

A close reading of Hamman Yaji's diary: slave raiding and montagnard responses in the mountains around Madagali (northeast Nigeria and northern Cameroon)

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Abstract

In the early 20th century, Hamman Yaji, the Fulani ruler of Madagali, developed a unique and intensified form of slave raiding, extending it into the Mandara Mountains proper. This paper describes and analyzes his slaving strategy, tactics and results in the light of his diary, which records his restructuring and management of this economic sector, contemporary written sources, oral traditions and ethnography. It pays particular attention to the responses of the montagnard groups on which he preyed and develops an interpretation of the nature of the interface between the Fulani and the montagnard resistance.

Introduction

The Mandara Mountains and surrounding foothills and plains had been the scene of slave raiding in various forms since at least the 16th century AD, but until the early 20th century the mountains themselves had been relatively little affected (David in prep.). This paper describes a brief, brutal and unique example of intensification of slave raiding carried into the mountains by Hamman Yaji, Fulani lamido (chief) of Madagali in the period 1912-1920. Madagali district, now in Adamawa State, Nigeria, had a varied and turbulent colonial history. First incorporated into German Kamerun in 1902, after 1916 it came under the partial and erratic control of the French, based in Maroua, until 1920, when responsibility was acquired by the British, though formalized under a League of Nations mandate only in 1922 (Vaughan 1995; Kirk-Greene 1969). The montagnards¹ on whom Hamman Yaji preyed consisted of numerous ethno-linguistic groups speaking related Chadic languages and organized into small chiefdoms rarely exceeding a few thousand inhabitants (Figure 1).

¹ While such groups are sometimes described globally as *Kirdi*, a word of Kanuri origin meaning “pagan” (<http://www.mandaras.info/Kirdi.html>), this term is derogatory. I therefore refer to the groups on whom Hamman Yaji preyed as “montagnards”, for even if resident on the plains they drew from the same symbolic and cultural reservoir (David and Kramer 2001: 216-18) as the inhabitants of the highlands. When some moved down onto the plains, they retained and continue to retain aspects of the montagnard cultural pattern.

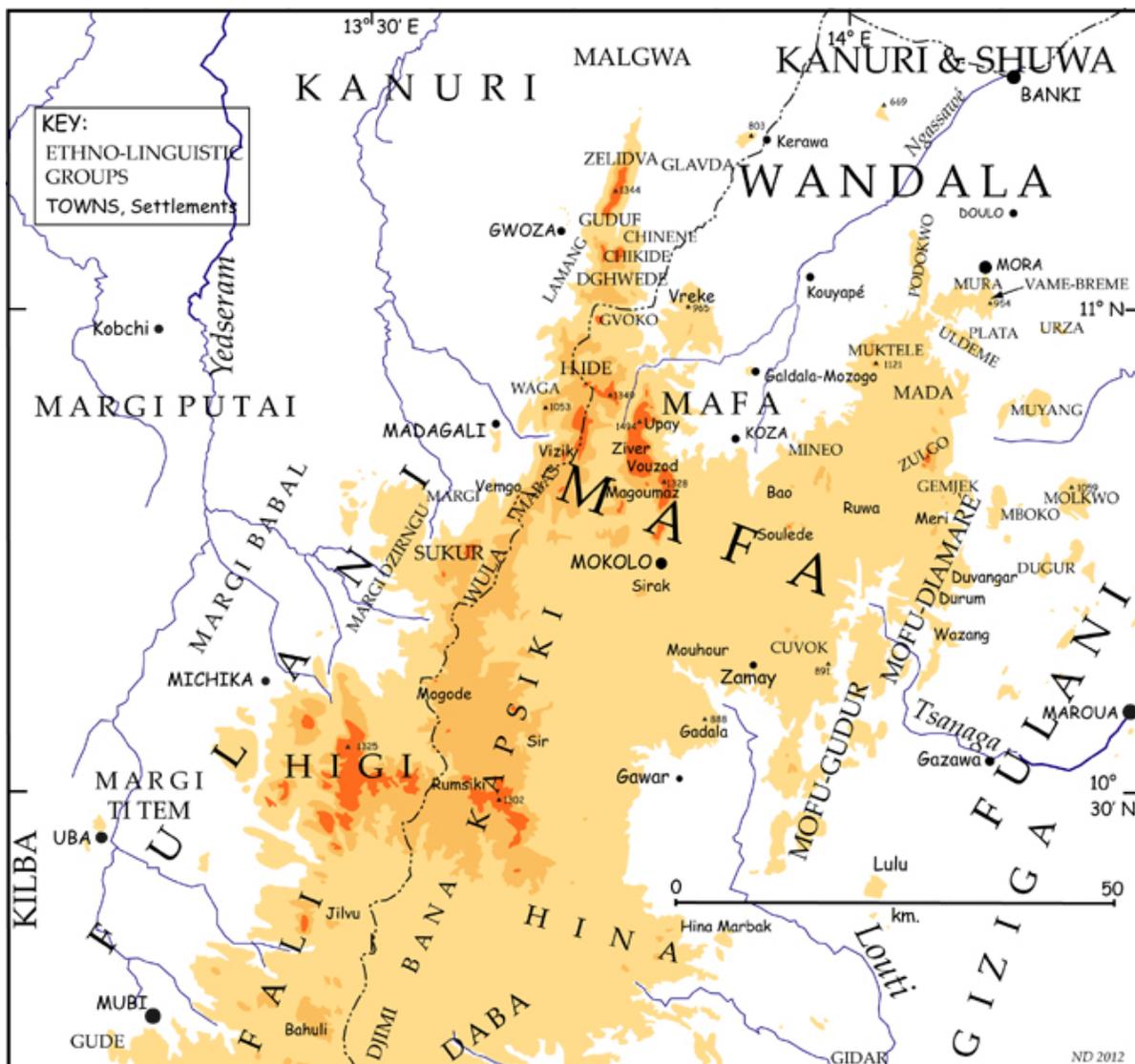


Figure 1. The northern Mandara Mountains and nearby surrounding plains showing topographic features and selected ethno-linguistic groups, towns and settlements. The Nigeria-Cameroon border is indicated.

The northern Mandara Mountains had been occupied by small groups of farmers since at least the second millennium BC (MacEachern 2012: 52-55). From perhaps AD 1200 settlement began to increase and in the 15th-16th centuries there is local evidence of communities constructing impressive monumental sites, probably related to major periods of drought (David 2008). Montagnards practiced local religions and made their living by the subsistence farming of staple millets and numerous other crops, the labor-intensive husbandry of small numbers of cattle, sheep and goats, and poultry, and various crafts including iron smelting and smithing (Hallaire 1991; Sterner 2003). The effects of natural disasters and increasing slaving pressure on surrounding areas exerted by the Wandala (or Mandara), Borno, Baghirimi and, in the 19th century, Fulani states stimulated immigration into the

mountains, mostly of individuals and kin-based groups who were absorbed into established communities, where they sometimes eventually took over political leadership (Seignobos 1991a and b), as for example among the Mofu-Diamaré (Vincent 1991: 149-246) and, according to oral traditions, the Sukur (<http://www.sukur.info/Soc/Legends.htm>).

