them. For security reasons, this sensitive place remained secret; almost unknown to the public, for it was strictly forbidden for whoever to pass, hunt or undertake any activity there. It was due to this tactical and strategic act of genius that the shallows had allowed many chieftainships of the Bamileke country to protect themselves and to survive the warlike attacks of their persecutors and today to be resilient to the adversity of foreign civilizations.

Today, although this place is no longer used as a barracks and/or rear base, it is erected and remains nevertheless through its sacred secret policy, a real living conservatory of past memories and preservation of fauna and flora, i.e., for animal and plant species in danger of extinction, for it is not accessible to any of such activities like that of hunting, gathering or farming.

### 4. Geo-architecture and the Bamileke spiritual anthropology

Among the Bamileke, as among many other peoples and/or civilizations around in the world, geography, apart from its influence in terms of defense and security strategy, has also played a tedious role in spirituality and cosmogony. According to our observations, there is really no different between the Bamileke spirituality and cosmogony, for they are two sides of the same coin. Indeed, both being linked, they are modelled on a geographical support that allows them to orient their earthly religious beliefs towards the cosmos. In facts, signs and symbols from various geometric shapes inspired by the universe and nature pace not only their conceptions and religious

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beliefs but also their daily activities and practice. What is fascinating and revealing in this explanation, was the directional link between the top and the bottom, the same orientation on which were elaborated the mechanisms of defense and security chieftaincies following a descending order. According to oral tradition, traditional Bamileke cultural orthodoxy would have each chiefdom have two forests, the upper forest and the lower forest (Tchinda, 2020), but our concern is with the upper forest at the bottom of the chiefdom, as this was in keeping with the pre-established spiritual order and energy fluid of the cosmic forces that governed the construction and alignment of the buildings, which in essence had to be on a slope, preferably high up, sheltering the *Leufeum*[2] and a watercourse (stream). Isn't it said that water is life? Water alone constitutes about 70% of the earth[3], composed of 65% in an adult body, 75% in infants and 94% in three-day-old embryos[4], and has an even more pronounced use in daily household tasks: laundry, washing, farming, industrial and spiritual activities.

In general, water played an essential role in Bamileke and Negro-African spirituality, as well as among Christians and other religious groups, but on different scales depending on the aspirations expected. In Bamileke land, it has a place of choice and enters into numerous rites and ceremonies, either of initiation or of purification, depending on the extenuating circumstances of the moment. There would be links of very wise similarities between the authentic ancestral beliefs of this people and those of these imported religions, because it would even seem that they would find justification and roots in the latter. According to authentic Bamileke ancestral beliefs, the forest, its upward position and water would represent respectively for Catholic Christians, the Garden of Eden in the Bible, the sky and the element of purification serving as a vessel through which the soul of a deceased person should ascend or the rite of passage from pagan to Christian expressed in the ideal of transformation from sinner to saint. From this observation, from this people who constitute a tiny sample of a large component of African peoples, we can conclude that religious universality was fundamentally an African thing.

According to oral tradition, the Bamileke ancestry belief and practice was clear and almost unanimous on the question of thanatology, aiming at regulating the habits and customs concerning the management of dead bodies and the funeral rites, especially that of the *fo* (Ndongmo, 2020). As in a fortress where monarchs lived their royal solitudes which added to their characters mysteries as it is appropriate to the royal condition, when a *fo* was "lost", i.e. died, a certain number of conditions had to be observed beforehand, namely; formal prohibition to put his body in the mortuary, to expose it in public and to make his body enter the chieftaincy by the main door (entrance) (Tapondjou, 2020). Taking into consideration these geocosmic rules, this people at the time of the construction of the chieftaincies had taken into account the position of the *Leufeum* and all that went with it: water and forest among others. The position of the chieftaincy was such that the chief's remains, in order to reach the upper forest, inevitably had to pass to the behind the chieftaincy from the fields (scrubland) from where it would take its rise and transit all along this route in an ascending manner to its final destination which is the *Leufeum*. This transitional circuit is, however, very important and challenging, as it reveals the ideological subtlety of enlightenment or spiritual elevation that would eminently pass through an ascent from the bottom, earth to the top, sky, i.e., from an impure place to a pure one, that of the holy paradise so much advocated by the Christians. In the same tone, in order to prepare a peaceful journey for the deceased *fo* in the afterlife where his ancestors resided, the various traditional castes having jurisdiction over the management of initiation and funeral rites, used water from the upper forest

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[2] The *Leufeum* or *Leufeum* or *Lefem* designates the royal cemetery and at the same time the sacred woods and prohibits the public from the chiefdom in the term *yemba* of the Bamileke tribes of the Menoua department of West Cameroon.

[3] https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Origine_de_l%27eau_sur_la_Terre, assessed 04/08/2022.

[4] https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eau, assessed 04/08/2022.

at the bottom of the chieftaincy considered sacred and possessing therapeutic virtues to wash his body in a spirit of purification, in order to rid it of any earthly defilement. Always in this momentum, this water served as a conductive fluid through which his soul was to ascend to heaven. Apart from the chief and his use, this water was also used for several rites such as that of widowhood, exorcisms scenes, cleansing of curses and the preparation of decoctions and remedies to treat and cure ordinary and especially mystical diseases.

