

The Indonesian migrations to Madagascar: making sense of the multidisciplinary evidence

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1 Introduction*

This chapter tries to integrate linguistic evidence with data from other disciplines into a theory about the early migrations from Indonesia to Madagascar. It discusses linguistic evidence and more particularly the evidence of loanwords from Malay, Javanese and South Sulawesi languages (Section 2). It also deals with migration routes (Section 3), migration dates (Section 4), genetic evidence (Section 5), and early Islam in East Madagascar (Section 6). Finally, it makes some educated guesses as to how Madagascar was populated (Section 7).

2 The linguistic evidence

2.1 The genetic link with South East Barito languages

Malagasy is a South East Barito language. Its homeland is in South East Borneo, and it is most closely related to other South East Barito languages such as Maanyan, Dusun Witu, Paku, Samihim and Lawangan (Dahl 1951, 1977). After half a century, it is still necessary to emphasise this genetic linguistic link. Although Dahl's theory has never officially been challenged since it was published in 1951¹, neither did it quite obtain the widespread recognition it deserved. There are several reasons for this.

From a historical linguistic perspective, there were problems with the way Dahl (1951) presented his data, parts of which could have been more organised and compelling (cf. Dyen 1953). There was also a problem with the way he analysed them: some of his proposed sound correspondences were messy, and a number of his etymologies were contrived. In spite of these shortcomings, historical linguists would soon come to accept Dahl's subgrouping claim, especially after Dyen's (1953) endorsement of it on the basis of, among other things, lexicostatistic testing. In the mean time, more sources have become available for South East Barito languages, including Samihim comparative data (Adelaar 1995c), and linguistic studies of Maanyan (Djantera Kawi et al. 1984), Lawangan (Andriastuti et al. 1992), Paku (Dewi Mulyani Santoso et al. 1989) and other languages from the National Language Center (Pusat Bahasa) in Jakarta. My own

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¹ Dyen (1953) criticised Dahl (1951) for lack of methodological rigour but accepted the proposed close genetic link between Malagasy and Maanyan on the basis of corroborating lexicostatistical evidence.

research (Adelaar 1989, 1994, 1995a, 1995b) has demonstrated that Malagasy has many loanwords from Malay, Javanese and South Sulawesi languages. These new data and analyses do not challenge the main claims Dahl's (1951, 1977) claims; rather, they substantiate them more clearly than he himself had been able to do on the basis of the data available to him in 1951. In hindsight, it is easy to see why (and to understand how) that in his search for the closest next-of-kin of Malagasy, Dahl had overlooked the possibility that his lexical data in fact represented two Austronesian layers, one consisting of inherited vocabulary, and the other of loanwords from Austronesian languages outside the South East Barito group. As a result, many of his sound correspondences were ambivalent and lacked phonological regularity. Identifying loanwords from Malay, Javanese and South Sulawesi languages and contrasting these with inherited Austronesian (South East Barito) vocabulary has made it possible to evaluate this vocabulary in its right phonological perspective.

Another reason is of a more typological linguistic nature. The morphosyntactic structure of Malagasy is in many ways more conservative than that of other South East Barito languages. It is more reminiscent of the structure of many of the languages of the Philippines, Sabah, North Sulawesi and Taiwan, which are often considered to have remained typologically closer to Proto Austronesian. This structural type is often referred to as the "Philippine-type structure"². On the other hand, Maanyan has evolved towards a "West Indonesian" (Malay-type) morphosyntactic structure. This has aroused much suspicion among theoretical and typological linguists: how can languages that are supposedly so closely related be structurally so different? And is it not odd that Maanyan, which never left its traditional linguistic environment, has drifted so much further away from the morphosyntactic proto structure than Malagasy, with its foreign influences and migratory history? As has become increasingly clear from recent typological comparisons, the morphosyntactic divergence between Malagasy and Maanyan is a consequence of the longstanding and sustained influence of Malay on the languages of West Indonesia. Through the early migration of its speakers, Malagasy escaped this influence, while other South East Barito languages have strongly been affected by it as they are spoken in the vicinity of Banjarmasin, a Malay-speaking metropolis in South Borneo.

