Alyna Reading

Divine Transformations: The Basel Mission in the Ghanaian Lawscape

Abstract: This article presents an interdisciplinary case study of a colonial land purchase made in 1875 by the Basel Mission in the Akyem Abuakwa region of Ghana. With the help of local carriers, catechists and seminarians, the missionaries travelled to the remote mountain town of Begoro to measure and map a plot of land, negotiate a price, and finally legitimise the sale through British bureaucratic processes. The sale then turned the land into private property, which the missionaries needed to establish Christian quarters or "Salems". In this article, I employ the legal concept of "lawscape" to examine the normative orders that governed land use in the early colonial period and their impact on the land itself. The aim of this case study is to highlight how religion and law as normative orders shaped the way in which the land was used and transformed at the dawn of colonial rule in Ghana.

Keywords: Historical property law, customary land tenure, Basel Mission, colonialism in Ghana (Gold Coast), Pietism

Alyna Reading is currently undertaking a doctorate in Contemporary History at the University of Fribourg after completing her internship at the State Archives of Lucerne. She earned a Master of Arts in European Global Studies in February 2026 from the University of Basel, where she participated in an excursion to Ghana and Germany in 2024 to conduct research on the Basel Mission. Her research interests centre on interdisciplinary approaches to understanding Switzerland's involvement in colonial projects through the lens of property, law, and religion.

Introduction

In the neighbourhood of Osu in Accra, Ghana, stands a concrete cross commemorating the arrival of the first Basel missionaries in 1828. The salty ocean air has corroded and weathered the cross itself, yet the golden letters on the marble slab at the foot of the memorial are well-polished and legible. They tell the story of the first missionaries who arrived at the Danish fort in Osu, on the coast then known to Europeans as the Gold Coast. Initially, these Pietist missionaries faced difficulties in establishing a mission in the region, but as the missionaries moved away from the coast and Danish patronage, they found that the climate and people in the hills of Akuapem were more agreeable to them. By the mid-1870s, the Basel Mission was growing and looking to buy land for new mission stations as far north as Akyem Abuakwa and Asante. Several missionaries – such as Johann Mader and Adolf Mohr – were involved in the surveying expeditions, while the mission treasurer, Christian Buhl, concluded land purchases using Western-style sales contracts.

The expansion of the mission coincided with other changes in the Gold Coast. While the missionaries claimed land for their mission stations and "Salems" (Christian towns) in the name of advancing Christianity, the British established colonial rule over the territory of the Gold Coast. In 1874, one year before the land sale investigated in this paper, the British ended the Third Anglo-Asante War by raiding Kumasi, the capital city of the autonomous Kingdom of Asante, and destroying the royal palace.[1] After this victory, the British began to formalise their rule over the



Figure 1: The Basel Mission Memorial near Osu, Accra, reads as follows: "In Blessed Memory of the Early Basel Missionaries who first landed at Osu (Christiansborg) in 1828 and tragically died within months of arrival" (photo by Rafael Feind, 2024)

Gold Coast by codifying law and establishing a colonial bureaucracy in Accra. As in other British colonies, "the law was not adapted to the land, rather, the land was adapted to the law".[2] Because the positivist international law of the nineteenth century did not regard West African kingdoms as equal nations, the British colonial administration only respected their hierarchy and norms in part. They did not regard them as applicable to British subjects and superimposed British legal norms as universally applicable.[3] Western property laws allowed the British colonial power to transform physical land into legal property that could be bought, sold or "consumed".

While the Basel missionaries worked independently of the British colonial power, they formed part of the "colonial spectrum".[4] Colonialism meant occupying territory in a material and psychological sense. It not only entailed the extraction of resources and human labour, but also promoted European science, religion and culture at the expense of local practices.[5] The missionaries applied property law as if it were universal, implementing it as a key technology by which colonial power was upheld.[6] The missionaries navigated a legally pluralistic space where traditional customs of land tenure and British property laws coexisted. These overlapping legal systems in one geographic area are interpreted through the concept of "lawscape", which explicitly asks how the physical space is affected by law.[7]

By focusing on the legal production of space, this paper uses the land as both "the object and tool of analysis"[8] to explore the consequences of missionaries buying land in a colonial environment. Firstly, this article aims to investigate the practices required to transform land into property through a micro-historical case study of a parcel of land purchased by the Basel Mission in the remote town of Begoro in Akyem Abuakwa. Secondly, I argue that land is shaped by religious and legal perspectives and that property law was introduced by the British colonial administration and enforced by third-party actors such as missionaries. Finally, using the specific case of the land at Begoro and the legal pluralism governing it, I will show how colonial law affected land use and ultimately transformed land into private property. Power over the land was not only legal but also strongly supported by religious moral frameworks as this paper will further illustrate.

2 Nicole Graham, *Lawscape: Property, Environment, Law* (Routledge, 2011), 124, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203847169.
3 Stephen C. Neff. *Justice Among Nations* (Harvard University Press, 2014), 318.
4 Raymond Craib, "Cartography and Decolonisation." In *Decolonizing the Map: Cartography from Colony to Nation*, ed. James R. Akerman (University of Chicago Press, 2017), 16.
5 Clifford C. Campbell and Kwasi Konadu, *The Ghana Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Duke University Press, 2016), 207.
6 Graham, *Lawscape*, 104.
7 Henry Jones, "Property, territory, and colonialism: an international legal history of enclosure." *Legal Studies* 39 no. 2 (June 2019): 188, doi: 10.1017/lst.2018.22.
8 Stuart Elden, *Birth of Territory* (The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 15.

Lawscape at Begoro

Lawscapes reflect both a highly specific geographic reality and an amalgamation of legal practices and therefore cannot be abstracted or generalised. Just as the weathered memorial at Osu tells a story not only of wind and corrosion but also of the missionaries and their "blessed memory", the plot of land at Begoro was defined by both its materiality and its social construction. The laws that governed land use directly impacted the way the land was physically shaped and socially imagined, so that "what we see in a landscape is not a detached and separated physical realm, "the land", but ourselves, our practices and our law – a lawscape".[9]

My case study focuses on Begoro, a mountain town on the Kwahu Plateau. The town was separated by steep scarps from the eastern part of the Kingdom of Akyem Abuakwa to which it belonged.[10] This remote location would later become a hindrance as the Basel Mission's inaccurate maps had placed it on the trade route to Kumasi. As elsewhere in the wider Akan states, the people of Akyem Abuakwa had cleared the thick forest in painstaking labour, creating arable land for present and future generations.[11] Two streams enclosed the plot of land that the missionaries would set out to buy, allowing for easy access to water even during the dry season or Harmattan. Far from the Eurocentric imagination of a *terra nullius*, an empty space whose history began at first contact with Europeans, this plot of land already had a varied history over the past centuries, with the recent settlement of the town of Begoro as part of the Akyem spatial politics that called for towns to change location and leadership to avoid uprisings.[12]

Before the advent of British colonial law in the Akan region in the 1870s, land use was regulated by what Ghanaian historian Robert Addo-Fening called the "customary land-tenure [sic] system".[13] In the customary land tenure system, the paramount chief of Akyem Abuakwa, the *okyenhene*, held stewardship of all the land, and this, in turn, obliged him to pay for all tribal war expenses.[14] He had the power both to grant newly conquered land to sub-chiefs and to return it to communal ownership. The sub-chiefs of each town held direct jurisdiction over their land but answered to

9 Graham, *Lawscape*, 5.

10 Robert Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa 1700–1943: from Ofori Panin to Sir Ofori Atta* (Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2001), 1.

