

■ MADAGASCAR

The Early Antandroy Kingdom: Excavations and Survey in Androy 1995

Mike Parker Pearson
Department of Archaeology and Prehistory
University of Sheffield
Sheffield S10 2TN
United Kingdom

Karen Godden
9 High Street
Souldrop
Bedford MK44 1EY
United Kingdom

Ramilisonina
Institut de Civilizations
Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie
B.P. 564
Antananarivo 101
Madagascar

Retsihisatse
Analamahery
FIR Andalatanosy
Ambovombe 604
Madagascar

Jean-Luc Schwenninger
Department of Geography
Royal Holloway College
University of London
Egham
Surrey
United Kingdom

Helen Smith
Department of Archaeology and Prehistory
University of Sheffield
Sheffield S10 2TN
United Kingdom

A two-month field season was undertaken in October and November 1995 by a team of seven from the University of Sheffield and the Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie, Antananarivo. We were

joined for much of the time by Georges Heurtebize whose considerable knowledge and experience of the region proved invaluable. The research can be divided into three main fields: the early Antandroy kingdom, its origins and development between the 16th and 19th centuries; the tombs and sacred forests of the contemporary landscape; and the earliest coastal settlements and their relationship with the extinction of *Aepyornis*, the flightless Elephant Bird. A full interim report is available on request (Parker Pearson et al. 1995).

Excavating the ancient capital of Fenoarivo at Ambaro

In 1993, a complex of large sites was identified by field survey in the Ambaro-Laparoy area, some 60 km from the coast, within the territory of the Andriamanare, the successors of the royal dynasty (Figure 1). One of these large sites was thought to be the ancient capital of Fenoarivo, to which the ill-fated crew of the shipwrecked English East Indiaman the *Degrave* were taken in 1703 (Drury 1729 [1890]). Although the site in question, Ampozy Be, is located within a sacred forest and may not be disturbed, we were able to carry out archaeological excavations on two large settlement complexes to its east (Laparoy) and immediately to its west (Ambaro). Whilst the excavations at Laparoy demonstrated that this supposedly large settlement was in fact a composite, multi-period hamlet spanning the 17th to 19th centuries, the Ambaro settlement was clearly a large center of the 18th and 19th centuries. The finds include pottery, metalwork, animal bones, imported glass, local and imported tobacco pipes, and gunflints. The remains of a house, possibly that of an *ombiasy* (a medicinal and ritual specialist), were excavated just outside the western edge of the sacred forest. This probably post-dates the Ampozy Be settlement. Oral histories concur in identifying Ampozy Be as the residence of a former king, Andrianjoma, who settled here with a large retinue of followers and slaves after a lengthy migration around Androy. The genealogies do not agree on Andrianjoma's antiquity but Georges Heurtebize has collected evidence which suggests that Andrianjoma ruled towards the end of the 17th century. He may, in fact, have been the king of Fenoarivo whom Robert Drury, one of

the survivors of the Degrave massacre, knew as Crindo (perhaps Kirindra). Further analysis of the imported clay pipes and wine bottles from the Ambaro excavations may help to clarify this dating problem.

It is clear from oral traditions and from Robert Drury's journal that Ambaro/Fenoarivo was just one of a number of ancient royal centers during the 17th to 19th centuries. According to Andriamanare traditions (Defoort 1913; Heurtebize pers. comm.), Ambaro was settled after royal centers had been established at Anjampanorora, Montefeno and the west bank of the lower Manambovo. Drury identifies six 'towns' in all but only those at Ambaro and Angavo can as yet be pinpointed with any certainty. The French governor of Fort Dauphin in the 17th century, Etienne de Flacourt, records that the Tanosy king was received by Andrianmififarive, the king of the Ampatres, in the 'large village' of Montefeno in 1649 (Flacourt 1661:264). Montefeno is still a village today, 5 km south of Ambondro and 12 km west of Anjampanorora, the sacred tomb forest of the Maromena group of Andriamanare. In addition to an extensive archaeological survey in this area, smaller surveys were also carried out in four other locations around Androy and Karembola. A large 18th century settlement was discovered 2 km west of Antanimora. Known as Amanda Be (the big fort), it is considered locally to have been occupied by the Bara, the tribe who live far to the north. Other area surveys at Berenty, Amanda and Tsihombe identified ancient settlement sites of the 16th-19th centuries.

