

# Memoirs of a Mbororo: The Life of Ndudi Umaru: Fulani Nomad of Cameroon (Cameroon Studies)

Henri Bocquene

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This remarkable book recounts the life of Ndudi Umaru, a pastoral nomadic Fulani, who was born in the Nigeria-Cameroon border zone, but spent most of his life in Cameroon where he was treated for leprosy. Left to his own devices at an early age-his illness having separated him from his kith and kin-Ndudi is befriended by Père Boquené, a French missionary who takes him on as a field assistant. Working closely with the young man, Père Boquené realizes Ndudi is a keen observer of his own pastoral society, with its links to a wider social setting, and suggests he record his observations on tape. The result is a rare and sensitive collaboration, which sheds new insight into the world of the Mbororo and the complex and ever-changing social mosaic of West African savanna societies. Ndudi's leprosy and his efforts to find a cure grant him the necessary perspective to analyze this complex world, while still remaining a part of it.

For the western public, the Mbororo have often been the photogenic subjects of "Disappearing World" documentaries or glossy coffee table books. However, this account renders "the exotic" comprehensible, preserving the cultural authenticity of Ndudi's story while making this unique world more accessible to outsiders.



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