11 Akan is an umbrella term (originally used by Europeans) for all Twi-speaking matrilinear nations in this region of Ghana. The Akan state model was organised in a hierarchical manner with the paramount chief at the top. Next came the chief or *ohene* who governed a group of towns or a division. Each individual town in a division had a sub-chief or *odikro* and finally each settlement or village had a headman or *adikrofo*; Paul Glen Grant, "Healing and Power in Ghana: Early Indigenous Expressions of Christianity." In: *Studies in World Christianity*, ed. Joel A. Carpenter (Texas: Baylor University Press, 2020), 34–35.

12 Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa 1700–1943*, 8; Graham, Lawscape, 95; Grant, *Healing and Power in Ghana*, 47.

13 Addo-Fening, "Customary land-tenure system in Akyem-Abuakwa." *Universitas* 9 (1987), 95–107; Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa 1700–1943*.

14 Addo-Fening, "Customary land-tenure system", 95.

the *okyenhene*, to whom the sub-chiefs owed taxes and who would be consulted for land sales.[15] Even though the sub-chiefs were authorised to decide on land sales, the actual land and agricultural equipment were owned communally by the *abusua*, a family or clan with a common female ancestor.[16] The head of each *abusua* functioned as a custodian representing the interests of his *abusua*. Land was conceived as "belonging to a large family of which many are dead, a few living and countless are yet unborn".[17] While chiefs could grant land use rights, they retained "allodial rights" or, in other words, the power to withdraw land use rights in the interest of the community.[18] Future generations were included in land practices as the Akyem deliberately left some land uncultivated for the use of future generations.[19] The Akan lawscape was not only shaped by those currently living on the land, but also by ancestors and descendants.

The term "customary land tenure" that I am employing to describe Akan land use is not unproblematic when writing about African legal traditions. Instead of the more neutral term "informal law", the term "customary" was readily applied by Europeans in the colonial context, often without a deeper understanding of these laws. This could foster misunderstandings as "customary laws" related not only to rigid laws that had been passed down through generations but also to readily adaptable rules.[20] Additionally, the term suggested that customary traditions were inferior to formalised legal traditions.[21] All human societies were governed by rules and taboos concerning the economy, family relations or land use. While such systems – be they formal or informal – served a similar function to that of laws, the term law has historically been used to denote the specific rationalised and formalised legal systems of European states.[22] It would not do to conflate informal, religious or customary systems with formal law, since it was their differences that allowed these rules to coexist with or influence formal laws. I have therefore decided to use the more comprehensive concept of "normative orders" when referring to all binding principles observed within a society.[23] When talking about the normative orders surrounding land use in Akan societies, I will continue to use the term "customary land tenure" employed by Addo-Fening and other leading Ghanaian scholars to avoid confusion.

15 Addo-Fening, "Customary land-tenure system", 96.
16 Christoph von Blarer, "Der Akan-Staat Akyem Abuakwa zwischen 1860 und 1943: Verweltlichungsprozesse und Königsamt vor dem Hintergrund von Mission und kolonialer Herrschaft." *Lizenziatsarbeit der Ethnologie* (Universität Basel, 1999), 22.
17 Emmanuel Ababio Ofosu-Mensah, "The Politics of Property Rights." *Journal of West African History* 5 no. 1 (2019): 89, doi: 10.14321/jwestafrihist.5.1.0083.
18 Ernest Sewordor, *The Basel Mission and the Establishment of a "Model Town" in Ghana – the Case of Abokobi, 1854–1926* (University of Ghana, 2017), 39.
19 Addo-Fening, "Customary land-tenure system", 97.
20 Salvatore Mancuso, "African Law(s): Comparative Insights on the African Lawscape." *Comparative Law in Global Perspective* 6 (Brill Nijhoff, 2024), 41–42.
21 Salvatore Mancuso, *African Law(s): Comparative Insights on the African Lawscape*, 43.
22 Winnifred Sullivan, "Law." In: *Vocabulary for the Study of Religion* no. 2, ed. Robert A. Segal (Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2015), 325.
23 Mancuso, *African Laws*, 4.

Whereas the British colonial authorities did not recognise local authorities in the Gold Coast as equal sovereigns, they also did not entirely dispense with customary land tenure. Instead, they relied on treaties of protection and later created a system of indirect rule, in which Akan normative orders were preserved as subsidiary to British Common Law.[24] Yet the codification of supposedly customary law changed these flexible normative orders into more rigid legal norms congruent with the written British legal tradition.[25] While indirect rule allowed customary land tenure to continue, British property law still changed local practices of land use and notions of property, because Europeans in the Gold Coast were buying land as alienable property, thereby removing it from communal use. The missionaries entered the lawscape in Begoro right at the beginning of this transformation process and were confronted both with the dramatic geography of the land and the legal pluralism governing its use.

Transforming land into property

The purchase of land by the Basel Mission at Begoro was exemplary of the transformation of land into property. This was not realised in a single day but through a process lasting several months. Before buying the land, the missionaries went to survey it and reported their findings to the Mission's "Home Committee" in Basel.[26] While the missionaries were active on the ground in Akyem Abuakwa, the Committee in Basel held power over financial decisions, including land acquisitions. Most missionaries who worked for the Evangelical Basel Mission Society came from the southern German countryside, but the organisational centre was staffed by the bourgeois class of Basel and the Mission seminary. The Home Committee made the financial and administrative decisions carried out by the agents in the colonial periphery.[27]

The decisions made in Basel, however, relied on reports made in the field. The missionaries wrote frequent letters to the Home Committee such as the report on the land at Begoro. This report was written in 1875 by the seasoned missionary Adolf Mohr and his younger companion Johann Mader, both of whom travelled to Begoro to survey the land before it could be bought. Through "investigative modalities" such as taking measurements, drawing maps, and assessing the soil, the missionaries gathered and classified information that the administrative authorities in Basel used to make decisions.[28]

24 Mancuso, *African Laws*, 88.
25 Mancuso, *African Laws*, 146.
26 Seth Quartey, *Missionary Practices on the Gold Coast, 1832–1895; Discourse, Gaze and Gender in the Basel Mission in Pre-Colonial West Africa* (New York: Cambria Press, 2007), 24.
27 Paul Jenkins, *Kurze Geschichte der Basler Mission* (Basel: Basel Mission Verlag, 1989), 10.
28 Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton University Press, 1996), 5.

