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A Brief Account of Life of Zigla according to Musgum Tradition

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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 Fulbe 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:

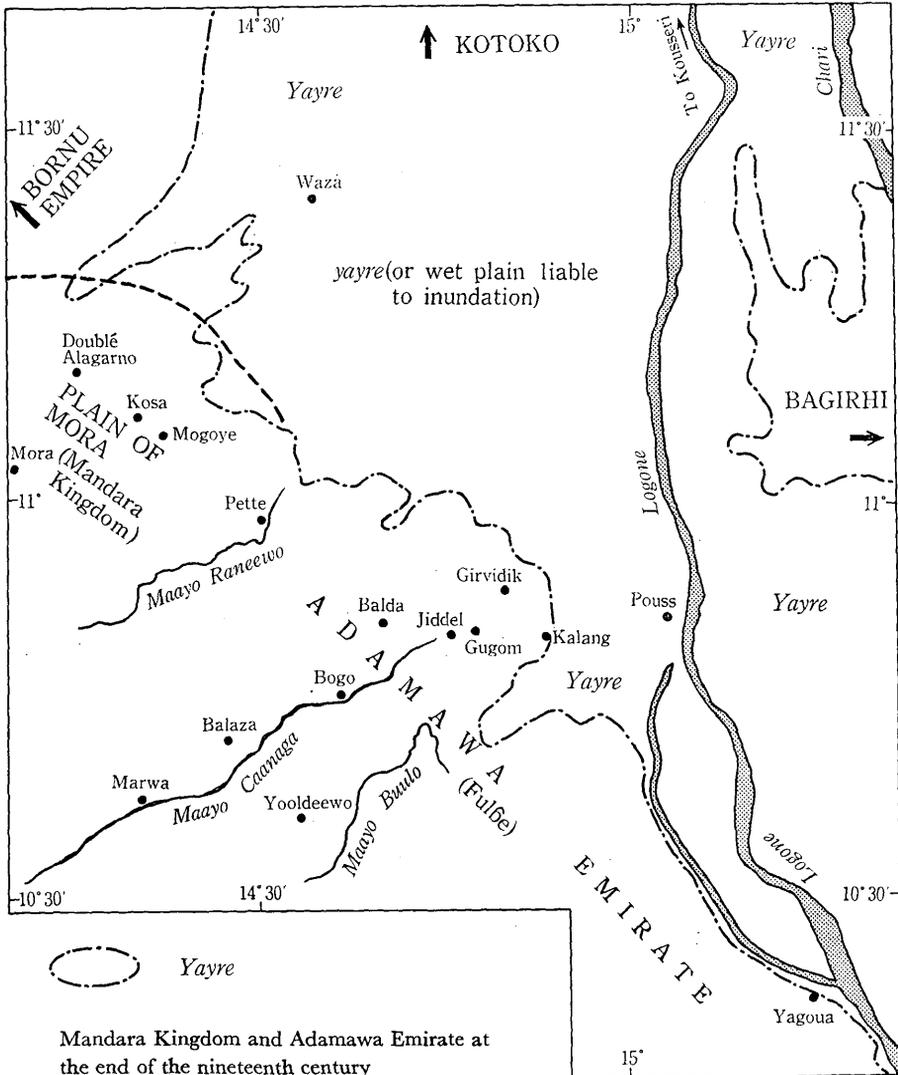
The Mandara kingdom reigned over the Musgum, who lived in the area from Girvidik to Pus in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The chief of Pus was appointed to be one of the vassals of the kingdom, and had a title, *Lawan-a-Mugulna* 'the governor of the Musgum'¹⁾. With his assistance the Mandara 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 Fulbe 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 Fulbe. Because of the

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1) A 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 Fulbe.; 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].

Fulbe occupation, the residence of the *Lawan-a-Mugulna* had to be moved to Mogonye. [MOHAMMADOU 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 Fulbe²⁾.



2) The relation between the Mandara and the Fulbe was extremely strained until relatively recently. The Fulbe were considered to be the "hereditary enemies" of the Mandara [MOHAMMADOU 1975: 207].

The colonization of North Cameroon by the Germans took place in 1901 and ended in 1914. The Germans ruled over the Fulbe indirectly, installing a puppet lamidat of Suudî or Abdurraamaani Suyuudî 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 Fulbe.

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 Fulbe, entitled “*Zigila*”⁴⁾, and 2) some German documents stored in the National Archives of Yaoundé⁵⁾. 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 Wandî, 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 Wandî 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 Azaḡa, the fight against the Fulbe, his death etc. They have been presented without any change.

