

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**CHIEFTAINCY IN BUILSA, 1900-1957**

**HALIDU BARI SULE**



**A Thesis in the Department of History Education, Faculty of Social Sciences,  
submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment**

**of the requirements for the award of the Degree of**

**Master of Philosophy**

**(History Education)**

**in the University of Education, Winneba**

**NOVEMBER 2022**

## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, HALIDU BARI SULE, declare that this thesis, except quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:  .....

DATE: 26/09/2023 .....

### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

SUPERVISOR: DR. DANIEL E. KOFI BAKU

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....

## **DEDICATION**

To Abdul-Nasser Bello, Kauthar Lobbel and Suleman Belko.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis could not have been accomplished without the guidance and encouragement of many people. First is Dr Daniel E. Kofi Baku, my Supervisor. He thoroughly went through the draft with me, offered exceptional suggestions and raised important questions about some of my arguments. Indeed, without his assiduous guidance, this work could not have been completed on time. I am also grateful to Professor John K. Osei-Tutu, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) for reading through the first chapter and offering excellent suggestions.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Department of History Education, UEW and NORPART scholarship for the opportunity and sponsorship of my exchange programme at NTNU, Norway. It was a great honour to be nominated for such a rare opportunity. I also thank all those who offered valuable information to me during the fieldwork. Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II, Weisi-Nab Akanab Abuntori II, and others whom I cannot mention here indeed offered me with rich historical information that helped to accomplish this thesis.

Finally, I wish to extend my appreciation to my family and friends for extending their ongoing love and support during my studies.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION .....	iii
DEDICATION .....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
GLOSSARY/ABBREVIATIONS .....	x
ABSTRACT.....	xi
<b>CHAPTER ONE .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background to and Motivation for the Study .....	2
1.2 Statement of Problem.....	5
1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Study .....	6
1.4 Research Questions .....	7
1.5 Conceptual Framework.....	7
1.6 Historiographical Review .....	14
1.7 Justification and Significance of the Study.....	21
1.8 Sources and Methods .....	22
1.9 Scope of the Study .....	25
1.10 Organization of Study.....	25
<b>CHAPTER TWO .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>PRE-COLONIAL BUILSA SOCIETY .....</b>	<b>27</b>
2.0 Introduction.....	27
2.1 The Builsa and their Territory.....	27
2.2 Social and Settlement Patterns.....	30
2.3 Slavery and Slave Raiding in Builsa.....	34
2.4 Political Organization .....	37
2.5 Conclusion .....	40
<b>CHAPTER THREE .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>INCORPORATION OF BUILSA INTO BRITISH RULE .....</b>	<b>42</b>
3.0 Introduction.....	42

3.1 Establishment of British Rule in Builsa.....	42
3.2 The Creation of the Builsa Paramountcy .....	47
3.3 Coexistence of the Chiefs under British Rule.....	55
3.4 The Relation between Sandema and Mamprugu under British Rule.....	75
3.5 Conclusion .....	79
<b>CHAPTER FOUR.....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>THE BUILSA NATIVE AUTHORITY .....</b>	<b>82</b>
4.0 Introduction.....	82
4.1 Establishment of the Builsa Native Authority .....	82
4.2 The Native Tribunal and the Treasury .....	89
4.3 Conclusion .....	95
<b>CHAPTER FIVE .....</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>97</b>
5.0 Introduction.....	97
5.1 Summary of Findings.....	97
5.2 Conclusion .....	100
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>103</b>
A) Primary Sources.....	103
I) Interviews .....	103
II) Archival Sources.....	103
III) Minutes .....	104
B) Secondary Sources .....	105
I) Journal Articles and Book Chapters.....	105
II) Published Books.....	106
III) Unpublished Works and Thesis/Dissertations.....	108
IV) Online Materials.....	109

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Builsa Chiefs during the implementation of the Indirect Rule system in 1934.



## LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig: 1.1 Map of Builsa Traditional Area before 1957. 1
- Fig. 4.1 Composition and Hierarchy of the Builsa Native Authority 89





## **GLOSSARY/ABBREVIATIONS**

Buli- is the language spoken by the Builsa people.

Nab- is the title of a chief in Builsa.

Nam- chieftaincy.

Tindana- refers to the custodian of the land (earth priest).

Teng-nyono- refers to Tindana in the Buli-speaking language.

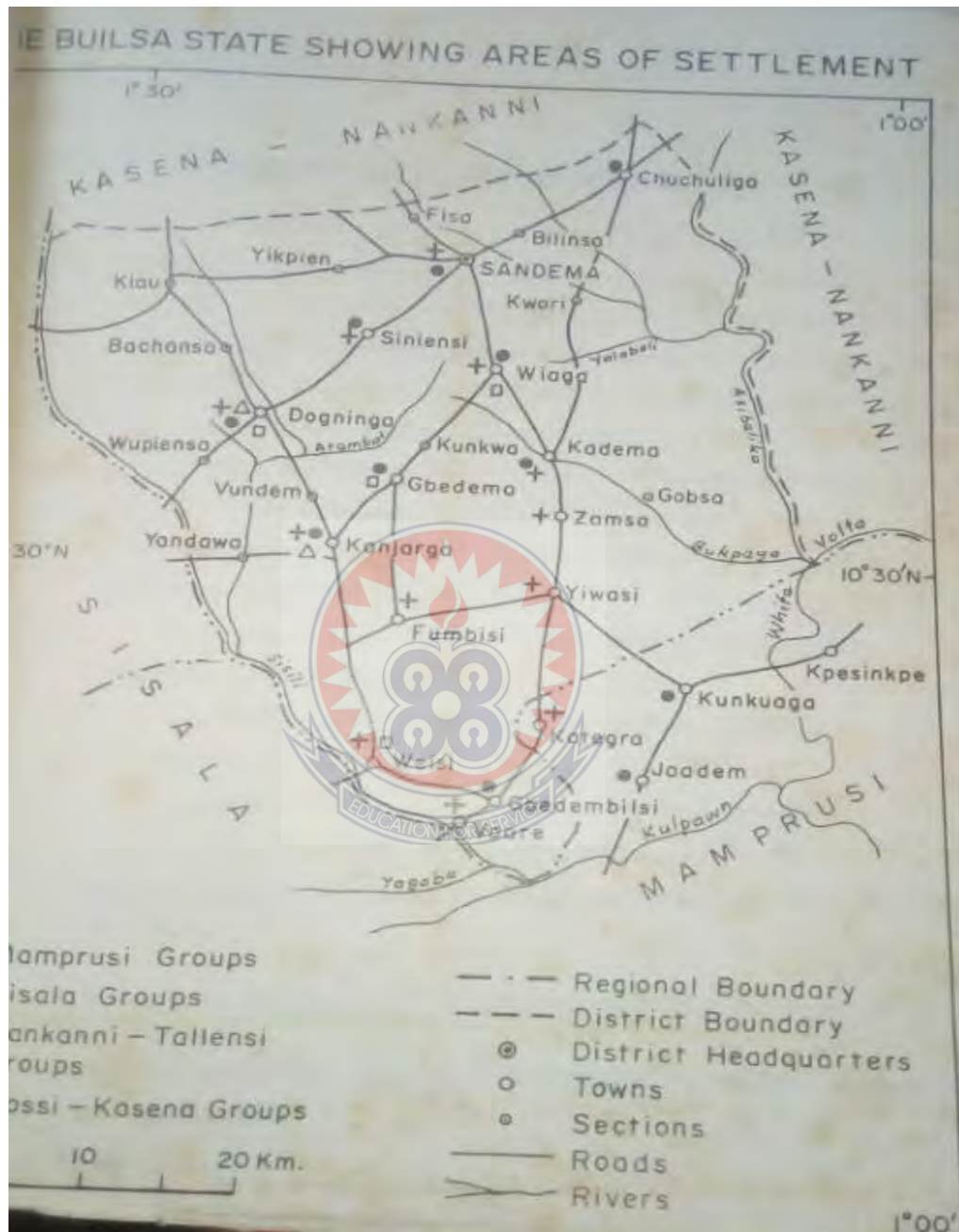


## ABSTRACT

The study explores the role of British colonial rule in shaping chieftaincy institutions in Builsa. The Builsa people occupy the western end of the Upper East Region of Ghana. They were annexed into the British colonial system in 1902 by Major Morris' led expedition to the Northern Territories. The socio-political aspects of their society particularly chieftaincy institutions experienced significant changes under British rule on the Gold Coast. Before the advancement of the British to the area, all the Builsa villages and towns were politically independent and autonomous from one another headed by clan heads and chiefs respectively. There was no supreme ruler who commanded control over the entire territory until the 1911 Armitage's political integrations of states in the Northern Territories, which facilitated colonial administration of the vast lands of the north. This scheme created Sandema as the paramountcy and its chiefs as overlords of the entire Builsa up to the present. This calls for scientific research to address the question, how far did British colonial rule shape the institution of chieftaincy among the Builsa people? In addressing this question, a qualitative research approach was adopted with a content analysis strategy for the examination of the text data gathered. In addition, the researcher conducted interviews with knowledgeable persons about the evolution of chieftaincy in Builsa under British rule to complement the archival and secondary sources. Based on the evaluation of the data, the findings conclude that British colonial policies strengthened the institution of chieftaincy in Builsa and bestowed more power and authority on the Builsa chiefs. The study further argues that British rule served as a magnetic force that pulled together the dispersedly Builsa villages and towns into a unified powerful state. This growth of unity and power made the Builsa paramountcy later challenged the supremacy of Mamprugu over the Builsa territory and completely regained its independence from the Nayiri colonial-backed domination in 1933.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION



**Fig: 1.1 Map of Builsa Traditional Area before 1957.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Pauline F. Akankyalabey, "A History of the Builsa People" (Long Essay, Dept. of History, University of Ghana, 1984).

## 1.1 Background to and Motivation for the Study

British influence in the Northern Territories began late in the history of British activities on the Gold Coast, yet their contributions to shaping indigenous politics of the Northern Territories particularly the Builsa cannot be underrated. As such, the study examines the evolution of chieftaincy in Builsa under British colonial rule. It traces the impact of British rule in shaping chieftaincy as a political institution among the Builsa people of the modern-day Upper East Region of Ghana. The study argues that British colonial policies from 1902 to 1957 played a major role in transforming the chieftaincy institution of the Builsa people from independent smaller villages to a unified strong state.

European anthropologists and colonialists by the beginning of the 1900s had a misconception that the Builsa society was like that of the Talensi who relied on household heads and had no such recognized central political establishment until British rule in the area.<sup>2</sup> The system the British colonialists particularly what Robert Rattray typically referred to as acephalous society was a colonial conjecture to label those societies as stateless to roll out the colonial policy of divide-and-rule tactics of replacing unfriendly traditional rulers with colonial favourites to carry out the orders of colonial officers. Applying this assertion of statelessness to the Builsa society before colonialism is inaccurate because all major Builsa communities had chiefs before British colonial rule in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Robert S. Rattray, *The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterlands* Vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), 401-402.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II, Retired Educationist, Sandema Chief and President of the Builsa Traditional Council, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2020. According to the Sandem-Nab, there was an established political system across all major Builsa communities such as Sandema, Kadema, Kanjaga, Wiaga, Siniesi and Fumbisi before the invasion of the British in 1902.

To Rattray, the highest political authority of these perceived stateless societies was the *Tindana* (earth priest) whose leadership dominated spiritual matters rather than administrative functions.<sup>4</sup> Politics and spiritual matters in African societies were inseparable. In those northern societies that lacked chiefs in the European sense of the concept, the *Tindana* was the leader of the community as he officiated ceremonial functions and organized the community to defend and resist invaders. His functions cannot be limited to only the people's spiritual concerns, but he also provided leadership. In societies like that of the Gonja and the Mole-Dagbani, which had a centralised political system the *Tindanas* who were seen as natives of the land served purposely as spiritual heads while the political elites who were seen as settlers wielded the political power. However, in the Builsa society, which did not have these two classifications of indigenes and invaders, the *Tindana* provided political leadership for the people. This was because the Builsa did not experience any sort of political invasion and domination from settler ethnic groups like those experienced by the Guan from the Gonja invasion. Except for the Atuga-Bisa Builsa towns of Sandema, Wiaga, Siniensi, and Kadema who traced their chieftaincy from Mamprugu long before the advent of British rule, in the rest of the Builsa towns and villages, the office of the *Teng-nyono* evolved into the *Naam* (chieftaincy) system.<sup>5</sup>

The British colonial government called for the separation of the two offices to facilitate colonial governance. As a result, it is common to see in most Builsa communities where both the *Teng-nyono* and the *Nab* (chief) are relatives. While in societies that have a clear

---

<sup>4</sup> Tindana simply refers to as earth priest, literally translated as 'the owner of the land'. The Tindana is refer to as Teng-nyono in Buli.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

division of the office of the *Tindana* and the *Naam* like that of the Gonja and the Mole-Dagbani states, both the occupants of the office of the *Tindana* and the *Naam* see each other as outsiders, in the case of the Builsa both see each other as relatives. Although the Builsa communities had *Nabs* before colonial rule, they did not have a supreme ruler among them; they were politically autonomous and independent of one another. The only connection that existed among them was social, precisely intermarriages.<sup>6</sup> They did not have a collective political administration as one ethnic group until the invasion of the Zambarima slave raiders, Samory and Babatu in the 1890s, which ignited consciousness of political unity among them and the subsequent establishment of the Builsa paramountcy in 1911 by the British colonial government.<sup>7</sup>

The Builsa society was to witness a revolutionary change in her political institutions from the beginning of the twentieth century when the British colonial interest extended into the Gold Coast's interior. After it annexed the Northern Territories into the colonial political structure, the colonial government played a major role in linking the various Builsa communities and their social and political institutions into a unified Builsa state, with one recognized paramount leader, Nab Ananguna (Sandem-Nab) on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1911.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the dynamics that characterised the institution of chieftaincy in Builsa, little academic work has been done to provide us with a historical understanding of the changes and continuities surrounding the phenomenon. This prompted the need for this study to

---

<sup>6</sup> Rudiger Schott, "Sources for a History of the Builsa of Northern Ghana," *Paideuma* 23 (1977): 155.

<sup>7</sup> Public Record Administration and Archive Department (hereafter, PRAAD), Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjarga Native Affairs (case No. 294/07), 23 May 1913 – 17 May 1915.

<sup>8</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjarga Native Affairs (case No. 294/07), 23 May 1913 – 17 May 1915.

investigate the impact of British colonial rule on the evolution of chieftaincy in Builsa. Thus, the study maps out the transformations that occurred in the institution of chieftaincy in Builsa, from the separate clans' rule system to centralised and vibrant political organisations under the British colonial indirect rule system in the Gold Coast.

The motivation for this study is to understand and document the historical basis of the ongoing struggle for power dominance among *Nabs* of the various Builsa communities in the Builsa Traditional Area. Since the inception of the Armitage policy of incorporation of smaller states in 1911 to date, there have been internal struggles for political hegemony among the Builsa chiefdoms.<sup>9</sup> It is on this basis that this study seeks to investigate how British rule shaped chieftaincy in Builsa.

## 1.2 Statement of Problem

Several scholars have studied various ethnic groups in the Gold Coast in terms of their socio-political developments;<sup>10</sup> nonetheless, the literature on Builsa is insufficient for our understanding of how their institution of chieftaincy evolved under British rule. Anthropologists including Rudiger Schott who had undertaken a series of studies in Builsa limited his studies to the cultural lives of the people. In addition, dissertations including that of Pauline Akankyalabey who remarkably looked at a general history of the Builsa people paid little attention to the specific developments that occurred in the area of their

---

<sup>9</sup> Chiefdom here refers to territories ruled by chiefs of the thirteen major towns of the Builsa Traditional Area.

<sup>10</sup> See Carl C. Reindorf, *A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti* (Basel, 1895); Kwame Arhin, *Traditional Rule in Ghana – Past and Present* (Accra: Sedco Publishing Limited, 1985); Irene K. Odotei, & Albert K. Awedoba, (eds) *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development* (Accra: Institute of African Studies, 2006).

chieftaincy institutions vis-à-vis British colonial rule.<sup>11</sup> She, however, highlighted major political developments such as the British annexation of the Builsa, various colonial policies and interference in local politics like appointment and dismissal of chiefs but she did not delve in-depth into how the various chiefdoms co-existed with the colonially created paramountcy in Sandema as well as with the colonial government itself.

Though these studies lack historical depth for our understanding of the Chieftaincy system in Builsa, they provide invaluable information for this study. This study, therefore, explores a historical understanding of how British rule on the Gold Coast shaped chieftaincy as a political institution in Builsa.

### **1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Study**

The study explores the role of British colonial rule in shaping chieftaincy institutions in Builsa. Aside from the main goal, the researcher formulated specific objectives to achieve the goal of the study. These include;

- to account for how Builsa society was organised before its incorporation into British colonial rule;
- to examine how chiefs in Builsa co-existed under British colonial rule and
- to examine how the Native Authority system in Sandema helped in transforming the smaller chiefdoms into a unified Builsa state.

The researcher organised these objectives into major chapters for coherence and historical analysis of the themes.

---

<sup>11</sup> Akankyalabey, “History of the Builsa.”



#### 1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher formulated the following research questions to guide the pattern of the data gathering and analysis.

- How was the Builsa society organised before its incorporation into British rule?
- How did the chiefs in Builsa co-exist under British colonial rule?
- What role did the Native Authority system play in the transformation process of chieftaincy institutions in Builsa?

#### 1.5 Conceptual Framework

The experience of the Builsa society and its political transformations within the framework of chieftaincy and colonialism, and the invention of traditions underpins this study. Scholars of social sciences and humanities have contested and conceptualised the concepts of colonialism and chieftaincy differently. Colonialism originates from the Latin word, *Colonia*, which ‘signifies contact, relations, and exchanges between alien intruders and indigenous inhabitants of a place.’<sup>12</sup> The dynamics of the contacts and the relations of the colonialists with the colonised resulted in changes in the socio-cultural and political atmosphere of the colonies. Colonialism has a long history of existence in human civilisation. The ancient Greeks, the Romans, the Moors and the Ottomans had colonies in Africa long before the European colonial drive from the sixteenth century to the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the Americas, Asian and African territories.

European colonialism from the 16<sup>th</sup> century took two main dimensions; exploitative colonialism and settlement colonialism. The exploitative colonialism dimension

---

<sup>12</sup> David Chidester, *Religion: Material Dynamics* (Univ. of California Press, 2018), 104.

emphasises on the exploitation of resources of the colonies to develop metropolitan countries to the disadvantage of the colonised. This form of colonialism was peculiar to French and British West Africa. Thus, the Gold Coast, which included the Builsa area, underwent this form of colonialism from the British. The British colonial policies not only aimed at the exploitation of the natural and human resources of the Gold Coast but also shaped the cultural and political lives of the indigenous people.

On the other hand, settlement colonialism builds on the ideology of eliminating the indigenous people and occupying the territory.<sup>13</sup> Although settlement colonialism destroys the old society and replaces it with a new foreign culture from the invading nation, Wolfe warns us not to mistake the process leading to settlement colonialism as genocide.<sup>14</sup> The Americas are typical examples of territories that had undergone settlement colonialism, where European capitalists and imperialists displaced the indigenous people such as the Amerindians to occupy their lands for settlement, agricultural and mineral exploitations.

In the 1960s and 1970s, scholars defined colonialism in Africa to focus on European powers exploiting the natural and human resources of African territories.<sup>15</sup> To understand colonialism in Africa, the works of anticolonial scholars particularly that of Eduardo Mondlane, the leader of the Mozambique independence struggle deserve acknowledgement. Mondlane conceptualised colonialism as a political ideology premised

---

<sup>13</sup> Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387.

<sup>14</sup> Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 387.

<sup>15</sup> See Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Dar-Es-Salaam: Tanzanian Publishing House, 1973); Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972).

on the idea of imposition of a centralised administration on the colony, a divide-and-rule scheme, domination of foreign capitalists to exploit natural resources, and the extraction of forced labour from the indigenous people.<sup>16</sup> Aimé Césaire sees colonialism in Africa as nothing but bourgeois' rule by the so-called civilised Europe, which was characterised by killing, exploitation and torture of the colonised people.<sup>17</sup>

In the context of this study, colonialism goes beyond a political system instituted to exploit the economic fortunes of the dominated territory to include the alteration of indigenous political and social institutions. The British, French, and Portuguese colonial rule and cultural domination shaped the sociocultural and political systems and practices of the indigenous people in Africa, particularly chieftaincy institutions. This cultural and political influence on the colonised resulted in what Terence Ranger termed the invention of traditions in colonial Africa.<sup>18</sup> The British political redefinition of African societies 'distorted the past but became in themselves realities through which a good deal of colonial encounter was expressed.'<sup>19</sup>

Colonialists adopted the term chieftaincy from Latin *capitaneus* and from Anglo-French *chiefteyn*, which means an office of a leader of a group to refer to as the political institution and office of indigenous rulers in Africa.<sup>20</sup> The colonialist referral of traditional rulers as

---

<sup>16</sup> Eduardo Mondlane, *The Struggle for Mozambique* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1969), 23.

<sup>17</sup> Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>19</sup> Ranger, "Invention of Tradition," 212.

<sup>20</sup> Oxford English Dictionary.

chiefs rather than kings had a significant impact on the reduction of their authority in the colonial system. Richard Rathbone argues that the colonialist adoption of the word of chief carried less power as compared to the king or prince.<sup>21</sup> He emphasises that:

After Queen Victoria's death and the subsequent imperial supremacy of a sequence of British kings, the older colonial use of the word 'king' in West Africa seems to die out; the most obvious reason for this was perhaps the avoidance of the literary chaos which would have resulted from the coexistence of a British king with imperial subjects who were also kings; whatever the reason, the newer terminology diminished their status.<sup>22</sup>

It is worth noting that the institution of chieftaincy is ancient in Ghana and was practised by major Ghanaian ethnic groups long before the advent of Europeans. Among the Buli, the Guruni and the Mole-Dagbani-speaking people of northern Ghana, it is referred to as *Naam*. *Naam* (chieftaincy) is a political institution in charge of the administrative and spiritual well-being of the people within a polity headed by divine leaders.<sup>23</sup> The bottom line is how divine and scared the indigenous people viewed the institution. In comparative terms, the chieftaincy system in Ghana is similar to the European monarchy system. However, European colonialists did not view indigenous officeholders as counterparts to European monarchs. They rather saw them as chiefs, which barely emphasised the divine right to rule as a prerequisite for kings and queens in Europe, but just ordinary leaders of a group of people who could be appointed or dismissed anytime without following the

---

<sup>21</sup> Richard Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana, 1951-60* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000), 9.