As montagnard numbers increased land came to be a scarce resource, setting communities against each other, while at the same time the mountains became more attractive to slavers. Population densities attained 100 - >200 persons/km² in regions where landforms required the building of agricultural terraces in order to sustain life. Much lower densities in the <10-45 persons /km² range characterized less defensible intra-montane plateaus, as for example south of Mokolo. Thus competition for land and the external threat from the plains states led to shifting patterns of intra-montagnard alliances and enmities, a situation of constant inter-group tension, liable at any time to erupt into small-scale internecine warfare. Travel even within the mountains was dangerous and undertaken only with precautions, for example in armed parties or under the protection of a kinsman or affine in the group visited. These divisions made it impossible for montagnard communities, often independent political entities, to band together in sufficient numbers to combat their common enemies. And so, when Hamman Yaji succeeded to the Madagali chieftaincy, montagnards were concentrated on the slopes of the mountains and nearby inselbergs. Although densely occupied, their settlements were not nucleated into villages. Compounds were set amongst their fields and agricultural terraces, only some on rocky outcrops beyond the reach of cavalry.

Madagali, the Europeans and the diary

The ... [northern districts of Madagali, Cubunawa. and Mubi] taken over by this province ... are the most lawless, ill-governed places I have seen in Nigeria ... Slave dealing and slave raiding are rampant ... chiefs of minor importance were given rifles with which they were encouraged to attack the wretched pagans [who are] hiding like frightened monkeys on inaccessible hilltops ... of course, everyone goes about fully armed: spears, shields, bows and arrows, clubs, etc. (The British Resident, Yola province, in 1920, cited by Anthony Kirk-Greene 1958: 84)

From about 1809, the Fulani chiefdom of Madagali had owed allegiance to the Sokoto Caliphate through Modibbo Adama, who was to become Emir of Adamawa with his capital at Yola. Hamman Yaji came into power in 1902, succeeding his father Bakari who had been shot by troops commanded by Oberleutnant Hans Dominik, and ruled until deposed by the British in 1927 (Kirk-Greene 1954, 1958: 60, 1995). Madagali, in 1902 a militarized outpost of the Adamawa emirate with other Fulani chiefdoms and settlements nearby, is located at the foot of an inselberg. Montagnards lived in close proximity and contested borders with Borno and Wandala lay only a few kilometers to the west, north

and northeast. To the east across the mountains other Fulani chiefdoms forming part of Adamawa claimed dominion over but did not control the mountains and their inhabitants (Mohammadou 1988).

The events described below took place in the context of the encounter of Africans and European colonial powers, the latter engaged from 1914 to 1916 (in this part of the world) in the First World War. Adamawa was, prior to the incursion of the Europeans at the start of the 20th century, a major supplier of slaves to the Fulani-Hausa emirates of the caliphate, and this continued with interruptions and changes in scale for the following two decades. Weiss (2000, and see Midel 1990) describes how even before World War I the German administration in northern Kamerun lacked the manpower and the will to rule effectively and to stamp out slavery. The Germans and the French and British who succeeded them were similarly constrained – and often influenced by racist beliefs – to practice forms of indirect rule whereby montagnard groups were assigned to Fulani rulers (see Goodridge 1994) who were given responsibility for and often a remarkably free hand in first their pacification and “taming”, and eventually the taxation imposed on Africans to demonstrate acceptance of European authority and to defray its costs. Assignations of particular montagnard groups to native rulers were capricious, or appeared so to those rulers:

On [13 June 1914] ... I [Hamman Yaji] received a letter from the Christians [Germans] telling me that they had taken away from me the pagans of Sirak, Mufuli [Mefe] and Midiri [Midre].²

Weiss (2000: 192-3) summarizes German Resident Schwartz's March 1911 report to his superiors after a tour of Adamawa:

The situation was unstable along the roads in the lamidats of Mugulbu, Mubi, Uba, Mitschiga, and Moda and in the areas of the neighboring non-Muslim societies. The lamido of Madagali was criticized by Schwartz for so severely raiding his non-Muslim neighbors that the whole border area of Madagali had become deserted. More generally, it was reported that "the pagans are stealing and robbing anywhere they can. The Fulani are doing, whenever possible, the same." The problem of slave raids, cattle thefts, slave trading, and smuggling was especially serious along the German-British border. Highway robbery, according to Schwartz, was actually slave raiding.

Such, at least in the eyes of the colonial power, was the situation, one of endemic, chaotic and fratricidal violence, when Hamman Yaji began to dictate a journal to a scribe. For, very exceptionally, this Fulani warlord maintained a diary from September 1912 until August 1927. This describes, amongst other matters, its author's raids on the montagnards, demonstrating in the process that

² The translator's spelling is retained for places, chiefdoms, ethnonyms, etc. mentioned in Hamman Yaji's diary, modern equivalents being given in brackets wherever possible and subsequently in the text (see my annotated index of the diary at [http://www.sukur.info/Mont/HammanYaji INDEX.pdf](http://www.sukur.info/Mont/HammanYaji%20INDEX.pdf)). Except in quotes, states and important towns are spelled in modern fashion.

depopulation of the Madagali border area was palpably untrue, as indeed were many though certainly not all (see Midel 1990: 318-28) of the montagnards' depredations reported by Fulani to their colonial masters.

The diary's editors, Vaughan and Kirk-Greene (1995), focus on the broader historical context and the British view of the events that led to Hamman Yaji's eventual deposition, but they have not exhausted its informational potential. The diary, its original long lost, was dictated and written in Arabic "... of a very illiterate kind ... it is sometimes very difficult to discover the correct meaning" as its erudite translator Captain L. N. Reed wrote in 1927 (Reed in Vaughan and Kirk-Greene 1995: 47) and it uses numerous Fulfulde words.³ Reed, probably instructed to extract what was politically relevant from the diary, unfortunately only summarized Hamman Yaji's account of his trading activities and local and private affairs for the period prior to January 1924.

The evidential value of any diary is open to question. In this case the points of contact with other chronicles are few, but the dates that can be checked, for example the fall of Garoua, the handover of administrative responsibility from French to British, are correct, as are the names of contemporary rulers and others. The diary appears to have been written for himself alone, not for posterity and certainly not as an apology for his life.⁴ I suggest that one motivating factor was that Hamman Yaji was as frustrated with the ongoing state of lawlessness as Resident Schwarz, though for very different reasons, and that he had resolved to put raiding on an efficient, commercially viable footing. The diary records his restructuring and management of this economic sector.