Malagasy and Maanyan are also very different in their phonologies, although here it is definitely Malagasy which appears to have undergone more innovations, rather than Maanyan. These innovations also show similarities with phonological changes that have taken place in other (non-South East Barito) Austronesian languages, such as the development of vocalic endings, which is also observed in South Sulawesi and Polynesian languages. However, as Dahl (1988:109-120) pointed out with his "Bantu substratum theory", the phonological developments of Malagasy can largely be explained through a common phonological history of this language with Comoran languages (Ngazije, Ndzuani, Maore), which, among others, show the same tendencies towards vocalic endings as Malagasy.

Finally, there is often a lack of corroborating interdisciplinary evidence to support the alleged close genetic relationship between the Malagasy people and the speakers of South East Barito languages. Until recently, this was the case with ethnological as well as

² However, Reid and Liao (2004:434) reject this label as it assumes a greater structural uniformity among Philippine languages than is justified.

archaeological and genetic evidence, but in the last 15 or so years, archaeological and genetic research has yielded promising new insights, which in many ways bear out the linguistic evidence, or at least, are amenable to an integrated interpretation of the linguistic findings (see below). Ethnological evidence is more difficult to bring into alignment. This is due to several factors. First, there do not seem to be salient cultural features that are shared exclusively among the Malagasy and South East Barito speakers. Obviously, both the Malagasy and the South East Barito speakers had undergone various cultural transformations after the Malagasy migration. This includes adaptation to external influences (from Malays and other Austronesian societies); in the case of the Malagasy, where the transformations must have been more dramatic, this also involved influence from Africa, and the adaptation to a totally new environment. Another reason is the lack of ethnological research in both South Borneo and Madagascar. This is especially the case in the South East Barito area: although an appreciable amount of work has been done on the Maanyan people (cf. Hudson 1963, Hudson 1972, Hudson and Hudson 1967), we know little more than just the names of some of the other groups. And last, but certainly not least, ethnographic data do not lend themselves to genetically based historical comparison as readily as do languages. Similarities may be due to genetic relationship, contact, inherent systemic change, or chance, and it is imperative to distinguish between these causes in the search for the historical source of any phenomenon. In general, such distinctions are more apparent in language than in ethnographic data.

As a consequence of lack of corroborating evidence for a Malagasy-South East Barito link outside linguistics, researchers have often resorted to looking for links with other ethnic groups, using evidence of cultural complexes (and their terminologies) that are not typically South East Barito. Unfortunately many of them fail to put their comparisons in a broader Austronesian context. There is little point in comparing, say, Malagasy rice cultivation techniques with those of Java, Malagasy musical instruments with Sulawesi musical instruments, or Malagasy burial practices with those found on Bangka Island, without starting out from a general ethnographic overview of these complexes in the wider Austronesian-speaking world. Such an approach ignores the existence of cultural commonalities across the Austronesian world as well as cultural spread in certain areas within this world (e.g. the Indianised Malay and Indianised Javanese spheres of influence in large parts of Indonesia). It creates a tunnel vision with little predictive value for Malagasy culture history.

The historical relations between Madagascar and the rest of the Austronesian world can only be studied effectively from a general Austronesian perspective. In this respect, the Malgachisants are in a more disadvantaged position, as they start out from an individual case (Madagascar), which they have to test against a general variety. Apart from being experts in their own field, they will also need to be general Austronesianists and/or experts in South East Asian studies in order to make meaningful culture historical comparisons.

