

# Basel Mission Archives

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"Mohr's Report on Reconnaissance Mission in the Interior of Togo"

**Title:** "Mohr's Report on Reconnaissance Mission in the Interior of Togo"

**Ref. number:** D-01.65.VIII..176

**Date:** Proper date: 25.10.1896

**Description:** The report deals specifically with Buem and Adele. Mohr lists the Buem villages he knows of: Worawora, with 2 villages Apeso, NNE of Worawora, with 2 villages Asato, Kagyabi, Nsuta NE and E of Worawora Tapa-Amanya, W of Worawora with 8 small villages Kugye Guaman Gyasekan the larger (this is the one with a catechist) Gyasekan the smaller Kwamekrom, Aka, Atonko, WSW of Worawora Borada Bowuri, with 3 villages Apafo, with 2 villages Santrokofi, with 3 villages Tetemang, with 3 villages Beyika. The most populous place is Apafo, the villages along the Volta from Kwamekrom northwards are scantily peopled, those lying on the west, on the other hand are more populous. The Santrokofi villages were partly in ruins. He did not have time to visit Akabu, which in time may come to belong to Buem (he presumably means here the Buem missionary district). To the east Akposo seems to be an Ewe language and therefore a Bremen area. Krakye, however, thinly populated, could also be taken as a part of the Buem missionary district. In Krakye the most populous place is Kete, but that is such a jumble of different languages, and the population is so constantly changing, that it would be difficult to carry on mission work from there. You meet many Twi- and Ga-speaking people in Kete, but it is very difficult to find out about their background, or their present activities. Distribution of languages in Buem - Twi spoken in Worawora and its two villages (though still there is much Sephana spoken in the area). Tapa and 3 of its villages, Apeso-Kubi and 2 villages, Asato with also Apaso and Akroso in the Fae district (Guan is spoken in Krakye and Nta (Salaga). Sephana is spoken in Kugye, Atonko, Aka, Guaman, Nsuta, Kagyabi, both Gyasekans, Borada, the Teteman villages. Biwri is spoken in the 3 Bowuri villages, Kephu in the 2 Akpaso villages, Siwu in the Santrokofi villages. Mohr comments that the linguistic position is exceptionally complicated and that the mission's task is to work for order and unity now that the district is under a unified political authority, namely by preaching and teaching in one language - Twi. It is true that the missionaries find twi-speaking people all over the place, but they are often only individuals, and often foreigners. The conquering addicted Asantes under God's hand prepared the way for the mission in that where they established themselves - e.g. in Atwati the people learned Twi. Also many slaves have returned to their homeland from Asante with knowledge of a somewhat poor Twi. The ending of Asante control on the left bank of the Volta has resulted in people losing their knowledge of and Twi, and though the hundreds of rubber-traders from Kwahu, Kotoku and Akwapim might have revived it, these people in fact busy themselves in learning the social language which helps them to their goal. Nevertheless, the missionary task should be to give the people Twi as a unifying language, and writeable language and create a situation as at Late where the greater population speaks Guan and Twi. On policy in Buem, and indeed the Volta district