What did he add and what did he omit? Additions I think none; he is frank about his failures at least as regards his raids. However, we learn little of the larger political and environmental context. For example there is no mention of the famine of 1912-14 or other natural disasters affecting the region in the period covered by the diary (Beauvillain 1989: 116-309). There is, however, internal evidence that the raiding record is incomplete. For example, on January 17th 1915, Hamman Yaji states that he had acquired 379 cattle in two months, but the diary records only two raids in 1914, one in November and one in December that between them produced 70 cattle. It is possible that he had acquired the remaining stock by some other means, but that would surely have been worthy of mention. This kind of omission requires that we regard his statistics of slaves, cattle and livestock

³ Reed arrived in Nigeria in 1925 after six years in Iraq, during which he "gained experience in regard to Mohammedan Laws and customs, and learnt to read and speak Arabic with ease." (Nigerian Archives Kaduna SNP 9/12 3331/1925)

⁴ An attachment to page 184 of the MS dated 10 Jan., 1926 and containing the words "Let him who pauses to regard this writing ..." was evidently written by Malam Abu Bakr and does not form part of the diary proper.

captured as minimum estimates. There is however one serious omission of which we have independent knowledge. On 6-13 September 1913, Resident Schwarz took action against Hamman Yaji for slaving. Weiss (1920: 195) gives the following account:

Lamido Madagali Hamman Yaji and his people were accused by two neighboring non-Muslim villages of having raided them several times during 1913 and enslaved over 200 people. Schwartz summoned the Lamido Madagali and forced him to return the enslaved people. Both the Lamido Madagali and his courtiers asked Schwartz not to take any harsh measures against them, but if they were to be caught again, they would lose their positions and power. Surprisingly, Schwartz agreed to this plea, perhaps out of pragmatic considerations. All the rifles of the Lamido Madagali were confiscated, the modern ones destroyed, and only the muzzle-loaders were returned to him. [and in a footnote] Of the 161 enslaved Mokolo [actually Mokola, a Mafa community⁵] people and 62 enslaved Sukur people, all but 22 Mokolo people had been returned by the middle of October. Only four of the enslaved were men, the rest were women and children.

Hamman Yaji's only reference to this major setback is imprecisely dated:

In [August-September 1913] ... the Governor and the Oberleutnant departed and I took leave of them safely. He sent Kobawim and Rizku to Gaur [Gawar], and God be praised for that.

According to the diary Hamman Yaji had made two raids on Mokola in 1913, obtaining 54 slaves, and two on Sukur, where he captured 22 slaves and one horse. The slaves obtained from Sukur since September 1912 up to the time of his trial numbered only 25. These figures are compelling evidence that Hamman Yaji began raiding some time before starting a diary, one that served the purpose of keeping an account of his slaving enterprise. He did not record his trial and punishment in the diary, I believe, for two reasons: first he didn't need to – he had learned a lesson (though not the one the Germans wished to convey) – and secondly he couldn't bear to put such a humiliation to paper, or rather admit it to his scribe, any more than when he was prevailed upon in 1920 to stop raiding altogether. Significant failures and setbacks are always referred to indirectly. His omission is thus full of information: on his character, as confirmation that his raiding had begun before the diary was started, and on a preference for female and young slaves (three boys are specifically mentioned).

With the above caveats, the diary can, at least as regards raiding, be considered an incomplete but factual account of his actions from which it is legitimate to draw limited conclusions. Other matters require mention. Whereas a check of two eclipses of the moon noted in the diary demonstrates that the translator's conversion of the Islamic to the Christian calendar is correct, the

⁵ References to Mokolo in the diary actually refer to the Mafa community of Mokola. This is located in the hills immediately northeast of present Mokolo and, slightly displaced to the west, is marked as Mokole on Moisel's maps

names of people and places present considerable difficulties. Suffice it to say that it is often unclear whether a montagnard name relates to a settlement, a clan, or a chief. Thus for example:

On [23 October 1920] ... while I was at Nyibango I heard that the pagans named Diskin had raided Wappara, so I made arrangements and sent Fadhl al Nar with his men to raid the pagans of Sukur.

This makes more sense than at first appears since the “pagans (*sic*) named Diskin” actually refers to Ndusheken, a chief of Sukur identified in the early colonial archives and in oral traditions (see <http://www.sukur.info/Hidis.htm>). Wappara is related to either Vapura and/or Wakkara, both Margi settlements, close to each other and to Mildu, and long under Madagali’s thumb.

From the beginning of the diary Hamman Yaji is in contact with the German Resident, Friedrich Dühring, in Garoua, for whom he collects taxes and to whom he supplies laborers and porters in considerable numbers. In September 1914 the first Englishman arrives from the north seeking horses and a little later the first Frenchmen. By then the British and Germans are fighting in and around Garoua. In June 1915, von Crailsheim surrenders besieged Garoua to the Allies, though Deputy Resident von Raben holds out in the mountain above Mora until February 1916. Hamman Yaji is soon sending laborers to Garoua again, now at the request of the Allies. In 1917 he begins to deal with the French station at Maroua, collecting taxes and becoming involved in a variety of lawsuits, mainly against other Fulani, in the French courts. The French mark out boundaries and assign and reassign various montagnard settlements to and from him. On at least two occasions his men and the French raid together – though the preferred French term was “police operation” (Beauvilain 1989: 320-27) – with limited success:

On [27 September 1916] ... the Lieutenant left for Mandara and the Sergeant with Yerima Baba went off to raid the pagans of Gaur.

On [29 September 1916]... Yerima Baba returned from raiding Gaur. The pagans had driven off my people, wounding 4 men and 1 horse.

Generally however, the French attitude seems to have been permissive. They were happy so long as the taxes continued to be brought in. Hamman Yaji could live with that.

In August of 1920 he is informed by the French and to his considerable displeasure that his land has been assigned to the British part of the mandated territories. British and French officials meet to settle the boundary and in December, although we are not told this directly nor is there archival evidence, Hamman Yaji is told by “the English judge with spectacles”, S.H.P. Vereker, the Political Officer accompanying a military patrol of the area (Vaughan 1995: 14; Kirk-Greene 1958: 84) that he must desist from raiding. In any case he records no raids after this date except for one carried out in 1922 and another in 1925, neither at his behest. From 1921 on Hamman Yaji farmed the hills by

collecting taxes, successfully keeping the existence of some villages from the British for several years, Sukur until 1927 shortly before his arrest.

Hamman Yaji can be said to have cauterized the historical memory of the montagnard inhabitants of this region in that, while one can elicit names of earlier chiefs, it is impossible to obtain any coherent history, but only accounts – legends rather than histories – of migratory movements in earlier times and fragmentary information about the 19th century. Montagnard history starts with his depredations, and in their stories, collected from the 1930s on by district officers and others, he is portrayed as a monster, who, amongst many atrocities, used enemies' severed heads to make cooking tripods (Kirk-Greene 1960: 75).

Hamman Yaji's raids

Horses, imported into the region from Borno and Wandala, and rifles from Europe gave Hamman Yaji an insurmountable advantage over the montagnards, who had very few horses or ponies, only three being captured from them in nine years, and no access to rifles. The horses were mainly used for transport, of soldiers to and of soldiers and captives from the field and for running down and herding montagnards and livestock (cf. Kosack 1992: 185). The rifles could – as muskets could not⁶ – kill and quell resistance over distances far greater than the tens of meters that poisoned arrows, or spears and the odd musket, could carry. Hamman Yaji's care to mention the acquisition or loss of single rifles or a handful of cartridges indicates that they were expensive and hard to come by. They were nevertheless sufficient: very few were required to establish a defensive perimeter around a raiding party.