Mader and Mohr interacted with the land on their surveying expedition under the assumption that it was potential property. Surveying was a common colonial practice that allowed the land to be appropriated in the mind before it was appropriated on the ground.[29] Even when the act of seeing the land was relatively passive, European "explorers" portrayed it as a heroic adventure of discovery.[30] During the second half of the 19th century, colonial actors in particular considered themselves entitled to the land they surveyed and "discovered". Using a missionary map from 1873 and a compass, Mohr realised on the journey to Begoro that the mission map was inaccurate and noted corrections for future cartographers. Just because missionaries – or other colonial agents for that matter – had made a map and presumably travelled through territory, it did not always mean that they were able to accurately identify or localise what they encountered. The mission map placed Begoro directly north of Kibi and significantly closer to the Asante border. In reality, Begoro was much closer to the station at Kukurantumi than expected and, due to its location in the mountains, thoroughly unsuited as an entry point into Asante.



Figure 2: This is the map used by Mader and Mohr on their journey to Begoro. The map shows the town too far north and does not depict the steep cliffs of the Kwahu Plateau, which made travel to Asante impossible. Source: "Die Goldküste und westliche Sklavenküste sowie das südliche Asante Reich". c. 1873. (BMA 96073) Basel Mission Archives (Mission 21).

29 Tania Li, "What Is Land? Assembling a Resource for Global Investment." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 39, no. 4 (2014): 592–593.

30 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd ed (Routledge, 2008), 199.

This mistaken geography showed once again that, although Europeans may have claimed scientific accuracy on the basis of their technology, they were actually highly dependent on local knowledge. On their way to Begoro, the missionaries were accompanied by (mostly unnamed) African agents such as catechists, seminarians and carriers who helped them find their way despite the inaccuracies of their map. The carriers are a powerful example of such unacknowledged labour by local actors. The carriers took on the physical burden of the missionaries' surveying trip by carrying them and their belongings in hammocks through the forests and hills.[31] Only local knowledge of the landscape and the language allowed the missionaries to find the land and start negotiations in Begoro. While the missionaries were not acting on behalf of a colonial power, they were engaging in a colonial practice. Some of the local authorities in the Gold Coast even perceived the Basel missionaries as so closely linked to the British colonial power that they called them "envoys of Queen Victoria".[32]

Once Mader and Mohr arrived in Begoro, they measured the land they wished to buy by walking around the plot of land and counting their steps. In addition to this rudimentary measurement, Mader described the boundary in words, explaining that it followed the stream and the road. These boundaries converted the land into something quantifiable, whose material properties could be measured and eventually valued at a certain price. The immobility of land meant that it could not be bought and sold like other commodities that could be lifted and carried away. [33] Only through boundaries could the land be transformed from common property into an alienable commodity.[34] The surveying expedition was the first time this land was regarded as one unit, whereas previously it had been part of the larger landscape encompassing agricultural land, forests and holy places such as the waterfall.

Fixing a price and drawing up a sales contract were only possible after measuring and mapping the plot of land. Maps created according to European scientific methods allowed the colonial project to advance. At the same time, the maps seldom achieved the scientific precision they claimed, relying on missionaries' accounts rather than scientific measurements. Like most missionaries, Mader and Mohr lacked the tools and education to draw precise maps of the land at

31 Johann Adam Mader and Adolf Mohr, "Begoro und Okwau. Bericht über zwei Untersuchungsreisen als Vorbereitung für die Asante-Mission." In: *Blätter für die Mitglieder der Frauen-Collecte zu Gunsten der Basler Heiden-Mission* no. 3 (Basel: Verlag der Missionsbuchhandlung, 1875), 8/9.

32 Sonia Abun-Nasr, "An African Missionary: The Ambition of David Asante." In: *University of Leipzig Papers on Africa: Mission Archives Series* 22 (2003), ed. Adam Jones: 41–50.

33 Li, "What Is Land?", 589.

34 Graham, *Lawscape*, 20.

Begoro. They were heavily dependent on local actors to find the land in the first place and to describe the plot they encountered using local designations such as the name of the stream or landmarks such as a holy tree that the missionaries dismissively called "fetish place". Still, the missionaries followed the aesthetic of science by drawing a descriptive map that included measurements in steps, which were usually defined as "the length of an average man's step".[35] Yet the numbers on the map cannot hide the fact that all these measurements amounted to nothing more than a sketch, and even the final entry in the mission land registry does not mention the area of the land at Begoro.[36] Even without scientific accuracy, a sales contract could be legally binding, favouring the correct legal form over the material content.

The original purpose of the mission station at Begoro had been to facilitate entry into the Asante Kingdom through a base close to the border. After correcting the mistaken geography, it became clear that Begoro was not as strategically valuable as expected. The annual report on the mission omitted the mistaken location and the failure to establish a means of preaching to the people of Asante. Instead of mentioning its geographic disadvantage, Mission Inspector Joseph Friedrich Josenhans remarked positively in his report on the number of potential baptismal candidates in Begoro.[37] Perhaps the remoteness of the town was offset by the concurrent opening of a mission station near Asante. Whatever the exact reasoning, the mission station at Begoro was approved by the Home Committee without openly acknowledging either that the missionaries had been mistaken about its location or that they had used funds that had been donated towards establishing a mission in Asante, even though Begoro was not part of Asante.

In November 1875, eight months after the return of Mohr and Mader from their surveying expedition, another group of missionaries set out from Kibi to purchase the land at Begoro. This time the missionaries were accompanied by the mission treasurer, a German from Calw named Christian Buhl, who conducted most of the mission's land purchases in the 1870s. Though Buhl worked for the mission, he was not a trained clergyman and did not seem to preach when travelling, leaving this task to his three companions. One of them was the first Basel-trained African missionary, David Asante, who was not only fluent in Twi but also a member of a royal Akan family. When the four missionaries arrived in Begoro on 12 November 1875, it was Asante who

35 Knut Borchardt and Cornelia Meyer-Stoll, *Die Maß- und Gewichtsreformen in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert* (München: Beck Verlag, 2010), 214.
36 Basler Mission, *Grundbücher der afrikanischen Stationen 1874–1846* (Basel Mission Archives: Signatur D-31.03,3), 181.
37 Joseph Josenhans, *Einundsechzigster Jahresbericht der evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft zu Basel* (Basel: Verlag der Missionsgesellschaft, 1876), 5.

interpreted during the audience with the *begorohene*, Antwi Kwasi[38], whom Buhl referred to only as "Antyi". The chief and his council of elders did not agree to the proposed boundaries since they included the aforementioned waterfall, which was venerated as a deity or *obosom*. Only after the parties had walked around the plot and defined a smaller parcel of land did the local authorities agree to negotiations.[39]