Field survey in the Montefeno-Anjampanorora area

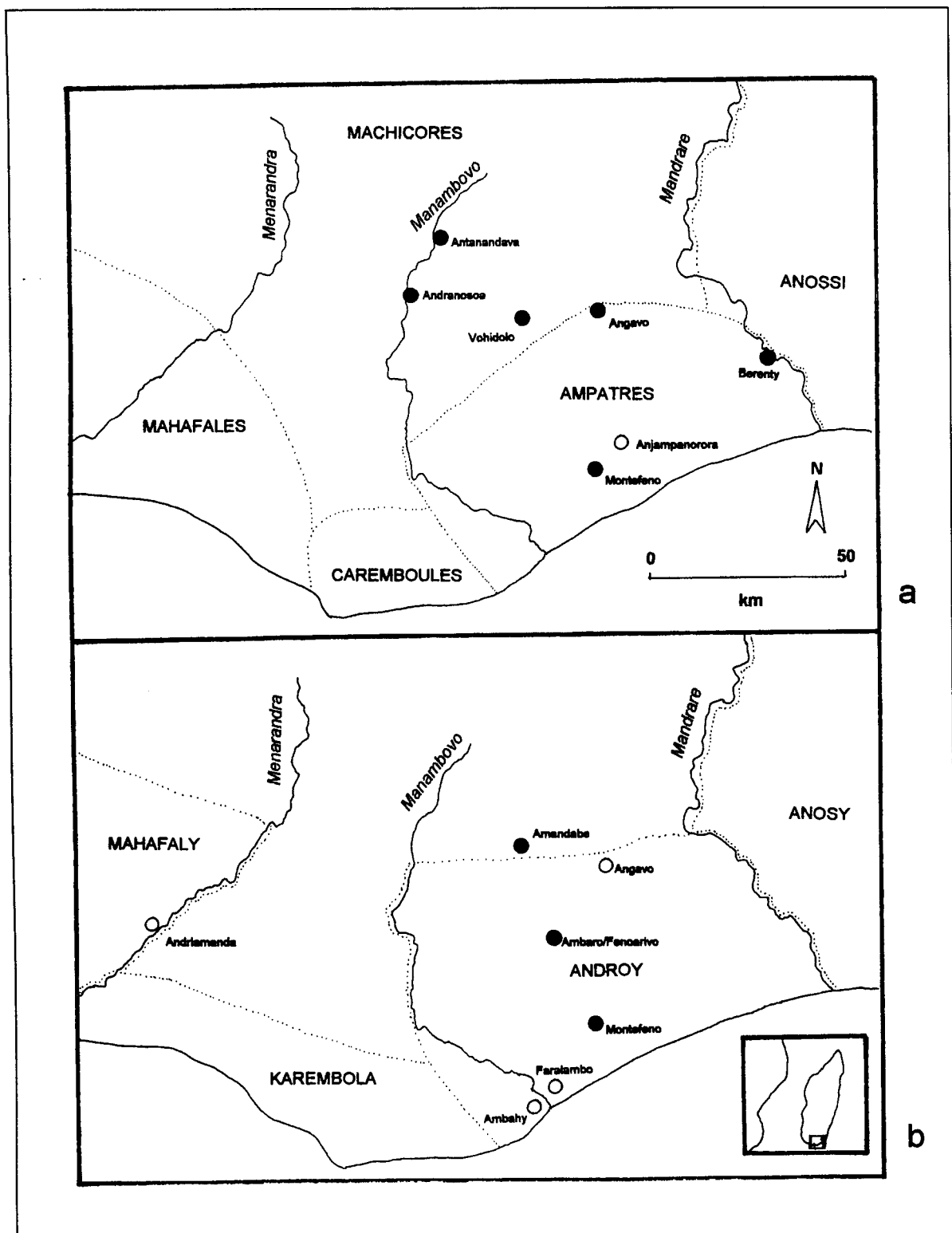
The main survey area in 1995 was an east-west transect which included Montefeno and Anjampanorora. The aim of this survey was to locate the major settlements which might be identifiable as the Montefeno and Anjampanorora of the documents and oral sources. Additionally, we hoped to build up a picture of the origin and development of settlement structure in this most ancient of ancestral Andriamanare land. The two earliest sites (Montefeno 331 and Anjampanorora IV) are characterized by triangle-impressed graphite-polished pottery which may date to the 16th century. The latter site is on the edge of the

