

A SOURCE FOR THE HISTORY OF ANTANANARIVO IN THE MID 1920s : THE LINTON PAPERS

by

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There is strong evidence that American archives can provide interesting information on the history of pre-colonial and colonial times in Madagascar * (1). The historical sources of the Great Island of the Indian Ocean are of very different origins, namely Arab, Portuguese, French, English, etc. In addition to such written sources we may add the documents of the Federal and Non-Federal archives. This paper is an attempt to present an American source : the Linton Papers*, housed in the Field Museum of natural History of Chicago, Il (2) and in the Swarthmore College Library, Swarthmore, Pa (3).

The papers include some of the letters, reports, etc. of the Ralph Linton expedition to Madagascar in 1925-1927. It will specifically refer to the documents dealing with the life and customs observed by the American anthropologist and his wife Margaret in the city of Antananarivo as well as a description of a visit to the sacred city of Ambohimanga (4).

* . The documents cited are verbatim. I wish to thank the Field Museum of Natural History of Chicago for the permission to publish the Linton Papers. I also wish to thank the Swarthmore College Library for allowing me to present the Linton unpublished typescript.

(1). L. Mosca, "Relazione su un programma di ricerca svolto negli archivi e biblioteche degli Stati Uniti e del Madagascar e relativo ai rapporti americano-malgasci nel secolo XIX", *Africa*, Roma, 2, 1973, p. 300-310 ; G. Micheal Razi, *Malgaches et Americains. Relations commerciales et diplomatiques au XIXe siècle*, s.l., Agence d'information des Etats-Unis, (1985 ?) ; L. Mosca, *Fonti edite e inedite sulle relazioni, 'Americano-Malgasce' (1676-1896)*, Napoli, Fotocomp Rapid, 1987.

(2). For a description of the "Linton Papers" in the Field Museum of Natural history of Chicago, see L. Mosca, "Ralph Linton in Madagascar : The Marshall Field Expedition 1925-1927", 31st ASA (African Studies Association), *Papers*, 1988, p. 22, note 1.

(3). R. Linton and M. Linton, *Veloma ! Madagascar*, Swarthmore College Library, Swarthmore, Pa. Unpublished Typescript (1973)?, p. CCCXL., For a description see : L. Mosca, "Ralph Linton in Madagascar...", op. cit., p. 22, note 2.

(4). For Ambohimanga see : L. Mosca, *Il Madagascar nella vita di Raombana primo storico malgascio (1809-1855)*, Napoli, Giannini ed., 1980, p. 85.

It might be of interest to remember that American awareness of Antananarivo and its royal court in the late nineteenth century was whetted by their representatives to Madagascar. The earliest attempt to describe the capital came from Major John P. Finkelmeier, Commercial Agent to Madagascar, in 1867 (5). He had described his official visit to Antananarivo in a letter to the *Paterson Guardian*, a local newspaper. The letter was reprinted by the nation wide *New York Times* (6).

Finkelmeier's letter reads :

"Our friends will be glad to hear that Major Finkelmeier is well in his far off home [...] On the 19th of November, Mr. Finkelmeier went on a Government order to see the Queen, in order to transact official business between the United States and Madagascar. The Queen was at the capital, Antananarivo, and he reached the outer gates of the city on the 1st of December [...] . Before he entered the city, twelve officers of the Queen, in gals uniform, and one hundred soldiers, with a band of music, came out and took him into the capital. The Queen sent Mr Finkelmeier a splendid horse to ride into the city, and an officer who spoke very good English accompanied the party [...] . The palace of the Queen is 2,500 feet above the level of the sea, the capital being located on elevated plateau [...] . Next day the Queen sent to ask how he endured the fatigues of the journey and notified him that she would see him on the next Sunday, the 8th of December. On Sunday she sent an escort of palace officers to conduct him to the throne, where she sat in State with her Ministers around her, and large numbers of ladies and gentlemen, all in European costumes, the Queen wearing a white brocade with a Hammelyn cloak hanging from the shoulder. She arose and extended her hand for him to kiss as Mr Finkelmeier entered, and he kissed her white kids according to Court etiquette. The Queen is about 50 years of age, quite tall and well educated and quite graceful [...] , Mr Finkelmeier was next introduced to all the ministers and guests [...] . After fifteen minutes he withdrew. The officers afterward told Mr Finkelmeier that the Queen was very well pleased with his appaarence. The Queen asked him during

(5). J.P. Finkelmeier had arrived in Madagascar in June 1866. See J.P. Finkelmeier to Hon F.W. Seward, Tamatave June 30, 1866, U.S. Consular Despatches, Tamatave, Madagascar, National Archives, Washington ; L. Mosca, *Fonti edite ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

(6). "An Interview with the Queen of Madagascar", *New York Times*, March. 17, 1867, p. 3-3. On the same subject see : J. Finkelmeier to Hon F.W. Seward, Antananarivo Jan. 1, 1867 : "After having had several communications with the Prime Minister at Antananarivo concerning my Exequatur, I received on the 14th Novb last an other, requesting me, to proceed to the Capital for a personal interview [...] . After a most tedious & fatiguing journey of 12 days [...] I arrived here on the 30 rd of November & was received at the entrance of the Capital by 12 Officers of the Palace, with 150 men soldiers, and a band of music 6 the usual salut of 7 guns, fired from the Palace. On Sunday the 9th Decb I was presented to the Queen at the Palace, who received me with very marked kindness. Monday following an invitation came to a royal dinner at the Palace [...] the day following I had an official interview with the Prime Minister, who, after an explanation ordered my Exequatur to be issued which was handed to me the same evening", U.S. Consular Despatches, Tamatave, Madagascar, *op. cit.*

the interview if he had a family. The next day he dined with the Chief Minister per invitation" (7).

