

### From Cameroon to Paris: Mousgoum Architecture In and Out of Africa

Steven Nelson



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The kind of extraordinary domed house constructed by Chad and Cameroon's Mousgoum peoples has long held sway over the Western imagination. In fact, as Steven Nelson shows here, this prototypical beehive-shaped structure known as the teleukhas been cast as everything from a sign of authenticity to a tourist destination to a perfect fusion of form and function in an unselfconscious culture. And in this multifaceted history of the teleuk, thought of by the Mousgoum themselves as a three-dimensional symbol of their culture, Nelson charts how a singular building's meaning has the capacity to change over time and in different places.

Drawing on fieldwork in Cameroon and Japan as well as archival research in Africa, the United States, and Europe, Nelson explores how the teleuk has been understood by groups ranging from contemporary tourists to the Cameroonian government and—most importantly—today's Mousgoum people. In doing so, he moves in and out of Africa to provide a window into a changing Mousgoum culture and to show how both African and Western peoples use the built environment to advance their own needs and desires. Highlighting the global impact of African architecture, *From Cameroon to Paris* will appeal to scholars and students of African art history and architectural history, as well as those interested in Western interactions with Africa.

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