<sup>22</sup> Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, 9.

<sup>23</sup> See Kofi A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1951); Arhin, *Traditional Rule*; Irene K. Odotei, & Albert K. Awedoba, (eds) *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development* (Accra: Institute of African Studies, 2006); A. Kodzo Paaku Kludze, *Chieftaincy in Ghana* (Lanham: Austin & Winfield Publishers, 2000).

customs and traditions of the people. This posture of European colonizers shaped their policies of turning indigenous political institutions into colonial agencies.<sup>24</sup>

In Ghana, chiefs administered their territories, spearheaded the spiritual and physical needs of their people, maintained law and order, and mediated between the living and the dead.<sup>25</sup>

To Hafis-Deen, the institution of chieftaincy in Ghana comprises ‘the personnel holding offices such as chiefs, queen mothers, council and staff, ritual symbols, such as shrines and other objects, the emblems of office such as stools, skins regalia, crowns, gowns, and staffs such as the linguist staff, swords, and various paraphernalia,’ as well as being a custodian of the lands.<sup>26</sup> These functions are still central to the indigenous political institutions despite the changes it has undergone during colonialism and post-colonial constitutional reforms. Chiefs served as the main implementers of the British indirect rule system in the Gold Coast and are currently working hand in hand with governments on land and customary dispute resolutions to promote growth and development in their localities.

The institution of chieftaincy in Africa arose out of the instinct of self and community preservation of man.<sup>27</sup> The evolution of every society across the globe was characterised by wars of conquest, wars of self-preservation, and the desire to overcome natural disasters, epidemics, famines, and floods.<sup>28</sup> Those wars and struggles contributed immensely to

---

<sup>24</sup> Arhin, *Traditional Rule*.

<sup>25</sup> Busia, *Position of the Chief*.

<sup>26</sup> Seidu Hefis-Deen, “An Examination of Chieftaincy Institution: The Role and Challenges of Chiefs in the Socio-Economic Development of the Dorimon Traditional Area of the Upper West Region of Ghana” (MPhil Thesis, University for Development Studies, March 2016), 11.

<sup>27</sup> Hefis-Deen, “Chieftaincy Institution,” 11.

<sup>28</sup> Hefis-Deen, “Chieftaincy Institution,” 11.

creating sedentary societies that naturally produced heroic men who assumed the position of first leaders of their societies. This formed the basis of royal lineages in African societies. The established royal lineages provide a procedure for the enskinning and deskinning of rulers to avoid disputes over who rules.<sup>29</sup>

In placing the study within a theoretical framework of the historical experience of the Builsa people from the late nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century, the evolution and socio-cultural integration theory by Elman Service and Hobsbawm's theory of invention of tradition is conceptualized. Two main factors played a significant role in the integration of the Builsa society: the invasion of Babatu for slave raiding in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the British colonial rule respectively fit into the Elman Service's theory of socio-cultural integration and the Hobsbawm's invention of tradition.

In his theory of Socio-cultural integration and transformation, Elman Service argues that chiefdoms evolved out of families, clans and ethnic groups.<sup>30</sup> A crystalized ethnic group under historical circumstances resulted in what Elman Service termed as 'pan-tribal',<sup>31</sup> which stabilises dispersed settlements into a cohesive society with leadership, power, prestige and influence. This stabilized ethnic group develops a sense of community and political consciousness to promote a sedentary life. Although an ethnic group to Elman Service is the basis for the formation of chiefdoms, 'it seems likely that without foreign-political problems, overall tribal integration would not take place; it is always such

---

<sup>29</sup> George B. N. Ayittey, *Indigenous African institutions* 2nd edition (Transnational Publishers, Inc., 2006), 143.

<sup>30</sup> Elman R. Service, *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective* (New York: Random House, 1962), 100.

<sup>31</sup> Service, *Primitive Social Organization*, 98.

problems that stimulate the formation of large political bodies.<sup>32</sup> In the case of the Builsa, these external problems came from the invasion of Babatu in the 1890s, which posed external pressure on the Builsa to re-organise their political system for strong leadership.

The British took advantage of these established chiefdoms in Builsa and invented a system of political integration in 1911 to have a unified political system for the implementation of their colonial rule in the area. This was realised by the creation of the office of the Head Chief in 1911 to coordinate colonial policies on behalf of the British colonial administration.<sup>33</sup> This invention led to the permanent making of the Sandema and Sandem-Nab the seat of the paramountcy and paramount chief of the Builsa traditional area respectively. In addition, the need for cooperation among the chiefs and the new paramountcy in Builsa to facilitate colonial rule called for new traditions. For instance, some of the chiefs appointed under the colonial system lacked traditional legitimacy. This was witnessed in almost all the Builsa villages as the colonial administration dismissed all chiefs who were uncooperative to colonial directives or unwilling to recognise the authority of the new paramountcy. Upon dismissal, the colonial administration in consultation with the paramount chief enskinned favourites who in most instances did not have traditional legitimacy to the traditional office. The agenda of the colonial administration was not to destabilise the existing traditions, but to redefine them in line with British governance system, where all divisional and sub-chiefs take unquestionable orders from their paramount chiefs. Throughout the colonial period in the Gold Coast, the British adopted

---

<sup>32</sup> Service, *Primitive Social Organization*, 102.

<sup>33</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjarga Native Affairs, case No. 294/07, May 23, 1913 - May 17, 1915.

new policies similar to the English monarchical system to rule the people with no regards of the traditions of the ruled, which still has consequences in the traditional governance system among the Builsa ethnic group of Ghana.

## **1.6 Historiographical Review**

The focus is on chieftaincy in Ghana and the impacts of colonial rule on indigenous political institutions in Ghana. Historians and social scientists alike have researched and documented changes in the institution of chieftaincy in Ghana and Africa as a whole. As a political institution, its structure and practice differ from one society to another. In classifying chieftaincy into the centralised and acephalous system of indigenous governance in Ghana, scholars such as Kwame Arhin and Godwin Nukunya described the Akan, Ga, Ewe, Gonja, and Mole-Dagbani as noted practitioners of the centralized system, while the Talensi typified an acephalous society.<sup>34</sup> Adu Boahen while acknowledging the existence of centralized states mentioned above, dismissed the notion that there were stateless societies on the Gold Coast. He emphasized that every community in the Gold Coast has its system of governance through family or clan heads and that the issue of acephalous society was a colonial conjecture to facilitate the colonial policies of the indirect rule system.<sup>35</sup>

In addition, Nyaaba in his PhD thesis remarked that grouping all states in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast except the Gonja and the Mole-Dagbani states as acephalous

---

<sup>34</sup> See for example Arhin, *Traditional Rule*; Godwin K. Nukunya, *Tradition and Change in Ghana: An Introduction to Sociology* (Ghana Universities Press, 2000).

<sup>35</sup> Albert A. Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Longman, 1975).



can be misleading because several other polities like the Kasena of Navrongo and Builsa communities had centralized political administration with recognized *Nabs* before British rule.<sup>36</sup> Akankyalabey emphasised that Mamprusi immigrants from Nalerigu in the 18<sup>th</sup> century introduced to the Builsa the concept and practice of *Naam* (chieftaincy) similar to the Mole-Dagbani's.<sup>37</sup>

Chiefs and the institution of chieftaincy play a significant role in society. As such, Abotchie summarizes the roles of chiefs in Ghana as military leaders, chief priests, agents of development, symbols of identity, and custodians of stool lands and property. As the chief performs these multiple roles, he is an embodiment of the beliefs, hopes, fears and aspirations of the people.<sup>38</sup> The institution became an agent of local governance of the British colonial administration and remains relevant to post-colonial governments. As stressed by Ahiave, due to the significant component of chieftaincy in ensuring good governance and development, the institution and its mandates and limitations are well enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of Ghana since independence.<sup>39</sup> However, immediate post-colonial chiefs and chieftaincy, in general, were under attack by the

---

<sup>36</sup> Ali Y. Nyaaba, "Transformations in the Chieftaincy Institution in Northern Ghana from 1900-1969: A Case Study of Navrongo and Sakot" (PhD Thesis, KNUST, 2009), 27.

<sup>37</sup> Akankyalabey, "History of the Builsa," 24

<sup>38</sup> C. Abotchie, "Has the Position of the Chief Become Anachronistic in Contemporary Ghanaian Politics?" in *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*, ed. Irene K. Odotei, & Albert K. Awedoba (Accra: Institute of African Studies, 2006).

<sup>39</sup> Edwin C. Ahiave, "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Ghana: The Case of the Dagbon Conflict" (Master's Thesis, Univ. of Ghana, 2013).

Nkrumah's government, because Nkrumah saw the institution as a collaborator of British rule on the Gold Coast and had no place in post-colonial governance in Ghana.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, Richard Rathbone emphasised in his *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, that, radical African nationalists such as Kwame Nkrumah perceived both colonial rule and chieftaincy as 'unheavenly twins linked by mutual support,' which were to be jointly destroyed to pathway for material modernization and economic transformation for the newly independent African country, Ghana.<sup>41</sup> As an agency of colonial rule, post-colonial governments viewed chieftaincy as a barrier to development rather than a stimulator of progressive change. As further advanced by Rathbone,

the processes by which chiefs ruled, the rituals and ideas which maintained their authority, were, it was widely claimed, the enemies of rapid transformation. Africa's and Africans' besetting problems were broadly those of 'underdevelopment'; chieftaincy was seen as a significant aspect of the problem rather than as part of the solution.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the unhealthy posture of the Nkrumah's government towards chiefs and the chieftaincy institution itself, the institution survived and even became more relevant throughout post-colonial governments.<sup>43</sup> Ghanaians continued to revere the institution and respect occupants of the chieftaincy positions across the country. As a political institution, chieftaincy serves as the first stage of governance of every Ghanaian society. To co-exist with modern republic governments, the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana

---

<sup>40</sup> Ayittey, *Indigenous African institutions*, 154.

<sup>41</sup> Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, 3.

<sup>42</sup> Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, 3.

<sup>43</sup> Kwabena Boateng and Stephen Afranie, "Chieftaincy: An Anachronistic Institution within a Democratic Dispensation? The Case of a Traditional Political System in Ghana," *Ghana Journal of Development Studies* 17, no. 1 (May, 2020), 27.

delineated the scope of operation of chiefs in the country, which incorporated them into the regional and national house of chiefs for them to contribute to the development of the country.

The chieftaincy institution in Ghana has been bedevilled with numerous disputes, despite its role in local governance in the country. Abotchie argues that major disputes in Ghana such as the Dagbon crises between the Abudu and the Andani gates of succession, the Tuobodom chieftaincy conflict, the Konkomba-Nanumba conflict, the Peki-Tsito conflict, and the Bawku conflict are all chieftaincy related disputes.<sup>44</sup> All these conflicts have a colonial legacy in them. These disturbances had negative impacts on the economy as the government diverted funds useful for development into managing the situation. The security threat in these areas further slows business, craft and agricultural production.

The institution of chieftaincy on the Gold Coast underwent significant transformations due to British rule. Brukum argues that the indigenous political organisations of British-occupied territories in Africa were transformed through treaties with traditional leaders to promote colonial rule.<sup>45</sup> The imperial and capitalist desire of the British to exploit cheap labour and open the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast for trade made the role of chiefs crucial in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Abotchie, 'Position of the Chief Become Anachronistic.'

<sup>45</sup> Nana James K. Brukum, "Chiefs, Colonial Policy and Politics in Northern Ghana, 1897-1956," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 3 (1999): 105-106.

<sup>46</sup> Lentz, *Ethnicity*, 32.

The administration catapulted the existing chiefs into the colonial system while it appointed new chiefs in the so-called stateless societies to smoothen colonial business in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. Rathbone argues that this new system of administration of the Gold Coast relieved the chiefs of most of the traditional roles as leaders of their people.<sup>47</sup> Arhin emphasised that those traditional roles of chiefs taken away by the colonial administration included ‘the power to make war, the power to make rules for the maintenance of law and order, and the power to take measures to promote the economic and social welfare of the people.’<sup>48</sup> He emphasises that the ‘colonial government took away the power of the traditional rulers and gave them authority in local government.’<sup>49</sup> The erosion of these powers was to cripple the chiefs into being colonial representatives rather than the people.

Many of the existing literature on traditional rule in Ghana pays much attention to Akan chiefdoms with little documentation on northern ones. For instance, Claridge’s work on the history of the Gold Coast barely mentions the socio-political development of the northern states not even the centralised states of the Gonja and the Mole-Dagbani. He only stated how the Northern Territories became part of the British colony as a protectorate.<sup>50</sup> In a similar line of argument, Kwame Arhin’s well-cited work on the traditional rule in Ghana only mentioned the Gonja, the Mole-Dagbani states, and the Talensi as the only

---

<sup>47</sup> Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*.

<sup>48</sup> Arhin, *Traditional Rule in Ghana*, 89.

<sup>49</sup> Arhin, *Traditional Rule in Ghana*, 108.

<sup>50</sup> W. W. Claridge, *A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti*, Vol. 1&2 (Frank Cass and Co. Limited, 1915).

states in northern Ghana with available evidence to be studied.<sup>51</sup> This conclusion by Arhin is unfounded. Despite the usefulness of oral histories and an interdisciplinary approach to the interrogation of our past, Kwame Arhin excluded many societies in his studies in a cry of a lack of evidence.

In addition, the well-crafted work on *Nkrumah and the Chiefs* by Richard Rathbone, which focused on the long struggle of Kwame Nkrumah and his government to detach chiefs from the administrative control of the country, placed more emphasis on the Twi-speaking states of southern Ghana.<sup>52</sup> He argues that the government of Nkrumah in its first ten years of rule consciously and systematically redefined the chieftaincy institution with implications that still exist in modern Ghana's politics. Although Rathbone's book did not pay much attention to chieftaincy institutions in northern Ghana, the book still serves as a valuable material for understanding the coexistence of Builsa chiefs with the colonial administration and with the Nkrumah's government since the north was not ruled in isolation.

The literature review has shown the trend of research undertaken in the field of traditional rule under British colonial rule in the Gold Coast, however, historical studies in Builsa are lacking. Most of the literature on Builsa political systems are works of anthropologists, which emphasise the ethnography of the people. The first of its kind came from the well-known German scholar Diedrich Westerman who compiled the first grammar of *Buli* (the language spoken by the Builsa people) in 1913 and erroneously referred to the language as Kanjaga, meanwhile, Kanjaga is rather a name of one of the many Builsa towns. In

---

<sup>51</sup> Arhin, *Traditional Rule in Ghana*.

<sup>52</sup> Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*.

Cardinall's book on the Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, he described the Builsa as people who have no definite origin. He indicated that the Builsa came 'from all points of the compass.'<sup>53</sup> Just like Cardinall, Rattray gave a similarly vague description of the Builsa indicating that they evolved out of 'local migrations and counter-migrations and intermarriages of clans belonging to the Moshi-speaking group and to the Kasen-Isal-speaking group.'<sup>54</sup> Rattray's work, which provided a survey of cultures and societies of the Northern Territories, only attempted to look at the social organization of the Builsa while paying little attention to their indigenous political structures.

Aside from these anthropological works, Pauline Akankyalabey undertook a historical study of the Builsa as her undergraduate long essay.<sup>55</sup> She highlighted major themes in Builsa's history such as the slave raiding and British colonial rule but did not map out how these encounters shaped the institution of chieftaincy in Builsa. The most recent study in Builsa is the dissertation of Amos Ademin, which discusses how the Builsa resisted Babatu and Samory slave-raiding activities of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>56</sup>

The reviewed literature and other scholars mentioned chieftaincy in Builsa in their discussions; however, they have not explored how chieftaincy as an indigenous political institution in Builsa evolved within the context of British colonial rule on the Gold Coast.

---

<sup>53</sup> Allan Wolsey Cardinall, *The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast: their Customs, Religion and Folklore* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1920), 11.

<sup>54</sup> Rattray, *Tribes*. 398.

<sup>55</sup> Akankyalabey, "History of the Builsa."

<sup>56</sup> Amos Yaw Ademin, "Indigenous Resistance to Slavery by the Builsa People of Northern Ghana" (Diss., MA African Studies, Univ. of Ghana, July 2016).

Hence, this study examines the historical changes that took place in the institution of chieftaincy in Builsa from 1900 to 1957.

### **1.7 Justification and Significance of the Study**

The lack of historical studies to give depth to the evolution of Builsa chieftaincy and the impacts of British colonial rule on the institution drives the need for this study. Studies on Builsa are about their ethnography with little attention to their political developments.<sup>57</sup> Although these works provide valuable information for this thesis, they are not devoid of bias and prejudice as most of the early writers were colonial agents and wrote to promote colonialism.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, this study investigates the transformations that took place in the political developments of the Builsa people with the application of historical ethics and methods. This line of analysis about the political history of the Builsa within the context of British rule on the Gold Coast set this study apart.

The study contributes to the existing knowledge of the impact of British colonial rule on the indigenous politics of the Gold Coast. Moreover, some of the complex advances briefly made in this study using primary sources will trigger more research into the history of the Builsa people and other societies that shared similar historical experiences with them. It will be useful to both academics and the public in understanding the dynamics of the institution of chieftaincy among the Builsa people resulting from British colonial rule. The

---

<sup>57</sup> For example, German anthropologist such as Rüdiger Schott and Franz Kröger conducted great works on socio-cultural studies of the *Buli* speaking people of the present day Upper East Region.

<sup>58</sup> See for example Cardinall, *Natives*; Rattray, *Tribes*.

study will additionally serve as reference material for scholars and students interested in traditional rule in the Gold Coast.

### **1.8 Sources and Methods**

To achieve the goal of this study, the study adopted historical methods in interpreting the relevant evidence. This study is exploratory, qualitative, and historical in design. It is exploratory because it explores and analyses the broad theme of the evolution of chieftaincy among the Builsa people under British colonial rule. Qualitative because it explores the subjective understanding of the impact of British colonial rule in shaping chieftaincy in Builsa rather than a statistical description of the phenomenon. Historical because the study analyses the transformations that took place in the political institutions of the *Buli*-speaking people during the colonial period. In interpreting the documentary sources, the study extensively employs the use of content analysis strategy since it is the most flexible method for analysing text data.<sup>59</sup>

This study made adequate use of both primary and secondary sources, threading together evidence from a variety of archives in a manner that has not previously been undertaken. It focuses on primary data such as archival materials from the Sandema Paramountcy Archives and the national Public Records and Archives Administration Departments (hereafter PRAAD) in Tamale and Accra respectively. In addition, the Builsa online journal, *Buluk: Journal of Builsa Culture and Society*, [www.buluk.de](http://www.buluk.de) or [www.buluk.de.new](http://www.buluk.de.new) established by the German anthropologist, Franz Kröger in

---

<sup>59</sup> Stephen Cavanagh, "Content Analysis: Concepts, Methods and Applications," *Nurse Researcher* 4 (1997), 05.



collaboration with the Builsa Traditional Council served as a catalogue for useful sources of both primary and secondary materials.

To complement the documentary sources, the researcher interviewed four knowledgeable persons on chieftaincy in Builsa land. They included the chief of Sandema and president of the Builsa traditional council, Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II, Chief of Wiesi, Chief of Kanjarga and other resourceful persons. The researcher selected these persons based on a preliminary search for people who have rich knowledge to help address the research questions on the political history of the Builsa people. The researcher contacted *Tindanas* as well as academics, and others who have first-hand information about the Builsa people.

Moreover, the study consulted books, book chapters, journal articles and thesis/dissertations to help place it within the historiography of colonialism and traditional rule in Ghana. The major secondary materials utilized in this study included but were not limited to Allan W. Cardinall's work on the Northern Territories.<sup>60</sup> This work as the first monograph that sketchily studied the ethnic groups in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast including the Builsa provides a cursory understanding of the complex society of the people under study. Robert S. Rattray's work on the hinterlands of Asante is also a valuable material for this study, especially on the issue of the social organizations of the *Buli*-speaking people before the influence of the British in the area.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, Rüdiger Schott's numerous works on the Builsa especially, his 'Sources for a History of the Builsa in Northern Ghana,' is instrumental in this thesis. Schott's article compiled a variety of

---

<sup>60</sup> Cardinall, *Natives*.

<sup>61</sup> Rattray, *Tribes*.

sources on Builsa that provide a gateway to vital sources necessary for this project. Also, the ‘Kunkwa, Kategri and Jadema: The Sandemnaab’s lawsuit in 1973,’ collected and analysed by Franz Kröger on a boundary dispute between the president of the Builsa traditional council, Nab Azantilow I and the communities mentioned above is useful in this study.

Again, Carola Lentz’s numerous works on the Dagaba and the Sisala people of the Upper West Region of Ghana provide a systematic analysis of how colonial and European activities generally contributed to ethnic consciousness and belongingness among these people.<sup>62</sup> As such, her work fits well in this study, concerning the role of British rule in facilitating the centralisation of indigenous authority among the Builsa people. The researcher had not only consulted books and journal articles but also thesis and dissertations.<sup>63</sup>

The major challenges encountered in the course of writing the thesis were mostly recorded during the fieldwork. Most persons endowed with knowledge of traditional rule in Builsa were unwilling to offer information to the researcher. They saw chieftaincy in their communities as a sensitive matter that needed not to be discussed by ordinary people because it reminded the families of whose ancestors were dismissed and replaced with others by the colonial administration. Because this tends to soil the unity and peace enjoyed by the people in the area. They referred the researcher to persons particularly the current occupants of the political institutions in the area. Even though most of the persons

---

<sup>62</sup> Lentz, *Ethnicity*.

