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INTRODUCTION

From the latter half of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, a famous Musgum named Zigla lived in the borderland of the former Adamawa Emirate and the Bornu Empire, a part of the Diamaré prefecture in the present-day Cameroon. Residing in the former Mandara kingdom, which was located in the plain of Mora, he carried out assaults and raids on the various neighbouring peoples: the Fulɓe in the South, the Kanuri and Shuwa in the Northwest, and the Musgum of the Kalang clan in the East.

The historical situation of the Musgum in Zigla's days in the plain of Mora was as follows:

The Mandara kingdom reigned over the Musgum, who lived in the area from Girvidik to Pus in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The chief of Pus was appointed to be one of the vassals of the kingdom, and had a title, Lawan-a-Mugulna 'the governor of the Musgum'. With his assistance the Mandara king controlled the whole Musgum country west of the Logone river. Around 1750, Pus fell into the hands of the Mbang, the king of Bagirmi. The residence of the Lawan-a-Mugulna was transferred to Girvidik in the land of the Kaday people. Thirty years later (around 1780), the ethnic equilibrium was destroyed due to the growth of the Fulɓe population (mainly of the Feroobe and Yillaga clans) in the area near the present town of Bogo, which was created at the beginning of the nineteenth century. By the middle of the nineteenth century this area was completely controlled by the Fulɓe. Because of the

* The 3rd Research Department, National Museum of Ethnology.
1) À la base le Mbarma, chef de village, chargé essentiellement de collecter l'impôt. Audessus des Laouan (I), chefs de sous-districts et des Ajia, chefs de districts(subdivisions territoriales inférieures à la province) [URVOY 1949: 117]. The lawan controls the subdivision of the territory governed by laamiido among the Fulɓe; In the Mandara kingdom, there were only four lawan: Lawan-a-Balkawa 'head of the group of Arab Shuwa of Balkawa', Lawan-a-Salamataha 'head of the group of Arab Shuwa of Salamat', Lawan-a-Bani-Hasan 'head of the group of Arab Shuwa of Bani-Hasan', Lawan-a-Mugulna [MOHAMMADOU 1975: 207].
Fulɓe occupation, the residence of the *Lawan-a-Mugulna* had to be moved to Mogonye. [Mohamadou 1975: 189–190].

Thus, although nothing was mentioned regarding the relationship between Zigla and the king of Mandara, there should have been a tacit understanding between them not to attack each other, since they had to fight against their common enemies, the Fulɓe).

Mandara Kingdom and Adamawa Emirate at the end of the nineteenth century

2) The relation between the Mandara and the Fulɓe was extremely strained until relatively recently. The Fulɓe were considered to be the “hereditary enemies” of the Mandara [Mohamadou 1975: 207].
The colonization of North Cameroon by the Germans took place in 1901 and ended in 1914. The Germans ruled over the Fulɓe indirectly, installing a puppet lamidat of Suudī or Abduurraamaani Suyuudī in Maroua, whose rule lasted from 1901 to 1908. In the territory of the former Bornu Empire, Rabeh or Raabe\(^3\), a powerful Mahdist from Sudan, made many wars against the already existing Moslem chiefs as well as the French army, which finally defeated him near Kousseri in 1900.

Zigla belonged to the Kaday clan which had been driven away from their ancestral country. During this transitional period of political instability he made frequent assaults against his conquerors, the Fulɓe.

We now have two sources from which to study the so-called Zigla expedition, which took place in October—December, 1096: 1) a poem of the pastoralist Fulɓe, entitled “Zigila”\(^4\), and 2) some German documents stored in the National Archives of Yaoundé\(^5\). These materials, however, do not say anything about Zigla’s earlier days, nor about his personal character, etc.

In this paper; I would like to throw light on Zigla’s life history, based on the Musgum oral tradition. I collected the materials in the following manner: First, a questionnaire consisting of several items was given to Mr. Zigla Wandi, my Musgum informant since 1969. He took the questionnaire to Jiddel and the surrounding villages, where Zigla, the thief, had spent his last days. Mr. Zigla Wandi obtained all the information in Musgum from an old Musgum woman, Mrs. Asakal Marba, born around 1895 in Gagiray. Upon his return to Maroua, we worked together to organize the information. The items cover Zigla’s birth, boyhood, life with his first master Mayni Azaija, the fight against the Fulɓe, his death etc. They have been presented without any change.