2.2 Language sources

Unless indicated otherwise, the lexical data in this chapter were taken from the following sources:

Arabic: Wehr (1994)	North Malagasy: Velonandro (1983)
Banjar Malay: Abdul Jebar Hapip (1977)	Old Javanese: Zoetmulder (1982)
Bantu languages: Dahl (1988)	Old Malay: De Casparis (1956)
Bara Malagasy: Elli (1988)	Proto Austronesian, Proto Malayo
Betsimisaraka Malagasy: Richardson (1885)	Polynesian: Blust (various publications)
Brunei Malay: Wilkinson (1959)	Proto South Sulawesi: Mills (1975)
Buginese: Matthes (1874)	Sakalava Malagasy: Thomas-Fattier (1982)
Comoran Malagasy: Gueunier (1986)	Sanskrit: Gonda (1973)
Maanyan: Dahl 1951	South Toraja: Van der Veen (1940)
Macassarese: Cense (1979)	Tandroy Malagasy: Rajaonarimanana and Fee (1996)
Malagasy: Abinal and Malzac (1970)	(Sumatran) Malay --> Malay
Malagasy "dialectal": Richardson (1885)	Vevo Malagasy: Dahl 1988
Malay: Wilkinson (1959)	
(Merina) Malagasy: --> Malagasy	

2.3 Borrowing from Malay

As indicated above, in order to properly understand the Austronesian element in Malagasy (henceforth Malagasy), a distinction must be drawn between features that are inherited, and features that are borrowed from Austronesian languages that are not directly related to Malagasy (cf. Appendix for regular phonological correspondences). As far as I can see, these Austronesian languages are Malay, Javanese, Ngaju Dayak, and South Sulawesi languages. Among these lending languages, Malay takes a prominent position. Malay loanwords appear to belong to two dialects: Banjar Malay and Sumatra (Srivijaya?) Malay. For instance, (Sumatran) Malay has the following words: *səmbah* 'gesture of worship or honour'; *ləmah* 'weak'; *cecak* 'k.o. lizard'; and *kəmbər* 'twins'. Banjar Malay, which does not have the vowel ə (the schwa or "pepet") and uses *a* instead, has the corresponding forms *sambah*, *lamah*, *cacak* and *kambar* (all with same meanings). These words were borrowed into Malagasy as *samba/samba* 'expression of gratitude to God', *Lama* 'weak', *Tsatsaka* 'k.o. lizard' and (Sakalava) *hamba* 'twins'. In all these cases, the Malagasy form agrees with Banjar Malay in showing *a*. It does not follow Sumatran Malay, which has a corresponding original ə (Adelaar 1989). In contrast, Malagasy words that are borrowed from Sumatra Malay reflect its ə as *e*, e.g. (Sumatra) Malay *rətək* 'to burst' > Malagasy *retaka* 'to collapse', and Malay *bəsər* 'big' > Malagasy *vesatra* 'heavy'.

Malay loanwords are found in any semantic domain but they are most conspicuous in the domains of maritime life (including shipping, winds and cardinal directions) and the human body. Examples of loanwords pertaining to the first domain are as follows.

<i>a/varatra</i> 'North'	<i>barat</i> 'West'
<i>varatraza</i> (Betsimisaraka) 'south wind'	<i>barat daya</i> 'Southwest'
<i>tsimilotru</i> (Betsimisaraka) 'north wind'	<i>timur laut</i> 'Northeast'
<i>rivotra</i> 'wind'	(<i>angin</i>) <i>ribut</i> 'stormwind'
<i>ranto</i> '1. go trading to far-out places or countries; 2. product of such trading'	<i>rantaw</i> '1. reach of a river; 2. go abroad for trading'

tanjona 'cape, promontory'
fasika, fasina 'sand'
trozona 'whale'
lamboara 'a species of fish'

harana 'coral-reef, coral-rock'
hara 'mother-of-pearl'
sambo 'boat, vessel'
tampika (North) 'outrigger'
tona 'large nocturnal snake; enormous eel'

fanohara (Sakalava) 'turtle with a particular k.o. shell'
*vatoharanana, vatokaranana*³ 'quartz'
hoala (North) 'bay, inlet', cf. also *Ankoala* (a region in northern Madagascar)
an-drefana 'West'
nosy 'island'

sagary 'a northeast wind'
vidy (North) 'k.o. small fish',

horita 'octopus'
vontana (North) 'k.o. fish'

fano 'turtle'

tanjung 'id.'
pasir 'sand; beach'
duyung 'sea cow'
lembuara 'a giant fish (possibly a whale)'
 and Old Javanese *lembwara, lembora* 'a very large fish (whale? porpoise?)'