<sup>63</sup> Two of such works are Akankyalabey’s “History of the Builsa” and Ademin’s “Indigenous Resistance to Slavery.”

contacted in most cases gave ‘glorified histories’ about their chieftaincy histories, the researcher applied ethics in historical writing to sort out and interpret the evidence gathered. In addition, most people contacted for interviews expected some sort of compensation, which was costly for the researcher. These obstacles delayed the completion of the thesis.

### **1.9 Scope of the Study**

The study period covers 1900 to 1957. This is to analyse the historical trajectories of the Builsa society within the framework of British colonial rule in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. It however considers the last decade of the Nineteenth century since British colonial advancement to the Northwestern part of the Northern Territories started in 1898.<sup>64</sup> This background is necessary to give the reader a broader understanding of the socio-political structures of the Builsa society before the establishment of British colonial rule in the area. It will then chronologically analyse how Builsa became under British rule and the transformations that were to take place in the chieftaincy institutions of the Builsa society throughout the colonial period. The study ended in 1957 to mark the end of British rule on the Gold Coast. The study area covers the entire Builsa traditional area known as Buluk. The Buluk area currently comprises two main administrative districts-Builsa North and Builsa South, with Sandema town remaining the seat of the ‘paramount chief’ since 1911.

### **1.10 Organization of Study**

The study comprises five chapters. Chapter one, which is the introduction comprises a brief background and motivation to the study, the statement of the problem, objectives, research

---

<sup>64</sup> Brukum, ‘Chiefs, Colonial Policy.’

questions, conceptual framework, historiographical review, significance and justification of the study, sources and methods, the scope of the study, and outline of chapters. Chapter two focuses on the Builsa society before the British established their colonial rule in the area. Thus, it pays much attention to the nineteenth century, indicating the social and political developments and transitions that were to occur by the close of the century. It analyses the dispersed settlement patterns and independent and autonomous nature of the Builsa villages before the arrival of the British. It also examines how the activities of the slave raiders such as Samory and Babatu facilitated the emergence of political collectiveness among the Builsa villages.

Moreover, chapter three discusses the incorporation of Builsa into British colonial rule on the Gold Coast. Thus, it looks at the developments leading to the re-organisation of the Builsa chiefdoms under a paramountcy headed by Sandema. It further looks at how these chiefdoms co-existed. Chapter four focuses on the activities of the Builsa Native Authority established in 1934 as it carried out its duty and enjoyed its privileges as an agent of the colonial administration. It further looked at how it served as a magnet for development in Buluk. Chapter five finally summarises the findings and provides a comprehensive conclusion to the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### PRE-COLONIAL BUILSA SOCIETY

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the nature of chieftaincy among the Builsa people before British colonial rule in the area. Before doing so, the chapter discussed the general overview of the Builsa society by indicating their territory, social organisation, settlement patterns and their contacts with external people particularly the Zambarima slave raiders before the advent of the British in the area in 1902. This background is necessary for our understanding of how these developments shaped the nature and form of traditional rule practised in this area before the 1900s.

#### 2.1 The Builsa and their Territory

The Builsa is one of the major ethnic groups occupying the western part of the Upper East region of modern Ghana. The Builsa traditional area currently comprises two administrative districts, which are Builsa North and South with Sandema and Fumbisi as capital towns respectively. Before the advent of British rule, the area had sparsely populated communities with fifteen major towns. These included, Sandema, Chuchuliga, Wiaga, Gbedema, Siniensi, Doninga, Kadema, Bachonsa, Kanjaga, Fumbisi, Gbedemblisi, Wiesi, Uwasi, Kunkwa and Kategri. The Builsa traditional area is bounded on the north and east by the Kassena-Nankana people and on the West by the Sissala people, while the south is by the Mamprusi with the White Volta serving as a natural boundary. The Builsa people speak *Buli* as their language, which forms part of the Mole-Dagbani sub-group of

the Gur Western Sudanic languages.<sup>65</sup> It has a linguistic relationship with the Nankani, Talensi, Kusasi, Dogomba, Dagaaba and Mamprusi languages.

Earlier European writers and colonialists erroneously referred to the Builsa ethnic group as Kanjaga, which is one of the major communities in Builsa. The name Kanjaga came to dominate in European records due to the enlistment of colonial soldiers including the Builsa people. The colonialists used the names of the communities or ethnicity of the recruits as surnames of most of these colonial soldiers. Since the first Builsa to be recruited into the colonial army was from Kanjaga, he was given a European name John and assumed his community name as his surname.<sup>66</sup> Thus, he became known as John Kanjaga rather than Asobla, which was his original name before his enlistment into the Gold Coast regiment in 1902.

The historical origin of the Builsa people has complex narratives like most other ethnic groups in Ghana, which are always associated with myths and legendary migrations. Previous scholars such as Cardinal, Rattray, and Akankyalabey who based their analysis on oral histories and traditions of the Builsa have not been able to arrive at a converging point on the exact origin of the people of the *Buli*-speaking language in Ghana. Cardinal and Rattray as the first scholars to have attempted interrogating the histories of the Builsa society were sceptical about their narratives. Cardinal for example vaguely referred to the Builsa people as an ethnic group with ‘families which have migrated from far to the west,

---

<sup>65</sup> Albert K. Awedoba, “The Peoples of Northern Ghana” (22 May 2006), [www.ghanaculture.gov.gh](http://www.ghanaculture.gov.gh) (accessed 15 July 2019).

<sup>66</sup> Akankyalabey, “History of the Builsa,” 03.

to the north - and in fact, from all points of the compass.’<sup>67</sup> Rattray also pointed out that ‘the so-called Builsa tribe are, I think, a hotch-potch people created by local migrations and counter-migrations and intermarriages of clans belonging to both the Moshi-speaking group and to the Kasen’-Isal-speaking group.’<sup>68</sup>

Akankyalabey on the other hand postulated three possible origins of the people. Aside from Akana’s story of the Builsa with Kanjaga as the ancestral home, Akankyalabey draws our attention to the indigenous evolution of the ethnic group that came to be known today as Builsa. She perceived the Builsa as indigenous inhabitants in their current occupation who evolved from one of the many Builsa communities called Kadema and intermingled with Mamprusi immigrants from Nalerigu/Gambaga.<sup>69</sup> This assertion owes its authority to the meaning of Builsa in *Buli* and the story of an immigrant prince from Nalerigu, the seat of the Mamprugu state. One interpretation points to the meaning of Builsa as ‘Bulliba.’<sup>70</sup> ‘Bulliba’ was a sub-sectional village under the town of Kadema whose inhabitants claimed indigenous status in the Builsa land. The indigenes of the area emphasised that it was ‘Bulliba’ that the immigrants from Mamprugu corrupted into Builsa.<sup>71</sup> Another account asserts that the *Buli*-speaking people occupying the southern part of the Builsa land

---

<sup>67</sup> Cardinall, *Natives*, 11.

<sup>68</sup> Rattray, *Tribes*, 398.

<sup>69</sup> Akankyalabey, “History of the Builsa,” 2.

<sup>70</sup> Akankyalabey, “History of the Builsa,” 1.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

precisely the towns of Fumbisi, Kanjaga and Doninga have their roots from the Sisala ethnic group who lives around the west of Builsa.<sup>72</sup>

Although the origin of the Builsa involves different and complex narratives, they all point to a conclusion that the Buli-speaking people evolved out of both autochthonous and entanglement with Mamprusi and Kasena immigrants from Mamprugu and Navrongo respectively. The Builsa of Kunkwa, Kategri, Jadema, Sandema, Kadema, Siniensi and Wiaga traced their roots to Mamprusi, the Kanjaga people viewed themselves as the descendants of intermingling between indigenous people with Kasena people from Navrongo. The people of Gbedema traced their original home to Tongo in the Tongo district in the Upper East region while the people of Bachonsa, Doninga, Fumbisi and Uwasi claimed indigenous evolution. The different roots of the Builsa people made it difficult for the centralisation of political authority before the advent of British colonial rule in the area. Because, each community saw itself as unrelated to the other in terms of political organization, and therefore remained autonomous.

## **2.2 Social and Settlement Patterns**

The socio-cultural life of the Builsa is similar to that of their neighbours: The Kasena and the Nankana people to the north and the Mamprusi to the south of the White Volta. This resemblance resulted mainly from intermarriages and the migration trajectory of the Builsa that points to Mamprugu on the one hand and Kasena on the other hand as their origin.<sup>73</sup>

The geographical setting of a people plays a significant role in shaping their cultural

---

<sup>72</sup> Interview with James Anang Amoak, Teacher in Fumbisi S.H.S, Fumbisi, 20 March 2021.

<sup>73</sup> Awedoba, "Peoples of Northern Ghana."



outlook in diverse ways. Therefore, the geography and the people the Builsa came into contact with shaped their political institutions such as chieftaincy. For instance, the Mamprusi, the Zambarima slave raiders, the Kasena-Nankana, the Talensi and Europeans particularly the British whom the Builsa had historical experience with resulted in transformation of their political organisation.<sup>74</sup> It is worth mentioning that the Builsa had organised social and political systems contrary to earlier European writers' generalization of most of the northern societies as stateless. The European's misconceptions about African peoples resulted from their misunderstanding and ignorance of the entire cultural practice and norms of the people concerned.

Kinship and clanship, which largely determine the line of succession into political office among the Builsa was by blood relation, marriage, pawning and slavery. At the lowest level was the extended family system, followed by the clan divisions. Each clan is a composition of related members who trace their ancestry to one founder. The Builsa clans are exogamous, totemic and patrilineal in practice. Clan members do not inter-marry, they have a totem that they all revered and inherited along the father's line. Like any other northern ethnic group of Ghana, in Builsa, succession to office and inheritance is through the patrilineal system.<sup>75</sup> The male children inherited their father while female children inherited their mother. However, in the case that the woman died living behind livestock, her male children took custody of them. The clan totem served as a magnet that united members of a particular clan in Builsa, which in most cases resulted into political unit such

---

<sup>74</sup> Awedoba, "Peoples of Northern Ghana."

<sup>75</sup> Interview with James Anang Amoak.

as chiefdoms. Sometimes, people realised their relationship by finding out if they shared the same totem.<sup>76</sup> For example, clans like *Nau* and *Wanu* have the crocodile and monkey as their totems respectively.<sup>77</sup> It was a taboo for the respective clans of these totemic animals to kill or eat them. The clans believed that those animals helped their ancestors in the past and must be respected and honoured like the ancestors.<sup>78</sup>

Moreover, pattern of settlement also determines the nature of political system a group of people will adopt for themselves. In the case of the Builsa people, they lived in communal settlements comprised of related clans and lineages. They collectively assisted one another in their farms, building of houses and other activities that required more labour. They built usually round rooms, which consisted of several circular mud huts. The rooms had conical-shaped thatch roofs connected by mud walls. They sometimes concreted some of their rooms rather than roofed them with thatch. This was done to avoid burning with fire from enemies or wildfire and avoid leaking during the rainy season, which is associated with the thatch housing.<sup>79</sup> In addition, the concreting of roofs was done for security reasons, men slept on top of the roofs to monitor any advancement of enemies such as the slave raiders.

The settlement pattern was purely rural with less densely populated villages. The setting of villages was influenced by various factors such as agriculture suitability. For instance, the villages of Gbedemblisi and Weisi emerged out of migrants from Gbedema and Wiaga

---

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II. Also see Rattray, *Tribes*, 399.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Nab Akanab Apomwein Abuntori II, Weisi-Nab, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2020. At his residence in Weisi.

respectively, who moved from their previous settlements to occupy their current homes purposely to take advantage of the valley by the Sicity River for agricultural production.<sup>80</sup> Today, these two communities control over 50% of rice plantation land in the Builsa traditional area. Another factor that guided the settlement of some of the Builsa villages was trade opportunities. Communities like Sandema and Fumbisi were strategically located to benefit from the trans-Saharan caravan trade.<sup>81</sup> The slave route from Burkina Faso to Daboya-Buipe-Kintampo passed through the Builsa land.<sup>82</sup> It is uncommon for any Builsa town or village to be occupied by a single clan, due to ‘the effects of civil wars and slave-raiding,’ which have resulted in the incorporation of the displaced persons into families.<sup>83</sup> By the beginning of the twentieth century, the towns of Kanjaga, Fumbisi and Sandema had turned into cosmopolitan societies.<sup>84</sup>

In addition, the Builsa established commercial links among themselves before the establishment of British rule in 1902. They engaged in trading activities through a barter system of exchanging goods for goods or services. The major towns in Builsa such as Fumbisi, Kanjaga and Sandema have not only provided market centres for farm produce, craft products and livestock for the Builsa people but also played a significant role in the trans-Saharan caravan trade. They served as transit centres for the caravan traders who

---

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Nab Akanab Apomwein Abuntori II.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>82</sup> Akosua Adoma Perbi, *A History of Indigenous Slavery in Ghana: From the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2004), Map III.

<sup>83</sup> Rattray, *Tribes*, 399.

<sup>84</sup> Rattray, *Tribes*, 399.

passed through them to Salaga and Daboya.<sup>85</sup> The impact of the trading activities in these towns made them politically organised in provision of security to traders long before the advent colonialism in the area.<sup>86</sup>

### **2.3 Slavery and Slave Raiding in Builsa**

The institution of slavery was not new in Builsa before their encounter with the Zambarima slave raiders in 1885.<sup>87</sup> The institution of slavery referred to as *Yomtri* in Buli is an ancient practice in Builsa. The institution emerged because of famine or extreme hunger, which compelled the poor to barter some of their children for large quantities of millet, sorghum and other foodstuffs to cater for the remaining family.<sup>88</sup> Aside from the purchase method of enslavement, there were instances where people got themselves into slavery due to being lost and found but could not trace one's home.<sup>89</sup> Builsa tradition mandated slave masters to incorporate their slaves into their families with the slaves' names maintained or changed depending on the wish of the enslaved.<sup>90</sup>

Unlike Asante and other forest and coastal states of the Gold Coast where slaves served in numerous capacities including heading administrative offices, slaves in Builsa mainly

---

<sup>85</sup> Perbi, *History of Indigenous Slavery*, map III.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>87</sup> Rudiger Schott, "Sources for a History of the Builsa of Northern Ghana," *Paideuma* 23 (1977): 145.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>89</sup> Ademin, "Indigenous Resistance to Slavery," 26.

<sup>90</sup> PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/2/204, Domestic Slavery, 1927. See also, Perbi, *History of Indigenous Slavery*, 114-115.

engaged in farming, shepherding and domestic chores.<sup>91</sup> As tradition demands, female slaves were limited to domestic chores such as cooking, babysitting, fetching water and helping on the farm. When they were of age, they were either married to their slave master's family or married out to relatives. All slaves married had their servitude condition abolished.<sup>92</sup>

Although Britain abolished the trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1807, the trade still prevailed in Africa. Because the abolition act passed in the British parliament was only applicable to enslavement across the Atlantic and did not necessarily stop the indigenous slave trade. Moreover, the French were not strict on the abolition law coupling with the activities of European interlopers who provided a ready market for the indigenous slave trade. This resulted in slaves raiding the north of Asante and being transported through the Volta to Popo in Benin slave markets.<sup>93</sup> The new trade route provided an opportunity for not only the European interlopers but also the notorious Zambarima slave raiders, Babatu and Samory who came from Niger and began raiding the north-western part of the Northern Territories, which included Builsa in 1885.<sup>94</sup>

The Builsa villages suffered severely from the Babatu raids because of their dispersedly and disunited political nature at the time. The raiders were aware of this weakness because they already had similar experiences with the Dagaba and the Sisala communities before

---

<sup>91</sup> Ademin, "Indigenous Resistance to Slavery," 27.

<sup>92</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>93</sup> Perbi, *History of Indigenous Slavery*, 156.

<sup>94</sup> See J. J. Holden, "The Zabarima Conquest of North-West Ghana Part I," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 8 (1965); Rudiger Schott, "Sources for a History of the Builsa of Northern Ghana," *Paideuma* 23 (1977): 145.

they invaded Builsa and the eventual establishment of their camps in the Builsa communities of Bachonsa, Doninga and Kanjaga.<sup>95</sup> They used these camps as military bases to monitor and capture the indigenous people into slavery, which resulted in stiff resistance from the Builsa led by Sandem-Nab Anankum who defeated the raiders in 1898.<sup>96</sup> The Builsa victory over Babatu and Samory ushered in a new phase of political organisation and ethnic unity among the villages.

The memory of the Builsa victory over Babatu is displayed in the *Feok* festival celebrated annually by the Builsa. As part of the festival activities, there is always, a ceremonial dance popularly called war dance, which symbolises how the Zambarima slave raiders were humiliated in Builsa land. The dancers do not speak during the performance. This portrays how concentrated and serious they were during the war with Samory and Babatu. The paraphernalia worn by the dancers during the festival is made of charms, amulets and talismans believed to have protected and deflected evil spirits and weapons from the enemy.<sup>97</sup> The dancers also shoulder poisoned arrows and bows, wild animals' skin and wear headgear made with the horns of buffalos. The use of buffalos' horns in the headgear is to demonstrate how bravely their ancestors disguised themselves like buffalos and ambushed the slave raiders. The movements and gestures shown during the dance indicated the wildness of a buffalo that is ready to resist attack.

---

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II. See also, Holden, "Zabarima Conquest," 75.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>97</sup> Ademin, "Indigenous Resistance to Slavery," 46.

## 2.4 Political Organization

The institution of chieftaincy existed in Builsa long before the British occupation of the area in the twentieth century. This is evidenced by the fact that during the British's 1902 expedition to the area, all the major towns in Builsa had traditional rulers who presided over their respective communities. The towns of Kanjaga, Fumbisi, Gbedema, Sandema, Kadema, Wiaga and Siniensi were respectively ruled by Atibil, Anyiamjutee, Atong, Anankum, Akomwob, Awuumi, and Abaagyi.<sup>98</sup> The villages were politically independent of one another as none of them had control over the other. Because of the dispersed and small nature of the villages at the time, it was common to have a single clan occupying a particular village. As a result, the lineage heads naturally became the leaders and exercised political authority and power over their respective communities before the British incorporation of the area into the Gold Coast colony in 1902.<sup>99</sup> Although the institution of chieftaincy existed in Builsa before British rule in the area, it was until the eighteenth century that the institution was introduced into Builsa by the legendary prince Agurima from Mamprugu.<sup>100</sup> Other colonial writings referred to Agurima as Agyabkai or Wurume.<sup>101</sup>

According to Builsa oral tradition, Atuga, the son of Agurima, the Mamprusi prince who led his people into the Builsaland later played a significant role in the chieftaincy politics of the Builsa people. Atuga's father had a dispute with his father, the overlord of

---

<sup>98</sup> Akankyalabey, "History of the Builsa, 34.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>101</sup> Cardinall, *Natives*, 11.

Mamprugu in Nalerigu over an issue of adultery in one account and another account over an issue about circumcision.<sup>102</sup> On account of the adultery, Atuga's father, Agurima was undermining the authority of his father, the Nayiri. He engaged in different plots to unseat his father to become the ruler of Mamprugu. In his effort to achieve this goal, he seduced one of the wives of his father. When the Nayiri discovered this indecent act of the heir to the skin, he denounced him and ordered his arrest and execution. Agurima and his family and followers then escaped to find an abode in Kadema in the Builsaland.<sup>103</sup> This version of the oral tradition of the Builsa was also reported by A. W. Cardinall who spoke of a certain son of Nayiri who committed adultery with one of his father's wives and was consequently banished and sought refuge in Kadema.<sup>104</sup>

The second version was about a disagreement between him and his father, the Nayiri over an issue of the circumcision of Agurima's children. Male circumcision was a revered custom among the Mamprusi as it symbolised the rite of passage of boys into manhood. Even with the reverence attached to the culture of circumcision, Agurima refused to have his children circumcised. As an heir to the skin of Mamprugu, Agurima was to succeed his father as custom demanded if the father died. Following his refusal to uphold the culture of his people, the Nayiri perceived that would alter the customs and traditions of his people if he assumed the position of the Nayiri, the highest political office in Mamprugu. To avoid future disgrace and disrespect for societal values and customs, the Nayiri banished Agurima in the eighteenth century from the Mamprugu kingdom where he moved with his

---

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>103</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>104</sup> Cardinall, *Natives*, 11.



wives and children including some people of the kingdom who demonstrated loyalty and sympathised with him.<sup>105</sup>

According to Nab Azantilow II, chief of Sandema and the president of the Builsa Traditional Council, indicates that ‘the introduction of *Naam*<sup>106</sup> by Agurima transformed the various Builsa villages into centralized political states before the coming of the British into Builsa.’<sup>107</sup> Thus, the descendants of the Atuga-Bisas ruled the modern towns of Sandema, Siniensi, Wiaga and Kadema.<sup>108</sup> According to Builsa’s oral tradition, Atuga had four male children who later occupied four major towns in Builsa. The eldest son, Asandem occupied Sandema; the second son, Awiak assumed Wiaga, the third, Asinee went to Siniensi while the last son, Akaa remained in Kadema with the father.<sup>109</sup> Because of the genealogical relationship between these Builsa communities and Mamprugu, the colonial administration found it easier to place the entire Builsa under Nayiri's control in 1912.<sup>110</sup>

Even though the Atuga clans of the Builsa people established centralised political administration in Builsa far back in the 1760s, they failed to organise the entire Builsa ethnic group into a single political unity until the introduction of the British political integration policy of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast in 1911. This resulted from

---

<sup>105</sup> Franz Kroger, “History of the Builsa,” speech delivered on December 2017 on the day of Feok festival at Sandema in the Builsa North Municipality.