Buhl's description of the negotiations provides a glimpse into the lawscape present at Begoro. Legal pluralism is understood as the "coexistence of two or more normative orders"[40], and once these overlapping normative orders are put into their cultural and physical context, they form the lawscape. Antwi Kwasi and the elders of Begoro were operating within their own normative order concerning land. The lack of historical sources representing their perspectives meant that it was impossible to know many of the reasons for their actions. While they were accustomed to customary land tenure laws, they may have also been somewhat familiar with European concepts of property. The missionaries did reference other land purchases during negotiations that the chief and elders seemed to know about.[41] Considering that some of the earlier land purchases took place in nearby towns such as Kukurantumi the chief may well have been aware of the legal implications. Still, the plot of land at Begoro was in communal use at the time and had never entered the free market. While the chief and his elders may have been aware that selling the land might afford certain opportunities, it is also likely that they did not completely accept the British normative order as authoritative.[42]

At the beginning of the negotiations, Antwi Kwasi and the elders offered the land as a gift to the missionaries, but the missionaries declined and offered to pay because "we knew very well how expensive such a present would become".[43] Of course, we cannot be sure if Buhl understood the offer correctly. Perhaps it was less of a gift and more of a grant of land use according to customary land tenure laws, under which land use was adjusted by the chief according to the needs of the community. But it is almost certain that Buhl's understanding of a gift would have been different from the local understanding, according to which land was not something that could be alienated from its context. Buhl's dismissive comment on how "expensive" the gift would

38 Robert Addo-Fening, "Ofori Atta, Mate Kole, and Jurisdiction over the Krobo Plantations." *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* no. 3 (1999), 82.
39 Christian Buhl, *Buhl to Basel November 24*, 1875 (Basel Mission Archives: Signature D-01.27.I..46), 2.
40 Mancuso, *African Laws*, 145.
41 Buhl, *Buhl to Basel*, 3.
42 Justice Modibo Ocran, "The Clash of Legal Cultures: The Treatment of Indigenous Law in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa." Akron Law Review 39 no.2 (2006), 465–466.
43 Buhl, "Buhl to Basel", 3.

become made him sound distrustful. He seemed to believe that the local people were trying to trick the missionaries into taking land and later changing the conditions. Buhl had no grasp of the local customary land tenure system which would grant him the right to use the land but would ultimately leave the land in the possession of the community. Instead, Buhl framed the idea of a gift – most likely a grant of land use rights – as a trick and not as a standard procedure in the local normative order.

It is hard to know the degree to which the missionaries understood and respected the local normative order. David Asante, who was familiar with Akan laws through his heritage, must have been able to understand the rules surrounding land tenure, but Buhl's report did not mention consulting with him. Instead, Asante appears primarily as a translator while the missionaries actively negotiated with the relevant local authorities via British legal processes. There was some understanding that the local protocol had to be honoured through reciprocal visits to the chief, but ultimately the legitimisation of ownership would come through bureaucratic paperwork and the official registration with the British administration.

Beyond the juxtaposition of colonial state law and local customary land tenure laws, the missionaries also brought with them their own "normative order" or binding norms regarding negotiation and land use.[44] After the missionaries refused the initial offer, they began bargaining over a price for the land. Buhl emphasised that the missionaries were coming to Begoro for the locals' benefit and that the population would profit from a mission station. He criticised the *begorohene* and his council for driving a hard bargain and not agreeing to the missionaries' offers: "But they did not want to hear any of it, probably thinking that their eggs were double-yolked and that we must have their land".[45] Buhl used the image of the double-yolked eggs in a derisive way, implying that it would be silly to think of the land at Begoro as better than the land the mission had bought at Kibi, Kukurantumi, Aburi or Akropong. Instead, Buhl regarded the land as interchangeable, comparing it to eggs whose uniformity is reflected in the German expression "sich gleichen wie ein Ei dem anderen" (English: "to be alike as two eggs"). Moreover, Buhl made it clear that the mission did not need the land at Begoro and that the town's residents would profit from having a mission station.

44 Mancuso, *African Laws*, 148.
45 Buhl, "Buhl to Basel", 3. Dt. Sie wollten aber davon nichts hören, dachten wohl ihre Eier haben zwei Dotter & wir müssen ihr Land haben.

The local authorities asked for 60 ounces of gold dust or *sika futuro*, the traditional currency in Akyem.[46] Buhl seemed familiar enough with the currency to provide the equivalent in silver dollars immediately, explaining that sixty ounces of gold dust were equal to 216 dollars. Even though Buhl characterised the locals as driving a hard bargain and asking for an unreasonable amount of money, it was in fact the missionaries who remained firm in their offer. They only budged from their initial offer of 120 dollars to "meet in the middle"[47] at 140. This price was significantly lower than what the locals originally proposed and only marginally higher than the missionaries' first offer.

Buhl recorded no objections to paying in silver dollars instead of gold dust, but he did describe how important it was to him that the coins looked new. His account of the transaction makes it seem as if he felt the need to convince the locals that the silver money was valuable:

> By now evening had fallen, so we went home, prepared the papers, counted out the money in neat little piles. I had brought new silver money, which really struck the eye, especially when Br Werner lit a few more lamps. But the only way to get to the piles of money was through the place where I had prepared the papers for signature. Finally, it was over and the chief & his elders were able to pack up & leave.[48]

Buhl's description of the missionaries polishing their silver reads like a boyish trick. Buhl and the other missionaries set out the money to glisten in the lamplight to entice the *begorohene* as if he were a child or a magpie attracted to shiny objects. The fact that the missionaries felt compelled to try to trick the locals also shows that on some level they were aware that the chief and elders were discontent with the deal.

The conversion of land into property was finalised through the sales contract that named all parties involved as well as the plot of land concerned.[49] Unlike other commodities, land could not be moved or taken home by the buyer.[50] Turning land into private property required a process of

46 Kristen Windmuller-Luna, "Gold Dust Box (Abamphruwa)", *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, last modified 2016, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/310823 (30.05.2025).
47 Buhl, "Buhl to Basel", 4. Dt. "Auf halbem Weg"
48 Buhl, "Buhl to Basel", 4. Dt. Mittlerweile war es Abend geworden, wir gingen nach Hause, machten die Papiere fertig, zählten das Geld in schönen Häuflein zurecht, ich hatte neues Silbergeld mitgenommen, das stach ordentlich in die Augen, namentlich als Br Werner noch einige Lichter anzündete. Der Weg an die Geldhäuflein ging aber nur über den Platz, wo ich die Papiere zur Unterschrift parat hielt. Endlich war auch das erreicht & der Häuptling mit seinen Ältesten konnte einsacken & abziehen.
49 Christian Buhl, *Kaufbrief Missionshaus in Begoro November 15*, 1875 (Basel Mission Archives: Signature: D-31.03.06), 1/2.
50 Li, "What Is Land?", 589.

abstraction through which wealth and power could be transferred.[51] Although the land remained physically unchanged, it was now to be considered separate from its social and geographical space, with boundaries being used to limit its uses and access to it. At Begoro, this process followed a procedure similar to that used elsewhere in the British Empire. The plot of land was defined by boundaries and then legally transferred through a bureaucratic process involving a sales contract. Once the contract was signed and the price had been paid to the proper authorities, the land was considered private property. While the transformation of land into private property happened through treaties and agreements instead of military conquest, the process remained asymmetric. These treaties replaced customary land tenure laws, although the British colonial power formally left local authorities in charge, slowly replacing communal land use with alienable commodities.