karang 'id.'
karah 'patchy in colouring (tortoise-shell)'
 Old Malay *sāmvaw* 'vessel'
 Brunei Malay *sa-tampik* 'on one side'
tuna name of a mud-snake or eel with yellowish body'
penyu karah 'tortoise-shell turtle, Ch. imbricata'
batu karang 'coral rock'
kuala 'river mouth'

depan '(in) front'
 Javanese (or Malay) *nusa* (with variant forms *nusya, nuswa* and *nungsa*)⁴ 'id.'
segara 'sea' < Sanskrit *sāgara*- 'the ocean'
(ikan) bilis 'anchovy, Macassar redfish; small fish, esp. *Stolephorus* spp.'
gurita 'id.'
(ikan) buntal 'box-fish, globe-fish or sea-porcupine'
penyu 'id.' (*fano* (probably < Banjarese Malay on account of its penultimate *a*)

Body-part terms that are borrowed from Malay are

Malagasy
vuavitsi 'calf of leg'
mulutra 'upper lip'
tsufina 'outer ear'
valahana 'loins'

haranka (dialectal) 'chest',
 Bara *harāka* 'skeleton'
tratra 'chest'
tanana 'hand'
hihi 'gums; (dialectally:) teeth'

Malay
buah betis 'id.'
mulut 'mouth'; cf. Proto Austronesian *vava
cuping 'lobe (e.g., of ear)'
bəlakang 'back; space behind'; Proto Austronesian *likud

kərangka 'skeleton'
dada 'id.'
tangan 'id.'; Proto Austronesian *lima
gigi 'teeth'; Proto Austronesian *[n,l,ø]ipən

³The Malagasy forms must be derived from +batu +karang + -an.

⁴The origin of this apparently non-Austronesian word is unknown.

and probably also

<i>vaoka</i> (dialectal) ‘hair along the jawbones’	<i>bauk</i>
<i>handrina</i> ‘eyebrow’	<i>kəning</i> ‘forehead’
<i>huhu</i> ‘nail’	<i>kuku</i>
<i>tumutra/tumitra</i> ‘heel’	<i>tumit</i>
<i>vua</i> ‘fruit; kidneys’	<i>buah ginjal</i>
<i>vutu</i> ‘penis’	<i>butuh</i>
<i>fifi</i> ‘cheek’	<i>pipi</i> .

Other loanwords do not appear to concentrate around such well-defined domains, although they do provide clear evidence of the great cultural influence the Malays must have had on Malagasy society (cf. Adelaar 1989, 1995b).

Another way of demonstrating Malay influence in Malagasy is by contrasting lexical pairs, one member of which is inherited, and the other borrowed from Malay. Examples:

Proto Austronesian	Malagasy (inherited)	Malay	Malagasy (borrowed)
* <i>apuy</i> ‘fire’	<i>afu</i> ‘id.’	<i>api</i>	<i>afi</i> (Bara) ‘lightning’
* <i>tanəq</i> ‘ground, soil’	<i>tani</i> ‘soil; country’	* <i>tanah</i> + <i>-an</i>	<i>tanána</i> ‘town, village’
* <i>ləmaq</i> ‘weak’	<i>lemi</i> ‘id.’	Banjar Malay <i>lama</i> ‘id.’	<i>lama</i> ‘id.’
* <i>tulək</i> ‘to push away; refuse’	<i>tudika</i> ‘turn to look’	<i>tolak</i> ‘push away’	<i>tulaka</i> ‘turn on its hinges’
* <i>tasik</i> ‘sea’	<i>taiky</i> (dial.) ‘sea’	<i>tasik</i> ‘lake’	<i>i/tasi</i> (< <i>i/tasih-anaka</i>) ⁵
* <i>tilik</i> ‘observe’	<i>tsidika</i> ‘peep in’	<i>tilik</i> ‘observe’	<i>tilik/ambo</i> ‘tower’ (* <i>ambo</i> ‘above’)