A few years later, Colonel William W. Robinson (8), the first American Consul to Madagascar, offered the following report of Antananarivo, after five months of residence in the capital.

"[Antananarivo] which may be appropriately called the city of churches — contains 150,000 or 200,000 inhabitants (9), with male and female schools at every turn, to which all children between the ages of eight and sixteen are compelled by law to attend, with a college buildings that would be an honor and ornament to any State in the Union, with ornamental churches more numerous than in Brooklyn, of stone, and of brick (the Palace Church-Protestant- of stone, and the Roman Catholic cathedral, also of stone would both be considered decided ornaments in New-York) ; [...] a stone palace for their sovereign, at least twice the size of the White House in Washington, and palaces for the chief notables equal to the best Washington residences" (10).

In June 1890, William Louis Abbott, the famous American naturalist, who was travelling about to collect specimens (11), arrived in Antananarivo. In a letter to his mother (12) Abbott gives an interesting description of the journey from the coast to the capital and of the capital itself.

"I arrived here safely [...] after a walk of 8 days from the coast [...] . Had a very pleasant trip & found the country to be far more beautiful & interesting than I had any idea of [...] Am in capital health, in spite of the predictions of everyone at Tamatave that I would get fever [...] . Here in the capital the climate is, at this season at any rate, simply magnificent. About 45° Faht. at night 55° during the day. It has not varied for many months as it is the dry season. Atmosphere is beautifully clear although mists are frequent in the early mornings. It is about 5,000 feet above sea level ; the greatest drawback is the badness & scarcity of the water supply. A. [Antananarivo] is a city of about 100,000 inhabitants, + is built upon several hills.

(7). "An interview with the Queen of Madagascar, *op. cit.*

(8). W.W. Robinson, born in Fairhaven Vermont served as United States Consul in Madagascar from 1875 to 1886. See : L. Mosca, *Fonti edite...*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

(9). Robinson's evaluation of the city's population is too high.

(10). Col. W.W. Robinson to Hon Chas Payson, Tamatave, June 9, 1881, U.S. Consular Despatches, Tamatave, Madagascar, *op. cit.*

(11) W.L. Abbott (1860-1936) naturalist and explorer devoted his life to the pursuits of a naturalist and explorer devoted his life to the pursuits of a naturalist and explorer. In particular Abbott visited all of the Southeast Asian Island Group. See : "Abbott William Louis", *The National Cyclopaedia*, v. XXVII, p. 313-315.

(12). W.L. Abbott to Susan Abbott, Antananarivo, Madagascar, June 19, 1890, William Louis Abbott, Personal Correspondence, 1887-1898, Box 2, Folder 4, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington. Abbott material was on loan from the Smithsonian Institution for the permission to quote the Abbott material.

The houses are all built of brick, sun dried for the most part, & roofed with red tiles. The Palace & churches are really fine buildings + are built of stones. The existence of such a city in the centre of Madagascar is simply wonderful. [...] The upper class of Hovas dress in European costume, but they must not be considered as civilized. —They are certainly not— Churches are very numerous, church bells remind me of Europe or America. But morality is nil, in spite of the *howling* christianity of the natives. The missionaries have a very strong grip upon Madagascar, & are a mean, bigotted, exclusive lot : there are over 70 in this immediate vicinity, including all denominations [...] . Wheat potatoes, etc. grow as in Europe, food is very cheap [...] There are about 5 newspapers in English, French or Malagasy or all 3 combined [...] The universal food is rice. The same sort as the American, which was originally introduced from Madagascar over 100 years ago" (13).

Antananarivo which was founded more than three centuries ago, has exerted influence over its periphery like no other Malagasy town before it. From a straggling village of miserable huts Antananarivo became the geographic center of Madagascar. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Antananarivo was provided with technological and economic means favoured its domination and defense of the Merina kingdom. With modern firearms, it conquered areas which were never submitted to the Merina monarchs (14) before. By the second decade of the twentieth century the capital had seen many changes in population density and urban growth (15), nevertheless in spite of the transformations and innovations brought about particularly by the first years of French occupation (16), the city had preserved a great deal of the grace and charm that had attracted the travellers in previous time. As one can read, it continued to fascinate and stimulate the

(13). *Ibidem*. The introduction of Malagasy rice to the United States happened at the end of the 17c. In particular the Malagasy rice was introduced in the colony of Carolina. See : D.C. Heyward, *Seed from Madagascar*, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1937.

(14). On the subject see A. Thompson, "The role of the Firearms and the Development of Military Techniques in Merina Warfare c. 1785-1828", *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer*, t. LXI, 224, 1974, p. 417-435 ; G.M. Berg, "The Sacred Muskets. Tactics, Technology and Power in eighteenth Century Madagascar", *Comparative Studies in Sociology and History*, , 27, 2, 1985, p. 261-279.