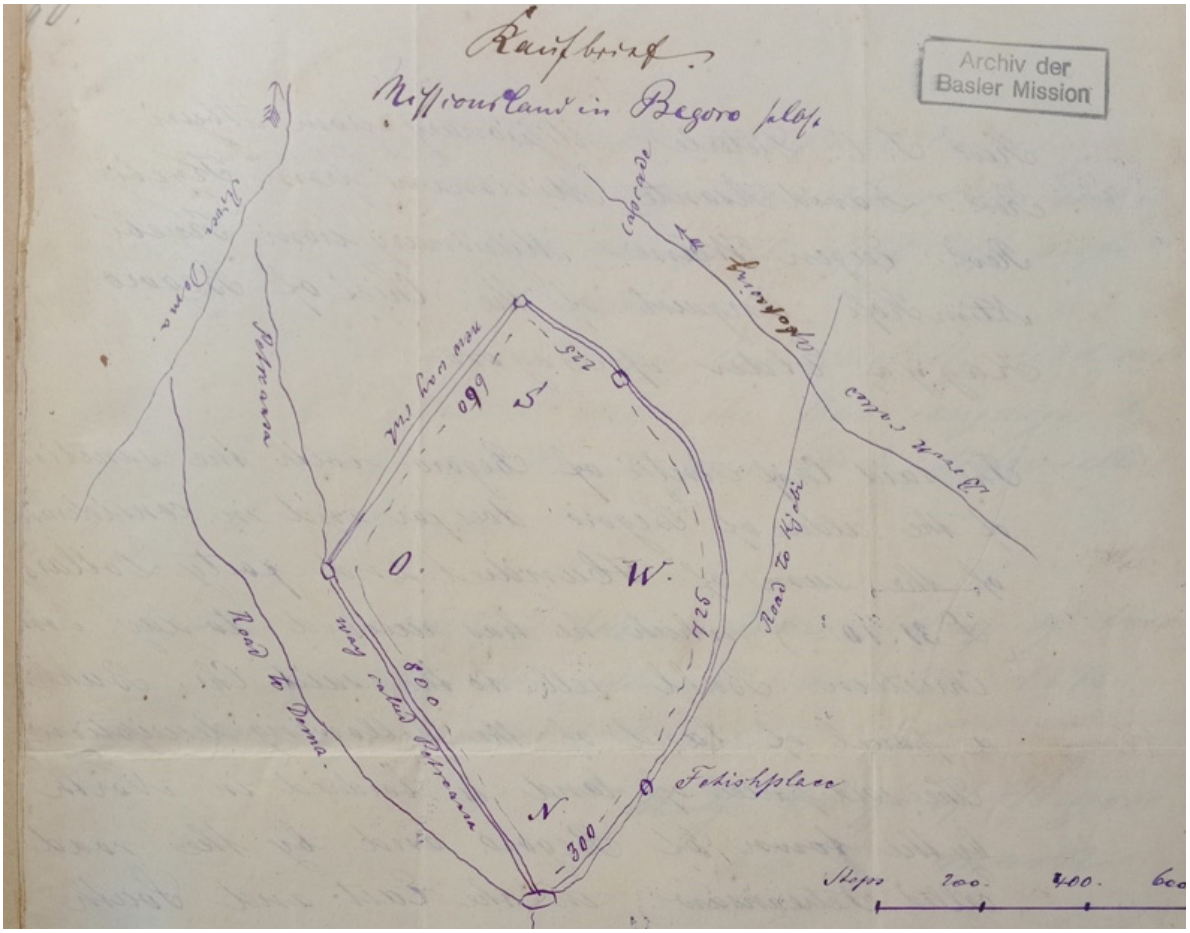


Figure 3: Buhl's sketch of the plot purchased in Begoro conveys an aesthetic of scientific precision without providing precise measurements. Source: "Kaufbrief Missionshaus in Begoro" c. 15 November 1875. (D-31.03.06) Basel Mission Archives.

51 Ofosu-Mensah, "The Politics of Property Rights", 84.

Sacred Land: The Salem

Private property law formed an integral part of the British legal corpus, but there was also a spiritual component of land purchase as Christians followed their divine mandate to "fill the earth and subdue it"[52]. The Basel Mission followed the same ethos of productivity in the spiritual realm as in the material world. Even though the Home Committee was situated in the city of Basel and composed of an urban elite, most of the missionaries themselves hailed from small Pietist farming communities in the southern German region of Württemberg. [53] In their understanding of Christianity, physical land was tied to agricultural productivity as well as Christian righteousness. The Christian creation myth imagined man as "disembodied from nature"[54], an individual dominating the land rather than a creature of the land. Adam may have been made from the land itself, yet God gave him dominion over this land. When buying the land, the missionaries may have been driven by economic and religious considerations alike.[55] God's blessings were manifested in the form of prosperous land and the associated increase in new converts.[56]

The connection between a hard-working farming community and Christianity was intuitive to the Basel missionaries. They were used to living off the proceeds of the land. The Evangelical Basel Mission followed a Pietist understanding of religion, which originated in a revival movement in the 17th century that challenged the institutionalisation of Protestant churches.[57] More important than ritual baptism was the spiritual rebirth marked by internal convictions rather than specific rites. Pietists valued Bible study, asceticism and discipline.[58] Because farming communities required hard work and discipline to sustain their modest lifestyle, they fostered Pietist communities. This rural lifestyle also offered a counterbalance to the rapid changes of industrialisation and urbanisation.

The church that the missionaries established in the Gold Coast tried to emulate the rural Pietist communities of their native Württemberg. Just as the Pietist towns of Kornthal and Wilhelmsdorf protected believers from worldly influences, Christian quarters founded by the missionaries in the Gold Coast were expected to serve that same purpose. The "Salem" or *bronikurom* (town of

52 "The Book of Genesis", in *The New King James Version of the Bible* (1982), 1:28.
53 Jenkins, *Kurze Geschichte der Basler Mission*, 11/12.
54 Bryer, Amanda, *Placing Property: A Legal Geography of Property Rights in Land* (Dublin, Ireland: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2023), 43.
55 Quartey, *Missionary Practices on the Gold Coast*, 29/30.
56 Joseph Josenhans, *Sechzigster Jahresbericht der evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft zu Basel* (Basel, Verlag der Missionsgesellschaft, 1875), 17.
57 Rudolf Dellsperger, "Pietismus". In: *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, last modified 2010. https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/011424/2010-10-19/ (21.05.2025).
58 Linda Ratschiller, *Medical Missionaries and Colonial Knowledge in West Africa and Europe, 1885–1914* (Springer International Publishing, 2023), 49.