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3) Rabeh entered Bornu in 1893 after having overrun Bagirmi. The reigning Shehu (Hashim) fled, but his self-appointed successor, Kiari, was defeated by Rabeh. Rabeh destroyed Kukawa and established a new capital at Dikwa [MEEK 1971: 84].

4) The mboɔ’en poem, a genre of Fulɓe oral literature, is performed by several male singers, called mboɔ’en. They live only in the Diamare prefecture. They chose historical topics. The following are the ten singers who can sing “Zigila”: 1) Aadamu Daarifu, 2) Aakal, 3) Basiru, 4) Bello Bakari, 5) Hammara Waaɓi, 6) Mammadi, 7) Siddi Ndollaandi, 8) Siddi Yammbaram, 9) Siddiiki Mise, 10) Yero Gaw. About Fulɓe oral literature, see [EGUCHI 1976].

ZIGLA’S LIFE HISTORY

1. Zigla was the son of Grég, and the grandson of Amdesni, and he belonged to the Mugulna clan of the Kaday group who dominated the plain of Mora. He was born in Mogoyet (Mogonye in Fulfulde) near Kosa in the Mora district, around 1830. When he was very young, he lost his father and then his mother. When he became an orphan, there was no one to take care of him, and he was very unhappy. He had to sleep in hollow trees, dry or wet. From his early days he became acquainted with the bush. Thus, he was not afraid of it, nor of the people.

2. Zigla underwent a Musgum initiation ceremony, called Lâbâ, in the forest. This rite is held in the bush to teach boys a secret language, and a dance. The boys stay in the bush for a few months, during which they must follow special rules.

3. Thanks to his effort and perseverance, he was able to marry his first wife at the age of twenty. Her name was Àkláy. Later he had eight other women, but no one knows their names. He begot Abbkbwa, ÁzagAl, Ktluje, Lawan Hammatt, Abaalit and many other children.

Zigla’s physical nature

4. Zigla was short and quite black. He had red eyes which only wicked people have. He did not eat much, nor drink any alcoholic drink. He liked to eat puyaacti.

Zigla’s taste in clothing

5. When he was at home, he did not dress properly. When he went out on a raid, he preferred to be dressed well. He loved to wear mudit, a short white gown.
made of *gabaga* or *leppi* cloth. He liked to wear a long black cap (*jiikuure* in Fulfulde). His sandals were called *yákátáp* (*yáká ‘to fall down’ + *táp* ‘a sound’).

Zigla’s raiding wear

6. When he went raiding, he wore a shirt called *gàarày* (*d’anciki* in Fulfulde), full of jujus, *kùpú* (*layaaji* in Fulfulde), over other clothes. He girded it with a long girdle (*mabaraszvol* in Fulfulde). On top of *gàarày* he put on an iron chain cloth called *cafayat* (*safaare, marabbaare njamndi* in Fulfulde), which even a spear could not pierce. His chain armour does not exist any more, since a blacksmith turned it into hoes.

The Musgum people did not have any arrows, which the Kanuri made in Bornu, nor any guns. Thus, Zigla had as arms only spears, called *kàyày* (*labbo* in Fulfulde). He preferred to ride a black horse with a white head, called *bùulù* (*mbuulu* in Fulfulde).

7. Zigla started his career as a thief under the great Musgum thief, Màynì Àzàŋá. He plotted many intertribal and intratribal wars with him. Although Màynì Àzàŋá was the head of the bandits, Zigla was the strongest of all, and the bravest.

8. When Zigla reached the age of fifty, he left his leader and founded his own band at Mogoye (*Mogonye* in Fulfulde), his home village. The separation was made because of a quarrel over the distribution of the booty taken from the Fulbe in Balaza. He then entered into alliance with Dàmàkáapi and Tèpèsàkì, and declared himself as Lawàn Zigla Mogoye.

9. Zigla subjugated almost all the inhabitants of Mayo Danai, a part of Diamaré,
and a part of Margui-Wandala. The wet plain of *yaɗे* was a natural barrier, and it prevented him from advancing to Logone and Chari, but he had been to Waza. In addition, he attacked Yagoua, Yooldeewo, Balaza, Barka, and Madalam via Girvidik. He reached Gourou-Gourou in the north.