<sup>106</sup> Naam is a Buli term literally means chieftaincy.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>108</sup> *Atuga-bisa* refers to descendants of Atuga.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>110</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/61, ‘Navrongo District Handing Over Reports,’ Chief Commissioner, Northern Territories to North-Eastern Provincial Acting Commissioner, Navrongo (17 July, 1912).

the fact that the immigrants from Mamprugu came to meet autonomous settlements in the area who retained their political independence and autonomy since none of them made efforts to dominate the other. Although none of the Builsa villages had political control over the other until 1911, the Samory and Babatu slave raiding activities in the area particularly in the last decade of the nineteenth century arose a collective consciousness of political integration among them to establish a formidable leadership to resist enslavement from the notorious raiders. By 1902 when the British annexed the area into the Gold Coast colony, some of the Builsa chiefdoms especially those of the Atuga clans had developed a loose political integration in which Sandema was viewed by these clans as a supreme polity over them. This socio-political relationship that existed among these clans was to manifest in the election of the Builsa Head Chief in September 1911, where the rest of the three Atuga clans were to endorse Sandem-Nab, Nab Ananguna over Kanjag-Nab, Nab Adachuro.<sup>111</sup> It is important to note that by the time the British started re-organising the political systems and institutions of the Northern Territories to augment colonial rule, Builsa had already started developing a web of political systems based on their socio-cultural relations.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The Builsa society before the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast became under British control in 1902 was rural. The people lived in a sparse settlement and engaged in peasant agricultural activities such as subsistence farming and the keeping of livestock. As a dispersed society, the village settlement served as the highest authority in the land. The

---

<sup>111</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjarga Native Affairs (case No. 294/07), 23 May 1913 – 17 May 1915.

earth priest, the *Teng-nyono* served as both the political and spiritual leader of every Builsa community before the advent of chieftaincy by the Mamprugu prince around the 1760s. This changed the political sphere of the Builsa people by introducing the concept of chieftaincy similar to that of Mamprugu to the indigenous people who metamorphosed with Mamprusi immigrants into what is Builsa today.<sup>112</sup>

The invasion of the Builsa villages by the slave raiders badly affected the social structures of the various Builsa settlements. The raiders burned down houses, destroyed farms, kidnapped both men and women, raped and brutalised women, and most importantly, the workforce of the society sold into slavery and families displaced and torn apart.<sup>113</sup> Nonetheless, the historical experience of the Builsa with the Zambarima slave raiders compelled them to restructure the social and political organisations of their society. There was a new development of relocating housing to a compacting community rather than the hitherto practice of dispersedly settlement patterns. Thus, urbanisation began to take place in the social life of the Builsa people immediately after they defeated Babatu, which resulted in the political unification of the independent and autonomous villages. By 1902 when the British conquered Builsa and imposed a colonial rule on her, all major Builsa villages had established chieftaincy institutions similar to that of the Mamprugu and Dagbon kingdoms at the time.

---

<sup>112</sup> Kröger, “History of the Builsa.”

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

## CHAPTER THREE

### INCORPORATION OF BUILSA INTO BRITISH RULE

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the process leading to the incorporation of Builsa into British Rule in 1902. It further examines how British colonial policies and activities in the area shaped the chieftaincy institution among the Builsa. Additionally, it looks at how the chiefs of the autonomous and independent villages co-existed after being brought into a single centralised authority in 1911 under the headship of Sandem-Nab. The analysis centred on Sandema, Kanjaga, Kunkwa, Wiaga, Fumbisi, Chuchuliga and Gbedema since they had more influence on both the administration of the paramountcy and the colonial office as compared to the much smaller chiefdoms such as Uwasi, Gbedemblisi, Weisi, Doninga, Bachonsa, Siniensi and Kadema. The chapter further examines the relationships between the Builsa Chiefs and the Nayiri under the Mamprugu Native Authority before it was split in 1934.

#### 3.1 Establishment of British Rule in Builsa

He will live in the history of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast as the liberator of that territory from French influence, and he thereby changed the course of [the] history of that territory. The whole of that Territory was gained for the British Government through the administrative genius of George Ferguson.<sup>114</sup>

The British had limited their activities around the coast of the Gold Coast until the last two decades of the nineteenth century when they began penetrating the interior. Two main

---

<sup>114</sup> Magnus J. Sampson, "George Ekem Ferguson of Anomabu," *Transactions of the Gold Coast & Togoland Historical Society* 2, no. 1 (1956): 32.

factors accounted for the delay of the British in advancing into the north of the Gold Coast according to Brukum. He identified huge expenditure on absorbing the north, and the Asante blockage as the main reasons why the British initially showed no interest in annexing the northern lands.<sup>115</sup> The economic viability in the north of the Gold Coast was not appealing for colonial business, because economic exploitation drove British colonial policies in West Africa making the colonial administration sceptical about places that could not demonstrate clearly the creation of local revenue to affect administrative cost. The major economic prospect of the north to the British imperial power was labour, which could be obtained without necessarily establishing political control in the area. The north was to remain as a labour pool for the colonial mines in the south. The north-south labour mobility did not change even after colonialism due to the underdeveloped nature of the north resulting from poverty; government neglect; land, chieftaincy and ethnic conflicts and illiteracy.

The Asante factor for delaying the British advancement to the north was broken in the defeat of Asante in the 1873-4 Sagrenti War, which provided a new impetus for British influence on the Gold Coast. The treaty of Fomena signed in 1874 that accompanied the defeat of Asante formally claimed the coastal zone as a British crown colony. The British began to exercise informal control over indigenous chiefs in the hinterlands through special commissioners sent into the interior to initiate British intentions to sign treaties for protection against Asante and promotion of trade.<sup>116</sup> In 1875, the colonial government sent

---

<sup>115</sup> Nana James K. Brukum, "The Northern Territories of the Gold Coast under British Colonial Rule, 1897-1956: A Study in Political Change" (PhD Thesis, Dept. of History, Uni. of Toronto, 1997), 53-54.

<sup>116</sup> John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *The Economic History Review*, New Series 6, no. 1 (1953): 01.

Goulsbury to Asante to mediate in the war between Kumasi and Dwaben while in 1883, Lonsdale was asked to intervene in the conflict between Kumasi and Adanse.<sup>117</sup> These numerous treaties were to open up the interior of the Gold Coast including the Northern Territories to colonial exploitation. Although the strength of the Asante Empire reduced drastically through the 1874 treaty of Fomena, it still blocked the north from the British until its final break in the Yaa Asantewaa War of 1900/1.

As the activities of the French increased towards the hinterlands of Asante, the British declared Asante and the Northern Territories as Protectorates in 1901 and 1902 respectively. Britain acted swiftly to avoid ‘encirclement by France and Germany who had begun to acquire territories along the [eastern] coastline and the interior.’<sup>118</sup> The French had already established their base in Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast in the north and west of the Gold Coast respectively while the Germans were advancing from the east. This resulted in the commencement of Anglo-Franco and Anglo-German rivalry on the Gold Coast until the end of the First World War.<sup>119</sup>

The news about the French intentions in the north compelled the Colonial Office in London under the leadership of Lord Knutsford as the Secretary of State for Colonies to have the Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir William Griffith send an experienced colonial agent to the interior to commence the signing of treaties with the chiefs.<sup>120</sup> This time, not a European

---

<sup>117</sup> Robert Addo-Fening, “Asante Refuges in Akyem Abuakwa, 1875-1912,” *Transactions of Historical Society of Ghana* XIV, no.1 (June 1975).

<sup>118</sup> Brukum, “Northern Territories of the Gold Coast,” 55.

<sup>119</sup> Brukum, “Northern Territories of the Gold Coast,” 60

<sup>120</sup> Brukum, “Northern Territories of the Gold Coast,” 60.

as in the case of George Maclean's role in securing the coastal states of the Gold Coast into British rule, but through a native of the Gold Coast, George Ekem Ferguson of Anomabu, who returned from London as a trained civil servant, explorer, surveyor, geologist, colonial agent and a scholar.

The entire territory that was to become known as the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast in 1902 was brought under British Rule through the cunning and diplomacy of George Ferguson.<sup>121</sup> He received the call from Governor Griffith in 1892 to undertake the mission of acquiring territories of the Gonja, Dagbon, Mamprugu, Wala and the numerous indigenous ethnic groups of the north for the British. Between 1 June and 26 August 1892, Ferguson entered into treaties with some major chiefs in the north. They included Tuluwewura, Bolewura, Wasipewura, chief of Daboya, the Ya-Na (Dagbon, Yendi) and Bimbilla Na.<sup>122</sup> However, Ferguson was unable to reach the Builsa, Mamprugu, Gorse (Frafra), Kusasi and Kasena states, because of the uncertainty about the hostilities around those areas culminating from the slave-raiding activities of Babatu and Samory. The government re-assigned Ferguson to the northern states in 1894 to sign treaties with the chiefs that he could not reach in his first mission. He succeeded in securing Mamprugu,

---

<sup>121</sup> After his return from England in 1890, Ferguson undertook major surveys and concluded treaties with indigenous chiefs that facilitated British rule in the Gold Coast. Before his adventure into the Northern Territories in 1892, he had already travelled to Kwahu and Atebubu and on behalf of the Gold Coast Government concluded treaties with chiefs and people of these areas in 1890. Ferguson remained instrumental to the colonial government throughout his service period. In a tribute on his death in 1897, Governor Maxwell lauded him for his hard work and dedication to colonial service. He stated that as a 'native Ferguson could travel with a small following and remain in the bush for long periods whereas the ordinary British Colonial Officer would have required a special escort, a doctor and interpreters.' Also see Kweku Asante, George Ekem Ferguson: An African Pioneer, *Empire Survey Review* 2, no. 8 (1933), 103-104; Magnus J. Sampson, "George Ekem Ferguson of Anomabu," *Transactions of the Gold Coast & Togoland Historical Society* 2, no. 1 (1956), 32.

<sup>122</sup> Brukum, "Northern Territories of the Gold Coast," 62.

Chakosi and Busunu for the British but was killed in Wa by Samory's army.<sup>123</sup> The second mission of Ferguson in the north granted almost the entire north to imperial Britain.

The colonial government was now confronted with two main tasks as far as the annexation of the north was concerned. One was to end the hostility of Samory and Babatu, which had for over a decade destabilised trade and peace in the far north of the Gold Coast and the other was to capture the area before the French. However, due to the casualties recorded in Henderson's expedition to Wa in 1897, which resulted in the killing of George Ferguson, the British relaxed their annexation drive just to reinforce it in 1902.

The dawn of the twentieth century was a new political era for the Builsa people and the entire Northern Territories of the Gold Coast that was to become known as the British Protectorate. The British renewed their interest in the area with a new approach from diplomacy to the punitive expedition and forceful annexation of territories. They entered the Builsa territory from Sissala through Chiana, west of Sandema. The experience of the Builsa from the hostilities of the Zambarima slave raiders made them suspicious of any strange people in their land and were always ready to attack any intruder. On the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 1902, the British expedition invaded and conquered Sandema with its African army mostly Hausa recruits from Nigeria. An estimated number of about thirty Builsa people lost their lives in the attack.<sup>124</sup> To avoid further casualties, Nab Ayieta Apooteva, Sandem-Nab at the time accepted a British flag to be mounted at the entrance

---

<sup>123</sup> Kwame Arhin, *The Papers of George Ekem Ferguson, a Fanti Official of the Government of Gold Coast, 1890-1897* (Leiden: Afrika-Studiecentrum, 1974), 104-105; Asante, "George Ekem Ferguson," 104.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.



of his palace to symbolize his alliance with the colonial administration.<sup>125</sup> He was then directed to meet the colonial authority in Gambaga to discuss the new political change.

It is important to note that, the chief of Sandema emerged as the leader of the entire Builsa traditional area following his military power displayed in fighting the enslavement by Babatu.<sup>126</sup> As a result, his acceptance of British domination began the annexation of the entire Builsa. The other Builsa villages such as Wiaga, Kadema and Siniesi, which have historical and genealogical ties with Sandema all rallied behind Sandema to serve the British in exchange for protection against any external invasion. The villages of Kanjaga, which was somewhat in rivalry with Sandema equally endorsed British domination but were unsatisfied with Sandema emerging as a supreme power over it. Fumbisi, which was an ally to Kanjaga also accepted British rule, however, it felt threatened by Sandema's rising recognition by the British as the administration's flag holder in the Builsa traditional area.

### **3.2 The Creation of the Builsa Paramountcy**

The colonial government ruled the entire Builsa independently until 1911 when all the ethnic groups in the North-Eastern Province were amalgamated into the Mamprugu kingdom. This policy was rolled out by the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, Captain Cecil Hamilton Armitage who saw the need to reorganise the dispersed and independent northern states into unified larger states to be headed by already established kingdoms of Mamprugu, Dagbon, Gonja and Wala. The policy was to serve

---

<sup>125</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

two main purposes. It was to have a centralised local administration system to facilitate the decentralisation of colonial governance to harness local human and natural resources for development. The second reason, which was more important to the colonial administration, was to save administrative costs.<sup>127</sup> The size of the Northern Territories and the limited natural resources in the region called for administrative reforms that would be less expensive in terms of staff and logistics to administer. The traditional rulers who were already the natural leaders of the people provided a ready political system for the colonial administration to exploit.

The British colonial rule on the Gold Coast was not uniform across all territories. Every territory had its unique administrative system. The political situation of the territory before colonial domination and the resources of the territory determined the kind of administrative policy to be adopted as the need to control resources and power became necessary. Armitage who championed the integrations of the independent and autonomous northern states, when he was the Chief Commissioner was earlier an advocate of the disintegration of the Asante Empire to weaken its political power.<sup>128</sup> He however saw the situation in the Northern Territories differently, which called for a change in his colonial policy design. Such inconsistent colonial policies of the same colony explained how dynamic British rule was on the Gold Coast and how such policies shaped indigenous political institutions.

---

<sup>127</sup> PRAAD, Tamale, ADM.1/146, Chief Commissioner of NTGC to Commissioner of Northern Province, 5 May 1931. The administrative boundaries of the Northern Territories were re-defined in 1921; the North-Eastern and North-Western Provinces were combined into the Northern Province.

<sup>128</sup> A. A. Iliasu, "The establishment of British Administration in Mamprugu, 1898-1937," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 16, no. 1 (June 1975): 5.

The Builsa, the Kasena, the Frafra, and the Kusasi states were arbitrarily annexed into the Mamprugu kingdom which became known as the North-Eastern Province with its capital in Navrongo and the Nayiri, Mamprugu-Na as the overlord of the province. The new federal government of Mamprugu was to have each of these states have its own Head Chief who represented his people in the Mamprugu Native Administrative Council headed by the Nayiri. The Head Chiefs did not only serve as representatives of their people in Nayiri's council but also were answerable to the Nayiri.<sup>129</sup>

The colonial administration had little consideration of the historical and cultural relationship of these people before bringing them together under the Nayiri in October 1911. While Nalerigu remained the seat of the overlord, Navrongo served as the seat of the provincial commissioner. This political integration was to pose a major problem in the administration of the Province and the question of Mamprugu hegemony over the supposed independent states was challenged, while the head chiefs of the sub-divisions, Builsa, in particular, were to face challenges at home.<sup>130</sup> Some of the colonial administrators, Major Festing for instance expressed his reservation about the Armitage's integration policy, which brought together people of different cultural and socio-political backgrounds citing the Builsa as people with little Mamprugu's influence before the annexation of the Northern Territories in 1902.<sup>131</sup> Major Festing further argued that, when every attempt is made to force the Builsa to acknowledge Mamprugu and the Nayiri as overlord fails, the

---

<sup>129</sup> Iliasu, "British Administration in Mamprugu," 7.

<sup>130</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>131</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM. 56/1/61, Circular to District Commissioners, North- Eastern Province, 20 July 1911.

colonial administration must act swiftly to get someone among the Builsa chiefs to head that section of the Province to speed up colonial governance and development.<sup>132</sup> The colonial administration compelled the Builsa just like the Kasena who had no ethnic connection with the Mamprusi to be under Mamprugu domination from the beginning of Armitage's political integration policy until 1933.<sup>133</sup>

The colonial administration considered both political and economic factors before settling on Navrongo as the administrative capital of the North-Eastern Province. While other colonialists favoured Zuarungu or Gambaga, Captain Nash and Captain Warden who were commissioners of the Province preferred Navrongo. Aside from the fact that Navrongo was convenient because of its commercial links with the French in Upper Volta, previously Burkina Faso, it was also the best choice for administrative purposes considering the need for reorganization of the independent and autonomous Builsa villages and the non-cooperation of the Navropio with the Nayiri.<sup>134</sup> For Captain Warden, making Navrongo the capital, which was nearest to the hitherto dispersed Builsa chiefdoms, was the surest way to complete the restructuring of their political systems and institutions agenda. This was to give the colonial officials the chance to frequently visit the area to ensure compliance with the new colonial policy on amalgamation of chiefdoms, which the chiefs were unfamiliar with until September 1911. As Captain Warden in his handing over report argued:

---

<sup>132</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM. 56/1/61, Circular to District Commissioners, North- Eastern Province, 20 July 1911.

<sup>133</sup> Iliasu, "British Administration in Mamprugu," 23.

<sup>134</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/61, Navrongo District Handing Over Reports, 1911-1914, Captain E. O. Warden, North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner, 29 July 1911.

My reason for in the first instance asking the Chief Commissioner to allow you to make Navarro [Navrongo] your headquarters was that there is a great deal of work to be done thereabouts and in Kanjaga [Builsa] that had I been able I should have undertaken personally. ...Mr. Berkeley [former provincial commissioner] when he was there... during my absence thus he was only able to make one tour to Kanjaga. ...[and] found a fairly numerous population and possibilities as regards [to] supplies and labour. On the other hand however, he found the people inclined to be out of hand and everything pointed to the country [Builsa] having suffered from our never having really systematically visited it. Since then Captain Wheeler I believe made a very brief tour in that direction at any rate he formed the same opinion. Subsequently Capt. Nash made searching enquiries about the people and wrote a very able report a copy of which has been rendered by me to the Chief Commissioner. ...I want you therefore to thoroughly visit the Kanjaga [Builsa] district with Captain Nash's report and to form your own ideas as to what is the best policy to pursue there bearing particularly in mind the chief commissioner's wish that we should try and consolidate our different tribes bringing them if possible under the rule of Mamprusi as paramount chief.<sup>135</sup>

The reasons espoused by Captain Warden had the colonial office's endorsement because Mamprugu was already an established powerful kingdom unlike the Builsa, the Kasena and the Frafra who were autonomous without a paramount chief. The establishment of an administrative centre in Navrongo was the best way to get closer to these loose states and mobilise labour for the colonial administration.

As stated earlier, the Builsa villages were autonomous and independent and none of them had political domination and control over another until the creation of the office of the Head Chief in September 1911 to represent all Builsa chiefs in the Province. It was very cumbersome for the colonial administration to appoint one among them as their supreme leader since all the chiefdoms politically saw themselves as sovereign and equal. The

---

<sup>135</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/61, Navrongo District Handing Over Reports, 1911-1914, Captain E. O. Warden, North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner, 29 July 1911.

position was advertised for any chief of the major Builsa villages to contest and be elected by the various chiefs.

On 23 September 1911, the election of the Head Chief of the Builsa was organised by Capt. E. O. Warden in the Kanjarga town for all chiefs of the major towns of Kanjaga, Sandema, Wiaga, Gbedema, Uwasi, Fumbisi, Bachonsa, Doninga, Siniensi and Kadema to decide on who leads them to the Mamprugu Administrative Council. The Sandem-Nab, Ayieta Ananguna emerged victorious over the Kanjag-Nab, Adachuro. The chiefs of Kadema, Siniensi and Wiaga voted for the Sandem-Nab on the basis that they were led by Sandema to fight the Zambarima slave raider, Babatu and his army in 1897, hence, the need to rally behind Sandema at all times.<sup>136</sup> However, it is important to note that Sandema, Siniensi, Wiaga and Kadema have a historical relationship of belonging to the Atuga-Bisa grouping of the Builsa ethnic group, who considered themselves as the descendants of Atuga.<sup>137</sup> This lineage relationship had more influence on political affiliation and allegiance than the mere fact that Sandema served as the lead fighter of the Zambarima slave raiders. Nab Adachuro on the other hand had only one vote from the Fumbisi-Nab, while the chiefs of Gbedema, Uwasi, Bachonsa and Doninga abstained from voting saying they were willing to follow any of the two contestants.<sup>138</sup>

Adachuro defeated Asinga, his cousin with thirty-eight followers against eleven followers to become Nab of Kanjaga in January 1906 after the death of his father as the Kanjag-

---

<sup>136</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II. See also, Iliasu, "British Administration in Mamprugu," 8.

<sup>137</sup> The Atuga-bisa is well discussed in chapter two of the study, which according to oral tradition the people of Sandema, Wiaga, Kadema and Siniesi are descendants of Atuga.

<sup>138</sup> Iliasu, "British Administration in Mamprugu," 8.

Nab.<sup>139</sup> He was confirmed as the Nab of Kanjaga in February 1906 by the Navrongo District Commissioner, Watherston and was later disposed of and exiled in 1913 due to what the colonial office described as being rejected by his people.<sup>140</sup> Adachuro's contender for the Head Chief position, Sandem-Nab, Ayieta Ananguna also became the Nab of Sandema in November 1905 after the death of his brother, Nab Anankum around 1901.<sup>141</sup> Nab Ayieta served as a regent from 1901 to 1905 until he was confirmed as Sandem-Nab in 1905. As reported by Lieut. P. T. Partridge, 'Ieta [Ayieta] was formally recognised by the people [of Sandema] as their chief in November 1905 [after] going through the ceremony.'<sup>142</sup>

The colonial administration was of the view that Kanjaga would lead the chiefs since it was considered the oldest Builsa town and traditionally 'superior' to Sandema. However, this did not happen as the personality of Nab Adachuro and his alleged role during the Babatu's invasion and camping at Kanjaga, Bachonsa and Doninga did not win him the support of these towns. Although at the time of the slave raiding in the last decade of the nineteenth

---

<sup>139</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjarga Native Affairs (case No. 294/07), S. D. Nash, Acting District Commissioner of Navrongo, North-Eastern Province, Northern Territories, 17<sup>th</sup> July, 1912.

<sup>140</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjarga Native Affairs (case No. 294/07), S. D. Nash, Acting District Commissioner of Navrongo, North-Eastern Province, Northern Territories, 17<sup>th</sup> July, 1912.

