

# Basel Mission Archives

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"Year's Report for the Anum District 1891 (Written by Philipp Johannes Rösler)"

**Title:** "Year's Report for the Anum District 1891 (Written by Philipp Johannes Rösler)"

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**Description:** The mission owns land in Anum, Toseng, Boso, Kpaleme, Ntwumuru, but has no land in Tsate, Vakpo, Amfoe, Kpando, Worawoaa, and though in Tsate the Christian village is described as community property this may well refer only to the houses. Kpando has been provided with a mission agent - but Toseng and Amfoe no longer have one resident there. In Anum Müller went on furlough in Europe and was replaced by Rösler from Begoro. Clerk was settled in Worawora, and Catechist D. Awere was posted to Anum to provide some replacement for him. Tim. Ofei, the 'second' teacher in Anum was posted to Kpaleme, to be replaced by the assistant catechist James Dako. Imm. Boakye was posted from Toseng to Kpando (In the course of the year Boakye lost his wife, who Rösler describes as a close relative of the king in Kibi). Catechist Okanta was posted to Asaseso, tough then asked to be posted elsewhere as his heathen relatives were involved in conflicts with the Akwapimhene. At this he was transferred to Kpando, while Catechist Asiedu from Amfoi was sent to Akwapim to replace him. James Opare, a teacher, is with Clerk in Worawora. Rösler remarks that they have not been able to fulfil the wishes of all the places who have asked for teachers. The European missionaries spent 70 days on preaching journeys in the course of the year - and the local assistants 400 days. Rösler generalises that hearers varied between the numerous and interested and the few and apathetic. One problem is that of language - he is glad that Buem, at least, is a genuine Twi area. Rösler suggests that if this problem is to be overcome by the training of local workers the people may need mission support in sending their children the Middle School and Seminary (this is a problem often touched on in other missionary reports). As for the results of the preaching journeys - this is the sowing period; 'the fairly widespread request for a teacher cannot always be taken as indicating a longing for delivery and salvation. The honour of having a teacher plays a large role in causing the requests, and also there is the hope that through having a teacher, people will have a share of all sorts of advantages.' When a teacher is provided the tempting promises are then forgotten - Kpando being the latest example, where instead of building the teacher a house, the chief wanted him to share an existing house with its existing inmates, who included a lady dealing in liquor. Eventually they only got the land to build a house of their own by threatening to withdraw the teacher if they were not allowed to purchase land (there was pressure on them to rent it only). The mission work has been much tendered by political developments. In August Graf von Pfeil(?) and a party of three other German officers travelled through the area in order to try to bring individual chiefs under the list German flag. They had mixed success. Vakpo and Amfoi refused to accept them, Kpando did, but Rösler remarks that this was in hopes that Kpando might be made head of the

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surrounding area which used to acknowledge the chief in Peki who now, as a chief in the Protectorate is not allowed to involve himself in affairs outside the Protectorate. Nkonya accepted the flag unwillingly, and indeed not in all towns; and Buem refused it altogether. On the whole people say they want to belong to England, since England delivered them from the Asante yoke, The English have great prestige while the Germans are regarded with distrust. They also say they have no need to fear the English, and they do not want to belong to Germany - so they are free. As a result longstanding enmities are coming to the surface again. For the last three months Amfoi and Kpando have placed an embargo on travel to either, and the Buems at Christmas fell on several Kwahu Dukoman towns taking the suitable people into slavery in Buem. (Rösler ascribes this war as partly an act of revenge for the role of the Kwahu Dukoman people in the Asante War, and the fact that under Asante the Kwahu Dukoman state was in charge of Buem). There were also Krakyes among the dead and enslaved, so that the war is leading to further complications. Murders are taking place in Nkonya, partly simply as a concomitant of robbery, partly because of the need for new skulls and bones at the festivals of the chief fetish (Previously they had decided not to be involved with human sacrifice again, at least publicly - but this custom has now come out onto the light of day again): One finds oneself wondering involuntarily what is the relationship of the German regime to all this? So far it has been powerless, and it is a very difficult situation. If they acted with force they would destroy what little trust they enjoy in the minds of the local people. They have not enough influence to act as successful mediators is without the use of force. In the context of rampant heathenism Rösler thinks the first baptisms in Vakpo and Ntwumuru a real victory. Discussing the life of the community Rösler writes that he is too new in the area to make secure judgements. The character of the people is very different from that in Akim. There is a lot of traffic with the heathen, mostly on the part of the weaker Christians. Many Christians do not hesitate to attend obsequy customs, even if only as observers. In Anum there have been no baptisms of heathens, - the oldest Christian, Gideon, died - and there were two serious cases in the course of the year. In one an excluded member of the community suffered because a relationship which he had had 10 years ago with a girl who was designated to be a wife of the king was revealed by the woman as she now was when a fetish priest divined that some unconfessed misdemeanour must be the cause of the illness of her child. The Anum chief passing judgement recalled that in the past the man would simply have lost his head. Now in order to punish him and his family in a way they would remember he wanted £60, 14 sheep, and 4 cases of liquor. The missionaries tried to intervene in a tentative way by sending the catechist into the town to suggest that the case ought to be taken to the English court - they feared that members of the family would be pawned to raise the necessary capital. The family feared to do this, however, and when the chief came in state to ask the missionaries of this case was now theirs, they said it was not, they had only been making a suggestion. Rösler heard later that £30 was paid - and now the chief has died - they are in the middle of an epidemic of influenza. The second case was the removal of a presbyter from office. He was found to have lent much-money to people, and this was the cause of his

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removal, though some members of the community were angry with him because of the role he had played when they attempted to refuse to pay school tax. (This question resolved itself when the dissidents found that the missionaries were adamant that the tax should be paid). The Toseng community, in their own little village, make a good impression and regularly attend service in Anum. In Bose the catechist T. Afari is a true worker, but much too quiet. The Boso people are building a new chapel, and a little suspicious of requests for money emanating from the missionaries. In Kpaleme there were five exclusions - all of people who went back to live in the heathen town first - ranging from the widow of the dead presbyter to a Christian girl including also a married couple who went off together, and a wife who left her husband after continuous quarrels to live with another man. There were however 7 adults and their 17 children baptised at the end of the year. Vakpo - 10 scholars. Amfoi - the station collapsed almost completely, with no school, and the people not coming to street preaching.

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