The raids, not described in any detail, took the form of rapid strikes by troops of mounted Fulani accompanied by footmen, many either slaves or freedmen themselves, or montagnards who had reached an accommodation with Hamman Yaji, and who lived on the plains, often at the foot of their mountain of origin, under his protection and threat. The following extracts give some idea of the raids:

On [1 October 1912]... I bought a suit of chain-armor at the price of a horse, and on the same day raided Mufuli [Mefele, a straight line distance from Madagali of about 27 km]. There we captured two calves, a cow and 14 sheep and goats, a result which displeased me.

⁶ See Barth's (1965, vol. 2: 393) harsh criticism of muskets: bad powder, light pewter balls, often missing at 30 to 40 yards.

On [11 June 1913]... I sent Barde [one of his commanders] to Wula, and they captured 6 slave-girls and 10 cattle, and killed 3 men.

On [11 April 1918] ... my people raided the pagans of Dinlim [Ldingding ?] and captured 14 slaves, 33 cattle, 68 sheep and 45 goats, the total of the livestock being 118.

On [19 May 1920]... I sent Fadhl al Nar [his chief of soldiers] to raid the Muktu [Mukta] pagans. They captured 11 slaves and 13 cattle. They killed 9 of the pagans and 2 Michika men. One of our men was wounded.

A significant raid duration, of three nights spent on Dufur [Douvar] massif near Mokolo in January 1919, is mentioned only once.

We have seen that Hamman Yaji was raiding before he began the diary. The third entry, dated 2nd September 1912, describes an attack on Sukur in a taken-for-granted fashion. In 1913 the last raid is recorded in July. The judgment against him and especially the confiscation of rifles, in conjunction with a lack of mounts for his horsemen mentioned on 7 November 1914, explain the interruption in raiding until well after the start of World War I, by which time the German gaze was directed elsewhere. German and later Allied and French demands for labor probably reduced Hamman Yaji's military strength. The gathering of 370 laborers sent off, most probably to Garoua, in January 1916 may have hindered the mounting of raids in the last two quarters of 1915. However his stomach first began to cause him trouble in June of that year and accusations were being made against him by Bakari and Yaji (identities otherwise unknown). Soldiers came to Madagali to investigate at the end of November and he went, or was taken by them, to Garoua, where he won cases against four individuals, returning to Madagali at the end of December. He may once again have been defending himself against charges of slaving. From that time on the raids continue at a rate of between 15 and 25 a year until their abrupt cessation at the end of 1920.

I have identified 118 raids on 64 raid destinations, one unspecified, of which 38 can be located and a further six approximately. Nineteen names associated with raids remain unidentified, though the general area of some is apparent from the context. Figure 2 shows the range of Hamman Yaji's predations and the relation of Madagali to three regional power centers: Mora of the Wandala, Maroua of the Fulani and the French administration, and Mubi of the Fulani, the nearest British administrative center. Of the open circles representing montagnard settlements that were forcibly allied to Hamman Yaji or largely under his thumb, only two, Gulak and Mildu, were ever raided, both on 15 February 1920. Fulani and montagnards, separated by a deep social divide, inhabited a restricted geographic space. Libam, the closest village raided, is 12 km from Madagali, though getting there requires a steep 360 m climb up the Mabas escarpment. It is only 65 km from Madagali to the Uba hills, the site of the furthest raid, undertaken with the permission of the lamido of Uba, who

received a share of the spoils.

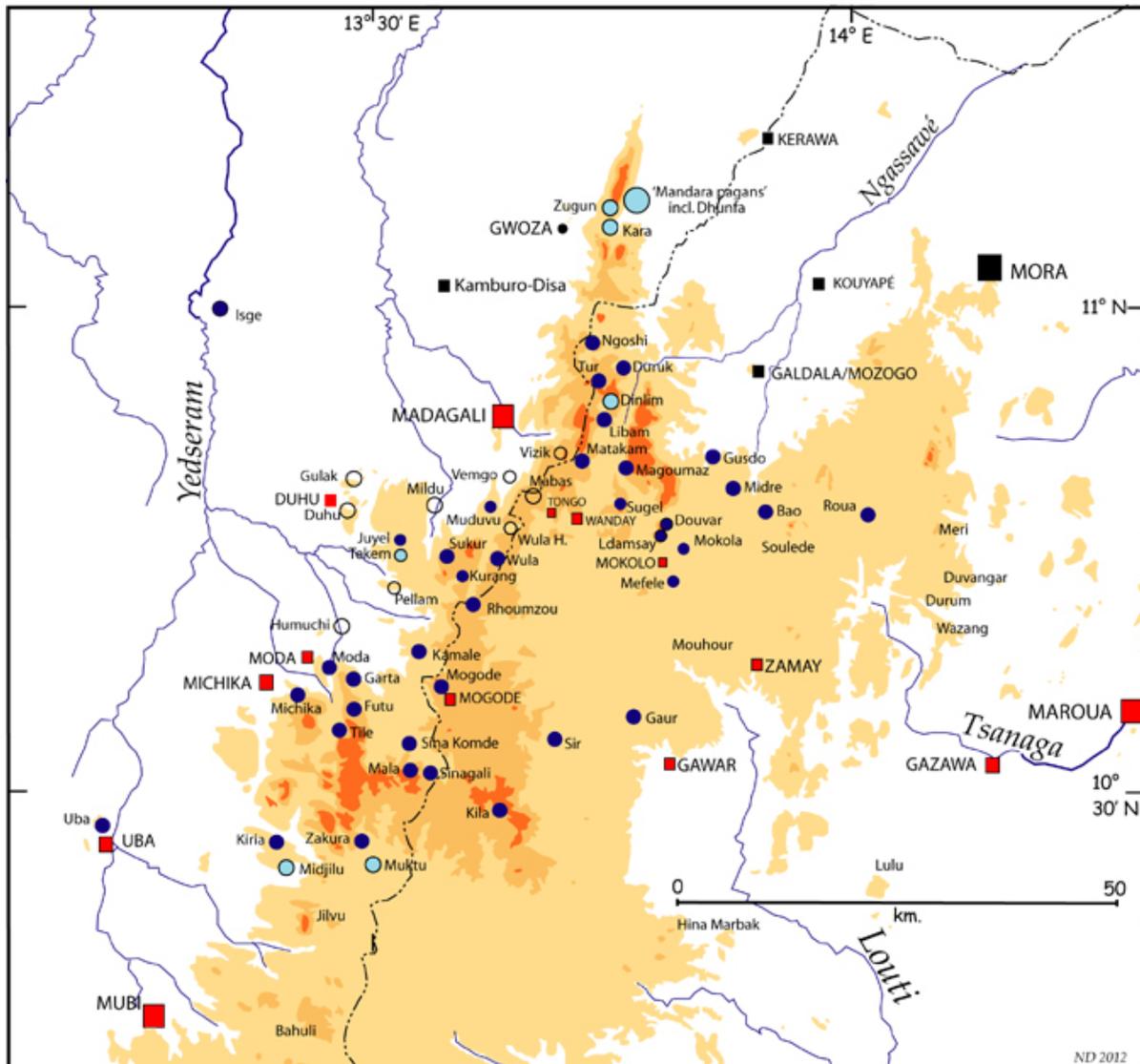


Figure 2. Madagali's raiding sphere in the Hamman Yaji years. Larger filled circles represent raiding targets, light blue ones indicating location approximate. Open circles are those villages under Hamman Yaji's control. A selection of other montagnard settlements are indicated by smaller black circles. Fulani settlements are indicated by red rectangles, Wandala ones by black rectangles.