<sup>141</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II. Also see Franz Kröger, "Extracts from Builsa History: Sandema Chiefs before Azantilow," *Buluk: Journal of Builsa Culture and Society* 6 (2012), <http://www.buluk.de/Buluk6/Sandemchiefs.htm>. (accessed 10 January 2022).

<sup>142</sup> Franz Kröger, "Archive Sandema (Paramount Chief's Compound)," 16 November 2018. <https://www.ghana-materialien.de/Archiv-Sandema.htm>. (accessed 10 January 2022).

century he was not a chief of Kanjaga yet, his role in collaborating with the raiders is said to be significant.<sup>143</sup>

The Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories, Armitage approved the election of the Sandem-Nab as the paramount chief of the Builsa on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August 1912. He subsequently cautioned his major contender, Nab Adachuro, chief of Kanjaga to be loyal to the new Head Chief. He warned that: ‘When at Navarro [Navrongo] I appointed the Chief of Sandema Paramount Chief of Kanjaga [Builsa], and if Adachuro gives any more trouble he must be deskinning altogether and deported. At present, he is chief of Kanjaga town only.’<sup>144</sup> This warning was not just a caution to Adachuro, but to all chiefs who stood against the new paramount chief or the colonial administration. It did not take more than a year before Armitage’s warning was implemented in the deskinning of chiefs they referred to as ‘troublemakers’ and the enskinning of new chiefs who promised to cooperate and promote the agenda of the colonial administration.<sup>145</sup>

The Builsa chiefs who gathered at Kanjaga on 23 September 1911 and elected the Sandem-Nab as their Head Chief thought that they were only choosing one among them to represent them. What they did not know was that they were permanently shifting their independence and autonomy to Sandema and authorising its Nabs to remain the paramount chiefs of the Builsa forever. The towns of Kadema, Wiaga and Siniesi did not have much problem with Sandema becoming the permanent administrative centre of Builsa traditional politics under

---

<sup>143</sup> Interview with Ben A. Abariwie, Assistant Superintendent of Police (Rtd), Kanjaga, 17 September 2022. See also, PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjaga Native Affairs (case No. 294/07).

<sup>144</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjaga Native Affairs (case No. 294/07), Chief Commissioner, C. H. Armitage Letter no. 223/58/1912 to Commissioner of North-Eastern Province, 27 August 1912.

<sup>145</sup> Akankyalabey, “History of the Builsa,” 51.



colonial rule, because these towns already, historically, saw Sandema to be superior to them because they believed that they all descended from the same ancestor. However, other towns like Kanjaga, Fumbisi, Gbedema and Chuchuliga faced serious conflict from both the colonial administration and Sandema after realising that the paramountcy position was not rotational but rather became a legitimate right to Sandema regardless of who ruled Sandema.

### **3.3 Coexistence of the Chiefs under British Rule**

The interference of the colonial administration in the traditional politics of the Builsa became extensive from the inception of the office of the Head Chief in 1911. The chiefs whom the colonial administration normally referred to as ‘troublemakers’ because they refused to follow the new order were dismissed and new ones who were favourites were enskinned. The first of those victims was Nab Adachuro who lost the paramount chief position elections to the Sandem-Nab, Ayieta. He was later deskinning in March 1913 and exiled to Navrongo.<sup>146</sup> As the major contender for the Builsa paramountcy, Adachuro could not lower himself to honour Sandema as the seat of the Builsa paramountcy. He was subsequently seen as an opponent of British rule by colonial officials. All manners of allegations were labelled against him to have him removed from his position. The colonial administration was tactical in its alignment with natives who could collaborate in the implementation of colonial policies. After all, the main aim of incorporating the chiefs into the colonial system was to serve as an avenue to mobilise labour and resources in the form of revenue for the regime, and any chief who failed to support these goals was seen as a

---

<sup>146</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjaga Native Affairs (case No. 294/07), North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner to Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories, C. H. Armitage.

failure and not fit for the position. Because of this task required of chiefs under British colonial rule, they were reduced to colonial agents and government appointees rather than providing leadership for their people. As reported by the North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner on 9 April 1913:

The present Chief ADACHURO, in my opinion, should certainly be removed, not so much on account of any offence he has committed himself, but for his omission in affording protection to the people generally from the depredations of his own sons and relatives.

In 1909 Captain Nash took down labourers for the ACCRA-AKWAPIM Railway, and KANJARGA in common with other towns was ordered to supply their share... [which] they failed to do: but the Chief's sons took this opportunity of commandeering for themselves cattle and sheep from everyone who had failed to supply men. All these cattle afterwards recovered and returned, but the Chief himself until pressure was brought to bear, made no effort either to restrain his sons nor obtain redress for the plundered.<sup>147</sup>

These excuses were the basis for the removal of Nab Adachuro to pave the way for a new chief who would fully endorse both Sandem-Nab as paramount chief and the British colonial administration. Nab Adachuro was in office since 1906, and there was no mention of his involvement and collaboration with Babatu in enslaving and plundering his people and their property until 1913. Yet the colonialists were quick to argue that,

Under circumstances it is not to be wondered at that feeling of revulsion exists against the present man [Nab Adachuro]; on the contrary, they should be sympathised with in having had such a person put in authority over them; but this state of affairs is due entirely to the reticence of the present men in not coming forward with this information at the time of the election... Their attitude in this matter at that time is readily understood; the country [Kanjaga] not being in same peaceful and settled condition that it is now, and the position of Chief, through ignorance, was regarded in no way as a sinecure, but merely as the medium for the

---

<sup>147</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjarga Native Affairs (case No. 294/07), North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner to Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories, C. H. Armitage, 9 April 1913.

payment of Government fines. In fact, cases occurred of men being elected who had neither position nor property... Now, however, this state of things is entirely reversed and there is the greatest competition for the position, in fact rather too much so- as unsuccessful candidates are constantly endeavouring to get their rival superseded on the flimsiest pretexts.<sup>148</sup>

Captain Warden believed that the new chief, Akinkangnab who replaced Adachuro, ‘...is a cousin of ADACHURO but through an elder branch, is the rightful heir, and on the death of the late chief, should according to native custom have been appointed in place of ADACHURO...’<sup>149</sup> It is questionable why the people of Kanjaga never raised the issue of the legitimacy of Adachuro during his election in 1906. The right to rule as well as how long that ruler stayed in the position under British rule in Builsa was determined by the colonial administration. As already noted the institution of chieftaincy in Builsa was transformed into a decentralised agency of colonialism rather than serving its traditional functions of handling the security, and spiritual and social needs of the people. The people began to see the new system as oppressive and unaccountable to them. Chiefs who wanted to stay in office forever had to accept to be colonial puppets and mere messengers of the colonial administration rather than providing leadership to their people.

The resentment towards Adachuro by the colonial administration and plans to dismiss him started earlier in July 1912 before the Armitage’s confirmation and approval of Nab Ayieta Ananguna as the paramount chief of Builsa in August 1912. In Captain Nash’s handing over notes on 17 July 1912, he painted a gloomy picture of Adachuro and how he has lost

---

<sup>148</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjarga Native Affairs (case No. 294/07), North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner to Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories, C. H. Armitage (9 April 1913), 2.

<sup>149</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjarga Native Affairs (case No. 294/07), North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner to Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories, C. H. Armitage, (9 April 1913), 2.

the support of his people in Kanjaga, therefore, becoming weak in working with the administration. He pointed out how the colonial ex-servicemen of Kanjaga's origin were advocating for a new chief preferably Akinkangnab to replace Adachuro. Nash argued that the difference between Adachuro and Akinkangnab is that

the latter is backed up by all the discharged soldiers residing in Kanjaga, and as they are quite numerous... Adachuro however, I saw, was poor, the possessor of a very small compound, and strange to say with only one wife. ...I'm afraid however that we shall have to destool the present Chief.<sup>150</sup>

Captain Nash's account contradicts other colonial reports that portrayed Adachuro as a wealthy man who accrued his wealth by collaborating with Babatu's slave-raiding activities in the Builsa. It is important to emphasize that the ex-service soldiers who were still loyal to the colonial administration had a significant influence on the administration's involvement in chieftaincy matters in Builsa, particularly matters relating to consolidation of Sandema's new supreme position as the seat of Builsa paramountcy.<sup>151</sup>

To avoid future rebellions over Kanjaga chieftaincy and the supremacy of Sandema, Captain Warden allocated land for Adachuro and his family where they established a permanent settlement in Navrongo until his death.<sup>152</sup> The colonial administration tipped Solla Kanjaga, a Sergeant-major to replace Adachuro but he shifted the opportunity to his maternal uncle, Akinkangnab due to his interest to continue serving in the Gold Coast

---

<sup>150</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjaga Native Affairs (case No. 294/07), North-Eastern Provincial Acting Commissioner to Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories (9 April 1913).

<sup>151</sup> Interview with Ben A. Abariwie, Assistant Superintendent of Police (Rtd).

<sup>152</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjaga Native Affairs (case No. 294/07), North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner to Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories, C. H. Armitage (9 April 1913), 7.

regiment.<sup>153</sup> Nab Akinkangnab remained the Kanjag-Nab until his death and was succeeded by Anyatuik, the ‘horse boy of Akinkangnab who always led him to Sandema for meetings. Akinkangnab appointed him as a successor because of his exposure to traditional rule and the British officials.’<sup>154</sup>

Unlike Akinkangnab, Nab Anyatuik’s reign was characterised by a confrontation with Sandem-Nab, the paramount chief of the Builsa. Like his contemporaries in Kunkwa, Nab Anyatuik who was backed by ex-servicemen from the Kanjaga traditional area questioned the legitimacy of Sandema over Kanjaga by threatening ‘to break away from Sandema several times.’<sup>155</sup> After failing to regain the independence and autonomy of Kanjaga from Sandema, Nab Anyatuik cooperated with the colonial administration to avoid removal. He died in 1957 and was succeeded by Nab Apinpanta, a son of Akinkangnab, the immediate chief before Nab Anyatuik. Nab Apinpanta following in his father’s footsteps, related well with both the newly independent government of Ghana and the paramountcy during his short reign. He died in 1959. He was the last Kanjag-Nab under British rule on the Gold Coast.

The interference of the colonial administration in local politics of the Builsa intensified after Nab Ayieta as Sandem-Nab and the Paramount Chief of the Builsa. His death renewed the interest of his major opponent in the Paramount Chief position, Nab Adachuro of Kanjaga. However, the colonial administration had already initiated the process of

---

<sup>153</sup> Interview with Ben A. Abariwie, Assistant Superintendent of Police (Rtd).

<sup>154</sup> Interview with Ben A. Abariwie, Assistant Superintendent of Police (Rtd).

<sup>155</sup> Francis Afoko, *The Ayietas*, (Unpublished manuscript, 1970), 8. Quoted by Franz Kröger, “Bulsa Chiefs,” *Buluk: Journal of Bulsa Culture and Society* 6 (2012): 6. [www.buluk.de/Buluk6/chiefs-liste.htm](http://www.buluk.de/Buluk6/chiefs-liste.htm) (accessed 10 January 2022).

removing him as Kanjag-Nab, which offered him no chance to re-contest for the position he lost less than a year ago. Although the colonial government's declaration of Sandema as the seat of the paramountcy closed any future election-related disputes from the other Builsa towns, the succession to Sandem-Nab in December 1912 was characterised by disputes since the competition for the office became increasingly higher due to the prestige bestowed on paramount chiefs under British colonial rule.

Nab Afoko, a son of the late Nab Ayieta was enskinned on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 1912 through a dispute with Ayieparo, a son of the *Teng-nyono*. The colonial administration saw Ayieparo as a traitor and did everything possible to disqualify him on the basis that he was sick of elephantiasis, which by customary law barred him from contesting for the skin.<sup>156</sup> The colonial administration preferred Afoko whom they saw as someone who would submit to the colonial administration and implement its policies in the area. Even before his father's death, he "always took orders from the government. ...in his father's time and everything points to his being of assistance" to the administration if made the Sandem-Nab.<sup>157</sup> Yet, Ayieparo tried to outsmart Afoko and the government by sending delegations and gifts to the Nayiri, Na Wubga in Nalerigu to win the favour of the king who was the overlord of the Mamprugu kingdom, which included the Builsa. Afoko quickly reported this matter to the Navrongo District Commissioner, who gave a strong warning to Ayieparo to desist from any manipulation with regards to the pending election as he 'seems to be no

---

<sup>156</sup> Traditional rulers in Northern Ghana sit on animal skin as their symbol of authority. PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/61, "Navrongo District Handing Over Reports," S. D. Nash, District Commissioner, Navrongo (27 June 1912).

<sup>157</sup> Kröger, "Sandema Chiefs before Azantilow."

relative of the late chief, has elephantiasis of the right leg and probably would not make a good chief. He was warned to keep quiet till election time.<sup>158</sup>

All the machinations to stop Ayieparo from contesting Afoko failed and the election was organised on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 1912 between the two. Afoko emerged as the victor with twelve votes out of the sixteen headmen present.<sup>159</sup> Although Ayieparo lost the election to lead the people of Sandema and the Builsa as a whole, he still controlled a significant number of the people that he successfully influenced to disobey the new chief, Nab Afoko despite several warnings from the colonial administration. He was eventually arrested in 1913 and sentenced to three months imprisonment in Navrongo.<sup>160</sup>

The interference of the colonial administration in the enskinment and deskinment of chiefs in Builsa was also observed in the Fumbisi area. This became more prevalent when the second Builsa paramount chief, Nab Afoko Ayieta succeeded his father in 1912. The role of Nab Afoko in facilitating British colonial policies in Builsa endeared him to the colonial administration. Unlike his predecessor, Nab Ayieta Ananguna whom the colonial administration described 'as stiff, bored or indifferent' towards the government, Nab Afoko Ayieta was friendly and worked tirelessly with the administration.<sup>161</sup> Although Nab Ayieta Ananguna had the privilege from the 1911 Armitage's colonial scheme to serve as the first paramount chief of the Builsa, he nonetheless showed disinterest in carrying out the

---

<sup>158</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/61, "Navrongo District Handing Over Reports," S. D. Nash, District Commissioner, Navrongo (27 June 1912).

<sup>159</sup> Kröger, "Sandema Chiefs before Azantilow."

<sup>160</sup> Kröger, "Sandema Chiefs before Azantilow."

<sup>161</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/61, Navrongo District Handing Over Reports, 1911-1914, Captain E. O. Warden, North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner (29 July 1911).

directives of the administration. He was reluctant to enforce colonial policies, which can be alluded to his experience with the British in 1902 as being conquered rather than willingly accepting to be dominated. The British conquest and annexation of the Builsa and Sandema in particular coincided with their struggle against the Zambarima slave raiders in the area. Such experience made all traditional leaders suspicious of establishing any form of political alliance with strange people including Europeans. This suspicious attitude towards the colonial administration was equally exhibited by his contemporaries as seen in the case of Nab Adachuro of Kanjaga and could also be seen in Fumbisi-Nab, Nab Anyiamjutee.<sup>162</sup>

The British colonial administration eliminated all existing chiefs who were opponents to the new regime to consolidate the newly created paramountcy. At the time of the British occupation of Builsa in 1902, Nab Anyiamjutee was the chief of Fumbisi until the colonial administration deskinning him in March 1915 and replaced him with Ampusuba on 14 April 1915 barely within a month in office.<sup>163</sup> Nab Anyiamjutee of Fumbisi was the only Builsa chief that voted for the dismissed Kanjag-Nab, Adachuro on the 23 September 1911 election of the Builsa Head Chief that saw Nab Ayieta Ananguna of Sandema elected. The swift dismissal and exile of Nab Adachuro to Navrongo in 1912 was a warning to all opponents of the colonial administration and the new authority system centred in Sandema. The election of Ampusuba for Fumbisi-Nab was quickly organised and supervised by the North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner at the Sandem-Nab's palace to reiterate the

---

<sup>162</sup> Akankyalabey, "History of the Builsa," 51.

<sup>163</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjaga Native Affairs (case No. 294/07), North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner to Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories (1 May 1915).



supremacy of Sandema over the other Builsa chiefdoms. Nab Ampusuba who related well with both the colonial administration and the paramount chief remained in office until his death and was succeeded by Nab Akambong in 1924.<sup>164</sup>

Although the colonial administration succeeded in establishing and sustaining Sandema as the paramountcy of the Builsa, the relationship of the successive paramount chiefs with the divisional chiefs after 1912 became more hostile. The reign of Nab Afoko as Sandem-Nab and the paramount chief of the Builsa from the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 1912 to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 1927 was characterised by conflicts with the divisional chiefs particularly those of Kunkwa, Kategri and Jadema who felt oppressed by him. Kunkwa and Kategri are both *Buli*-speaking villages, while Jadema is a Mamprusi-dominated village. In terms of political authority among these towns, Kunkwa-Nab was the supreme leader who appointed chiefs of the other two towns, confirmed, and approved by Kpessinkpe-Na on behalf of the Nayiri. The chiefs of these towns who before British rule were under the Mamprugu kingdom expressed their wish to secede from Builsa and re-align with the Nayiri where they felt they were humanely treated as compared to their Builsa kinsmen.<sup>165</sup>

Even during the September 1911 implementation of Armitage's political integration policy in the Builsa, Kunkwa, Kategri and Jadema were not included in the election of the Builsa Head Chief. Nab Afoko advocated for their inclusion into the Builsa paramountcy rather than Kpessinkpe, which was a Mamprusi territory. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of December 1917, in the

---

<sup>164</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjarga Native Affairs (case No. 294/07), North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner to Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories (1 May 1915).

<sup>165</sup> Franz Kröger, "Kunkwa, Kategra and Jadema: The Sandemnaab's Lawsuit," *Buluk: Journal of Bulsa Culture and Society* 6 (2012), <https://www.buluk.de/Buluk6/Lawsuits.htm> (accessed 20 May 2021).

company of the Navrongo District Commissioner to Kunkwa, Nab Afoko was ‘anxious that Kunkwa should be put under him’ since they belong to the Builsa ethnic group.<sup>166</sup>

Nevertheless, in as much as the colonial administration wished to establish political integration of the traditional authorities to facilitate colonial administration, it was very mindful in its dealings with the local authorities not to push the paramount chiefs into territorial and ethnic conflicts. This fear was expressed by the Navrongo District Commissioner in 1917 who indicated that before a conclusion could be reached on whether Kunkwa should be placed under Sandema or remain under Kpessinkpe, the Commissioner of the North-Eastern Province ‘will consult with the chief [of] Passankwere [Kpessinkpe], who appointed the Chiefs of Kunkwa.’<sup>167</sup> Although the colonial administration did not give official approval of Sandema’s domination of these southern towns, it neither completely opposed it. It seemed convenient for the administration in terms of cultural relationship and geographical consideration for Kunkwa to be under the Navrongo District but whether it was to be under Sandema paramountcy was undecided.<sup>168</sup>

The chiefs and people of Kunkwa, Kategri and Jadema themselves did not see any problem being under the Navrongo District as an administrative district but incorporated under Builsa paramountcy. Because the White Volta dividing these towns and Gambaga District was a barrier to mobility during the wet season. However, the interference of Sandem-Nab, Afoko Ayieta in enskinment and deskinment politics in Kunkwa constituted the main

---

<sup>166</sup> Navrongo District Commissioner, 27 December 1917. Quoted by Kröger, “Sandemnaab’s Lawsuit,” 4.

<sup>167</sup> Kröger, “Sandemnaab’s Lawsuit,” 4.

<sup>168</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab, Azagsuk Azantilow II.

reason for the unending conflict of secession throughout the colonial period.<sup>169</sup> In addition, Kunkwa raised concerns about the administration and the paramountcy policy that all chiefdoms supply logs of wood and roofing materials to Sandema and Navrongo for the construction of colonial projects such as rest houses and administrative structures. The people of Kunkwa saw this responsibility as tedious considering the distance to Sandema and Navrongo respectively and preferred to remain with Kpessinkpe, which is closer.

The conflict between Sandema and Kunkwa went beyond complaints of being given a heavy task to execute by the Builsa paramount chief. Kunkwa wanted to maintain its autonomy and possibly establish its paramountcy over the southern Builsa towns of Uwasi, Gbedemblisi, Kategri, Weisi, and the Mamprusi town of Jadema. According to Kunkwa oral tradition, before the emergence of Sandema in the last decade of the nineteenth century as the leading political force among the Builsa polities, Kunkwa was already an established state that played a significant role in the political organization of the Builsa states including Sandema in terms of enskinment of chiefs.<sup>170</sup> Kunkwa was in charge of leading the other Builsa chiefs to Kpessinkpe for confirmation and approval from the Kpessinkpe-Na, who acted on behalf of the Nayiri through Wulugu-Na. The colonial administration's lack of consideration of this relationship that existed among the chiefdoms before bringing them under one paramountcy resulted in unending conflicts and undermined the effective political administration of these areas. To find a solution to the rising conflict between

---

<sup>169</sup> Kröger, "Sandemnaab's Lawsuit," 5.

<sup>170</sup> Kröger, "Sandemnaab's Lawsuit," 5.

Sandema and Kunkwa, the North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner, B. Moutray Read warned that

when one WURUME was Chief of Passenkwere [Kpessinkpe] he appointed one of his sons Chief [of] Kunkwa, whose sons were made chiefs of Kanjarga, Wiaga, Sandema and Seniessa [Siniensi]. This was previous to Babatus' raids. These men were of course Mamprusis and were the ancestors of the present Chiefs of those villages who now call themselves Kanjargas [Builsa]. ...The Chiefs of the above-mentioned (now recognised as Kanjarga) villages up to the coming of Babatu, were not only appointed by the Chief of Passenkwere [Kpessinkpe] but approached him through the Chief of Kunkwa for confirmation in their appointments as chiefs; consequently, if this statement is correct, to appoint Sandema now over Kunkwa would be an upheaval of all Native traditions and customs.<sup>171</sup>

The above narrative made it cumbersome for the colonial administration to enforce Kunkwa's compliance with Sandema as the overlord of the Builsa traditional area. While the colonial administration aimed at integrating the dispersed villages to enhance efficient and effective governance, it was careful not to trigger any uncontrollable conflict among the indigenous people. Despite such cunning tactics by the colonial administration not to directly push the local people into unending conflicts of domination, Nab Afoko, the paramount chief of the Builsa in the company of the Navrongo District Commissioner, George B. Freeman on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 1920 organised an election of a new chief for Kunkwa after the death of Nab Aparinga. The election resulted in the victory of Akwabil who won by fifty-five votes against Natorma who was the son of the late chief who sturdily refused Sandema's domination.<sup>172</sup> About six years later, most people in Kunkwa fled the

---

<sup>171</sup> B. Moutray Read, Commissioner for North-Eastern Province to Navrongo District Commissioner, 30 December 1917. Quoted by Kröger, "Sandemnaab's Lawsuit," 5.