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

5) There exist the following six documents related to Zigla: 1) Correspondance et rapport concernant l’expédition contre Zigila de novembre et décembre 1906 (187–192, No. 217), 2) Rapport résumé du 25/11/06 de l’affaire Zigila (182–184, No. 217), 3) Rapport du 2/12/06 du Résident de Kousseri au Gvr. rel. à la situation politique à l’issue de l’expédition Zigila (193–194, No. 217), 4) Rapport du 1/1/07 du Résident de Kousseri au Gvr. re. à l’expédition menée d’octobre à décembre 1906 contre le bandit Mousgoum Zigila (167–178, No. 217), 5) Lettre du 25/4/08 du Résident de Kousseri au Gvr. rel. au bétail volé par Zigila, 6) Croquis accompagnant le rapport sur l’expédition contre Zigila (118, No. 217), Résidence de l’Adamaoua, le Service des Archives Nationales de Yaoundé [MOHAMMADOU 1972].

ZIGLA'S LIFE HISTORY

1. Zigla⁶⁾ was the son of Gréŋ⁷⁾, and the grandson of Amdesni⁸⁾, and he belonged to the Mugulna⁹⁾ clan of the Kaɗay group who dominated the plain of Mora¹⁰⁾. He was born in *Mogoye*[†] (*Mogonye* in Fulfulde) near Kosa in the Mora district, around 1830¹¹⁾. 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 *Làbà*, 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 Àbòkòwá, Àzàŋá¹²⁾, Kúujé¹³⁾, Lawan Hammat[†], Abaali[†] 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 *ɸuyaaɗ*¹⁴⁾.

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 *mudi*[†], a short white gown

6) *Zigila* is a Musgum goddess who distributes babies to pregnant women.; The I. A. I. alphabet has been employed for Musgum words. There are twenty-six consonants in the Musgum dialect of Girvidik: ' , b, ɓ, c, d, ɗ, f, g, h, j, k, l, ɓ, m, n, ŋ, p, r, s, t, v, w, y, z, ɔ. There are seven short oral vowels: a, e, ə, i, o, u, ü [y]; five long oral vowels: aa, ee, ii, oo, uu; and four short nasal vowels: ā, ē, ī, ō and one long nasal vowel: ōō. There are a high tone and a low tone marked by / and \ respectively. Note that the I. P. A. symbols are in [] if they are different from those of I. A. I.

7) *Gréŋ* is a name given to a baby born after its father's death; cf. *Greŋà*, female form of *Gréŋ*.

8) † is employed when the tone is not identified.

9) According to this information, the Mandara title *Lawan-a-Mugulna* signifies the head of the Mugulna subgroup of the Kaɗay clan.

10) The plain of Mora is called *Walna* in Musgum.

11) A *mbooku* singer, Mammadi Bello, told me that he saw Zigla ill in bed with Guinea worms about thirty years ago in Jiddel, and he was too old to walk. If Zigla was born in 1830, he lived to more than 116 years of age. When the Zigla expedition took place, he must have been strong enough to be active. It is my guess that he was born in the middle of the nineteenth century.

12) Àzàŋá was named after Zigla's great chief, Mayni Àzàŋá.

13) *Huunde* means 'thing, animal' in Fulfulde. This name was given with a wish that the boy would be rich with many possessions (*kuuje*, plural of *huunde*).

14) Nuts of *Balanites Aegyptiaca*.

made of *gabaga*¹⁵⁾ 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 *gàaráy*¹⁶⁾ (= *d'anciki* in Fulfulde), full of jujus, *kùpú* (= *layaaji* in Fulfulde), over other clothes. He girded it with a long girdle (= *mabaraswol* in Fulfulde). On top of *gaaray* 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 arrows¹⁷⁾, which the Kanuri made in Bornu, nor any guns. Thus, Zigla had as arms only spears, called *káwáy* (= *labbo* in Fulfulde). He preferred to ride a black horse with a white head, called *búulò*¹⁸⁾ (= *mbuulu* in Fulfulde).

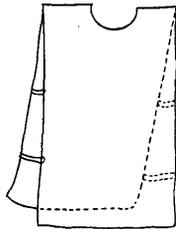
7. Zigla started his career as a thief under the great Musgum thief, Màyní Àzàṅá. He plotted many intertribal and intratribal wars with him. Although Màyní Àzàṅá¹⁹⁾ was the head of the bandits, Zigla was the strongest of all, and the bravest.

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 Balaza²⁰⁾. He then entered into alliance with Dàmàkáapi and Tépésáakù²¹⁾, and declared himself as Lawan²²⁾ Zigla Mogoye.

9. Zigla subjugated almost all the inhabitants of Mayo Danai, a part of Diamaré,

15) < *gabaga*, Kanuri word for strips of native cloth before being sewn; To the end of the nineteenth century, *gabaga* was used as money together with thaler, cauris, and rotli in Bornu [TEMPLE 1965: 434].

16) *gàaráy*



17) According to the informant, arrows were made in Bornu.

18) *búulò* may have derived from a Kanuri word, *bul* 'white'.

19) Màyní Àzàṅá literally means Azaṅa's friend.

20) There are two Balaza villages, Balaza Alkaali 'Balaza of judge' and Balaza Lawan 'Balaza of district head'. The people of these Balaza villages belong to the Maaliki group of the D̄ara clan [MOHAMMADOU 1976].