**Fight between the Kanuri and Zigla**

10. When the Kanuri wanted to attack Zigla, they had to make a big enclosure of tree branches into which they put all the horsemen. They barred the gate of the enclosure with a huge log of *arpåf* or *Acacia albida*. They decided to attack Zigla if the hooves of their horses cut the log in two when going out of the enclosure. If they could not cut the log in two, they were not yet numerous enough and must look for more horsemen. The Kanuri had a gun called *girùm*, while the Musgum did not. The former charged the ammunition with an iron rod, and it took a long time to charge after shooting. As soon as they finished shooting, the courageous Musgum fighters came to kill their enemies with their spears. This was real war. Some died. Some were made slaves. Some hid themselves. Some ran away. But the Kanuri were never successful in catching Zigla.

**Fight against the Kalâq Musgum**

11. Zigla captured the village of Girvidik and drove away the people of Kalâq, called *mâkânlây*. This is how he took the village. He promised the head of the

23) *Fulfulde* word, *yaɗe* ‘wet plain liable to inundation.’
24) *Wâjâ* in Musgum.
25) *Baraka* and *Madalam* could not be identified. *Baraka* seems to be Barkaya near Kaykay.
26) Firearms were introduced at the time of Idris Amsami, one of the most renowned of Bornu kings, and the first to use the title of Sultan (1571–1603). It was due to his muskets (imported from Tripoli) that he was able to subdue thoroughly the numerous pagan tribes within his territory, encouraging them to attack each other [MEEK 1971: 80]. Of what little use even the firelock is to the latter (= the Kanuri), I had ample opportunity of judging, several musketeers having come to me anxiously entreating me to provide them with flints, as their own had been lost or had proved useless [BARTH 1965: 368].
27) They (= Musgum fighters) generally carry only one spear, but several “gōliyòs” or hand-bills, the latter being evidently their best weapon, not only in close fight, but even at a distance, as they are very expert in throwing this sharp and double-pointed iron sideways, and frequently inflict severe wounds on the legs of horses as well as of men. Some of their chiefs protect their persons with a strong doublet made of buffalo’s hide, with the hair inside [BARTH 1965: 374].
Zigla probably used a horse when he attacked the Kanuris.

Here, there is an interesting description:

They make a broad, open wound on the back of their small sturdy ponies, in order to keep their seat; and when they want to ride at full speed, they often scratch or cut their legs in order to glue themselves to the horse’s flanks by means of the blood which oozes from the wounds; for, as I have stated above, they have neither saddle, stirrups, nor bridle, and they use nothing but a simple rope to guide their animals [BARTH 1965: 373–374].
28) Of course, these immense forests, which separate one principality, and I might say one village from another, are themselves a consequence of the want of intelligence and of the barbarous blindness of these pagan tribes, who, destitute of any common bond of national unity, live entirely separated from, and even carry on war against each other [BARTH 1965: 376].
Kalag people to fight against the Fulbe of Bogo. The Kalag people headed by Kèbesnàakìm came to Gugom, a small village eight kilometers from Girvidik, and they joined Zigla’s fighters. When everyone had fallen asleep, Zigla woke up, and cut the throats of all the persons of the Kalag group except two. One was called Bepledegday, and the other, Dàycúlí. When Kèbesnàakì, the chief, was dying, he said to Dàycúlí: “Escape, Dàycúlí. At least you should live. Go, my son.” Dàycúlí escaped.

Dàycúlí and another Musgum man called Awersegt Paalaw helped organize a strong band with the help of the Bogo Fulbe. They took revenge on Zigla at Huray nay gootay. This is the only time Zigla was defeated. In order to defeat him, the Musgum team attacked him from the front, and the Bogo Fulbe from behind. In this sandwich attack, he had no choice but to run away.

Because of this defeat, bad relations grew between the Kañay clan, Zigla’s clan, and the Kalag clan. The Kalag clan asked the European who lived in Lànátà to intervene, and they finally regained Girvidik.

The relations between the Fulbe and the Musgum
12. There was no peace between the Fulbe and the Musgum. They were fatal enemies to each other. Naturally, when a Musgum found a Fulbe man, he killed him. Zigla regarded the Fulbe like chickens, because they feared him. He became rich only because of the Fulbe. The Fulbe hoped for his early death.