2.4 Borrowing from Javanese

Another lexical donor language, Javanese, is less important a source than Malay. Nevertheless, its legacy in Malagasy does include the honorific prefix *ra-*, which in Madagascar also occurs in many proper names, cf. Old Javanese *rānak* (< *ra-* + *anak*) ‘child’, *rāma* ‘father’ (< *ra-* + *ama* ‘father’, modern Javanese *rāmā* ‘Roman Catholic priest’), *rahadyan* ‘Lord, Master’ (modern Javanese *raden*, < *ra-* + *hadi* + *-an* < P(W)MP **qazi* ‘ruler’), etc.; Malagasy *rafotsi* ‘term of address for old lady’ (< *ra-* + *fotsi* ‘white’); Comoro Malagasy *ravinantu* ‘child-in-law’ (< *ra-* + *vinantu* < Proto Austronesian **b-in-antu* ‘child-in-law’); *Ranavalona* ‘(name of a series of Malagasy 19th century queens), *Rantoandro*, *Rajaonarimanana*, *Razafintsalama* (Malagasy last names).

As a category, Javanese loans can be difficult to spot, and it is often not possible to establish with certainty that Javanese is indeed their source language.

Some loanwords in Malagasy can reasonably be assumed to be borrowed directly from Javanese, because no cognate forms are found in any other language. This is the case with *ala* ‘forest’ (< Javanese *alas*), *tumutra* ‘close, imminent’ (< Javanese *tumut* ‘to

⁵ *i/tasi* derives from an earlier *i/tasih-anaka*, the name of a big lake, (with back-formation: < **i/tasih-anaka* < **i* + **tasik* + **anak* ‘small sea’, Dahl 1951:316)

follow, accompany, participate’), and *vulana* ‘word, speech’ (< Javanese *wulang* ‘lesson, advice; admonition’).

Other loanwords occur in Javanese as well as in Malay but must ultimately be borrowed from Javanese because philological research and phonotactic probability clearly favour Javanese as an ultimate source. However, they have also been borrowed into Malay at a very early stage and have been totally adapted to the structure of this language. In such cases, these loanwords could also have been borrowed via Malay, especially since Malay is a major source for lexical borrowing, while Javanese is not. Words like these include *rutsaka* ‘fall downwards, slip on a slope’, (in Tandroiy Malagasy): ‘collapse’. This word has a Malay corresponding form *rusak* (in Indonesia) or *rosak* (in Malaysia) meaning ‘spoiled, ruined’, and a corresponding form in Javanese *rusak* ‘spoiled, ruined’. These forms originally derive from an Old Javanese compound *rūg* ‘fall in, collapse, be smashed’ + *sāk* ‘fallen apart, loosened, dispersed’⁶. However, *rutsaka* could just as well have been borrowed via an older form of Malay, as *rusak/rosak* also became part of the core vocabulary of this language. *Mura* ‘easy; cheap’ is a reflex of Proto Austronesian **mudaq* ‘easy’ but phonologically it cannot be a direct continuation of this form (Proto Austronesian *-aq > Malagasy -i). It shares its meaning with the Malay and Javanese corresponding form *murah* ‘cheap’. Malay *murah* in turn is borrowed from Javanese (the regularly inherited Malay reflex of Proto Austronesian **mudaq* is *mudah* ‘easy’). However, *murah* now belongs to the Malay core vocabulary, and Malay is therefore just as likely the source of Malagasy *mura* as is Javanese. Finally, *fatutra* ‘to bind’ may be borrowed from Javanese or Malay *patut* ‘fitting, suitable’. This word ultimately derives from Old Javanese *pa-tu:t* ‘id.’, the root of which, *tu:t*, is a reflex of Proto Austronesian **tuRut* (Proto Austronesian *R > Javanese \emptyset) and corresponds regularly to Malay *turut* ‘to follow; to conform’. However, *patut* has become so integrated in Malay that it also qualifies as a direct source of *fatutra*. In all three cases (*rutsaka*, *mura*, *fatutra*), there is simply no way of telling which language was the direct lending source.