Table 1. Raids by destination, year and month, with color coding of the most common target settlements or clusters. Refer to annotated index for names.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	N	
1912									Sukur	Mufuli Mufuli Sukur Muduvu Sukur+ Juyel		Kamale	7	
	Sina		Dugupchi Sinagali Unspecified	Mokolo Duruk to Matakam	Sukur Hudgudur	Wula Mokolo Midiri + Bula	Sina Sina							14
1914											Gumasi	Tur	2	
1915		Kurang Humumzi				Futu Kamale								4
1916	Kanikela		Mokolo Lamsa + Dubur Loko	Hida Mokolo	Kecele		Hindu	Mokolo	Gaur	Sina Sukur		Tile Hindu	15	
	Bedel	Midiri	Hindu	Mokolo	Uba Libam	Sinagali Hindu	Lamsha	Mijilu Fakara Sukur Dufur	Hindu Gedel	Midiri Wula Hindu	Gumasi Dufur	Dufur	24	
1918		Dubugu	Mokolo Mokolo	Dinlim Bau Bau			Midiri Ramdere Kamale (Wulunku)	Muduvu	Wudila Futu		Zakura Isge	Bau Sugel	16	
	Dufur	Tekem Tur	Uba hills	Rowa	Sir		Sinagali Mugudi Kamale		Kara	Bau Mokolo	Bau Waru	Wula	15	
1920	Z. Kumbura	Gulak + Mildu	Gaur Zugun + Mandara	Futu Lamsha Kalo Isge Gumusi	Gawar + Shir Gusdo Fatawi Gumasi	Kiria Gatahurki	Bau Wula Digel	Sina-Mala Wudala		Sukur			21	
				Gumusi	Muktu									
N	5	7	12	14	11	9	13	8	7	14	10	8	118	
%	4.2	5.9	10.2	11.9	9.3	7.6	11.0	6.8	5.9	11.9	8.5	6.8	100.0	

The multiplicity and dispersion of targets and his concern also to vary the month in which he attacked any particular settlement or cluster testify to Hamman Yaji's skill as a guerilla general, and ensured that montagnards would be unable to predict or prepare for attacks (Table 1). There are exceptions as when occasionally a village was hit twice within a week (Mefele and Sina), and oddities as when Hindu⁷ was raided five times in two years, though always in different months, and then never again. A more marked exception is Sukur, hit three times within September and October in 1912, in May and July 1913, in October 1916 and August 1917, and finally in October 1920. A partial explanation for this atypical pattern may be that Hamman Yaji was still learning his business in 1912 and 13.

The first eight raids produced very little return for substantial losses, including one disaster in which he lost both men and critical matériel:

On [8 January 1913]... the pagans of Sina killed 3 of my soldiers and captured 3 rifles. My people killed 5 of the pagans.

It is only on the ninth raid in March 1913, for which he had chosen or engaged a certain Mahawonga as leader "to hunt out slaves for me" that he begins to obtain a more than negligible return: eleven "slave girls" and a cow. Thereafter professionalisation is evident in the increasing reliance on named leaders to take his men into the field, especially Fadhl al Nar, appointed chief of soldiers in August 1916, who led 24 raids, and Jauro (Jauro Abba, Jauro Soji) who led eleven, sometimes with a co-leader. Hamman Yaji himself led, sometimes with co-leaders, no less than 42 raids (36%), though only two out of 21 in 1920, perhaps on account of his deteriorating health. Professionalism is also evident in the wearing by his "soldiers ... [of] a kind of khaki uniform, with red fezzes" (Kirk-Greene 1995: 35), but is better demonstrated by his ability to mount raids in rapid succession. Between the 10th and the 14th of April 1920, during which year he was averaging a raid every two weeks, he sent three separate raiding parties in different directions. Yet another indication is the distribution of raids by month (Fig. 2). The Bagirmians, according to Reyna (1990), were not alone in raiding mainly in the dry season when pagans had their crops harvested and threshed. Hamman Yaji raided throughout the year including during the rains when movement is difficult. The modal months are April, before sowing of the crops, and October, after weeding the staple sorghum and pearl millet is complete. There is rather less raiding during harvest and in February, during which threshing is at its height. But raids continue through the rains, reaching a peak in July when weeding of the sorghum and millet fields is most intense, a clear indication that his militia's labor could be freed from agriculture. Over the nine years of raiding covered by the diary there is evidence of continuing improvement and fine tuning of the raiding enterprise. Hamman Yaji achieved a

⁷ Unidentified, although Oudahay and Mavoumay, north and west of Mokolo respectively, are good candidates.

Table 2. Hamman Yaji's spoils from raiding, deaths in raids, gifts from pagans, besides gains and losses of munitions, as recorded in his diary for the years 1912 to 1920..

Years	Raids	Total slaves (named categories)	Cattle	Sheep and goats	Equids Horses Donkeys	Pagans killed (gender or age specified)	Hamman Yaji's men killed	'Gifts' from 'pagans' Cattle, Slaves	Rifles	Cartridges
									Gained Lost	Gained Lost
1912 (Sep- Dec)	7	4 (3 boys, 1 woman)	3	14	0	≥6	2	2 C, 11 S	20 G	20 G
1913	14	198 (129 slave girls)	80	30	1 H	21	3	>2 S	3 L	1672 G
1914	2	0	70		0			Arnado Pellam gives HY his "daughter"		
1915	4	52 (12 slave girls)	176		0			unspecified on 1 or more occasions		
1916	15	194 (44 slave girls, of whom 5 let go]	303 + 10 killed		0	17 (12 men)	>9		1 G	a few G; 1000 L
1917	24	313 (2 women, 12 boys, 40 slaves given away)	149	102	0	73 (19 men, 27 men and women, 17 children)	1		n +2 G; 1 L	
1918	16	298	374	266	1 mont. horse killed	a large no. +2	1	unspecified on 3 or more occasions; 2 C	1 G	
1919	15	416	319	644		8 (men)			8 G; 2 L	873 G
1920	21	537	378	>524	2 H, 2 D	41	1		1 L	130 G
Totals	118	1642	1852	>1580	3 H, 2 D	>>168	>17			