Europeans) allowed Christian converts to separate themselves from their non-believing relatives and dedicate their time to worship and agricultural work. [59] The term Salem was derived from the Holy City Jerusalem itself and underlined its religious significance as Holy Land for the promised people.[60] These Salems were meant to become self-sufficient and independent of the surrounding town, guaranteeing an orderly and quiet Christian life under the patriarchal leadership of the missionaries or clergy.[61] Since the Salem was a Christian space, the missionaries held power over who could be there. Excommunication from the church could be followed by removal from the land.[62]

Although the missionaries had begun their missionary work at Osu on the coast in 1828, they moved further inland and up into the hills where the climate was better for the missionaries' health.[63] Akropong became one of the largest and most important mission stations in the Akuapem region. Here, the missionaries started building a church and a school in the 1840s. Since the missionaries valued industriousness, they established a farm to determine which crops and agricultural techniques were best suited to the land.[64] The Basel Mission was focused on modernising the local agriculture and helping the locals become self-reliant through farming, always emulating familiar European farming methods. The establishment of the Basel Mission Trading Company in 1859 and the subsequent sale of cash crops from local and mission plantations followed this same rationale.[65]

Agricultural improvement of the land was one part of the so-called "civilising mission". This was the notion that non-Christian peoples were suffering in spiritual darkness and had to be enlightened and saved from their despotic rulers.[66] This belief was as common among missionaries as it was among British colonial administrators. While the "civilising mission" was framed as a humanitarian and altruistic project, it often furthered exploitation and violence against the local population.[67] The term "civilising" is highly problematic because it presupposed its opposite: "barbarism" or "savagery". Both terms were used in the colonial imagination to justify the

59 Kofi Affrifah, "The Impact of Christianity on Akyem Society, 1852–1887." *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 16 no. 1 (1975), 70.
60 Anne Beutter and Ernest Sewordor, "A Processual Perspective on Utopia as a Lived Social Project." *Religion* 54 no.3 (2024), 516.
61 Sewordor, *The Basel Mission and the Establishment of a "Model Town" in Ghana*, 43.
62 Sewordor, *The Basel Mission and the Establishment of a "Model Town" in Ghana*, 80.
63 Quartey, *Missionary Practices on the Gold Coast*, 27.
64 Andrea Franc, „Wie die Schweiz zur Schokolade kam: Der Kakaohandel der Basler Handelsgesellschaft mit der Kolonie Goldküste (1893–1960." *Basler Beiträge zur Geschichtswissenschaft* no. 180, (Basel: Schwabe Verlag), 69.
65 Quartey, *Missionary Practices on the Gold Coast*, 27.
66 Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung Der Welt*, 5th ed. (C.H. Beck, 2010), 648.
67 Maria Lugones, "Towards a Decolonial Feminism." *Hypatia* 25 no.4 (2010), 744.

subjugation of people and betrayed the colonial agents' racist assumption that non-Christian cultures were somehow inferior.

The Basel Mission framed the land of the Gold Coast as very fertile and underdeveloped. In a photo book published after decades of mission activity in the area in 1895, the editor wrote in the introduction that "for the culture of the country, however, little is done by its inhabitants", claiming that "what can be found is limited to the coastline and comes at the expense of the English colonial government".[68] The editor went on to write that this state would only change once the blessings of Christianity had been introduced to the entire population. To the author, the connection between Christianity and productive agriculture was self-evident. Similarly, when Johann Mader wrote his report to the Home Committee, he underlined the fact that the people living in Begoro were already farmers, a fact that was intended to demonstrate their morality and receptiveness to Christianity. In his view, the correlation between good Christians and good farmers was reciprocal: Not only were good Christians good farmers, but good farmers would certainly make good Christians.

When describing Begoro, Mader conflated farming skills and Christian virtue, while making clear that there was valuable potential – in the form of crops – in the land. History would later prove him right when the cocoa boom began in Akyem Abuakwa in the 1890s and farmers migrated from Akuapem, Krobo, Shai, Ga, and other places to establish cocoa plantations.[69] Even if the focus of his letter was on preaching the Gospel to the people at Begoro, Mader did reference the economic dimensions of the land. The purchased land possessed not only spiritual value because of the souls that would be reached by the missionaries, but also a clear economic value. The practice of transforming the land into property allowed the missionaries to benefit from both, since the land was now theirs to use.

Establishing a mission station at Begoro meant that the Basel Mission could introduce its methods of land improvement. Although the sources made it clear that farmers were already cultivating produce on the plot of land at Begoro, the missionaries did not regard local cultivation practices as equal to their own or to those of the British. The potential quality of the land lay in its suitability for improvement both in an agricultural and a spiritual sense as the two were considered

68 Fritz Ramseyer, *Achtzig Ansichten von der Goldküste (Westafrika)* (Neuenburg: Verlag von Gebr. Attinger, 1895), IV. Dt. Für die Kultur des Landes aber geschieht wenig von seinen Bewohnern und was etwa davon zu finden ist, beschränkt sich auf die Küstenlinie und kommt auf Rechnung der englischen Kolonialregierung.
69 Franc, *Wie die Schweiz zur Schokolade kam*, 59.

connected. By establishing a Salem in Begoro, they would be able to realise the "colonist utopia" of creating an ideal Christian community on the land that God had given man to dominate. [70]

This Christian belief that God had given the land to man shaped the way that the missionaries interacted with it. Missionary efforts formed part of the colonial lawscape as their religious message conveyed specific normative orders. The missionaries at Begoro applied British property law not only by virtue of being Europeans but also because of their belief in a superior form of societal organisation derived from common Christian values. Agricultural labour became a metaphor for missionary work and God's admonition to till the land turned into a spiritual call: man should not only improve the land through cultivation, but also through Christianity.

Just as the Basel Mission had struggled in the 1820s and 1830s to establish a mission on the Gold Coast, it faced difficulties entering the Kingdom of Asante in the 1870s. The mission had tried and failed to do this for decades, but the war with Britain made this difficult.[71] Mission Inspector Josenhans wrote about this trouble in the annual report of the mission: "Asante is stone and our whole mission is a stone".[72] The missionaries saw themselves as labourers in a difficult field. The land was considered as hard as a rock both for its material conditions – climate, illness and war – and its spiritual ones. While the evangelising mission did not always yield the desired results, the new mission station at Begoro was a symbol of unfettered optimism.[73] The missionaries had been mistaken about the location and usefulness of the new mission station but continued their plans to build it anyway. The missionaries described Asante as "stone" while advancing their projects regardless of setbacks and failures. In the Christian parable of the sower, it was the soil that was responsible if the seeds did not grow. The way Josenhans used the metaphor seemed to imply something else: The local conditions may have impeded the spread of Christianity, but it was missionary labour that would make the difference. Once the land was improved spiritually through Christianity, God would show His favour through agricultural yields.