sacred tomb forest of Anjampanorora, at the center of which is reputed to lie the most ancient ancestral village of the Andriamanare. The former, Montefeno 331, lies to the west of the modern village of that name and its density of artifacts and variety of ceramic motifs suggests that it was occupied intensely for a considerable time, perhaps for the full duration of the 16th and 17th centuries. Of the 85 sites that we found in the area, a substantial number were large settlements with graphite wares and 'wavy comb' decorated wares, probably dating to the later 17th and perhaps 18th centuries. Their numbers indicate a veritable population explosion in this region, which had scarcely been settled at all before the 15th/16th century (only one sherd was found of the earlier ceramic style of the 13th-15th centuries). Perhaps the most extraordinary and unexpected discovery was made on a large, late 17th century site (Montefeno III 351) just east of Montefeno. At the center of the sherd scatter is a large fig tree where the umbilical cords of the *roandrian* (royal family) of Ambaro are buried. It is highly likely that this was the ancestral village from which Andrianjoma migrated to eventually settle at Ambaro.

Forests, tombs and tradition

Certain forests have a strong significance for the Antandroy, linking the present with the past and the living with the dead. These *ala faly* (taboo forests) are protected by a variety of proscriptions and for a variety of reasons. A fortunate side-effect of this attitude to these forests is that substantial areas of primary forest and of regenerated woodland will remain as wildlife sanctuaries and reservoirs of biodiversity within an otherwise impoverished semi-arid environment. All such *ala faly* are considered to have been handed down by the ancestors. Those which are used for burial may only be entered after the necessary sacrifices of cattle which precede the funerary rites of interment. Other protected forests may be previous residences of ancient kings (such as Ampozy Be), depositories of gold and silver, or locations for beehives. Access is restricted and certain activities such as wood-collecting, digging, grazing and defecating are strictly prohibited. Not all primary forest is subject to such taboos and many areas in central Androy are still densely forested.

Figure 1. The distribution of major centers in Androy: a) large sites of the 16th to 17th centuries; b) royal centres of the 17th to 18th centuries. Filled circles indicate sites confirmed by archaeological reconnaissance. The ethnic groups and boundaries are derived from Flacourt (1661) and Drury (1729), amongst other sources.



Although forest clearance is increasingly extensive, certain areas have regenerated to woodland. An analysis of satellite remote sensing imagery (Garrod et al. 1995) has allowed us to classify different types of forest according to their infra-red signal. Ground survey of parts of these forests may enable us to correlate satellite images with tree species groups and woodland densities. Initial findings suggest that primary forests may be very diverse in tree species (well over 200 per 100 m²) but the majority of trees belong to between 8 and 4 main species. Regenerated woodland, probably less than 150-200 years old, in the same area is largely comprised of a slightly different mix of species but there is a strong probability that regenerated forest, given time, may return to the same main species composition as primary woodland. In addition, regional differences in soil, hydrology and topography may also account for different types of forest composition within Androy.