highly positive raiding balance (Table 2). He is less than systematic in his categorization of human prey and after 1917 refers only to slaves or persons without any specification of age and gender. Even before that, for example in 1913 when he captured 198 slaves of whom 129 are described as slave girls, we do not know that the remaining 69 were not women. Young women, and to some extent children, were generally preferred to mature, less controllable, men. Conversely when the sex of montagnards killed is noted, except on one occasion it is always exclusively male. Cattle were also highly desirable; they are sometimes mentioned before slaves. The relatively large numbers of cattle and small stock suggest that the montagnards were at that time practicing a more extensive form of mixed agriculture than they do today. Although calves are very occasionally mentioned, we are given no idea of the proportions of bulls and cows in the take. Presently bulls predominate in mountain communities. Sheep and goats were either largely ignored in the early days or perhaps ceded uncounted to montagnard allies, but from 1917 were taken in ever increasing and often suspiciously round numbers. The reason for this is unclear but does not appear to have been the result of over-harvesting causing a shift to less desirable resources. I suspect they were needed to feed his troops, whose numbers must by this time have increased. The diary never discusses such matters. In addition, the Fulani took other goods when they could lay their hands on them, including gowns and fezzes, the presence of which in montagnard settlements such as those in the Uba hills and at Kiria indicate ongoing peaceful forms of interaction with the Muslim world.

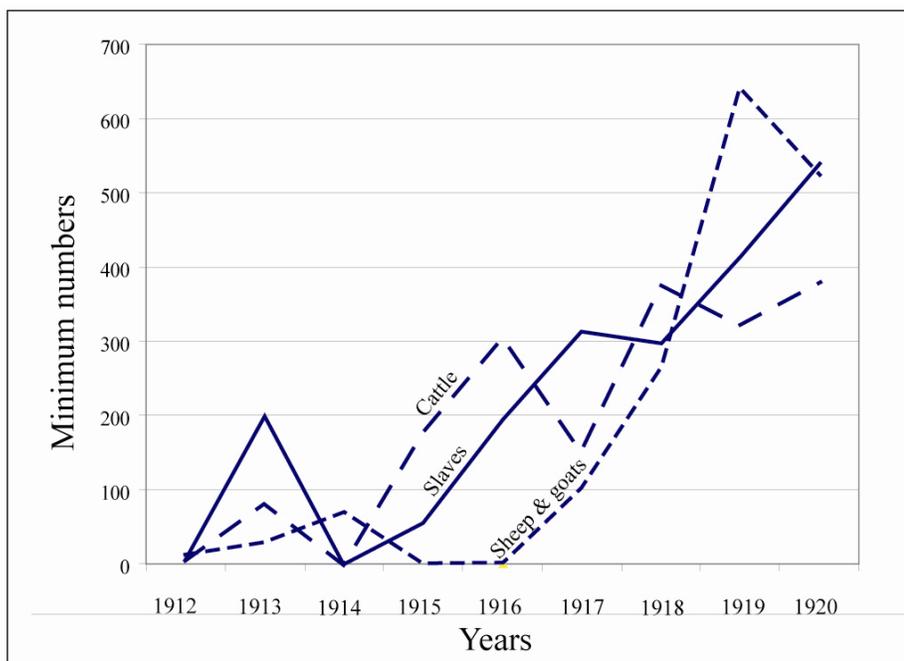


Figure 3. Hamman Yaji's spoils: minimum numbers of slaves, cattle and small stock captured by year.

A rapidly increasing intensity of raiding in from 1916 onwards is evident in the statistics summarized in table 2 and figure 3. It occurred as the cessation of inter-European hostilities was followed by an administrative interregnum characterized by increased availability of rifles. However, the scale of Hamman Yaji's operations became ever more apparent to the British, who had known of slaving in Madagali since at least 1913, and who in 1916 – before taking over responsibility for the region – commented on the “orgy of oppression and confiscation” in Madagali and Mubi, where slaves were being openly sold (Vaughan 1995: 14). In December 1920 the British Political Officer, the Judge with spectacles, prevailed upon Hamman Yaji to desist – while apparently at the same time confirming his position as District Head with responsibility for collecting taxes.

Hamman Yaji had always appreciated the advantages of sustainable harvesting of the hills. Such an attitude is evident in occasional statements in the diary:

On [23 July 1913] I returned the people of Sina 6 of their pagans.

[ca 30 January 1916] I raided Kanikela and captured 5 slave-girls, whom I let go, and 20 cattle.

On [10 April 1920]... I sent Fashakha and Kalifa to raid the pagans of Lamsha and they captured 8 slaves. I left them their livestock.

It was in his interest that he not depopulate his raiding area and that both the montagnards and their livestock reproduce abundantly. The great variety of targets, most attacked only once over the nine year period, was good strategy from both a military and a production perspective. One wonders, however, whether in the last years the marked intensification of raiding would not have stressed carrying capacity. Did he read the writing on the wall, foresee the end of slaving and of slavery, and decide to make hay while a setting sun still shone? Was the change from slave raider to tax farmer such a great one? His diary is silent on such questions.

Finally, and before discussion of montagnard responses, it should be pointed out that other Fulani polities in the region do not seem to have emphasized the “sharp end” of the slave trade. Although in 1904 the lamido of Uba fled to British territory when accused of slave raiding by the German residency, and the lamido of Gawar was deposed in 1906 for enslaving his own subjects, and there were many such accusations elsewhere (Weiss 2000: 185-87), there is no evidence in the diary or in regional oral traditions that either the lamido of Uba, or those of Michika, Moda, or Gawar and Mogode in Cameroon, were seriously engaged in raiding during the Hamman Yaji years, though Mubi had its slave market. They might, however, participate in raids with Hamman Yaji.

On [20 February 1919] ... my people and Moda's people raided Tur (Tourou) and captured 70 slaves, 14 cows and 90 sheep and goats.

Once in a while they raided on their own, but on at least one occasion when Lamido Moda tried it, his men came off second best.

On [20 March 1919]... Moda's people were badly defeated in a raid on their pagans. There were 24 of them, their leaders being Waziri Kadiri, Durtu and Kachella Abdu.

The nature of the relationships of these petty lamidats with their montagnard neighbors must have been different from Hamman Yaji's, often founded, one suspects, upon distrust and armed stand-off but also recognition of the necessity of accommodation. It is noteworthy that in 1904-05 many montagnard groups (*vielen Heidenstämmen*) supported in arms the deposed Lamido Issa of Mubi against his successor and eventually fought on his side against Hauptmann Thierry – who put 250 of them to death (Midel 1990: 318-19). However, such an alliance was exceptional.

The fate of the enslaved

The diary is uninformative regarding the fate of those captured during the raids. Not all accrued, of course, to Hamman Yaji.

On [29 April 1919]... I raided the pagans of Rowa (Roua) and captured 50 cattle and 33 slaves. We calculated my fifth share as 17 slaves and 25 cattle. ...