(15). J. Devic, *Tananarive. Essai sur ses origines, son développement, son état actuel*, Tananarive, Imprimerie Officielle, 1952, p. 51-53 ; Ph. Oberlé, *Tananarive et l'Imerina. Description historique et touristique*, Tananarive, Oberlé, 1976, p. 74-76 ; J. Ramamonjisoa, *Etude géographique d'un espace urbain*, Antananarivo, Université de Nice, UER géographie, 1978, vol. 1, p. 23-26 ; F.V. Esoavelomandroso, J. Fremigacci, "Héritage de l'histoire et mode d'urbanisation malgache : Tananarive", in *Histoire et organisation de l'espace à Madagascar*, Cahiers du CRA, 7, 1989, p. 71-82 ; F. Esoavelomandroso, "Discours colonial et transformations de l'espace urbain : Tananarive dans l'entre-deux-guerres", *ibidem*, p. 83-104 ; *idem*, "Des rizières à la ville : les plaines de l'ouest d'Antananarivo pendant la première moitié du XX^e siècle", *Colloque International d'Histoire* (Antananarivo 1989).

(16). Great Britain's recognition in 1890 of France's dominant position in Madagascar enabled Paris to annex the island six years later (1896). But it was only in 1904 that the French had completed their conquest of the island and could affirm their political and cultural influences.

imagination of its visitors for the persistent aura of mystery surrounding the origins of its inhabitants and the time of their arrival in the island (17) as well as for the legend of the giant bird(18) and the legendary origin of the city itself (19).

Dr Ralph Linton was the Assistant Curator of North American Ethnology in the Field Museum in Chicago. His mission in Madagascar was spelled out in a letter of Mr D.C. Davies, the Museum Director (20). First and foremost there would have to be a search for the acquisition of artifacts, but "the main problem to be pursued" —we read in the letter— "is to determine the relationship of the natives to other Malayan groups, particularly to those of Sumatra whence their first migrations are supposed to have taken place and to study the degrees and effect of influences that have come from India and the Arabs" (21).

Dr Linton was to return with a collection illustrating : "The life, activities, industries, and religious beliefs of the native tribes of the island [...] also secure data and photographs of one or two life-size and as many miniature groups showing modes of living, habitations, or striking industries" (22).

Dr. Linton and his wife left Chicago for Europe in October 1925 and in December (23) they sailed from Marseilles to Madagascar, arriving at the seaport of Tamatave (24) on January 16, 1926 (25).

(17). On the two subjects origins of the Malagasy and date of their arrival in the island see : L. Mosca, "Questione etnica ed integrazione nazionale a Madagascar", *Africa*, Roma, 3, 1987, p. 487, note 14, p. 488, note 19.

(18). F. Ramiandrasoa, "L'oiseau' Rok et le 'Madcigascar' dans le livre de Marco Polo. (Un problème de géographie historique)", *Revue de Madagascar*, n.s., 37, 1967, p. 55-68 ; Louis Mollet, "Origine chinoise de quelques animaux fantastiques de Madagascar", *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, XLIX, 1974, p. 123-130.

(19). R.P. Callet, *Histoire des Bois. Tantaran'ny Andriana* (traduction par G.S. Chapus et E. Ratsimba), Tananarive, Librairie de Madagascar, 1974, t. 1, p. 437-440 ; Raombana, *Histoire* (Edition et traduction par Simon Ayache), Fianarantsoa, Librairie Ambozontany, 1980, p. 74-79.

(20). L. Mosca, "Ralph Linton in Madagascar...", *op. cit.* p. 2.

(21). *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3

(22). *Ibid.*, p. 2.

(23). *Ibid.* p. 3.

(24). Tamatave, founded around the middle of 17c., became the most important Madagascar port and a chief center for the Merina Kingdom. See : J.M. Filliot, *La traite des esclaves vers les Mascareignes au XVIIIème siècle*, Paris, ORSTOM, 1974, p. 139-141 ; M. Esoavelomandroso, *La province maritime orientale de Madagascar à la fin du XIXème siècle (1882-1895)*, Antananarivo, FIM, 1979, pp. 33-60 : For a more information, see also J. Chauvin, *Le vieux Tamatave : 1700-1936*, Tamatave, Ed. Sourd, 1945.

(25). L. Mosca, "Ralph Linton in Madagascar...", *op. cit.* p. 3.

After a rather uninteresting stay of three days on the coast, "Tamatave" — they wrote— "meant little to us but heat and worries, red tape, and aching heads, a street of Hindu, Chinese and French shops, and a lot of shuttered houses over decorated with iron grillwork that had seen better days, it looked as though it might have been put up for a world's fair toward the end of the last century" (26), the Lintons proceeded by train up to the mountains, to the capital city. Mrs Linton ended her description of the journey from Tamatave to Antananarivo annotating : "To describe this journey quickly would be to give no idea of it at all, for it always seemed as momentous as crossing the Atlantic"(27).

The Lintons spent their first night in Antananarivo at the Grand Hotel. The next day, they found quarters in the home of Rev. John Sims who was an English Quaker Missionary and the head of the Friends Foreign Mission (28). From that moment the Lintons were no more strangers in Madagascar" because "always after that we had good friends to turn to, and a place we might call home" (29).

To Linton and his wife, Antananarivo looked better than anything they had dared to hope. Arriving in Madagascar during the rainy season, Dr Linton judged it impossible to travel throughout the island, and decided to work in and around the capital until it was over. The Lintons considered this circumstance as "a good opportunity to come to know the capital, the language, the customs of travelers in Madagascar, the people who inhabit the central plateau" (30).