Although comparison is not always right, this Bamileke spiritual knowledge and know-how were similar to, or even coincided with those found in ancient Egyptian eschatological thanatology. This similarity could nevertheless justify or bring any Bamileke claim to an ancient authentic Egyptian affiliation. Among the ancient Egyptians, the remains of the pharaoh were placed in the highest burial chamber of the pyramid to facilitate the ascent of his soul into the afterlife. When we go back in time to ancient Egypt and the history behind the construction of the pyramids, we can see that the eschato-thanatological and spiritual conception behind it was oriented towards a higher and higher construction, as was the case with the Bamileke who also advocated the construction of the *Leufeum* on ascending sites. The evolution in the construction of the pyramids of the different pharaohs confirms and reinforces this observation; Djoser (2630 to 2611 BC) 61m,[5] Cheops (c. 2551-2528 BC) 137m,[6] Chephren (c. 2560-1526 BC) 143m,[7]  all during the old empire, etc.

Another notorious and similar observation that exists between these two civilizations is that of social status, i.e., those to whom the pyramids benefited or were awarded. In ancient Egypt, only the royal family; the pharaoh, his mother, the princes (*ses*), etc., with the exception of a few nobles and/or wealthy people could enjoy the funeral privilege of an architectural jewel. Similarly, in the Bamileke customary tradition, this was also the case with the *fo* and his mother and with a few exceptions, the princes (*ses*), who have not yet had a house or land were also buried in the *Leufeum*, i.e., in the sacred forest which shelters it. In the same vain, another obvious similarity between these two civilizations was the sacred use of water in the thanatological and spiritual funeral rites. During the preparation of the pharaoh's dead body, water from the Nile was used to bathe his body in order to purify it from all earthly evil stain; this was also the case among the Bamileke with water from the *Leufeum*. In the same logic, after the long process of mummification, the mummified body of the Pharaoh was going to reach its last residence, the funerary chamber at the top of the pyramid, and to do this, it had to go upwards through all the different levels of this building in order to facilitate the ascent of its soul towards the kingdom of the dead where it would live eternally after a favorable judgment from the god Osiris.  This was also the case among the Bamileke with the remains of the *fo* who had to take flight in an ascending and continuous way from the back chieftaincy to the *Leufeum* where he would rest for eternity with his ancestors.

Still, during our research, another important observation was that of the pyramidal shape of most of the royal vaults in the Bamileke chieftaincies that have preserved the authenticity of the ancestral precepts despite the erosion of the past time in the face of the adversity of exogenous forces from imported civilizations: colonization, neo-colonization, globalization, etc., which were probably similar to the ancient Egyptian pyramids used for tombs. Its triangular shape was a kind of trilogy that represented the life cycle: present, past and future and therefore designated femininity which was synonymous with life, procreation and above all continuity on earth as in the afterlife. In any case, the eschato-thanatological spiritual conception and the

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[5] https://french.memphistours.com/Voyage-En-Egypte/Guide-Egypte/Culture-et-voyage/wiki/Pyramide-degres-Djoser, assessed 25/09/2022.

[6] https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramide_de_Kh%C3%A9ops, assessed 25/09/2022.

[7] https://www.merveilles-du-monde.com/Pyramides-d-Egypte/Pyramide-de-Khephren.php, assessed 25/09/2022.

attention given to the mortal remains of the rulers were almost the same, including the geocosmic orientation of the funeral buildings even though it's no longer the case in most chieftaincies today. The only difference was in the materialization of this ideal, which was somewhat heterogeneous due to the differences in geographical variation that characterized the evolutionary context of this people imposed by a constant quietude of security and conservation of the assets that required the principle of adaptation as the only imperative of survival.

## 5. Conclusion

This study, which focuses on geo-architecture as a defense mechanism within the Bamileke chieftaincies, is part of an ideological framework of African renaissance, and more specifically that of the Bamilekes. Thus, in a logic of return to the ancestral sources, question of reconnecting and reconciling with our past and our rich cultural heritage identity, it lends an attentive ear to the shadowy areas that still obscure part of the historicity of this people and Africa in general and invites everyone to an awareness of values, knowledge and endogenous knowledge. In this article, now more than ever, it has been demonstrated with clear evidences that geography was a major ally for this Bamileke people. In short, geography taking into account the realities of survival and the disparity between demography and natural resources, has enabled this people to fully establish themselves, as it has effectively punctuated their trajectory and migratory movements, determined the choice of their settlement, sedentary lifestyle and architectural mode of construction, influenced their socio-political and structural organization, defined the balance of power between its different tribes, paced their exchanges, oriented their religious perception and, above all, in a warlike and security concern both defensive and offensive, enabled them to defend and protect themselves. Indeed, the geography by lending itself in a coherent and decisive way to the different activities and daily constraints of this people as a response or solution became a civilizing factor of this already millenary civilization.

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