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generally, Mohr is against a Trans-Volta Middle School- They have reached the limits of the area in which they can teach in Twi and the school population is not big enough to sustain a middle school. He is also against taking great pains to teach German. The Bremen missionaries are not making much effort in this line - and if the Basel missionaries have to follow suit, he suggests following their system of qualified teachers stay in house of a missionary to learn German. In any case, in view of the fact that the English, with all their advantages, have failed to establish English as the common language on their part of the coast, there seems little hope of the Germans establishing theirs. Advising on the siting of a European missionary station in Buem Mohr dismisses Worawora on the grounds of bad water supply, and the huge rocks which make building on mission land difficult. Akpafo might do, but, it is not central enough - this would be the case especially if the Buem mission were supposed to be regular visitors to Krakye. Tapa he recommends - a hill site, with water to drink, Odum (though no yellow afram for shingles, they would have to use metal tiles), stones, but apparently no large blocks in the way. Building materials could be brought up the Volta to the landing place at Fa-ohia-kobo and carried to Tapa for 1/6d per load. The main drawback about Tapa is that it has so few people. Amanyia is rather more populous. Adele: He travelled into Adele from Kete Krakye via Kpatshu to Tutukple, a Tribu village as far as he could find out. This point is often difficult to establish, since until recently many of those villages lived quite cut off, and recognised only the authority of the fetish - Tutukple, for example, recognised the chief priest of the fetish Fruko in Dadease as an authority over them. From Tutukple he travelled through the Atwati villages, which he not read about before, with the exception of those on the road from Dadease to Perewu. These villages give him reason to suggest the founding of an Adele station, because without them the Adele district would not be significant enough to merit a European station. Tutukple, Aberewanko, Kokrong, Keri, and especially Nyamo are all populous places. If the latter were on the road to Tagyang, Fosogu and Basari to the North and Nta (to the West) with a good situation for health, that would be the place. Ketsubi, Odomase, Karontae, Dadease, Odome, Pewa and Okawu, like the chief fetish town Siare, all belong to Atwati, and are to the NW of Bismarckburg. Adele is reached from Atwati either by a western route through Dadease and Perewu, or by a northern route from Odome through Siare and Kyriringa (The western route was used by Rösler and Hall in 1895). It is an upland with only a few relatively small villages. Kadsenke,  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour from Bismarckburg is now what Mohr had imagined from what he had heard - it is certainly high 650 m. cf. Bismarckburg 710m) and important in that in the Harmattan Season caravans from Yoruba and Tschantscho pass through it. Though even then it is an exception that Tschantscho caravan passes through Adele, because the Fosogu-Atwati route is more convenient for them. Nor do even the Adele people make a market place out of Hatsenke. On the other hand Adele would be the place for a station when one considers: 1. Anyanga can be made part of the district. There are only three villages in but they are large - Pali (?), Bofoli and Blitta. The latter is only one days' journey from Tschantscho. 2. Tribu could also be taken into the area. From this side it is the easiest ascent into Adele. Perhaps a teacher could be

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stationed in the village of Brewoaniase on the Pribu-Buem road, in order to visit the villages of Pusrapu, Nyakodome, Bontibo etc. Taking this two areas into consideration Adele (Katsenke) could be a suitable place for a mission station, being central, and taking its significance from its many important outstations. It also has the advantage in terms of health over Atwati and the valley of the Oti. The traffic towards Krakye is increasing - this is important because as the area is opened up, so it will be easier to get carriers and use money. At present nothing can be bought in the area for money - the only currency is little balls of rubber - you even have to buy eggs with these. Also the building of a mission house may change the picture, as it did in Abetifi and Begoro, with the injection of cash into the area. Over building Mohr reports that the necessary wood is present - Odum and mahogany - though not Afram for the shingles. If they can find no substitute he again suggests metal tiles which could be brought to Krakye by boat and then carried to Adele for 5/- per load. The priest-king of Siare has recently been taken prisoner by the Germans and sent to Lome. He had been involved in the Odum ordeal. (In a postscript Mohr reports that Mischlich in a letter to him dd. 8 October tells of great joy in the area over the imprisonment of the priest of Siare, Anyanga asking for the German flag, the number of pupils increasing from 14 to 29, and Anyanga and Pessi asking for a teacher.) The next step he writes would be to Fosogu or Tschantsche. The people in these districts speak Timu and not Hausa, and the language must be spoken by c40-60,000 people.

- Subject:** [Archives catalogue]: Guides / Finding aids: Archives: D - Ghana: D-01 - Incoming correspondence from Ghana up to the outbreak of the First World War: D-01.65 - Ghana 1896: D-01.65.VIII. - Anum
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- Ordering:** Please contact us by email [info@bmarchives.org](mailto:info@bmarchives.org)
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