21) *Tépésáakù* belonged to the same lineage as Zigla.

22) *Lawan* means the head of a district in Fulfulde as mentioned above. Usually there is someone who bestows the title. In Zigla's case, did he claim to be *lawan* by himself? Or did this title come from the king of Mandara?

and a part of Margui-Wandala. The wet plain of *yàré*²³⁾ was a natural barrier, and it prevented him from advancing to Logone and Chari, but he had been to Waza²⁴⁾. In addition, he attacked Yagoua, Yooldeewo, Balaza, Barka, and Madalam²⁵⁾ 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 *ârpâf* 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 *gùrlùm*²⁶⁾, 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 spears²⁷⁾. 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 Kalaj Musgum²⁸⁾

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

23) < Fulfulde word, *yayre* 'wet plain liable to inundation.'

24) Waza, *Wájà* in Musgum.

25) *Barka* and *Madalam* could not be identified. *Barka* 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 "góliyós" 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, destituted of any common bond of national unity, live entirely separated from, and even carry on war against each other [BARTH 1965: 376].

Kalaŋ people to fight against the Fulbe of Bogo²⁹). The Kalaŋ people headed by Kèbèsnáakùm 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 Kalaŋ group except two. One was called Beŋleŋday, and the other, Dàycúlù³⁰). When Kèbèsnáakù, the chief, was dying, he said to Dàycúlù: "Escape, Dàycúlù. At least you should live. Go, my son." Dàycúlù escaped.

Dàycúlù and another Musgum man called Awerseŋ† Paalaw† then organized 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 Kaɗay clan, Zigla's clan, and the Kalaŋ clan. The Kalaŋ clan asked the European who lived in Ɖànàtá³¹) 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 Tépésáakù, Màyní Àzàŋás force became very small. Only the group led by his son remained with him. Màyní Àzàŋá wanted to attack Girvidik. Instead, they were defeated by Àsiyáakù, the head of the Kalaŋ 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 Cakamaaje 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) Dàyculu literally means 'two persons'.

31) A location near Pus or Pouss.

before the coming of the *Dofta*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:

<i>Ziglá à hùná mà yù ká y</i>	'Zigla who does not fear his companion'
<i>Ziglá à yór nà Bòkó</i>	'Zigla who ran into the Boko village, namely, Zigla who did unnecessary things (<i>karammbanijjo</i> in Fulfulde)'
<i>Ziglá àyṭé mādí Ziglá</i>	'Zigla, an egg in Zigla's mouth'
<i>Ziglá à púlóhōy zàrwáy</i>	'Zigla the female ass with a child'
<i>Ziglá Bàràskú</i>	'Zigla the activist'
<i>Ziglá dídí nà Bòngòr</i>	'Zigla, the big tree of Bongor'
<i>Ziglá Gàmáw Danndi†</i>	'Zigla Danndi the bastard; Zigla Danndi as strong as the <i>gamaw</i> shrub'
<i>Ziglá Gréy</i>	'Zigla who was born right after his father's death'
<i>Ziglá Gréy Mogoye†</i>	'Zigla of Mogonye who was born after his father's death'
<i>Ziglá Jènjéy Gùrnà y</i>	'Zigla with a lion's vertebral column'

Praise song sung when cleaning the *karal* field³⁴⁾

16.

<i>A làaká y yé há yà.</i>	'Oh ,men, <i>haya</i> .
<i>A làaká y yé há yà.</i>	Oh, men, <i>haya</i> .
<i>Ziglá àmál Kád'áydá.</i>	Zigla the Kaɗay people's rod
<i>Ziglá Jènjéy Gùrnà y.</i>	Zigla, with a lion's vertebral column'
<i>Ziglá, wàr kú àndá plá,</i>	Zigla, your mood has changed,
<i>há yà.</i>	<i>haya</i> .
<i>Bàrkú àlàkáy, há yà.</i>	Young men, <i>haya</i> .
<i>Ziglá wàrnà y bìndí.</i>	Zigla has a belly like <i>bìndí</i> .
<i>Àdàkàsàm dé, há yà</i>	<i>Adakasam, haya</i> .
<i>Àlìibàrkú, dó màzàa</i>	Men, beer is not good either, <i>haya</i> .
<i>màzà y là y, há yà.</i>	

32) According to an informant, the epidemic called *dofta* in Fulfulde appeared in 1921. When a person is attacked by *dofta*, he dies in the morning although he seemed well when he went to bed. This epidemic came from the north.

33) (< ٤٣ > '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.

<i>Há yàyoò, bàrkú àláká y</i>	<i>Ha yayoo, young men,</i>
<i>h̄h̄h̄m̄.</i>	<i>hmm.</i>
<i>Háyá, àzèrmánìy,</i>	<i>Haya, àzèrmánìy,</i>
<i>àzèrmánìy.</i>	<i>àzèrmánìy.</i>

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