70 Itohan Osayimwese, "Pietism, Colonialism, and the Search for Utopia: Pietist Space in Germany and the Gold Coast." *Thresholds* 30 (2005), 76.

71 Grant, *Healing and Power in Ghana*, 29.

72 Josenhans, *Sechzigster Jahresbericht der evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft zu Basel*, 20. Dt. Asante ist Stein und unsere Mission ist Stein.

73 Affrifah, "The Impact of Christianity on Akyem Society, 1852–1887", 72.

Conclusion

The plot of land at Begoro described by the missionaries in the 1870s has by now made way for church buildings, concrete streets and car parks as well as some greenery. Both the highly specific materiality and the socio-legal construction of this lawscape have been completely transformed. Centring the land and its lawscape at the time of the land sale allows for a deeper understanding of the changes that accompanied the advent of colonisation in Ghana and whose effects continue into the present. After all, the relationship between people and land is foundational in our legal framework. What was once part of a broad landscape belonging to ancestors and descendants alike became a bounded, alienable commodity that could be sold and resold to the highest bidder.

At the outset of this article, I began in Osu, where the missionaries stepped ashore in 1828. The weathered cross stands there to remind passersby of how the Basel Mission first entered the Gold Coast as sickly Europeans who needed the grace of God to succeed. The cross conveys a narrative in which illness and adversity were overcome by divine protection so that the missionaries could share the Gospel despite their difficulties acclimatising to the Gold Coast. In part, the mission pursued this goal by buying land from local chiefs and having these sales contracts notarised by the British colonial administration. Transforming land into property was a by-product of evangelisation, yet it was also integral to the proselytising mission. Only through land acquisition were the missionaries able to establish Christian quarters or "Salems" where they could cultivate their physical crops and their spiritual flocks.

After the missionaries had assessed the land quantitatively and qualitatively, they purchased the land according to British property law. For this purpose, they had to approach the legal owner of the land. Although the British purportedly supported customary land tenure laws, they simultaneously recognised chiefs as individual owners of the land in a British legal sense. This paradox meant that the chief was able to sell land as private property to Europeans that had previously been part of communal land use. After the preparatory practice of surveying the land, it could be transformed into private property through bureaucratic processes such as drawing boundaries and signing contracts. The boundaries alienated the land from its communal use as it was now excludable, which in turn meant owners could do with their property what they wished.[74] The accompanying contracts which were registered with the British colonial administration gave legal force to the boundaries. If someone were to encroach on the land, the owners could prove and enforce their ownership. As the contract of the land at Begoro stated, the chief and elders

74 Li, "What Is Land? Assembling a Resource for Global Investment", 591.

of Begoro now had to defend "for ever"[75] Buhl's right to dispose of the land as he pleased. The emphasis on the finality of this transaction symbolised a rupture in the Akan belief that land belonged to a family complete with ancestors and descendants, since these would now not be able to lay any claim to the land.[76]

Examining the lawscape in the emerging colonial state of the Gold Coast involved working at the intersection of law and history. In this interdisciplinary approach, I relied on legal theory and micro-historical analysis in the Begoro case study. Legal processes had to be understood within their epistemological framework because the missionaries used law to legitimise their presence in Begoro. Understanding the mechanisms of legal codification and the complexity of legal pluralism is vital to the history of the Basel Mission. I chose to combine theories of both law and history in the notion of lawscape because law is so integral to the shaping of power. The land for the mission station was bought through a legitimised – albeit colonial and Eurocentric – process which reduced the *begorohene's* power to grant and revoke land use in the interest of the community. Binding normative orders, such as sales contracts, reshaped the land as the missionaries were now able to decide how to use their property in both legal and spiritual terms.

In Begoro and elsewhere, the purchase of land by the missionaries detached it from the customary land tenure system and transformed it into private property. In doing so, the missionaries applied modalities of investigation similar to those used by the colonial powers before beginning the legal processes of transformation through rationalisation, boundedness and bureaucracy. The Basel Mission followed colonial practices of transformation in the lawscape of the Gold Coast to establish mission stations, guided by their belief in the Christian missionary mandate. Religious elements remained entangled with legal practice, as religious morality informed the law. The missionaries used British property law to buy land for their Salems, which had to be separate from local towns so that they could establish Christian communities and establish their own normative orders. The Basel missionaries preached Christianity as a universal religion and with this religion came universal property law, thereby disrupting the local lawscape. The plot purchased for the Basel Mission station was the first application of private property law in Begoro, marking the beginning of formalised British colonial rule. Under colonial rule the land was made to fit the laws instead of adapting the laws to the land and its culture.[77] Commodifying land meant stripping it of its unique geography and meaning, making it interchangeable. While this supposed

75 Buhl, "Kaufbrief", 2.
76 Ofosu-Mensah, "The Politics of Property Rights", 89.
77 Graham, *Lawscape*, 124.

interchangeability allowed colonial property law to be superimposed on customary land tenure, it remained a construct. Just as the cross on the Osu coast may have been erected to honour the advent of Christianity, it did not remain untouched by time and climate. The land and its meaning – the lawscape – are always changing and evolving and are ultimately shaped by the interplay of societal norms and nature.

Bibliography

Abun-Nasr, Sonia. "An African Missionary: The Ambition of David Asante". Edited by Adam Jones. *University of Leipzig Papers on Africa*, Mission Archives Series, 22 (2003): 41–50.

Addo-Fening, Robert. *Akyem Abuakwa 1700–1943: From Ofori Panin to Sir Ofori Atta*. Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2001.

Addo-Fening, Robert. "Customary Land tenure System in Akyem-Abuakwa". *Universitas* 9 (1987): 95–107.

Addo-Fening, Robert. "Ofori Atta, Mate Kole, and Jurisdiction over the Krobo Plantations". *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, no. 3 (1999): 81–100.

Addo-Fening, Robert. "The Native Jurisdiction Ordinance, Indirect Rule and the Subject's Well-Being: The Abuakwa Experience 1899–1912". *Research Review* 6, no. 2 (1990): 29–44.

Affrifah, Kofi. "The Impact of Christianity on Akyem Society, 1852–1887". *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 16, no. 1 (1975): 67–86.

Basler Mission, "Grundbücher der afrikanischen Stationen", 1874–1846. Basel Mission Archives (D-31.03,3).

Beutter, Anne. *Religion, Recht und Zugehörigkeit: Rechtspraktiken einer westafrikanischen Kirche und die Dynamik normativer Ordnungen*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2023. https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666554636.

