

“The Spiritual Economy of Southern Ghana: Slavery, Migration and Atlantic Commerce, c. 1500-1800”

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Abstract

This talk studies the spiritual economy of southern Ghana during the period of Atlantic commerce, roughly between 1500 and 1800 AD. Inasmuch as the Atlantic slave trade caused mass external migration out of Africa, it also caused significant internal migration, which transformed the social, political and economic life of West African territories. This talk will study the effect of internal migration on the evolution of the spiritual economy in precolonial Ghana. In particular, it examines the relationship between migration and enclosure. The talk argues that the invention of fences and borders marked the emergence of private property in precolonial Ghana. It suggests a Weberian emergence of private property, driven by religious changes, shaped by a period of expulsion and war.