Coastal survey in southern Androy

This season's coastal dune survey was carried out at four locations: the mouth of the Manambovo, Faux Cap, east of Cap Sainte Marie and the mouth of the Mandrare. We hoped to ascertain whether the earliest inhabitants of Madagascar in the first millennium A.D. exploited the eggs of the *Aepyornis*, the largest flightless bird ever known, and whether its extinction may have been partly due to human predation. One of the earliest settlement sites in Madagascar, associated with a radiocarbon date of 840 ± 80 b.p., was excavated in 1962 at Talaky on the east bank of the Manambovo estuary (Battistini et al. 1963) where *Aepyornis* eggshell was found in association with hearths and pottery on one of a number of shell middens amongst the dunes. Our survey of the Talaky dune complex uncovered a dozen midden sites associated with a range of ceramics of different dates. Nearly all of these sites, particularly the potentially early ones, are deflated and survive only as artifact and shell scatters without any occupation layers. Early sites of the 10th-12th centuries survive in better condition on the west bank of the Manambovo but none appear to belong to the first millennium A.D. In the Faux Cap area, first surveyed in 1991, no additional sites were found. A large number of shell mid-

dens were found along a 12 km stretch of dunes east of Cap Sainte Marie, where dry stream courses, wells and a suitable reef must have combined to form an attractive fisher-gatherers' environment and where the current erosion of ancient dunes has facilitated site prospection. Sites of the last thousand years were located but none appeared to be any earlier. Finally, the mouth of the Mandrare river was surveyed for archaeological sites. Curiously it was nothing like the mouth of the Manambovo in terms of its settlement history. There were no shell middens of any date, possibly due to the absence of a reef in this locality, and the earliest definite sites date to the 18th-19th centuries. Nonetheless, deposits of fossil animal bones were found in the calcareous sandstone at two locations, one on each side of the rivermouth.

Acknowledgements

The project was only possible thanks to Victor Razanato's skills as mechanic and cook, particularly for mending the Landrover in seemingly hopeless circumstances. We also thank Georges Heurtebize who accompanied us for much of the fieldwork and provided invaluable help and advice. In Antananarivo Chantal Radimilahy, Jean-Aimé Rakotoarisoa and the staff of the Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie are to be thanked for their support and advice. In Sheffield Chris Clark of the Department of Geography and Peter Day, Simon Garrod, Jo Heron, Dorothy Cruse and the staff of the Department of Archaeology and Prehistory are also to be thanked. We have also benefitted from the advice and help of David Burney, Peter Davey, David Gaimster, Jean de Heaulme, John Mack and Henry Wright and from the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Antananarivo, the Geography Department at the Royal Holloway College at Egham, and the Museum of Mankind Library in London.

Many people helped us during the fieldwork. We would especially like to thank the people of Belanky, Laparoy and Ambaro for their hospitality and the people of Laparoy and Ambaro for their permission to carry out fieldwork. In particular, we thank Tsihandatse and Alphonse Tsiongaha at Ambaro for sharing their knowledge with us and for securing the blessing of the ancestors for our excavations. The people of Ambasy, Ambazoa,

Analafaly, Analalava, Analamahery, Bebea (Ambondro), Bebea (Mandrare), Belavenoke, Berenty, Bevala, Montefeno, Talaky, and Vahavola are also to be thanked. This season's research was funded by the National Geographic Society, the British Academy and the Society of Antiquaries of London. The remote sensing project and the preparation work for the forest survey were funded by the Natural Environment Research Council of Great Britain.

References

Battistini, R., Vérin and R. Rason

1963 Le site archéologique de Talaky. *Annales Malgaches* 1: 111-27.

Defoort, E.

1913 *L'Androy: essai de monographie*. Antananarivo: Bullétin Economique de Madagascar.

Drury, R.

1729 [1890] *Madagascar: or Robert Drury's Journal during Fifteen Years Captivity on that island*. London: Fisher Unwin.

Flacourt, E. de

1661 *Histoire de la Grande Isle de Madagascar*. Paris: Clouzier.

Garrod, S., C. Clark and M. Parker Pearson

1995 Tombs, forests and remote sensing: landscape archaeology in the semi-arid spiny forests of southern Madagascar. *Proceedings of the 1995 Conference on Remote Sensing*. Southampton.

Parker Pearson, M., K. Godden, Ramilisonina, Retsihisatse, J.-L. Schwenninger, and H. Smith

1995 The central Androy survey: third report. University of Sheffield and Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie, Antananarivo unpublished report.