The end of Zigla’s former chief
13. After the separation of Zigla and Tèpésákì, Máynì Azàngà’s force became very small. Only the group led by his son remained with him. Máynì Azàngà wanted to attack Girvidik. Instead, they were defeated by Ásiyàkì, the head of the Kalag Musgum, who had a bitter memory of Zigla because of what had happened to his fathers.

The end of Zigla
14. When the Europeans reached Cameroon, Zigla’s first son, Abokowa, wanted to take the place of his father. He plotted with the Fulbe, and helped the Europeans arrest his father. Zigla spent several years in Mora before being freed. After being set free, he would not go back to Mogoye. Instead, he settled in Cakamajje near Jiddel.

At that time he was very old and had lost all his property. He had only a slave, who prepared his food for him. He died naturally without any sickness,

29) At the beginning of the nineteenth century Bogo was created and the Feroobe settled in this area. By 1850 the Mandara made many expeditions to try to reestablish the rule over the area, but they were never successful [MOHAMMADOU 1975: 190].
30) Dàycúlí literally means ‘two persons’.
31) A location near Pus or Pouss.
before the coming of the *Dofla*\(^{32}\) epidemic. When he died, no one made *sadaka*\(^{33}\) for him until the head of Girvidik, whose name was Agurda, offered a cow for the purpose.

Zigla’s sons were not able to succeed to their father’s place, and they all died poor.

Zigla’s epithets

15. Zigla had many eulogized names such as:

- **Zigla a háná màyná káy** ‘Zigla who does not fear his companion’
- **Zigla a tūr nà Bōkó** ‘Zigla who ran into the Boko village, namely, Zigla who did unnecessary things *(karammbaniijo in Fufulde)*
- **Zigla ǎqélé màdī Zigla** ‘Zigla, an egg in Zigla’s mouth’
- **Zigla à pándhóy jàrwáy** ‘Zigla the female ass with a child’
- **Zigla Bāráskó** ‘Zigla the activist’
- **Zigla dīdī nà Bōnggōr** ‘Zigla, the big tree of Bongor’
- **Zigla Gàmáw Danndí** ‘Zigla Danndi the bastard; Zigla Danndi as strong as the gamaaw shrub’
- **Zigla Gréy** ‘Zigla who was born right after his father’s death’
- **Zigla Gréy Mogoye** ‘Zigla of Mogonye who was born after his father’s death’
- **Zigla Jënjén Gùrnày** ‘Zigla with a lion’s vertebral column’

Praise song sung when cleaning the *karal* field\(^{34}\)

16.

- *A làakáy yée hàyà.* ‘Oh, men, haya.
- *A làakáy yée hàyà.* Oh, men, haya.
- **Zigla àmál Kàḍáyďá.** Zigla the Kaḍay people’s rod
- **Zigla Jënjén Gùrnày.** Zigla, with a lion’s vertebral column’
- **Zigla, wár kú àmdá plà, hàyà.** Zigla, your mood has changed, haya.
- **Bàrkú àlákáy, hàyà.** Young men, haya.
- **Zigla wàrnày bùndí.** Zigla has a belly like bùndí.
- **Ādàakásàm dé, hàyà.** *Adakasam, haya.*
- **Ālíibàrkú, dò màžáa màgáy lây, hàyà.** Men, beer is not good either, haya.

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\(^{32}\) According to an informant, the epidemic called *dofla* in Fufulde appeared in 1921. When a person is attacked by *dofla*, he dies in the morning although he seemed well when he went to bed. This epidemic came from the north.

\(^{33}\) *(<ːjː> ‘alms, charity’) sadaka is thought to help the dead; it is given in the name of Allah, and is not consumed by the offerers.

\(^{34}\) The *karal* field is employed for replanting young millet plants about thirty centimeters long at the beginning of the dry season. When they clean the *karal* field with communal labor, they sing songs.
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Ha yayoo, bärkà àläkäy	Ha yayoo, young men,
hmmn. 
hmmn.
Háyà, àzärmónìyìg, Haya, àzärmónìyìg,
àzärmónìyìg. àzärmónìyìg.

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