They also decided to settle down on their account, to find one or two native servants, a teacher and an interpreter. They had a look at two houses and finally succeeded in renting a villa for the sum of "500 francs a month or twenty dollars" (31). Villa Henriette, that was the name of the house (32), had eleven rooms, five porches, numerous outhouses, a garden and also a bathroom, wich according to the Lintons, was very unusual in those days (33) ! Villa Henriette was almost behind the American Consulate (34) and at a walking distance from the Zoma (35).

(26). R. Linton and M. Linton, *Veloma ! Madagascar, op. cit.*, p. XXI.

(27). *Ibid.* p. XXV.

(28). The FFMA opened the work in Madagascar in the year 1867 with Joseph Sewell, a British missionary and Louis and Sarah Street from the U.S. of America. On the subject see : B.A. Gow, *Madagascar and the Protestant impact (The work of the British Missions, 1818-1895)*, London, Longman & Dalhousie University Press, 1979.

(29). R. Linton and M. Linton, *Veloma ! Madagascar, op. cit.*, p. XXVI.

(30). *Ibid.* p. XXVII.

(31). *Ibid.* p. XXIX.

(32). *Ibid.* p. L.

(33). *Ibid.* p. XXIX.

(34). *Ibid.* p. XXXI.

(35). *Ibid.* p. LVI.

The Lintons hired a maid, Raketamanga, who "smiled [...] with a Mona Lisa inscrutability" (36) for two dollars a month ; a sewing woman, Rasoavelo, a "short pug-nosed and aggressive" (37) lady ; and a cook, Rapoly (38) who was to come and prepare each of the two main meals and "leave as soon as it was served" (39). Rapoly was hired for five dollars a month (40).

The Lintons were also able to find a teacher, Rasoanjanahary, to teach them Malagasy (41) and an interpreter, Ramamonjy (42). Rasoanjanahary had attended the London Missionary Society's schools (43) and she spoke beautiful, cultured British English (44). Ramamonjy, the interpreter, descended from a noble family. He had been a professor (45).

Dr Linton gave fairly good descriptions of the living conditions in the capital and explained that the low prices were due to a favourable exchange. The city however was suffering from a great deal of fever and a mild epidemic of bubonic plague. He also observed that the inhabitants were "rather restless [...] and [...] were stirred up against the whites by the younger educated element among them and by discharged soldiers who fought in France" (46).

In Antananarivo there were also many wild rumours, but the Assistant Curator judged the city safe. "Tananarive" —they wrote— "smiled upon us, the very colors of the city, the beauty of the scene from any one of its hills made us feel an optimism that was quite unsupported by grim facts" (47).

From the very beginning Mrs. Linton acquired a range of Malagasy vocabulary. She learned about the words down : *ambany* ; up : *ambony* ; and the

(36). *Ibid.* p. XXIX.

(37). *Ibid.* p. XLIX.

(38). *Ibid.* p. LI.

(39). *Ibid.* p. XXX

(40). *Ibid.* p. XXV.

(41). *Ibid.* p. XLVIII.

(42). *Ibid.* p. XXXIX.

(43). The London Missionary Society opened the first school in Antananarivo on the 20th of december 1820. See L. Mosca, *Il Madagascar nella vita di Raombana...*, *op. cit.*, p. 73, note 10.

(44). R. Linton and M. Linton, *Veloma ! Madagascar*, *op. cit.*, p. XLVIII.

(45). *Ibid.*, p. XXXIX.

(46) Dr. R. Linton to Mr. D.C. Davies, Tananarive Feb. 1, 1926, Field Museum of Natural History (hereafter cited as FMN11), Manuscript and Archives. On the Malagasy participation to the 1st World War, see M. Gontard, *Madagascar pendant la Première Guerre mondiale* (Antananarivo, Société Malgache d'édition, (1969 ; S. Randrianja, "Les valeurs de 1789 et leur utilisation par les forces politiques à Madagascar durant l'entre-deux-guerres", *Regards sur Madagascar et la Révolution française* (Actes du Colloque d'Antananarivo, 5-6, juin 1989 réunis et présentés par G. Jacob, Madagascar, ed. CNAPMAD, 1990, p. 159-166.

(47). R. Linton and M. Linton, *Veloma ! Madagascar*, *op. cit.*, p. XXVII.

names of foods. She also began to learn the intricacies of cooking with kindling wood and charcoal. She reported that they used to eat rice, beef, chicken and a great variety of vegetables. Mrs. Linton also recalled, with pleasure, an episode regarding Rapoly. "On ordinary market days" —she wrote— "our man [Rapoly] bought our food, too, and I would get pencilled lists of what he had purchased, with the price all added up wrong, and I supposed he had made them. Then one day I discovered quite by accident that he could neither read nor write, and I learned of a new trade. A man made his living in the Tananarive market place by writing out shopping lists for the cooks of the *vazaha*, the Europeans. He arranged the prices so that if the housewives met at tea they could comment on the rise in the price of beef without discovering that a sou (48) has been added for the accountant, and one for the wise cook who patronized him. All the accounts agreed. As I fed my household on fifty cents a day or less I could not believe that I was being badly cheated, but I came to realize in time that I fed the cook's family, too, even on the days when I did not give him left-over food to carry home in his *lamba*" (49).

While Mrs. Linton was adapting her way of living to the new life, Dr. Linton dedicated himself immediately and totally to the exacting work of an anthropologist of a well known institution.

He was well received by the colonial officials as well as by scientists, particularly by the Malagasy Academy. on thursday January 28th, 1926 he attended a meeting of the Academy and was elected Honorary Member (50).