<sup>172</sup> Kröger, "Sandemnaab's Lawsuit," 5.

town and crossed the White Volta to Kpessinkpe in the Gambaga District to avoid what they described as the tyranny of the Sandem-Nab who doubled as the paramount chief of the Builsa. In response to this situation, the colonial administration through the Provincial office in Navrongo issued an order barring people from migrating to other districts without approved permission.<sup>173</sup> The conflict between Sandema and Kunkwa reached its peak during the reign of Nab Agaasa, the successor of Nab Afoko as Sandem-Nab and the paramount chief of the Builsa, under whose reign the three southern villages of Kunkwa, Kategri and Jadema broke away and re-aligned with Kpessinkpe.<sup>174</sup>

The colonial administration through the created Builsa paramountcy adopted the tactics of appointment and dismissal of chiefs in Builsa to subdue unfriendly chiefs and promoted cooperation among chiefs and the colonial office. This interference affected all the major Builsa chiefdoms in their local politics. Like in Kanjaga, Kunkwa and Fumbisi, Chuchuliga also suffered similar political victimization throughout the colonial period. Chuchuliga is a Builsa town located in the north of Sandema, which was not part of the Builsa paramountcy until 1923. Before the creation of the Builsa paramountcy in September 1911, Chuchuliga just like all other Builsa chiefdoms was independent and autonomous. It was rather added to the Navrongo traditional council headed by the *Navropio* due to its proximity to Navrongo.<sup>175</sup> However, in 1923 the *Navropio*, Awe agreed to Nab Afoko, the

---

<sup>173</sup> Kröger, “Sandemnaab’s Lawsuit,” 5.

<sup>174</sup> Kröger, “Sandema Chiefs before Azantilow,” 4.

<sup>175</sup> *Navropio* is the chieftaincy title of chiefs of Navrongo.

Builsa paramount chief's long-standing request to have Chuchuliga, which is a Builsa community to be added to the Builsa paramountcy.

According to Awedoba, the Chuchuliga chief during Lieutenant- Morris' led British invasion of the Builsa territory in 1902 was Nab Gonab Apiriga, whom Morris reported to have accepted British domination.<sup>176</sup> The rule of Nab Gonab Apiriga was characterised by apathy towards the colonial administration. This posture was not peculiar to Nab Gonab Apiriga but was the norm for almost all the Builsa chiefs that had first encounters with the colonial administration. The colonial administration removed Nab Gonab Apiriga and replaced him with Nab Atuchiga Amaachana on the 30<sup>th</sup> of December 1907. Nab Amaachana was considered by the British as more efficient and friendly due to his engagement in trading activities as (Bago/Bagao's slave seller).<sup>177</sup> Nab Amaachana's reign was very short as he was also dismissed by the colonial administration and replaced with Akapoba Apiriga, a son of the first chief, Nab Gonab Apiriga who was earlier dismissed and replaced with Nab Amaachana. The reason for Nab Amaachana's dismissal is not known but it was probably a result of a lack of cooperation with the colonial administration regarding labour and revenue mobilisation or disregard of colonial orders since these were the main issues chiefs had with the administration.

The administration was in limbo on whom to entrust traditional leadership as it kept on removing and appointing fathers and sons, brothers and cousins to the same position. The administration's conception of chiefship was that of the British form of monarchy that

---

<sup>176</sup> Albert K. Awedoba, *An Ethnographic Study of Northern Ghanaian Conflicts: Towards a Sustainable Peace* (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2009), 114.

<sup>177</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM63/5/3, Navrongo District Record Book, 16 October 1913.

wields much power and authority and commands respect from the subjects, which was virtually absent in the Builsa traditional area. Chiefs in Builsa were more concerned with the settlement of lands and customary disputes, attending to the spiritual needs of the people and providing leadership during wars rather than compelling their subjects into forced labour and payment of outrageous taxes. The chiefs and the people who were unfamiliar with these forms of labour and taxation policies had challenges in their implementation. The people were initially uncooperative with the chiefs resulting in what the colonial officers described as the chiefs having ‘little or no power and even when friendly disposed, are quite helpless’ to implement government policies in their chiefdoms, as ‘every compound ... is in itself, a small kingdom.’<sup>178</sup> Before colonial rule, chiefs were seen as servants of both the living subjects and ancestors, which made the institution sacred and posed a challenge in implementing colonial policies that were not customarily practised. The colonial administration was either unaware or intolerant of the belief systems surrounding the traditional political office and termed occupants who did not dance to the tune of the administration as incapable and required replacement.

The District office in Navrongo upon realising the lack of cooperation of some of the Builsa chiefs with their paramount chief, or what the colonialists termed as ‘troublemakers’, the office always looked for flimsy excuses to remove such chiefs from office. This was seen in the case of the removal of Nab Akapoba Apiriga in 1926 who was appointed to replace Nab Amaachana as Chuchuliga-Nab. The colonial administration blamed Nab Akapoba Apiriga for showing no interest in the wellbeing of his people by not reporting an outbreak

---

<sup>178</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/2, Lieutenant-Colonel A. Morris, Chief Commissioner of Northern Territories to Colonial Secretary, 16 April 1904.

of an epidemic to the colonial office through the paramountcy, hence his removal.<sup>179</sup> However, Nab Akapoba Apiriga opposed the detachment of his chiefdom from Navrongo and placing it under Nab Afoko, whom the colonial administration styled as ‘the man who always took orders from the government’ while some Builsa chiefs such as Kunkwa-Nabs saw him as autocratic and oppressive.<sup>180</sup> Nab Akapoba’s opposition to the colonial administration earned him a place on the watch list of the government. It was not surprising that he was removed within three years after Chuchuliga came directly under Sandema’s suzerainty in 1923.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1926, Nab Afoko supervised the election of Allan Asangalisa who was unanimously voted against his contender, Apirime as a new chief for Chuchuliga to replace the dismissed Nab Akapoba Apiriga. The colonial administration confirmed the enskinment of Nab Allan Asangalisa in March 1927 only to be unilaterally dismissed shortly by the paramount chief of Builsa. The paramount chief appointed his rival, Apirime to replace him as the new chief without the consent of the colonial office. Although the colonial administration declared the decision of the paramount chief on the dismissal of Nab Allan Asangalisa and the swift enskinment of Apirime as ‘null and void by a committee set up by the Governor to look into the case,’ no sanction was issued against the paramount chief for taking such a unilateral decision.<sup>181</sup> The government realised that the

---

<sup>179</sup> Awedoba, *Northern Ghanaian Conflicts*, 114.

<sup>180</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM. 56/1/137, Navrongo District Records Book, Captain H. Wheeler, Navrongo District Commissioner to S. D. Nash, North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner (27 June 1912).

<sup>181</sup> Awedoba, *Northern Ghanaian Conflicts*, 114.



removal of Nab Asangalisa was based on the paramount chief's interest rather than in the interest of the colonial government and therefore re-instated him until his death.<sup>182</sup>

The relationship between Chuchuliga and Sandema worsened after the rise of Azantilow in 1931 as Sandem-Nab and the paramount chief of Builsa, Chuchuliga continued to question the authority of Sandema over it since it was not part of the Builsa towns that endorsed Sandema as the seat of the paramountcy in the Armitage's 1911 political integration scheme. This political dispute remained up to date as it rose to its peak during the enskinment of the current chief in 1995.

The relationship between the Builsa paramountcy and Wiaga as a divisional chiefdom under British colonial rule was more cordial compared with other chiefdoms such as Kanjaga, Kunkwa and Chuchuliga. Wiaga's acknowledgement of Sandema's domination without hesitation could be linked to the genealogical relationship that existed between these chiefdoms before the advent of British rule in the area. All chiefs that ruled Wiaga throughout the colonial period collaborated and related well with Sandem-Nabs in implementing colonial policies such as labour and revenue mobilisation. At the time of the Morris-led British invasion and annexation of the Builsa in 1902, Awuumi was the Wiaga-Nab as reported by previous scholars and corroborated by oral histories.<sup>183</sup> As was the norm, any traditional ruler who was unwilling to serve the colonial administration was replaced with someone ready to implement colonial policies regardless of that person's relationship with the ruling clan. Nab Awuumi was a victim of this intolerance from the

---

<sup>182</sup> Awedoba, *Northern Ghanaian Conflicts*, 114.

<sup>183</sup> Akankyalabey, "History of the Builsa," 51.

colonial administration, as he was removed for flimsy excuses and replaced with Ateng who was not from the royal line of political succession in Wiaga.

The change in the ruling clan of Wiaga was instigated by the refusal of Nab Awuumi in 1907 to offer carriers for a British colonial official after he visited the area, where one Ateng Abooma volunteered and mobilised his peers and assisted the official back to Gambaga, the then colonial residence of the province.<sup>184</sup> In honour of Ateng's gesture, the colonial official announced him as the new chief of Wiaga after he arrived in Gambaga and consequently, subsequent colonial officials who visited Wiaga recognised him as such.

This leadership change in Wiaga was not only about a change in the occupant of the traditional office at the time, but it also transferred the royal lineage too, from the *Yimonsa* clan to the *Yisobsa* clan, which has remained the ruling clan to date. Both the *Yimonsa* and the *Yisobsa* are clans among the Builsa in Wiaga. Since this political change, candidates from both sections have contested for the chieftaincy title of the Wiaga skin, however, 'chieftaincy never returned to *Yimonsa*.'<sup>185</sup> The reign of Nab Ateng lasted shortly as he died in 1909 and was succeeded by his son, Azenaab who ruled for over three decades, dating from 1909 to 1947.

Even though the process of becoming chief in Builsa under the colonial period was through elections by households, chiefs 'were practically appointed and installed by the British. In other words, the British would have never allowed somebody who had disobeyed their

---

<sup>184</sup> Akankyalabey, "History of the Builsa," 51.

<sup>185</sup> Franz Kröger, "Bulsa Chiefs," *Buluk: Journal of Bulsa Culture and Society* 6 (2012), 10. [www.buluk.de/Buluk6/chiefs-liste.htm](http://www.buluk.de/Buluk6/chiefs-liste.htm) (accessed 10 January 2021).

orders before or with whom successful cooperation could not be expected to become a chief.<sup>186</sup> Nab Azenaab was the son of the previous chief, Nab Ateng who was favoured by the colonial administration because of his loyalty and cooperation with the British visiting officers to the area. Azenaab who was the eldest son of Nab Ateng emerged as the chief of Wiaga over his main opponent, Abasing, a member of the former dynasty, *Yimonsa*. After the confirmation of Azenaab as the chief of Wiaga, the colonial administration influenced the relocation of Azenaab's compound to the centre of the town to make it convenient for both traditional and colonial administrative exercises. This new residence of Nab Azenaab located in a suburb of Wiaga called Goansa has remained the chief's palace to date.

The period of Nab Azenaab's leadership was not only seen as the major pillar to sustaining Ateng's clan as the ruling clan of Wiaga but also supporting Sandema as the seat of the Builsa paramountcy in carrying out the orders of the colonial administration. Nab Azenaab served four successive Sandem-Nabs who by convention were the paramount chiefs with whom he collaborated smoothly in the implementation of colonial policies within the Builsa traditional area. These paramount chiefs during his reign were Nab Ayieta Ananguna, Nab Afoko Ayieta, Nab Akansugaasa Ayieta and Nab Azantilow Ayieta. He served under the first paramount chief of the Builsa, and also the last paramount chief under colonial rule.

Nab Azenaab was such a shrewd leader who offered valuable counsel to all the successive paramount chiefs on their dealings with the newly incorporated chiefs in the Builsa traditional area. His relevance in the Builsa traditional administrative council was much

---

<sup>186</sup> Kröger, "Sandema Chiefs before Azantilow," 1.

felt at the time of the rise of Nab Azantilow Ayieta as Sandem-Nab and by practice the paramount chief of the entire Builsa. At the elections and installation of Nab Azantilow on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1932, Nab Azenaab was the oldest among all the twelve major Builsa chiefs.<sup>187</sup> As the senior among the chiefs at the time, Nab Azenaab in collaboration with the North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner and the Navrongo District Commissioner organised and supervised the election of Nab Azantilow who was a son to the first paramount chief, Nab Ayieta Ananguna and a brother to the immediate past chief, Nab Akansugaasa (Agaasa) Ayieta.

The leadership style of the Wiaga-Nab, Nab Azenaab in relating cordially with all chiefs made other chiefdoms like Kunkwa to propose that he assume the position of the paramount chief instead of the Sandem-Nab, Nab Azantilow who was much younger.<sup>188</sup> They preferred Nab Azenaab to head the paramountcy not only because he was friendly and tolerant, but he was also the senior most and the most experienced among all the Builsa chiefs.

Beyond the political role, Nab Azenaab made a significant contribution to the health and educational lives of his people. Following the colonial administration's instruction to have two children from each Builsa town to be educated in the White Fathers Mission school that opened in 1906 at Navrongo, Nab Azenaab sent two boys from Wiaga, one being his brother, Asiuk who later succeeded him in April 1948 as Wiaga-Nab and ruled throughout

---

<sup>187</sup> Kröger, "Bulsa Chiefs," 10.

<sup>188</sup> Akankyalabey, 'History of the Builsa,' 55.

the colonial period.<sup>189</sup> Although the White fathers of the Navrongo mission school ‘proselytising enthusiasm far exceeds their desire to educate the natives,’ the school yielded many results as boys who graduated from the school later served in various capacities in the Native Authority system.<sup>190</sup> The White Fathers extended their operation to the Builsa land particularly in Wiaga in 1927 under the request of Nab Azenaab.<sup>191</sup>

The colonial administration’s desire to have many natives to be educated so that they could serve as clerks and interpreters compelled the administration to sponsor the new mission house in Wiaga to open a school attached to their missionary activities in 1930. This school was to serve the Builsa administrative area since the long distance to the Navrongo mission school was a disincentive for boys to be enrolled at the expense of engaging in agricultural activities. Just like his predecessors, Nab Asiuk had a good relationship with the paramount chief and the colonial administration throughout his reign, which ended in 1988.<sup>192</sup>

### **3.4 The Relation between Sandema and Mamprugu under British Rule**

The Builsa related cordially with Mamprugu both socially and politically before the incorporation of the Northern Territories into the Gold Coast in 1902. Socially, the Builsa, particularly, the people of Sandema, Wiaga, Siniesi and Kadema claimed Mamprusi ancestry and viewed Mamprugu as their ancestral home. In the political sphere, these

---

<sup>189</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/61, Navrongo District Handing Over Reports-1914. See also Kröger, ‘Bulsa Chiefs,’ 10.

<sup>190</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/61, Navrongo District Handing Over Reports-1914, Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories to the North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner, Navrongo, 21<sup>st</sup> August, 1912.

<sup>191</sup> Franz Kröger, ‘The Beginnings of Christian Missions among the Bulsa and the History of the Catholic Parish,’ *Buluk: Journal of Bulsa Culture and Society* 4 (2005), 1-2. <https://www.buluk.de/Buluk4/Cath-MissTxt.htm> (accessed 23 July 2022).

<sup>192</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab, Azagsuk Azantilow II.

Builsa chiefdoms recognised the Nayiri as their overlord through the Wulugu-Na. The colonial administration realised this already existing network and merged all the Builsa towns under Mamprugu domination and control. It was partly to enhance colonial rule and empower the newly created paramountcy in Sandema and the Nayiri to exert formal authority and control over divisional chiefs who before were independent and autonomous and only paid respect to the Nayiri of their own volition. The introduction of British rule changed this natural relationship to a politically compelling one. The Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast emphasised this after the proclamation of Nayiri, Na Mahama Wubga as the overlord over the Province on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1912. He cautioned the Builsa chiefs that

when His Excellency [the Governor of the Gold Coast] visited Navarro [Navrongo] I appointed the chief of Sandema Paramount Chief of Kanjarga [Builsa Traditional Area] under the “Na” of Mamprusi, but Kanjarga Sub-Chief must not be allowed on that account to throw off their allegiance to the Chief of Sandema, and should approach the “Na” through him, and not independently.<sup>193</sup>

A month after this pronouncement, the Nayiri summoned some of the Builsa chiefdoms in Nalerigu to reiterate the authority granted to him by the colonial office on the divisional chiefs. It was also a way of strengthening the powers of the chiefs over their jurisdiction by way of awarding them with red fez caps to be worn as a symbol of delegated authority of the Nayiri.<sup>194</sup> The Builsa towns in attendance at the meeting were Sandema, Fumbisi, Doninga, Wiaga, Siniesi and Gbedema where the Nayiri delegated his power of appointment bestowed on him by the colonial administration to the Wulugu-Na who

---

<sup>193</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/61, ‘Navrongo District Handing Over Reports,’ Chief Commissioner, Northern Territories to North-Eastern Provincial Acting Commissioner, Navrongo (17 July, 1912).

<sup>194</sup> Iliasu, “British Administration in Mamprugu,” 12.

happened to be a divisional chief of the Nayiri. Moreover, Wulugu as a chiefdom was founded by a son of Nayiri long before the advent of British rule in the area. As reported by the Gambaga District Commissioner, Kortright during the Nayiri's meeting with the chiefs of the Builsa chiefdoms, every 'new chief being appointed to any of the villages mentioned above...the people of that village shall go to Wulugu [for confirmation and approval].'<sup>195</sup> This new power structure established by the Nayiri to rule his newly vast kingdom was to bring central governance closer to the annexed non-Mamprusi societies, which in the end would create dissatisfaction among the amalgamated Builsa villages.

The placing of Builsa under Wulugu did not only shorten the distance for payment of homage to the Nayiri through the Wulugu-Na but also empowered Wulugu over the Builsa, which will be contested later by subsequent Builsa paramount chiefs. The tribute system and the mobilization of the administration's tax made the paramount chiefs rich and began to question the political authority of their supposed superior, the Nayiri over their territories. The Builsa does not recognize the superiority of Mamprugu over it as its pre-colonial relationship with Mamprusi was purely social in the form of partaking in annual festive activities and not political.<sup>196</sup> This concern was first brought to the notice of the colonial administration that placing the Builsa who had no history of recognised political domination under the Nayiri was a mistake and that the Builsa and the Mamprusi worshipping the same particular god with Mamprusi was not enough bases for such a

---

<sup>195</sup> PRAAD, Accra, ADM. 56/1/121. Kortright to CNEP (14 May 1912).

<sup>196</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab, Azagsuk Azantilow II.

political reconstitution.<sup>197</sup> Major Jackson, the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories listened to the calls of Colonel Whittall, the Commissioner of the North-Eastern Province to have the Builsa and the Kasena who do not also have any ethnic relation with Mamprusi detached from the Nayiri's control to form the Navrongo Native Authority in 1933. Sandema was later detached from Navrongo in 1934 as an independent Native Authority with executive, legislative and judicial powers.

The relationship between Builsa and Mamprugu continued in peace and harmony despite its separation until Builsa began to amass more power to challenge the legitimacy of Mamprugu over the southern Builsa towns of Kunkwa, Kategri and Jadema (Jadema is Mamprusi dominated village). The contestation over who controls the southern chiefdoms of the Builsa soiled the peace between Sandema and Mamprugu. Although the people of these towns are ethnic Builsa, they preferred being under Wulugu through Kpessinkpe rather than with Sandema, whom they saw as oppressive. In addition, the economic fortunes that the traditional rulers enjoyed in serving the colonial administration directly stimulated the hostile relationship that erupted between Builsa and Mamprugu.

The conflict was brought to an end by the Northern Territories Chief Commissioner's Court ruling on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 1952, which objected to Sandema's claim to have control of the people of the said territories. The plaintiff was Nab Azantilow, the paramount chief of the Builsa, and the Nayiri of the Mamprugu kingdom, the Kunkwa-Nab, Nab Anabil, the Kategri-Nab, Nab Aninlik, and the Jadema-Nab, Nab Ajuik as the defendants. As the charges stated the people of Kunkwa, Kategri and Jadema were 'living on the Builsa land,

---

<sup>197</sup> PRAAD, Tamale, ADM. 1/169, Col. P. F. Whittall, North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner to C. C. N. T. Major F. W. F. Jackson (6 April 1932), cited in Iliasu, "British Administration in Mamprugu."



which lies on the Westside of the White Volta River... and do not pay their tribute tax to the Builsa Native Authority. ...the White Volta River is the boundary [dividing Builsa and Mamprugu] before the coming of the White man.<sup>198</sup> Therefore, the Nayiri should relinquish these towns to Sandem-Nab. Sandema lost the case based on a lack of sufficient historical data that emphasized the pre-colonial political relationship with Kunkwa.<sup>199</sup> The court's ruling reinforced Nayiri's suzerainty over Kunkwa as a Builsa ethnic community. The court emphasized that Kunkwa, Kategri and Jadema had "strong ties with the Wuruguna [Wulugu-Na] and through him with the Nayiri, the first defendant" than with Sandema.<sup>200</sup>

### 3.5 Conclusion

The beginning of British rule in the Northern Territories initiated an age of new political consciousness among the various chiefdoms. The administration strengthened the already established kingdoms like Mamprugu, while weak chiefdoms forcefully or willingly brought under those established kingdoms or merged into supra-states. These in some instances were done without proper consideration of the political history of the people. The disagreement of Kunkwa to be under Sandema as the seat of the newly created Builsa paramountcy resulted from this unnoticed history.