Beutter, Anne and Sewordor, Ernest. "A Processual Perspective on Utopia as a Lived Social Project". In *Religion* 54, no. 3 (2024), 514–537. https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2024.2362062.

Blarer, Christoph von. "Der Akan-Staat Akyem Abuakwa zwischen 1860 und 1943: Verweltlichungsprozesse und Königsamt vor dem Hintergrund von Mission und kolonialer Herrschaft". Lizenziatsarbeit der Ethnologie, Universität Basel, 1999.

Bryer, Amanda. *Placing Property: A Legal Geography of Property Rights in Land*. Dublin, Ireland: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-31994-5.

Cohn, Bernard S. *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*. Princeton Studies in Culture/ Power/ History. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1996.

Craib, Raymond. "Cartography and Decolonization". In *Decolonizing the Map: Cartography from Colony to Nation*, edited by James R. Akerman. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Dellsperger, Rudolf. "Pietismus". In *Historisches Lexikon Der Schweiz*, October 19, 2010. https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/011424/2010-10-19/.

Elden, Stuart. *The Birth of Territory*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Elias, Taslim Olawale. *Africa and the Development of International Law*. Edited by Richard Akinjide. 2nd ed. Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1988.

Franc, Andrea. *Wie die Schweiz zur Schokolade kam: Der Kakaohandel der Basler Handelsgesellschaft mit der Kolonie Goldküste (1893–1960)*. Basler Beiträge zur Geschichtswissenschaft 180. Basel: Schwabe AG Verlag, 2008.

Graham, Nicole. *Lawscape: Property, Environment, Law*. Abingdon, Oxon, New York, N.Y: Routledge, 2011. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203847169.

Grant, Paul Glen. *Healing and Power in Ghana: Early Indigenous Expressions of Christianity*. Edited by Joel A. Carpenter. 1st ed. Studies in World Christianity. Texas: Baylor University Press, 2020.

Jenkins, Paul. *Kurze Geschichte der Basler Mission*. Basel: Basel Mission, 1989.

Jones, Henry. "Property, Territory, and Colonialism: An International Legal History of Enclosure". *Legal Studies* 39, no. 2 (June 2019): 187–203. https://doi.org/10.1017/lst.2018.22.

King, Richard. "Colonialism and the Mapping of South Asian History and Culture". In *Secularism and Religion-Making*, edited by Markus Dressler and Arvind-Pal S. Mandair. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Konadu, Kwasi, and Campbell, Clifford C., eds. *The Ghana Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016.

Li, Tania. "What Is Land? Assembling a Resource for Global Investment". *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 39, no. 4 (2014): 589–602.

Lugones, María. "Toward a Decolonial Feminism". *Hypatia* 25, no. 4 (2010): 742–59. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2010.01137.x.

Mancuso, Salvatore. *African Law(s): Comparative Insights on the African Lawscape*. Vol. 6. Comparative Law in Global Perspective. Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2024.

Meyer-Stoll, Cornelia, and Knut Borchardt. *Die Maß- und Gewichtsreformen in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Rolle Carl August Steinheils und der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*. Abhandlungen / Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, N.F., H. 136. München: Beck, 2010.

Neff, Stephen C. *Justice Among Nations*. United Kingdom: Harvard University Press, 2014.

Ocran, Justice Modibo. "The Clash of Legal Cultures: The Treatment of Indigenous Law in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa". *Akron Law Review* 39, no. 2 (2006): 465–82.

Ofosu-Mensah, Emmanuel Ababio. "The Politics of Property Rights: The Case of Akyem Abuakwa, Ghana (1912–1943)". *Journal of West African History* 5, no. 1 (2019): 83–113. https://doi.org/10.14321/jwestafrihist.5.1.0083.

Opoku, Theophilus. *The Reports of Theophilus Opoku: A 19th-Century Gold Coast Pastor*. Edited by Michelle Gilbert and Paul Jenkins. 1st ed. Fontes Historiae Africanae. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024.

Osayimwese, Itohan. "Pietism, Colonialism, and the Search for Utopia: Pietist Space in Germany and the Gold Coast". *Thresholds*, no. 30 (2005): 74–79.

Osterhammel, Jürgen. *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*. 5th ed. München: C.H. Beck, 2010.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. 2nd ed. Routledge, 2008.

Quartey, Seth. *Missionary Practices on the Gold Coast, 1832–1895; Discourse, Gaze and Gender in the Basel Mission in Pre-Colonial West Africa*. New York: Cambria Press, 2007.

Ramseyer, Fritz. *Achtzig Ansichten von der Goldküste (Westafrika)*. Neuenburg: Verlag von Gebr. Attinger, 1895.

Ratschiller, Linda. *Medical Missionaries and Colonial Knowledge in West Africa and Europe, 1885–1914*. Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-27128-1_7.

Raugh, Harold E. *The Victorians at war, 1815–1914 : an Encyclopedia of British military history*. ABC-CLIO, 2004.

Sewordor, Ernest Sasu Kwame. "The Basel Mission and the Establishment of a 'Model Town' in Ghana – the Case of Abokobi, 1854–1926". University of Ghana, Department of History, 2017.

Sullivan, Winnifred. "Law". In *Vocabulary for the Study of Religion*, edited by Robert A. Segal and Kocku von Stuckrad, 2:323–30. Leiden: Boston: Brill Nijhoff, 2015.

"The Book of Genesis". In *The New King James Version of the Bible*, 1982. https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=genesis%2012&version=NKJV.

Windmuller-Luna, Kristen. "Gold Dust Box (Abamphruwa)". *The Met* (blog), 2016. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/310823.

Archival Sources

Buhl, Christian. “Bewerbungsbrief Christian Buhl”, September 15, 1868. Basel Mission Archives (BV 813).

Buhl, Christian. “Buhl to Basel“, November 24, 1875. Basel Mission Archives (D-01.27.I..46).

Buhl, Christian. “Kaufbrief Missionshaus in Begoro”, November 15, 1875. Basel Mission Archives (D-31.03.06).

Buhl, Christian. “Transfer of Property”, March 21, 1876. Basel Mission Archives (D-31.3,2a).

Josenhans, Joseph. *Einundsechzigster Jahresbericht der evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft zu Basel.* Basel: Verlag der Missionsbuchhandlung, 1876.

Josenhans, Joseph. *Sechzigster Jahresbericht der evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft zu Basel. Basel*: Verlag der Missionsbuchhandlung, 1875.

Mader, Johann Adam and Mohr, Adolf. *Begoro und Okwau. Bericht über zwei Untersuchungsreisen als Vorbereitung für die Asante-Mission*. Blätter für die Mitglieder der Frauen-Collecte zu Gunsten der Basler Heiden-Mission 3. Basel: Verlag der Missionsbuchhandlung, 1875.