Because of his overriding concern for the expedition, Dr Linton had minimal interest or energy to devote to matters not connected with his daily labours and paid very little attention to social life in Antananarivo of to European personalities, unless this social activity or the persons played a role in the success of the expedition.

"It would have been easy" —we read— "to fall into the routine of the capital, housekeeping a little, sewing, gardening, seeing friends, and fulfilling our parental obligations to the various people who worked for us. But our chief interests were not in these things, and more and more callers would find that we had gone off to the old Queen's Palace, where there is a good collection of Malagasy things (much of it upstairs in a store

(48). Sou : five centimes

(49). R. Linton and M. Linton, *Veloma ! Madagascar, op. cit.*, p. XXX.

(50). L. Mosca, "Ralph Linton in Madagascar...", *op. cit.* p. 3.

room, at the mercy of cockroaches) ; or attending market day at some village that was on the automobile road" (51).

In fact, Mrs. Linton recorded : "Our days soon feel into orderly line, with lessons in the Malagasy language right after breakfast most days, and quiet hours at night to study for them" (52).

The Lintons described the quiet nights of Antananarivo :

"Late supper came after it was quite dark and all the world was closed up tight and double barred for the night. At first there would be the sound of the native *valiha* with its cut-bamboo strings, or real violin, or the piano in a creole's house which was giving forth an approximation of the Merry Widow Waltz. Then all would be still except for the sound of a typewriter in one of our two offices, and no light could be seen on our street save the one which lighted up the account of what Ramamonjy had been recounting, and the other which shone on the beginnings of a home-made English-Malagasy dictionary" (53).

Only on mail days did the Lintons, as well as the other foreigners, have to postpone all obligations and go out at night.

"We never went out at night except when the mail was going down to Tamatave to the [...] mail boat, and we would get our letters to the post office at the eleventh hour. Mail days were always busy ones. Each steamer that brought us mail would go on to Mauritius and Reunion, then make a second call on its way back to Marseilles. When the schedule was not upset by storms, or engine troubles, there would plenty of time of our incoming letters to come up from the coast and be delivered to us, and for us to write answers to go down to the same boat as it returned. But that meant a strenuous day or two of writing for the English and American colonists. Then the dictionary had to wait. But when the bi-weekly letters were off there were the lesson note books, and an 1885 London Missionary Society Malagasy-English dictionary, waiting to help [...] to write our own English-Malagasy one" (54).

However they sometimes had formal entertainings with the French authorities (55) as well as tea parties (56). But Dr. Linton and his wife never had the leisure to join "speedy young French set [...] who held thirteen-course

(51). R. Linton and M. Linton, *Veloma ! Madagascar, op. cit.*, p. XXXVI.

(52). *Ibid.*, p. XXXVII.

(53). *Ibid.*, pp. XL-XLI.

(54). *Ibid.*, XLI-XLII.

(55). *Ibid.*, p. XXXII.

(56). *Ibid.*, p. XXXV-XXXVI.

dinners, and dances, and then rode horses around the Route Circulaire in the early morning" (57)

While in Antananarivo, Mrs. Linton accepted the invitation of Rev. John Sims to give a speech at the Trano Briky Church, where she learned the Malagasy etiquette and its social stratification.

"He [Rev. Sims] " —we read— "could interpret for me [...] . I chose a number of subjects. The Wuakers as peace-loving people was rejected. The French might not approve. Finally we agreed on the fellowship of Quakers all over the world [...] . It went well —I think. Each little section I did in English turned out to be much longer in Malagasy. What comes to my mind most vividly is the mass of absolutely quiet people in that congregation, some four hundred black heads dotting the white of the clean *lamba* everyone wore. As we went out into the church yard afterward I was addressed by a tall, imposing looking woman to whom I said, '*Akory hianao, Tompko*' which is quite correct normally. It means, roughly, 'May you live, Master'. (There is no difference in the *Tompoko* when you are speaking to a man or a woman, young or old). But this time I was all wrong. The tall woman was '*Andriana*' or noble, and of course nobility will live. One must pray that their family will increase" (58).

Through their relationship with the natives, the Lintons became well aware of their characters, customs and history. Writing of Antananarivo, they reported :

"Never was there a city of greater contrasts. Across the way from a luxurious French residence would be found a little wayside market where the native stopped to buy meat, and carry it home, threaded on a piece of raffia. In a yard nearby a carpenter plied his trade. On the lower level, jutting out almost under some of the fine houses of the Europeans where old houses of natives, whose nearly naked babies played in the sun beside mothers who are weaving *lamba* dyeing silk, or pounding rice. Inside the European houses the contrasts were no less striking. Few of the French hostesses have adapted their way of living to the climate. There are heavy velour hangings at the windows of many of the finer houses, some of them appliqued with red or pink flowers. But Madagascar has crept in, even with its sunlight shut out, for between the curtains one saw a big spider web which the servants have been too superstitious to sweep down, the mistress too indolent" (59).

Mr and Mrs Linton developed a particularly strong riendship with the two maids, the teacher and the interpreter.

(57). *Ibid.*, p. XLI.

(58). *Ibid.*, p. LII.

(59). *Ibid.*, p. XXXV.