A generous fifth! And we have seen that when he raided with Moda or another lamido, there was a sharing of the spoils. But afterwards the slaves disappear as products of industry to become:

- a) objects of diplomatic exchanges: "I gave the Emir of Rei (Rey Bouba) a horse, 2 six-year old cows and a female slave."
- b) sureties or currency: "I gave Malam Muhammad 2 slaves as a deposit." "I paid Babel Burmatali a slave for 60 cartridges".
- c) inducements for favors desired or received: "... a man of the Pellam pagans asked me for the headship of these pagans and he gave me two slaves in order that I might appoint him."
- d) reward for achievements or services rendered: "... my son Yaya finished the Quran, and I gave him a slave-girl and a cow."
- e) ritual charity: "I caused the name of my land to be changed and gave away two slave-girls on the occasion of changing the name, and I fixed a fine of 5s. for anyone who made a mistake in this name."
- f) a form of *per diem*: "... I sent Burza and Ardhunga on a long journey with 1500 shillings to buy me rifles and cartridges. I gave them a slave so that they might sell him to buy themselves food."
- g) as militia (see the 1916 raid on Kekele quoted above), and a variety of other functions, including
- h) as players in an ongoing soap opera "The same night a female slave of mine, named Awwa, refused to cook me my food, and gave as her excuse that she had no water. This made me a little angry."

We also learn prices: “50 shillings and 2 gowns for a slave-girl” on 25 February 1917, which amounts to a third the price of a horse on 3 July 1918; 260 shillings for a slave on 22 February 1919; 160 shillings for two female slaves bought by Hamman Yaji on 29 August 1919, a few days before he bartered a slave for 60 cartridges. But nowhere does the diary record bulk shipments of slaves as tribute to the Emir of Yola or the assignment of captured coffles to his many farms, though one ran away from his establishment in Nyibango on 1 June 1922. Hamman Yaji dictated to his scribes much of the detail of his life, and a substantial and itemized, if incomplete, chronicle of his raiding, but he was unwilling to entrust to them either his strategies or the balance sheets of his diversified enterprises.

Montagnard responses

What must it have been like for the inhabitants of Mokola to have been hit ten times in eight years? I think that, after a clandestine approach in the night guided wherever possible by a former member of the target community, most attacks came some time after dawn when most men were away from their compounds, in their fields or collecting fodder, and unable to offer much in the way of organized resistance – though this did on occasion occur:

On [29 September 1916]... Yerima Baba returned from raiding Gaur (Gawar Habe). The pagans had driven off my people, wounding 4 men and 1 horse.

We know from the accounts of victims that compounds were raided individually and their inhabitants enslaved or killed and livestock driven away. Soldiers of montagnard origin were often the ones to penetrate the compounds, and there are stories of some shouting a warning to the occupants to hide, while others knew where to find hidden valuables such as brass ornaments.

Houses were burnt, perhaps to drive the inhabitants into the grip of the soldiers, but this seems not to have happened often, and when it did was perhaps punitive in intent. We have seen that the montagnards killed were almost always men. The following account is exceptional, being the only time that Hamman Yaji records killing women and children:

On [16 August 1917]... I sent Fadhl al Nar with his men to raid Sukur and they captured 80 slaves, of whom I gave away 40. We killed 27 men and women and 17 children.

This was almost certainly a political reprisal, Hamman Yaji having had hopes that a conciliatory faction in Sukur would gain the upper hand, leading to community submission. Although he never mentions it, it is likely that he had his eye on control of Sukur’s famous iron market (David and Sterner 1996; David 2012).

Montagnard options

1. Warfare and armed resistance

The montagnards were hopelessly outclassed by Hamman Yaji's organized militia equipped with horses and rifles and backed by the resources of Adamawa and the caliphate. Their communities, in most cases autonomous political entities that made alliances with some of their neighbors and fought with others, were incapable of achieving effective unions against the Fulani (van Beek 1986: 68-69). Thus it was that Hamman Yaji, probably from 1918, could maintain a "house" in his Mokolo outpost and way station between Madagali and Maroua (van Santen 1993: 86-88; Lavergne 1944: 18). This was overlooked by montagnard settlements (including Mokola) that he repeatedly raided, but the small outpost was never itself attacked. Nonetheless many montagnard communities never submitted to Hamman Yaji, nor indeed to the French in Cameroon for many years after he had been stopped from raiding.⁸

On [24 July 1918]... the pagans of Mugudi [Mogode] raided Ardo Harun and wounded him.

Ardo Harun may have been the headman of a pastoral Fulani hamlet. This apparently small scale attack, perhaps merely Mogode Kapsiki attempting to rustle cattle being herded between the highland plateau and the plains, is the only violent act perpetrated by montagnards on Fulani mentioned in the diary that is dignified by the term that Reed translates as raid. In August 1916 Hamman Yaji's son "Yahya was killed by the pagans of Gaur and his slave wounded" and there are two other instances of montagnard attacks on Fulani mentioned during the raiding years, on a man and his slave and on a caravan. Two of these four attacks were sanctioned within a month by raids on the settlements of the perpetrators. In the same 1912-20 time frame Hamman Yaji also mentions one montagnard attack on a delegation from another montagnard village on its way to Madagali and three montagnard on montagnard raids. Of these three two were on settlements under Hamman Yaji's protection and retaliation was swift and ferocious.

As to defensive measures, although we have seen many walls built by montagnards against the Fulani in the mountains and across valleys in the foothills (cf. van Beek 1978: 6), these were not fortifications around settlements or major defensive installations but constructions less than 2m in original height intended to hamper cavalry and to provide cover from behind which to shoot poisoned arrows. Neither do montagnards appear, even in the most raided communities, to have organized any system of watchers or sentries.

⁸ A French civilian administration only replaced the military in Mokolo in 1939.

2. *Flight*

Once the alarm was raised, it was common practice for montagnards in Sukur and elsewhere to seek refuge in their boulder-strewn hills, sometimes in caves (Kosack 1992: 185). There the cavalry could not follow them, though they were on occasion smoked out (van Santen 1993: 88).

Judy Sterner and I have collected oral traditions regarding the flight of all or part of montagnard communities in the face of Fulani aggression. Thus the entire community of Sirak, just south of Mokolo, took refuge for a period of years with their relatives on Mouhour massif. It was probably after the brutal raid on Sukur noted earlier that its non-appeasers scattered to live for a time in a variety of nearby communities, including Mogode, but also others like (Higi) Pellam that were to an extent under Hamman Yaji's control.

3. *Submission and alliance*

Several of the plains villages in the vicinity of Madagali and Moda had submitted to the Fulani well before Hamman Yaji's time (see Fig. 2) and provided him with varying combinations of tribute, corvée labor on his many farms, and a part-time militia. Of the montagnards proper, the people of Mabas and Vizik, located on top of the steep scarp that overlooks Madagali and on a well traveled route via Wanday and Mokolo to Maroua, were never raided. According to Mafa informants, the Mabas were allied with the Fulani and acted as their jackals, assisting in raids for what they could plunder in goats, chickens, indeed everything but slaves (and it would seem cattle) that the Fulani reserved for themselves. Mabas may have been the only montagnard community actively aligned with Hamman Yaji, though there is plenty of evidence in the diary and in oral traditions that other communities including Sukur were split. For example:

On [16 May 1916] ...I sent my men to Kekele, but on Wednesday they made a mess of the expedition, and my slave Audu Wemgo was killed, as also were 7 pagans of Humuchi together with some pagans of Pellam.