---

<sup>198</sup> PRAAD, Tamale, ADM8/16/16, Navrongo District Record Book, Kunkwa, Kategri and Jadema, 1951-1955, Nab Azantilow I, Paramount Chief of Builsa to Chief Commissioner, Northern Territories, 12 March 1951.

<sup>199</sup> Kröger, "Sandemnaab's Lawsuit," 5.

<sup>200</sup> The Chief Commissioner's Court ruling quoted by Kröger, "Sandemnaab's Lawsuit," 5.

The colonial system did not only impose chiefs on the people, the system also turned the institution of chieftaincy into a business venture and political profiteering in Builsa. The colonial backing of new chiefs gave the holders of the traditional office a new authority and power to accumulate wealth through all means possible. The chiefs imposed heavy fines in the form of cattle and sheep on households that failed to honour communal assignments. The Sandem-Nabs in particular was the highest beneficiary of the colonial policy of the amalgamation of the villages into a unified state. The Sandem-Nabs before the 1911 creation of the office of the Head Chief were only serving as the chiefs of Sandema with weak political authority and little wealth. The colonial administration empowered the Head Chief of the Builsa to command respect across the entire Builsa towns and villages. The Sandem-Nabs used this new power to impose heavy tributes such as livestock, foodstuff, heinous labour for the Chief's farmlands and provision of roofing and building materials for the chief's palace.<sup>201</sup>

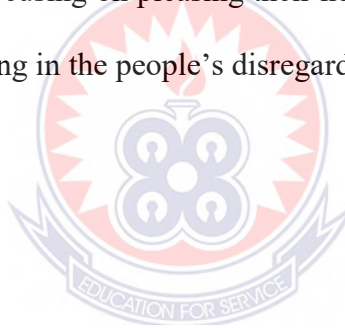
The chieftaincy institution came to be embedded with corruption under British rule on the Gold Coast as it lost its customary procedure in the enskinment and deskinment of chiefs. Because of the growing lucrative nature of the institution under the colonial period, claimants to the office of a traditional ruler became so competitive that potential candidates devised all means of capturing the attention of Provincial and District Commissioners who acted as kingmakers rather than representatives of the colonial administration. The attendant problem was corruption in the selection process of new chiefs as well as chastisements of chiefs to make them unpopular to the colonial administration. People

---

<sup>201</sup> Iliasu, "British Administration in Mamprugu," 11.

began influencing the colonial agents such as the commissioners and paramount chiefs with gifts like cattle and sheep just to establish cordial relationships that they would be preferred over others who by customarily might be more qualified to serve their people.

The power of appointment shifted from the people to the colonial administration, which resulted in the people's diminished respect towards the chiefs. Hitherto, the chiefs were accountable and responsible to their people because they derived their power and authority from them. Under the colonial system, this changed completely as the colonial administration assumed the role of the kingmakers and determined whom they wanted to work with. This had a devastating effect on the relationship between the chiefs and the people. The chiefs while focusing on pleasing their new kingmaker ended up abusing the rights of their office resulting in the people's disregard for their authority.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE BUILSA NATIVE AUTHORITY

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the establishment of the Builsa Native Authority in 1934. It looks at how it functioned as a colonial organ of administration as well as strengthened traditional political institutions in the area. It specifically examines the structure of the local government system, activities of the tribunal court in Sandema known as Court B; and the operation of the Native Treasury. The chapter further discusses how the Native Authority Council transformed into the Local District Council in 1951.

#### 4.1 Establishment of the Builsa Native Authority

So far as I can ascertain, this Government is completely on the dark as regards to the administration of the Northern Territories: There seems to be no clear-cut statement of policy: We do not know what is being done and what our administration is intended to bring forth.

But on one point I am quite clear. The opening up of the country has begun, and having begun, it is likely to develop more and more quickly as the years go on. It is, therefore, most important that definite lines should be laid down without delay on which administrative officers can work; so that, when the time is ripe, a system of indirect rule can be introduced and the natives themselves given a share in the government of the country.<sup>202</sup>

The system of administration to be adopted in managing the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast was a major concern of the British officials on the Gold Coast. As quoted

---

<sup>202</sup> T. Shenton Thomas, Acting Governor, *Native Administration in the Gold Coast and its Dependencies: Confidential Minute by His Excellency the Governor* (Accra: Government Printing Office, 1930), 1. <http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh/bitstream/handle/123456789/33955/Native%20Administration%20in%20the%20Gold%20Coast%20and%20its%20Dependencies.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>. (accessed 25 June 2022).

above, Sir T. Shenton Thomas, the Acting Governor on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1928 doubted if the Armitage's scheme that incorporated the northern ethnic groups into larger established political states was achieving the results of economic and political development of the area. To bring governance close to the people and utilize the economic potentials of the various territories called for the introduction of the Native Authority system that re-demarcated the territory and redefined the level of influence of the paramount chiefs based on the political and cultural history of the various people.

The chiefs were to be further empowered to adjudicate justice and mobilize labour and revenue for various developments in their respective areas acting on behalf of the colonial administration. As colonial officials blamed the existing political structures for lacking a proper road map on how the traditional political institutions were to be organised, the indirect rule system already adopted in the British colonies of Northern Nigeria and Tanganyika was to be rolled out in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. However, the colonial officials were sceptical about the practicability of the policy since there was much cultural variance between the people of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast to the above-mentioned British African colonies that were already practising the policy. The Acting Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir T. Shenton Thomas expressed his confidence in the workability of the policy based on rolling it out with 'the necessary modification' to fit the cultural and social context of the people.<sup>203</sup> It was on these grounds that the Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Alexander Ransford Slater in 1931 argued that:

The aim of the present administration must be to repair the damage of the past by welding together the parts of the same tribes, which within the memory of people alive today were under one paramount chief but

---

<sup>203</sup> Thomas, Acting Governor, *Native Administration in the Gold Coast*, 1.

for one reason or another have split apart, and in this way to build up larger states which will allow for the establishment in them of an efficient and effective form of local government.<sup>204</sup>

The attention of the colonial government towards the administration of the Northern Territories was now focused on transiting from the direct political control of the area to an indirect rule system, which ultimately saved finances and equipped the traditional rulers with ‘real authority over their people.’<sup>205</sup> Sir Thomas was certain that the system of indirect rule would prove successful and impactful to the people, as their chiefs would represent them in the government of the country.<sup>206</sup>

The need for the implementation of the Native Authority system was to strengthen the objectives of the colonial government towards the administration of the Gold Coast. These objectives were:

- (ii) To conduct the administration of the natives of the country through the proper native authorities.
- (iii) To encourage education among the Native Rulers and Oman Councils to enable them to cope successfully with the gradual advance of Western civilisation, advising and guiding them in the measures which it may be necessary to take from time to time to harmonise native institutions and law with the natural course of historical development;
- (iv) To increase the prestige of the Native Rulers and Oman Councils, encourage their initiative, and support their authority.<sup>207</sup>

---

<sup>204</sup> PRAAD, Tamale, ADM 1/169. Governor of the Gold Coast to CCNT, 22 December 1931. Quoted by R. B. Bening, “Foundation of the Modern Native States of Northern Ghana,” (1975), 122. [https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/AJA00495530\\_65](https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/AJA00495530_65) (accessed 25 July 2022).

<sup>205</sup> R. B. Bening, “Foundation of the Modern Native States of Northern Ghana,” (1975), 125. [https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/AJA00495530\\_65](https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/AJA00495530_65) (accessed 25 July 2022).

<sup>206</sup> Thomas, Acting Governor, *Native Administration in the Gold Coast*, 1.

<sup>207</sup> Thomas, Acting Governor, *Native Administration in the Gold Coast*, 2.

The 1933 Native Authority Ordinance sought to decentralise power and authority to the chiefs to handle judicial matters beyond matrimonial cases. This was to strengthen the provision of section 15 of the Northern Territories Administration Ordinance of January 1902 that ‘Native tribunals shall exercise the jurisdiction heretofore exercised by them in the same manner as such jurisdiction has been heretofore exercised.’<sup>208</sup> According to Sir Thomas, the power and authority bestowed on the chiefs were underutilised because of so many colonial officers’ control and influence, which need to be addressed by replacing the pro-direct rule system with an indirect rule system. This was to give the chiefs and their council members a strong political will to exercise their judicial and executive powers enormously. Before the adoption of the indirect rule system, Native Tribunals in the Northern Territories, which included that of the Builsa had

...no jurisdiction whatsoever in criminal matters. As to the constitution of the native courts or tribunals, nothing is on record. The system of direct rule has been so intense that how a court is formed, of whom it consists, what officers are attached to it, the nature of its procedure have never been recorded or even considered.<sup>209</sup>

The Acting Governor, Sir Thomas, a strong advocate of the indirect rule system was ‘convinced that the character of the Gold Coast native institutions as a whole is such that it is abundantly worthwhile to maintain their authority’ to formulate and implement policies and adjudicate justice that affects their people rather than merely made as the mouthpiece of the government.<sup>210</sup> This was the basis for the change of the administrative

---

<sup>208</sup> Thomas, Acting Governor, *Native Administration in the Gold Coast*, 2.

<sup>209</sup> A. W. Cardinall, Chief Commissioner Northern Territories, quoted by Thomas, Acting Governor, *Native Administration in the Gold Coast*, 2.

<sup>210</sup> Thomas, Acting Governor, *Native Administration in the Gold Coast*, 2-3.

policy from a centralised political system to a more decentralised system with maximum involvement of the chiefs in the administration of their lands and people.

In rolling out the indirect rule policy, the administration gave the Builsa chiefs the option of choosing to join the proposed Kasena-Nankana Confederacy or form a Confederacy among themselves. The paramount chief, Nab Azantilow and his divisional chiefs opted to have their own Native Authority established in Sandema to facilitate the socio-economic development of the Builsa traditional area.<sup>211</sup> This decision to have an independent Builsa Native Authority was seen as political emancipation from Mamprugu domination resulting from the dissatisfaction expressed by the Builsa chiefs of what they referred to as being arbitrarily placed under Mamprugu by the 1911 Armitage's colonial scheme.

The Builsa Native Authority was finally established on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1934 to serve as a local government machinery to the colonial administration as well as an executive, legislative and judicial council for the Builsa people. Although the Builsa Native Authority was separated from the Kasena-Nankana Native Authority, Navrongo remained the district capital and seat of the district commissioner for both Native Authorities. Under the Builsa Native Authority system, the paramount chief who doubled as the Sandem-Nab served as the head of the council while the district commissioner only served a supervisory role. The district commissioner was mostly present in council meetings when important issues such as chieftaincy disputes, the election of new chiefs and initiatives, which involved the use

---

<sup>211</sup> Akankyalabey, "History of the Builsa," 57.



of the accrued revenue from the imposed colonial tax to carry out developmental projects like the establishment of the Sandema Native School in 1935.<sup>212</sup>

The composition of the Builsa Native Authority council was made up of thirteen chiefs representing the major Builsa towns and villages. At the time of the establishment of the Native Authority in 1934, the following chiefs presented in the table below were the occupants of their various chiefdoms. Except for Wiesi whose chief, Nab Anakwen died in December 1933, all the other chiefdoms had substantive chiefs who represented them in the council. While preparation was underway to elect a new chief for Wiesi, Akamba was made the regent until the enskinment of Nab Abotempo on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 1937 as the new Wiesi-Nab.<sup>213</sup> The table below is the list of chiefs and their respective chiefdom in 1934.

Name of Chief	Chiefdom	Title	Date of Enskinement
Nab Azantilow	Sandema	Sandem-Nab and Paramount Chief of the Builsa	1932
Nab Azenaab	Wiaga	Wiaga-Nab	1909
Nab Akaachie	Doninga	Doing-Nab	c. 1912
Nab Anakansa	Bachonsa	Bachonsa-Nab	1921
Nab Anusayansa	Siniesi	Siniensi-Nab	1919
Nab Anangabe	Kadema	Kandem-Nab	1927
Nab Ayarik	Gbedema	Gbedem-Nab	1927
Nab Allan Asangalisa	Chuchuliga	Chuchuliga-Nab	1927

<sup>212</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>213</sup> Kröger, "Bulsa Chiefs."

Nab Akinkangnab	Kanjaga	Kanjag-Nab	1912
Nab Akambong	Fumbisi	Fumbisi-Nab	1924
Nab Ambowen	Uwasi	Uwasi-Nab	c. 1912
Akamba	Wiesi	Regent of Wiesi	1933-1937
Nab Akannuemina	Gbedemblisi	Gbedemblisi-Nab	1910

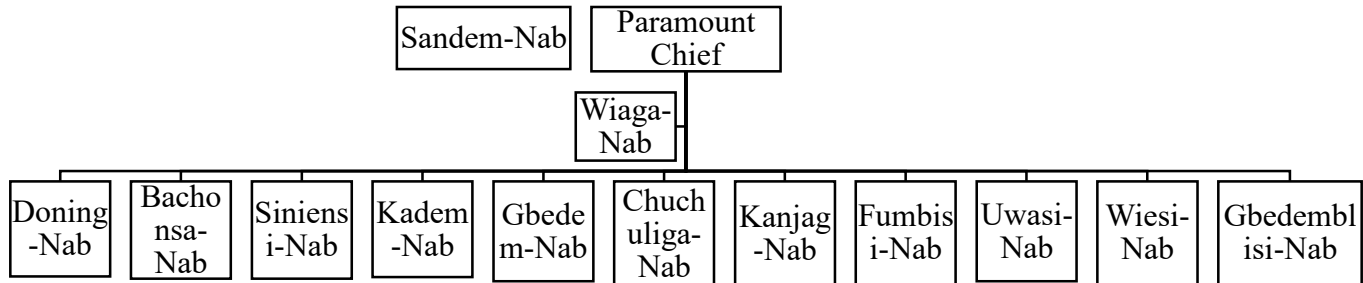
**Table 4.1: Builsa Chiefs during the implementation of the Indirect Rule system.**<sup>214</sup>

The Sandem-Nab was the head of the Native Authority council. In the absence of the paramount chief, the Wiaga-Nab assumed the leadership role of the Native Authority in council meetings. Wiaga enjoyed this unchallenged privilege as a senior advisor to the paramount chief and second in command due to the role Nab Azenaab, Wiaga-Nab played in the consolidation of Sandema as the permanent seat of the paramountcy in the Builsa traditional area as discussed in the previous chapter of this study. Nab Azenaab was the longest-serving chief of Wiaga under British colonial rule and the senior chief among the Builsa chiefs at the time of the implementation of the Native Authority administration system.<sup>215</sup> The chiefs of the other chiefdoms accepted the position of the Wiaga-Nab because, age and long service as a traditional ruler was customarily seen as a divine honour, and it was catastrophic to challenge such a situation. The figure below illustrates the structural hierarchy of the membership of the Builsa Native Authority Council.

<sup>214</sup> The information provided in the table is largely obtained from Oral Sources and works of previous scholars such as Kröger, “Bulsa Chiefs,” and Nyaaba, “Chieftaincy Institutions in Northern Ghana.”

<sup>215</sup> Kröger, “Bulsa Chiefs.”

### Hierarchy of the Builsa Native Authority



**Fig. 4.1 Composition of the Native Authority**

The purpose of the Native Authority was to “uphold the authority of the native rulers by giving them threefold powers: Judicial; Fiscal; Executive.”<sup>216</sup> Just like all established Native Authorities under British rule on the Gold Coast, the Builsa Native Authority had three main organs of administration: the Native Tribunal; the Native Police and the Native Treasury. Each organ served respective functions of adjudication of justice and settlement of disputes; enforcement of law and order; and mobilization of revenue.

#### 4.2 The Native Tribunal and the Treasury

As a judicial branch of the Native Authority system in Builsa, the Tribunal was set up to carry out the role of a court, which was referred to as Court B. It was so called to signify its power and authority in the delivery of justice as the highest court in the area. It was more of a court of appeal because cases brought before it were unsatisfied cases already tried in the traditional courts of the various Builsa chiefdoms known as Court As. The

<sup>216</sup> Thomas, Acting Governor, *Native Administration in the Gold Coast*, 3.

Tribunal prosecuted criminal cases including ‘petty assaults, wilful disobedience or resisting of the Native Authority’s messenger or police in the execution of his duty, fighting and quarrelling in public places,’ as well as theft.<sup>217</sup> However, in civil jurisdiction, it specifically dealt with cases such as:

- (a) Suites to establish paternity or custody of children other than those arising out of any Christian marriage,
- (b) Matrimonial cases,
- (c) Personal suits and matters relating to succession to the property of any deceased native and,
- (d) All suits relating to the ownership of lands held under the native tenure situate within the Builsa Area.<sup>218</sup>

The Native Treasury Ordinance of 1936 ordered all Native Authorities to set up a Native Treasury to handle revenue mobilisation and disbursement within their administrative areas. The expenditure on local development and keeping the Native Authorities running was a challenge to the colonial administration, especially during the inter-World Wars period. The world economic depression culminating from the consequences of World War I broke the economic power of imperial Britain to keep her overseas colonies. Pragmatic colonialists like Sir T. Shenton Thomas in 1928 pre-empted the need to establish native treasuries in the Northern Territories similar to that of Northern Nigeria where under the guidance of colonial officers, funds will be raised from the local people and used to meet the demands of local needs.<sup>219</sup>

---

<sup>217</sup> Akankyalabey, “History of the Builsa,” 59.

<sup>218</sup> Akankyalabey, “History of the Builsa,” 58.

<sup>219</sup> Thomas, Acting Governor, *Native Administration in the Gold Coast*, 3.

The availability of a local source of funds was the major pillar in the implementation and sustainability of the indirect rule system. The tax policy levied on every adult and ownership of animals as property tax became essential in carrying out the day-to-day administration of the Builsa Native Authority. The commitment to payment of tax for the socio-economic development of the area was not only seen as an utmost desire of the indigenous people of the Builsa to provide educational, health and transportation networks for themselves, but it also prepared them for self-determination and self-governance. Lord Lugard, the proponent of the British colonial policy of the Indirect Rule system was right when he said, ‘without a tax, there can be no Treasury and without a Treasury no eventual measure of self-rule.’<sup>220</sup>

The Builsa Native Treasury since its establishment in 1936 always met its revenue targets for the development of the area. For instance, between 1937 and 1938, the estimated revenue was £813 and the generated revenue was £830 with £17 as excess.<sup>221</sup> Market tolls and the levy on animals popularly known as *Lampo* were the major sources of revenue for the Treasury. The Sandema, the Fumbisi and the Kanjaga markets were the major markets in Builsa that provided a large part of the revenue in the area. The Main items sold in these markets were farm produce such as grains and domestic animals like cattle, sheep, goats, guinea fowls and poultry. All these products and animals that entered the markets were taxed. Every household with domestic animals was required to pay the annual property tax

---

<sup>220</sup> Lord Frederick Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, Fifth Edition (Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1965), 219.

<sup>221</sup> Maasole S. Cliff, “Tax Collection in Northern Ghana during British Colonial Rule from 1898-1950 (Part Two),” *Ghana Journal of Development Studies* 16, no. 1 (2019): 195.

to the *Kambonabas* who were designated by the chiefs for collection of the tax. The *Kambonabas* also delegated others mostly sons or brothers to serve as tax collectors.

Although the tax collectors sometimes embezzled large components of the revenue before it finally got to the Native Treasury in Sandema, the tax system contributed largely to the improvement of the lives of the Builsa people.<sup>222</sup> Nab Azantilow, the paramount chief of the Builsa used part of the money accrued from taxation to build a health unit in 1937 and a primary school in Sandema in 1935, which was opened in 1936 with boarding facilities to accommodate pupils from far distance. The cost of establishing the boarding primary school was £15 of which the president of the Builsa Native Authority who doubled as the Sandem-Nab personally offered £10 of the required amount.<sup>223</sup> The health unit served as a dispensary to handle the health needs of the community and staff of the Native Authority.

To account to the people about the use of their taxes, the revenue accumulated was used to spread development across all the Builsa chiefdoms. By 1948, Nab Azantilow mobilised communal labour and with the revenue from the Native Treasury, he built schools in Siniensi, Fumbisi and Chuchuliga. This was to spread educational facilities to all parts of the Builsa traditional area. Because of the commitment attached to education by the Builsa chiefs and their people under British rule, immediately the Native Authority Administration system was replaced with the Local District Councils, they secured a Middle Boarding School for the Builsa in 1952.<sup>224</sup>

---

<sup>222</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab, Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>223</sup> Funeral Brochure of Nab Ayieta Azantilow I.

<sup>224</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab, Azagsuk Azantilow II.

The imposition of direct taxation on the people resulted in a positive attitude towards development in the Builsa traditional area. Because of the judicious use of the revenue to provide infrastructural development such as schools and quarters for chiefs and staff of the tribunal in Sandema, the people readily paid their tax without resistance. In fact, unlike in the Gold Coast colony proper where the indigenous people in most cases resisted the imposition of taxation, the situation in the Northern Territories was the opposite.<sup>225</sup> This smooth administration of the colonial tax collection was partly the result of the ‘allegiance subjects had for their chiefs and the reverence everyone had for chiefs.’<sup>226</sup>

Aside from the direct tax, the Native Treasury also raised revenue from court fees and fines from the Tribunal. The gravity of the crime on which the accused was tried and the economic status of the accused were the main determinants of deciding on the fine to be awarded to the person. The court clerk was the one tasked to collect and keep records of all payments in the court, while the Native Police summoned defaulters to be reheard. Even though the Native Authority had the power to refer any matter relating to tax or fine default to the District Commissioner’s office in Navrongo, the Builsa Tribunal instead devised alternative means to have defaulters dealt with. The Tribunal assessed the defaulter’s case on whether it was based on his inability to pay or disobedience to orders. If it was based on the former, he was made to offer labour in exchange and if it was on the latter, the Tribunal ordered the Native Police with the help of volunteer youth to confiscate his valuables higher than were required of him. The funds and valuable items charged after the

---

<sup>225</sup> Maasole S. Cliff, “Tax Collection in Northern Ghana,” 196.