"My three R's" —wrote Mrs. Linton— "facilitated everything I had to do, Rasoanjanahary, our teacher, came to us with the very highest recommendations, from the Friends Mission. It was the London Missionary Society [...] that had educated her from childhood [...] . By choice Rasoanjanahary kept to the conservative Hova ways. The arrangement of the big white cotton lamba around her shoulders, over her long black and white dress, and the simple braid of her straight black hair down her back, both proclaimed that she was a widow [...] Rasoavelo [...] at first [...] came to us one day a week, to mend the washing brought back by the *mpanasa lamba* (washerwoman). Then [...] she came to our house almost daily. Often she and Rasoanjanahary both were upstairs in my study and talked about the old days. I sat at my desk and though the teacher undoubtedly knew I was making occasional notes, getting down valuable information for our study of the Malagasy culture, the sewing woman probably did not know that her added days at our house were of use to me more because of what she remembered and told than of what she sewed for me [...] . She disapproved of the French. They didn't take seriously the moral standards of the Malagasy, different from their own, but more rigidly adhered to [...] . God was angry about the French conquest of the island, she told me, and had sent the malaria and the bubonic plague, which would one day wipe out both the *vazaha* and the native residents of Madagascar [...] . Raketamanga, our young maid, was my third standby. She too, loved me, I felt" (60).

As regards Dr. Linton's relationship with the natives, the noble Ramamonjy received prominent mention in the papers.

In a letter he wrote : "I have gotten a good interpreter" (61).

Later on he reported :

"One of the informants, Ramamonjy, can write French, and I have had him write accounts of native life for me [...] . One of these, a description of rice culture, is so interesting that I have taken the liberty of sending a translation of it to the *Atlantic Monthly*" (62).

About the work done by Ramamonjy for Dr. Linton, Mrs. Linton wrote :

(60). *Ibid.*, pp. XLVIII-L.

(61). For Director Information. Letter of Dr. Linton, Tananarive, Feb. 7, 1926 FMNH, Manuscript and Archives.

(62). R. Linton to Mr D.C. Davies, Tananarive, March 25, 1926, FMNH, Manuscript and Archives. Copy in the Department of Anthropology. The description of rice culture appeared in the *American Anthropologist*. See R. Linton, "Rice a Malagasy tradition", *American anthropologist*, n.s., 1927, 3, p. 654-660.

"[Ramamonjy] delighted to take long hours of my husband's time to tell what he remembered of the incident, explaining each old custom, in the French which he knew well, and in the English which he hoped to perfect. We had to get all that material from someone, so the patient anthropologist sat and listened, and assented from time to time, and made notes" (63).

The Lintons —as we have said— took a special interest in the Malagasy cultural patterns. They observed :

"Tananarive was the Malagasy capital quite as much as it was the French administrative capital. The European culture is simply superimposed upon the foundations of the older capital, and its government and its society. Here the *vazaha* seem more like intruders than they do in the coast towns. This makes Tananarive more interesting to live in, and less comfortable and healthful. Several other towns have each new sections that are thoroughly European in character, with wide straight streets, and houses of French type. In Tananarive, the new, wide streets have been cut right through the old town with its alleys and back ways —a regular rabbit warren" (64).

Dr. Linton immediately started collecting specimens and artifacts and it proved very rewarding, especially for a single collector. After two weeks spent in Antananarivo, he announced :

"The work is opening up well and I feel sure that I can get the best Madagascar collection in the world" (65).

" We know that each morning the natives used to call at Villa Henriette in order to sell their objects. In particular they were bringing *lamba* and native- made things (66). This newly learned vocabulary as well as to learn day after day how to bargain with the Malagasy.

"We needed" —Mrs Linton annotated— "all we could learn; too, for bargaining is the national sport in the Malagasy, and one should be ashamed of paying the price first asked" (67).

-In his work of collecting Hova textiles, ornaments and metal ware, Dr. Linton was helped by three of four natives who went around scouting for old artifacts (68).

In a letter dated february 7, 1926 the anthropologist described his work among the Merina people.

(63). R. Linton and M. Linton, *Veloma ! Madagascar, op. cit.*, p. XL.

(64). *Ibid.*, pp. XXXVIII-XXXIV.

(65). L. Mosca, "Ralph Linton in Madagascar...", *op. cit.* p. 4.

(66). *Ibid.* pp. XXXVII-XXXVIII.

(67). *Ibid.*, p. XXXVII.

(68). L. Mosca, "Ralph Linton in Madagascar...", *op. cit.* p. 4.

"Modern material" —he wrote— "can be purchased in the Zuma or great weekly market and is very cheap, but old objects, especially textiles are reasonably dear. I have had to pay as much as \$25.00 for one very fine old silk lamba or robe and from \$ 20.00 to 24.00 for several others [...]. The material, aside from the silks, is not especially beautiful or striking, but is extremely interesting from the comparative standpoint. There are two varieties of silks, the domestic silk, which is an innovation, the first worms having been imported by the French, and the wild silk, which has been used since time immemorial. The wild silk (*landy*) looks very much like fine wool, lacking much of the luster of the domestic silk. Fabrics of both domestic silk and landi are still woven entirely on hand looms, but they are beginning to use aniline colors. The old mantles of landi are nearly as heavy as canvas and are almost always woven in solid colors or broad stripes. There are also heavy fabrics of wild cotton, bark thread, hemp and banana fiber, and a tremendous variety of rafia fabrics. The rarest objects are old wood carvings, of which I have so far gotten only three, and weapons. The French disarmed the Hova completely at the time of the conquest, and although many spear-heads which had been cut off and hidden have been offered to me I have gotten only one spear (which I suspect is Sakalava and not Hova) and no shield. I have gotten an ancient blow gun, however, which is an extremely rare piece. I am also having trouble in getting old ornaments, which have mostly been melted down for the metal, and old bead work. Even so I believe that I have already gotten together the best Hova collection outside the museum here"(69)

Through a diligent application to the study of the Malagasy language and the collections in the local museum as well as the books in the Government and Malagasy Academy libraries, Linton gradually gained a little knowledge of the Malagasy civilization. After a few weeks he was able to write :

"The culture as a whole seems to be of an extremely primitive Malayan type with numerous African features. I think it is quite impossible to correlate it with the cultures of Java or Sumatra at the time at which the Hova are supposed to have immigrated from there. They were entirely ignorant of the plow or of the use of draught animals, their art shows absolutely no Hindu influence, and the names of their domestic animals, even those of the pig, dog, and chicken, seem to be of African origin" (70).