Audu Wemgo's name indicates that he was from a Mabas-related village, and it is clear from the context that the Humuchi and Pellam men were fighting on Hamman Yaji's side. Remarkably, there appears to be and to have been remarkably little resentment of montagnard collaborators. With Sukur assistants we have visited the son and grandson of a notorious Sukur turncoat and spy in Madagali, and relations were cordial.

4. *Tribute, ransom and taxes*

The diary for the period 1912-20 describes instances of montagnard chiefs sending "gifts", sometimes an irregular form of tribute and sometimes as thanks for a position granted, to Hamman Yaji, including both

cattle and slaves (Table 1).

On [10 December 1912]... the pagans called Shikawa [unidentified] brought me 10 slave-girls.

On [2 June 1912] ... I appointed Takma Arnado Pellam [Palam] and he gave me his daughter.

On [19 October 1918]... the pagans of Midiri [Midre] brought me a calf. The pagans of Bau [Bao], after running away from fear, also brought me a calf.

On [17 November 1924]... the pagans of Tur [Tourou], who had settled down at Wamga [Vemgo], brought me 2 female slaves, one of whom had been ransomed by the exchange of a boy. The reason for their being seized was that they were witches.

Despite the brutality of the raids, both the diary and oral traditions report that persons were ransomed, sometimes by communal, sometimes by individual initiative:

On [7 November 1914]... the pagans of Subala ransomed their women at 36 shillings a woman.

This is the only mention of ransom in the diary before 1924. Between 1924 and 1927 there are three mentions of ransom, only one of which relates to money paid to Hamman Yaji in return for a slave. A Mafa male nurse told me how his grandfather had traveled to Madagali, had met Hamman Yaji face to face, and had succeeded in ransoming his father, then a boy.. Thus despite the rarity of ransoming, there were some who moved between the two worlds.

The diary for 1912-1920 tells us little about taxes, though he often notes their amount and delivery to the European power of the moment. Collection was clearly profitable for the collector:

On [4 May 1913]... the Governor returned to me 410 shillings of the tax, and there remained with him 490 shillings.

Hamman Yaji mentions by name only two non-Muslim settlements that paid tax, Isge on the plains and Bao, near Mokolo, the tax in the latter instance being obtained by raiding.

On [19 October 1918]... Mishan returned from his journey to Marua [Maroua] with a letter from the Lieutenant in which he ordered me to arrest Bakari Duhu. He also told me to collect the tax from the pagans of Isge. This I will do willingly and obediently.

On [25 December 1918]... I raided Bau and captured 52 cattle, 29 slaves and 63 goats. [The next day] ... I sent Muhammad Bindiga to Marua with 30 cattle and 40 goats representing the Bau tax.

A landscape of resistance

For eight years and more the montagnards in Hamman Yaji's sphere of operations were subjected to a progressively more efficient, better equipped and brutal form of slave raiding mounted by a ruthless leader with great strategic and tactical talents. Nowhere else in and around the northern Mandara

Mountains did any comparable intensification of raiding develop despite the greater availability of rifles to Africans after the end of World War I. Until that time the people living in the mountains had been little exposed to slave raiding and it is to their credit that, despite intra-montagnard competition, they fought back when they could, inflicting minor defeats on their attackers, and that there are virtually no records nor any oral traditions of montagnards in this region themselves engaging, as happened elsewhere, in the enslavement of their neighbors (see e.g., Kosack 1992). This was due to a number of factors. First, the animosities existing between different montagnard communities were counteracted by economic and social ties. The iron trade was rationalized and to a degree integrated with the exchange of other goods over a wide region (David 2012). There were multiple kinship and other social links between groups, often activated and rendered visible at times of ceremony (Sterner 2003: 90-115). And even though there was fighting within and between communities, there were generally agreed rules as to what types of weapons and behaviors were appropriate (Otterbein 1968). What this all meant was that, even though the montagnards were unable to form alliances capable of carrying the fight to their enemy, they nonetheless created a landscape of resistance which substantially constrained and impeded Hamman Yaji's operations.

Yet another factor, related to the suddenness of the irruption of high intensity raiding into the mountains, was the nature of the interface between Fulani and montagnards. Although in the 18th century Fulani herdsmen had pastured their cattle at Sukur and at times taken refuge there from the Wandala (Sterner 2003: 35-7), during the 19th the jihad had progressively cut those ties. By the early 20th century the iron trade, over which Hamman Yaji had little or no control, constituted the primary link between the montagnards and the peoples and states of the plains. While there is evidence of occasional ransoming by montagnards of their people, and traditions and the diary concur that some montagnards – those settled on the plain and some made captive in their youth – fought and worked for Lamido Madagali, the interface between the Fulani and montagnard worlds can be characterized as sharp and shallow, in that there was an unqualified distinction between these two worlds and few contacts between them that were not characterized by violence or threat of violence.

Thus Hamman Yaji's raids represent a brief episode of intensification and extension of high intensity raiding from plains and foothills into the mountains, a zone that had become more attractive through time in terms of the resources, human and other, potentially available, but which required rifles besides horses for its effective exploitation. The Fulani : montagnard / state : stateless / Muslim : local religion interface remained distinct and clear-cut, permeable by violence and in one direction, with few agents mediating between the opposed spheres. Slaves, if they remained in Madagali, were gradually incorporated into Fulani society.

Postscript

To place this story in a broader context, let us note that revolutionary France had abolished slavery in all its possessions in 1794, though this was rescinded by Napoleon in 1802. In 1818 France abolished slave trading and in 1848 slavery in all its colonies. In 1807 Britain abolished slave trading within the British Empire and all slaves were fully emancipated in 1838, although not in Northern Nigeria until 1936. In 1841 Prussia was one of the signatories of a treaty to suppress the slave trade but it took Germany 46 years to ratify the League of Nations' "Convention to Suppress the Slave Trade and Slavery" after it came into effect in 1927.

Shortly after Judy Sterner and I arrived at Sukur we were, as happens from time to time, thanked as descendants of the "Nassaaraa'en" (whites) who had put an end to slaving in the region. We were told that down in Gulak there was a church where we could see Hamman Yaji hanging on a cross with nails through his hands and feet. The descendants of his victims still regard him as a monster, but it should be remembered that in 1800 over three-quarters of the world's population were unfree, that Christians of almost all sects - the Quakers being a glorious exception - engaged in slave trading or owned slaves, and that many, like the Church of England's Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, worked the slaves on its Barbados sugar plantation to death - whence the need for the Atlantic trade to replace the stock. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Regius Professors of Religion at Oxford and Cambridge were on the Society's Board (Hochschild 2005). Hamman Yaji was no more and as much a monster as those eminent gentlemen. Just as today many people, corporations and governments deny the threat of humanly-caused primate change - because to combat it is an "economic impossibility" that would "destroy our way of life", so it was then with the abolition of slavery. It took about two generations to achieve in Britain, much longer in the world as a whole. But this time two generations may be too late for the planet.

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