<sup>226</sup> Richard A. Ajuik, “Chieftaincy Institution and Revenue Mobilization in Ghana: An Example from Builsa Traditional Council,” *Buluk: Journal of Bulsa Culture and Society* 6 (2012), [http://bluk.de/Buluk6/Ajuik\\_chieftaincy.htm](http://bluk.de/Buluk6/Ajuik_chieftaincy.htm) (accessed 20 July 2022).

prosecution of cases brought before the Tribunal were used to cater for court sittings in the form of providing meals for chiefs and council of elders in Council.<sup>227</sup>

One remarkable contribution of the colonial taxation system to the transformation of chieftaincy institutions in Builsa was its role in economically enriching the chiefs and making the traditional political institution more competitive than before the advent of British rule. The chiefs wielded economic might resulting from proceeds of taxation, cattle kraal fees, court fees and fines, the forced labour of their subjects on their farms further strengthened their political authority over the people. Claimants to chieftaincy titles did everything possible to win the trust of their people and the visiting colonial officers because the process of enskinning a chief was based on populace voting by heads of households. Although the validity of the election owed its confirmation and approval from the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories through the Provincial and the District Commissioner and the paramount chief, potential chiefs devised many means to win the support of their people.<sup>228</sup>

The Builsa Native Authority served as a magnetic force for uniting the Builsa Chieftdoms and strengthening the political power and authority of Sandema as the seat of the paramountcy until the Gold Coast attained internal self-government in 1951, which ushered in the Local District Council system. Although the name of the local government institution changed, the composition and scope of operation remained the same. As the Gold Coast was on the threshold to independence, Kwame Nkrumah made efforts to reform all

---

<sup>227</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab, Azagsuk Azantilow II.

<sup>228</sup> Interview with Sandem-Nab, Azagsuk Azantilow II.



institutions that had colonial connotations since those institutions were not only viewed as collaborators of colonialism but also oppressive.

### 4.3 Conclusion

Before the introduction of the Native Authority system in Builsa, the power of the chiefs to exert orders was limited as they were merely taking directives from the District Commissioner. Just as the Acting Commissioner of the Southern Province of the Northern Territories, A. W. Cardinall in 1928 put it, the chiefs 'have tended to become mere sergeant-majors through whom the Administration can address the rank and file' of the territories.<sup>229</sup> The colonial administration introduced the Native Authority system to change this dilemma of making the chiefs colonial stooges rather than political leaders of their people and an important arm of the government. Although the Native Authority system brought governance closer to the indigenous people, chiefs championed the objectives of the colonial administration more than the needs of their people. For instance, the establishment of the Native Authority School in Sandema in 1935 was the initiative of the District Commission Office to train clerks to serve in the native tribunal rather than developing the minds and skills of the people for creative and innovative ideas for the development of the area. Despite the criticism that chiefs under the colonial system represented the administration rather than serving their people, 'the whole idea of the NAs [Native Authorities] was not just about using chiefs to mobilise labour, impose taxes and

---

<sup>229</sup> PRAAD, Tamale, ADM. 1/7, Acting Commissioner of the Southern Province (C.S.P.), 20 July 1928; Report on Native Administration in the Northern Territories. Quoted by Nyaaba, "Chieftaincy Institutions in Northern Ghana," 97.

raise revenue, but also to introduce a system of government at the local level using traditional leaders.<sup>230</sup>



---

<sup>230</sup> Wilson K. Yayoh, "Local Government in Ewedome, British Trust Territory of Togoland (Ghana), 1922-1974" (PhD Thesis, SOAS, University of London, April 2010), 98.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 Introduction

The chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the findings of the study as well as the conclusion to the arguments advanced in this work. It systematically summarized the discussions in order of the main objectives of the study.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The study examined the impact of British colonial policies in shaping the institution of Chieftaincy among the Builsa people of the Upper East Region of Ghana. According to Builsa oral tradition, the Builsa are a group of people of a mixture of Mamprusi immigrants from Nalerigu with indigenous people who were already inhabiting the area before the eighteenth century. The historical scope of the study spans from 1900 to 1957. These dates are carefully selected to mark the entry of the British in Builsa in 1902 and the end of British rule in 1957 since the analysis of the trajectories is situated within the framework of British Rule in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast.

The socio-economic lives of the Builsa people before Major Morris' led invasion and conquest in March 1902 were dispersedly settled and agrarian. The people lived a communal life of collective responsibility for a common goal. The political system was purely based on smaller chiefdoms with autonomy and independence from one another. However, family heads ruled some villages such as Wiesi, Gbedemblisi, and Vare. This was the case because those communities were small and the inhabitants were mostly people from the same extended family who saw no need to have chiefs until the British rolled out

the civil administrative system with districts in 1907, which required every major section without a substantive chief should appoint one or be placed under an already existing state. Under this system, Builsa was placed under the Navrongo district with the District Commissioner as the officer directly in charge with a supervisory role on the chiefs.

The British colonial administration in its effort to manage the vast Gold Coast territories especially the newly annexed territories in the north referred to as the Northern Territories adopted an amalgamation of states scheme in 1911 that brought all the Builsa chiefdoms under one supreme leader who was further placed under the Nayiri of Mamprugu kingdom. Although colonial officials had favourites whom they wished to work with, they, however, organised elections for chieftaincy positions for customarily qualified candidates. The first of its kind was the election of the Head Chief for the Builsa in September 1911, which was contested by Nab Adachuro, the chief of Kanjaga and Nab Ayieta Ananguna, the chief of Sandema. The Sandem-Nab emerged victorious making him the paramount chief of the Builsa and Sandema becoming the seat of government of the native administration. This colonial scheme provided a framework for the political organisation of the Builsa towns. It granted anyone who occupies the Sandema skin to become automatically the paramount chief of the Builsa.

Although other Builsa towns and chiefs challenged this idea of making Sandema the permanent head over the entire Builsa, the colonial administration intimidated and victimised those chiefs with the dismissal and replacement of favourites of the regime. All that the colonial administration needed was to get flimsy excuses labelled against those intolerant chiefs as ‘troublemakers’. The influence of the colonial administration on the appointment and dismissal of chiefs was rampant in the first two decades of British colonial

rule in Builsa. Those chiefdoms who were unsatisfied with the domination of Sandema threatened secession. Kanjaga, Kunkwa and Chuchuliga registered their displeasure about the growing supremacy of Sandema and threatened several times to break away. Kunkwa finally seceded under the leadership of Nab Agaasa as paramount chief of the Builsa, while it took the intervention of the District Commissioner to prevent Nab Anyatuik from taking Kanjaga out of the Builsa Native Authority during the reign of Nab Azantilow as the leader of the council.<sup>231</sup> This move was to provoke the long-standing rivalry between Kanjaga and Sandema over supremacy.

The administration nature of the British colonial rule on the Gold Coast served as the main pivot in shaping the administration of chieftaincy in Builsa. Thus, the amalgamation policy of September 1911 united the smaller chiefdoms into a strong and unified state, while the introduction of the Native Authority system in 1934 strengthened the political and economic power of the chiefs in Builsa. The executive, legislative and judicial powers granted to chiefs under the Indirect Rule system also made them and their sub-chiefs abusive to their subjects and enriched themselves through the embezzlement of funds from the tax.

The Native Authority was not without problems. The funds accrued from levies and fines were not sufficient to pay clerks and carry out all required developmental projects for the people. Akankyalabey argues that the lack of revenue for the Builsa Native Authority to

---

<sup>231</sup> Interview with Ben A. Abariwie.

keep pace in development with other Native Authorities in the Province ‘may be attributed mainly to the fact that its geographical position was off the main trade routes.’<sup>232</sup>

## 5.2 Conclusion

Chieftaincy institutions in Builsa underwent significant changes under British rule in the area: both progressive and retrogressive transformations occurred in the traditional political systems and practices of the people. The Builsa chiefs who ruled before the September 1911 amalgamation policy were more intolerant to the colonial administration than subsequent chiefs who served their colonial master friendly while profiting from the colonial system. The initial unfriendliness of chiefs towards the colonial officers partly results from a lack of trust in the British and fear of strong chiefdoms dominating weak ones. Although, the deliberate incorporation of the Builsa towns and villages by the colonial administration brought about dissatisfaction among some chiefs leading to their dismissals, the new policy unified the Builsa state and placed the people of the Builsa on a similar political par with their counterpart northern ethnic groups. The colonial system ignited the spirit of competition for chieftaincy positions among the people as the indirect rule system made chiefs powerful and rich resulting from taxation and the use of their subjects’ labour on their farms.

Beyond the excessive powers the administration bestowed on the chiefs over their subjects, the *Kambonabas* equally took advantage of the regime and made themselves powerful and

---

<sup>232</sup> Akankyalabey, “History of the Builsa,” 59.

authoritarian.<sup>233</sup> Akankyalabey summarised the position and abusive nature of the *Kambonabas* as being

appointed by the chief to look after a certain section for him, instead of being delegated by the people to represent them. There was no constitutional check on him as he was appointed for life and owed responsibility solely to his chief. He almost invariably won his case if anyone dared to make a complaint about him either had a deliberately false charge laid against him or could be sure to be picked on the next time Government called for carriers or labourers.<sup>234</sup>

Indeed, the chiefs and the sub-chiefs exploited the system to enrich themselves by using forced labour of their subjects in their farms, hiding behind the government's taxation system to extort from the people in the form of cattle, sheep, goats and domestic birds. In addition, children of chiefs became abusive towards the people since it was seen as an attack on the authority of the chief if one fought a royal.

Moreover, the emergence of British rule diminished the relevance of the *Teng-nyono* in Builsa. In developing the political structures of chieftaincy in Builsa, the colonial administration focused mainly on the chiefs and neglected the role of the *Teng-nyono* who occupied an important position in the traditional governance of the Builsa society. As the colonialists were interested in collaborating with those who would exert political control and influence on their people to achieve colonial objectives of accruing wealth and power, the *Teng-nyono* who occupied the spiritual component of the leadership of the society had

---

<sup>233</sup> *Kambonabas* literally means 'Asante form of chief'. It was derived from Dagbon when Asante dispatched its 'sergeants' to be stationed in various areas in Dagbon to facilitate the payment of tribute in the form of slaves to Asante during the Asante occupation of Dagbon and the Gonja.

<sup>234</sup> Akankyalabey, "History of the Builsa," 60.

little to offer in the colonial business. Hence, no reason to consider him in formulating and implementing the political decisions in the area.

The colonial incorporation of the Builsa chiefdoms under Sandema's hegemony resulted in a long-standing rivalry among the *Nabs* of the various chiefdoms. Most of the non-Atuga-Bisa chiefdoms felt Sandema had no political right over them since before colonial rule they were politically independent and the amalgamation was to serve a colonial purpose, which is over. The people of Kanjaga expressed being robbed off by Sandema of their position of being the leading Builsa state before the invention of the paramountcy by the British while the people of Chuchuliga for example felt they were compelled to serve under Sandema, which was not rooted in their traditions.

The growing argument is that the people of Sandema and not the entire Builsa exclusively elect the paramount chief who doubles as the Sandem-Nab. He owes his allegiance to the people of Sandema and not the entire Builsa and therefore cannot wield political control over the territories outside Sandema. Currently, the paramount chief has only a confirmation right over chiefs elected by their people. He cannot enskin or deskin any chiefs of the other towns. His power and authority over the entire territory occupied by the Builsa people completely diminished after independence. The reluctance of the chiefs to openly oppose and question Sandema as the leader of the traditional area is because they are the same ethnic group with similar cultural practices, who see themselves as the same people. Hence, what is keeping the Builsa state united after independence is social rather than political.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### A) Primary Sources

#### I) Interviews

Interview with Ben A. Abariwie, Assistant Superintendent of Police (Rtd), Kanjaga, Builsa South, 17 September 2022.

Interview with James Anang Amoak, Teacher in Fumbisi S.H.S, Fumbisi, Builsa South, 20 March 2021.

Interview with Weisi-Nab Akanab Apomwein Abuntori II, Weisi, Builsa South, 29 August 2020.

Interview with Sandem-Nab Azagsuk Azantilow II, Sandem-Nab and President of the Builsa Traditional Council, Sandema, Builsa North, 6 September 2020.

#### II) Archival Sources

Public Record Administration and Archive Department (hereafter, PRAAD), Accra, ADM.56/1/137, 'Navrongo District Records Book,' June 1912.

PRAAD, Accra, ADM.56/1/61, 'Circular to District Commissioners, North-Eastern Province.' 20 July 1911.

PRAAD, Accra, ADM.63/5/2, 'Navrongo District Record Book,' October 1918.

PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/169, Kanjarga Native Affairs (case No. 294/07), 1911-1914.

PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/2, Lieutenant-Colonel A. Morris, Chief Commissioner of Northern Territories to Colonial Secretary, 16 April 1904.

PRAAD, Accra, ADM56/1/61, 'Navrongo District Handing Over Reports,' 1911-1914.

PRAAD, Accra, ADM63/5/3, 'Navrongo District Record Book,' October 1913.

PRAAD, Tamale, ADM8/16/16, Navrongo District Record Book, '1951-1955.

PRAAD, Tamale, ADM.1/169. Governor of the Gold Coast to Chief Commissioner of Northern Territories, 22 December 1931.

PRAAD, Tamale, ADM. 1/7, Acting Commissioner of the Southern Province (C.S.P.), 20 July 1928; Report on Native Administration in the Northern Territories.

PRAAD, Tamale, ADM.1/146, Chief Commissioner of NTGC to Commissioner of Northern Province, 5<sup>th</sup> May 1931.

PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/2/204, Domestic Slavery, 1927.

PRAAD, Tamale, NRG8/3/23, Northern Territories Report, 1937-38.

### III) Minutes

Thomas, T. Shenton. *Native Administration in the Gold Coast and its Dependencies:*

*Confidential Minute by His Excellency the Governor.* Accra: Government Printing Office, 1930.

<http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh/bitstream/handle/123456789/33955/Native%20Administration%20in%20the%20Gold%20Coast%20and%20its%20Dependencies.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (25 June 2022).

## **B) Secondary Sources**

### **I) Journal Articles and Book Chapters**

Abotchie, C. "Has the Position of the Chief Become Anachronistic in Contemporary Ghanaian Politics?" In *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*, edited by Irene K. Odotei, & Albert K. Awedoba, 169-191. Accra: Institute of African Studies, 2006.

Addo-Fening, Robert. "Asante Refuges in Akyem Abuakwa, 1875-1912." *Transactions of Historical Society of Ghana* XIV, no.1 (June 1975): 39-64.

Asante, Kweku. "George Ekem Ferguson: An African Pioneer." *Empire Survey Review* 2, no. 8 (1933): 102-105.

Boateng, Kwabena and Stephen Afranie. "Chieftaincy: An Anachronistic Institution within a Democratic Dispensation? The Case of a Traditional Political System in Ghana." *Ghana Journal of Development Studies* 17, no. 1 (May 2020): 25-47.

Brukum, Nana James K. "Chiefs, Colonial Policy and Politics in Northern Ghana, 1897-1956." *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 3 (1999): 101-122.

Cavanagh, Stephen. "Content Analysis: Concepts, Methods and Applications." *Nurse Researcher* 4 (1997): 1-8.

Cliff, Maasole S. "Tax Collection in Northern Ghana during British Colonial Rule from 1898-1950 (Part Two)." *Ghana Journal of Development Studies* 16, no. 1 (2019): 181-202.

Gallagher, John and Ronald Robinson. "The Imperialism of Free Trade." *The Economic History Review*, New Series 6, no. 1 (1953): 1-15.

Holden, J. J. "The Zabarima Conquest of North-West Ghana Part I." *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 8 (1965): 60-86.

Iliasu, A. A. "The establishment of British Administration in Mamprugu, 1898-1937." *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 16, no. 1 (June 1975): 1-28.

Ranger, Terence. "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa." In *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, 211-262. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Sampson, Magnus J. "George Ekem Ferguson of Anomabu." *Transactions of the Gold Coast & Togoland Historical Society* 2, no. 1 (1956): 181-215.

Schott, Rüdiger. "Sources for a History of the Bulsa of Northern Ghana." *Paideuma* 23 (1977): 141-168.

Wolfe, Patrick "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-409.

## **II) Published Books**

Arhin, Kwame *Traditional Rule in Ghana – Past and Present*. Accra: Sedco Publishing Limited, 1985.

Awedoba, Albert K. *An Ethnographic Study of Northern Ghanaian Conflicts: Towards a Sustainable Peace*. Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2009.

- Ayittey, George B. N. *Indigenous African institutions*, 2nd ed. Transnational Publishers, Inc., 2006.
- Boahen, Albert A. *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. London: Longman, 1975.
- Busia, Kofi A. *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti*. London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1951.
- Cardinall, Allan W. *The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast: Their Customs, Religion and Folklore*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1920.
- Césaire, Aimé. *Discourse on Colonialism* Translated by Joan Pinkham. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972.
- Chidester, David. *Religion: Material Dynamics*. Univ. of California Press, 2018.
- Claridge, W. W. *A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti*, Vol. 1&2. Frank Cass and Co. Limited, 1915.
- Kludze, A. Kodzo Paaku. *Chieftaincy in Ghana*. Lanham: Austin & Winfield Publishers, 2000.
- Kröger, Franz. *Ancestor Worship among the Builsa of Northern Ghana: Religious, Social and Economic Aspects*. Klaus Renner Verlag, 1982.
- Lentz, Carola. *Ethnicity and the Making of History in Northern Ghana*. London: Edinburgh University Press, 2006.
- Lugard, Lord F. *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, Fifth Edition. Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1965.

Mondlane, Eduardo. *The Struggle for Mozambique*. Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1969.

Nukunya, G. K. *Tradition and Change in Ghana: An Introduction to Sociology*. Ghana Universities Press, 2000.

Odotei, Irene K. & Albert K. Awedoba, (eds) *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*. Accra: Institute of African Studies, 2006.

Perbi, Akosua A. *A History of Indigenous Slavery in Ghana: From the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*. Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2004.

Rathbone, Richard. *Nkrumah and the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana, 1951-60*. Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000.

Rattray, Robert S. *The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterlands*, Vol. 2. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932.

Reindorf, Carl C. *A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti*. Basel, 1895.

Rodney, Walter. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Dar-Es-Salaam: Tanzanian-Publishing House, 1973.

Service, Elman R. *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective*. New York: Random House, 1962.

### **III) Unpublished Works and Thesis/Dissertations**

Ademin, Amos Yaw. "Indigenous Resistance to Slavery by the Builsa People of Northern Ghana." Diss., MA African Studies, Univ. of Ghana, July 2016.

Ahiave, Edwin C. "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Ghana: The Case of the Dagbon Conflict." Master's Thesis, Univ. of Ghana, 2013.

Akankyalabey, Pauline F. "A History of the Builsa People." Long Essay, Dept. of History, University of Ghana, 1984.

Brukum, Nana James K. "The Northern Territories of the Gold Coast under British Colonial Rule, 1897-1956: A Study in Political Change." PhD Thesis, Dept. of History, Uni. of Toronto, 1997.

Funeral Brochure of the late Nab Dr Ayieta Azantilow, Paramount Chief of the Builsa, Sandema (30 April 2011).

Hefis-Deen, Seidu. "An Examination of Chieftaincy Institution: The Role and Challenges of Chiefs in the Socio-Economic Development of the Dorimon Traditional Area of the Upper West Region of Ghana." MPhil Thesis, University for Development Studies, March 2016.

Kröger, Franz. "History of the Builsa." Speech delivered on December 2017 on the day of the Feok festival at Sandema in the Builsa North Municipality.

Nyaaba, Ali Y. "Transformations in the Chieftaincy Institution in Northern Ghana from 1900-1969: A Case Study of Navrongo and Sakot." PhD Thesis, KNUST, 2009.

Yayoh, Wilson K. "Local Government in Ewedome, British Trust Territory of Togoland (Ghana), 1922-1974." PhD Thesis, SOAS, University of London, April 2010.

#### **IV) Online Materials**

Ajuik, Richard A. "Chieftaincy Institution and Revenue Mobilization in Ghana: An Example from Builsa Traditional Council." *Buluk: Journal of Balsa Culture and*

*Society* 6 (2012). [http://buluk.de/Buluk6/Ajuik\\_chieftaincy.htm](http://buluk.de/Buluk6/Ajuik_chieftaincy.htm) (accessed 20 July 2022).

Awedoba, Albert K. “The Peoples of Northern Ghana.” (22 May 2006). [www.ghanaculture.gov.gh](http://www.ghanaculture.gov.gh) (accessed 15 July 2021).

Bening, R. B. “Foundation of the Modern Native States of Northern Ghana.” (1975): 116-138. [https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/AJA00495530\\_65](https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/AJA00495530_65) (accessed 25 July 2022).

Kröger, Franz. “Archive Sandema (Paramount Chief’s Compound).” 16 November 2018. <https://www.ghana-materialien.de/Archiv-Sandema.htm> (accessed 10 January 2022).

\_\_\_\_\_. “Bulsa Chiefs.” *Buluk: Journal of Bulsa Culture and Society* 6 (2012). [www.buluk.de/Buluk6/chiefs-liste.htm](http://www.buluk.de/Buluk6/chiefs-liste.htm) (accessed 20 January 2021).

\_\_\_\_\_. “Extracts from Bulsa History: Sandema Chiefs before Azantilow.” *Buluk: Journal of Bulsa Culture and Society* 6 (2012). <http://www.buluk.de/Buluk6/Sandemchiefs.htm> (accessed 10 January 2022).

\_\_\_\_\_. “Kunkwa, Kategra and Jadema: The Sandemnaab’s Lawsuit.” *Buluk: Journal of Bulsa Culture and Society* 6 (2012). <https://www.buluk.de/Buluk6/Lawsuits.htm> (accessed 20 May 2021).

\_\_\_\_\_. “The Beginnings of Christian Missions among the Bulsa and the History of the Catholic Parish.” *Buluk: Journal of Bulsa Culture and Society* 4 (2005). <https://www.buluk.de/Buluk4/Cath-MissTxt.htm> (accessed 23 July 2022).