During their stay in the capital, Dr. Linton and his wife were roaming about the city and the nearby towns of Imerina with the help of the noble Ramamonjy. Dr. Linton collected objects and talked to the people, mostly the old people, trying to

(69). For Director's Information. Letter of Dr Linton, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

(70). L. Mosca, "Ralph Linton in Madagascar...", *op. cit.* p. 4.

reconstruct the Malagasy culture. In their travels in Imerina country, they went to visit the city of Ambohimanga with Ramamonjy. On this occasion Mrs. Linton annotated :

"Ambohimanga was the sacred city of the *Hova* and for many years no pigs, horses, nor foreigners were allowed to pass through any one of its seven gates. Under French administration the foreigner, at least, might enter, if he had a permit to do so. We had asked Ramamonjy to get the permit from the government, but his notion of his own dignity and of the importance of the Museum Expedition made him feel that for us a permit would be superfluous, so we arrived without one. Coming to the sacred hill we passed mission buildings, outside the gates, and then, in the government automobile we had rented, we got inside as far as the house of the local native governor, and there we stopped to be admitted to the *Rova*, the holy enclosure where the kings had lived, where the royal houses still stand-though this is only hear say as far as I am concerned [...]. I had an amusing morning watching the children and talking to some women who were making lace [...], but I began to suspect that we would never see the inside of the *Rova* [...] The Ambohimanga governor was honored to have us dine with him, even though he could not open royal gates for us. His wife greeted us cordially. She was *Andriana*, which means of noble family, and all the polite phrases we had so carefully learned should have had quite different forms to be used when addressing an *Andriana* ! I think she understood our dilemma. She was charming to us, and she was as beautiful a woman as we saw anywhere on the island. We sat for a time in the salon, a room in the French mode, with little tables covered with photographs in frames, in other objects which belong to our own civilization. But when lunch was served in the other downstairs room we found our dining table covered with a priceless old blue silk *lamba*, whose colors cannot be duplicate in modern dyes even when none but vegetable dye is used. It was an ink-stained and worn, but we covered it nevertheless.

The wife and her children ate upstairs, the Governor, Ramamonjy, Ralph and I downstairs. It was our first meal in a native house [...]. After lunch we admired the kings'view, and sat where native royalty used to sit on a promontory overlooking the wide valley and saw the lines scratched in the rock which made a *fanorona* board (71) for his use when he chose to play the chess-like game here in the cool of the evening. We saw also the two holes in the slanting rock where women who desired children came to try their luck. They rolled pebbles from above, and if the pebble went into the hole they would get the child they asked for. One hole gave promise of a boy, the other a girl. I noted with satisfaction that there was as much grease smeared around the edges of the girl baby hole as there was

(71). On the *Fanorona*, see J. et S. Chauvicourt, *Le Fanorona. Jeu national malgache*, Antananarivo, s.e., 1980.

around the boy baby hole. The women had not been leaving all to fate ! These things were all very interesting, and the view was splendid, and the luncheon party delightful ; but not one of us set foot inside the *Rova*, nor save the royal houses we had come to see" (72).

With the help of old informants and of his own observations, Linton was able to make these sharp considerations to the Museum director :

"I have gotten two excellent informants, old men, and as they hate each other and take delight in catching each other in mistakes I feel fairly sure that I am getting the truth from them. They have already given me a mass of new material, much of it of great scientific importance. I have obtained a hitherto unknown legend of the Hova, which contains references to the *aepyornis*, the great extinct bird of Madagascar. It also states that the *Hova* did not has been previously believed, but reached the island after a long voyage along the coast of Africa and landed first on the west (African) side of the island. I have gotten a good deal of other information which seems corroborate this, and if true it will revolutionize the study of east African ethnology. No one has ever thought of looking for ancient Malay influence there"(73).

During his residence in Antananarivo, Dr. Linton contracted malignant malaria. He was seriously ill and sometimes Dr. Ch. Ranaivo (74), the "more respected doctor in the capital" (75), ordered to administer the quinine by a hypodermic injection.

In Imerina the Lintons not only collected objects and information, but also began to learn the method of divining or *sikidy* (76). Dr. Linton, in particular, became very expert at interpreting the *sikidy* and when he was back to the United States, he continued for some time to practice it (77).

In April, Linton informed Mr. D.C. Davies, the Director of the Field Mucum, that the first lot of artifacts, 6 cases, had been sent to the port of Tamatave and from there would be shipped to the United States by the first vessel (78). A few

(72). R. Linton and M. Linton, *Veloma ! Madagascar*, *op. cit.*, p. XLIV-XLVII.

(73). R. Linton to Mr. M.C. Davies, Tananarive, March 25, 1926, *op. cit.* ; L. Mosca, "Ralph Linton in Madagascar...", *op. cit.*, p. 5.

(74). For his life, see R. Rajemisa-Raolison, *Dictionnaire historique et géographique de Madagascar*, Fianarantsoa, Librairie Anibozontany, 1966, p. 298.

(75). R. Linton and M. Linton, *Veloma ! Madagascar*, *op. cit.*, p. LV ; L. Mosca, "Ralph Linton in Madagascar...", *op. cit.* p. 5.

(76). On the *Sikidy*, see R. Decary (avec la collaboration de M. Urbain Faubléc), *La divination malgache par le sikidy*, Paris, Geuthner, 1970.

(77). R. Linton and M. Linton, *Veloma ! Madagascar*, *op. cit.*, p. LIII-LIV.

(78). L. Mosca, "Ralph Linton in Madagascar...", *op. cit.* p. 5-6.

days later, the Lintons left Antananarivo beginning their travels through the island of Madagascar. They returned back to the capital after each expedition but always for a brief stay and when in November 1926 poor health caused Mrs. Linton to return home and leave his husband behind, the two Americans said farewell to their native and European friends with deep regrets.

In a report written for the Museum, Linton described his work with the Merina in details :

"The *Hova* in and about Tananarive are all ostensibly Christian, and have been largely Europeanized. Many elements of the ancient culture have entirely disappeared and many others are on the point of disappearance. Nearly all the objects still manufactured by the natives could be bought in the great weekly market. The native proved eager to sell, and brought old things of all sort, and examples of the best silk weaving to my house almost daily. A native collector was sent into the least civilized part of the province to try to find certain objects formerly in use, but was only partially successful. About 600 specimens were purchased, forming by far the best and most complete *Hova* collection which has so far been assembled [...] . The outstanding features of the collection are the textiles, especially the silk lambas (mantles), the stone lamp (now obsolete) a practically complete collection of snuff boxes showing all forms in ordinary use, a fairly complete set of charms beads, with full information on their use and significance, and a wood idol which is probably one of the 12 original national gods (*Sampy*) of Imerina. All these *sampy* were supposedly burned at the time of the conversion of the Queen, about 50 years ago, but are generally believed to have been hidden away by their hereditary guardians, who substituted other things for them. They all reappeared at the time of the native revolt against the French in 1893 [sic !], but disappeared again when the rebels were dispersed. The figure I obtained was found among the effects of an old man who had been one of the hereditary guardians of the *sampy* and corresponds almost exactly to early missionary descriptions of the idol which was his family special charge. It is evidently of great age and its surface shows a peculiar glassy polish that could only have been produced by long handling. It was found by my native collector and bought for a price so small that deceit is out of question. I am convinced that is one of the *sampy*, and if so is the only one that has ever fallen into European hands. I ask that nothing be published on this, as it will cause me serious trouble if it is known. Many valuable notes were collected, old *Hova* and missionaries of long experience being used as informants. An outline was made and gradually filled in with details on the material culture, social life, etc. There are many old people whose memory goes back to pagan times and the material should make an

excellent report. Especial attention was paid to the Vazimba legends, and a good deal of quite new material collected" (79).

CONCLUSION

This paper aims at describing some aspects of Antananarivo as it appeared to Mr. Linton and his wife at the time of their residence there in the first months of 1926 (January-April). In addition this paper deals with the problem of the origins and nature of Malagasy civilization. Here as already suggested at the beginning, the American archives, i.e. the material presented, can be considered a legacy for scholars interested in the Malagasy past.

FAMINTINANA

Ity lahatsoratra ity dia mampiseho tahirin-kevitra notsongaina tao anatin'ny "Ralph Linton Papers" (taratasy fananan'i Ralph Linton). Ny ankabeazany dia taratasy sy tatitra nalaina tao amin'ilay antontan-taratasy mitondra ny lohateny hoe : "Captain Marshall Field expedition to Madagascar (1926-1927), Ralph Linton Papers" ao amin'ny "Field Museum of National history" any Chicago (U.S.A.). Hita ao koa ny ampahany vitsivitsy, vita sora-printy, amin'ilay lahatsoratra mitondra ny lohateny hoe "Veloma ! Madagascar" tao amin'ny "College Library" any Swarthmore (Pensylvania, U.S.A.). Nanampy azy tamin'ny fanoratana io lahatsoratra farany io i Margaret McIntosh Linton vadin'ny.

Ity tahirin-kevitra ity dia loharano azo anovozana fahalalana momba an'Antananarivo tamin'ny faramparan'ny taompolo 1920.

(79). R. Linton, Report on Work of Madagascar expedition to september 9, 1926, FMNH, Manuscript and Archives, p. 6. Linton published an incomplete version of this report. See R. Linton, "Report on work of Field Museum expedition in Madagascar. From January to september 9, 1926", *American Anthropologist*, n.s., 3, 1927, p. 292-307. In particular, see. p. 301-302

RESUME

Cet article présente une sélection de documents qui font partie des Ralph Linton Papers, surtout des lettres et des rapports qui appartiennent au recueil "Captain Marshall Field expedition to Madagascar (1926-1927), Ralph Linton Papers" du Field Museum of National History de Chicago (USA). On trouvera aussi des extraits dactylographiés de *Veloma ! Madagascar* de la Collège Library de Swarthmore (Pensylvania, USA). Ce dernier texte a été écrit en collaboration avec sa femme Margaret McIntosh Linton. Cette documentation est une source très utile pour la connaissance d'Antananarivo, dans la deuxième moitié des années 20.