Other loanwords that are common to Malay and Javanese cannot be diagnosed as being borrowed from either one or the other because their development is unknown and their shape in no way violates the phonotactic structure of either Malay or Javanese in any stage of their known history. Malagasy *lazu* ‘wilted, fading’ is borrowed from either Malay or Javanese, which both have *layu* (same meaning); Malagasy *sala/sala* ‘doubtful, hesitating’ could be from either Malay *salah* or Javanese *salah* which both mean ‘wrong’; Malagasy *sudina* ‘flute’ could be from either Malay *suling* or Javanese *suling* ‘flute’, etc.

Another, especially difficult category, are the Sanskrit loanwords in Malagasy. These are known to have entered the language via Malay or Javanese. Considering that Malay loanwords in Malagasy outnumber by far loanwords from other Indonesian languages, it is likely that most Sanskrit loanwords in Malagasy have been borrowed via Malay. But for reasons of documentation, this is impossible to demonstrate. Both Old Malay and Old Javanese had a large amount of Sanskrit loanwords. Since there are plenty of texts in Old Javanese (8th – 16th century AD), but there is only very limited textual material for Old Malay (mainly 7th – 10th century AD), it is much easier to find a

⁶ The resulting cluster in this compound is still witnessed in an altered form in Sundanese *rutsak* (Eringa 1984).

matching form for a Malagasy word of Sanskrit provenance in the rich Old Javanese literature than in the handful of Old Malay inscriptions. This creates the impression that Old Javanese was the “vehicular donor language” for these Sanskrit loanwords, but this is clearly too narrow an interpretation of what may have happened. We simply have a better insight into what written Javanese must have looked like at the height of Indian intellectual influence in insular South East Asia than we have for written Malay in the same period. Some reservation is therefore required in assessing the influence of Javanese on Malagasy. For instance, Malagasy *lapa* ‘palace; courtroom’ reflects Javanese *paṇḍāpā* ‘large open structure in front of Javanese house; open veranda, pavilion’, which in turn is borrowed from Sanskrit *maṇḍapa-* ‘open hall or temporary shed, pavilion’; Merina Malagasy *s-um-undrara* ‘having the breasts in a state of growth’, Tandroy Malagasy, Bara Malagasy *s-um-undrara* ‘adolescent girl’ reflects Old Javanese *sundara* ‘beautiful’ and Sanskrit *sundara-* ‘handsome’ (Gonda 1973:334). Malay has no corresponding forms for these Sanskrit loanwords and their correspondences; however, it is still possible that it had them in the past, and that it was these now lost forms that were borrowed into Malagasy.

2.5 South Sulawesi loanwords

A third important source for lexical borrowing into Malagasy was South Sulawesi. It is not clear which South Sulawesi language or languages in particular had an influence on the South East Barito lexicon. Certainly Buginese is a strong possible candidate to be one of the lending languages. However, although Buginese has been the most influential and cosmopolitan South Sulawesi language, it is not clear when it began to assume this role, and whether it already did before the migrations took place. Furthermore, given that the Austronesian ancestors of the Malagasy left Borneo somewhere halfway through the first millennium AD, it is not even clear whether at that time Buginese (or any other South Sulawesi language) already had become a separate linguistic entity. It is therefore safest to label the loanwords in question a generic “South Sulawesi”, and not to specify their origin any further. The fact that there are South Sulawesi loanwords in Malagasy should not come as a surprise, given that several South Sulawesi communities have had a strong orientation towards the sea and have developed impressive navigational skills. The Buginese have travelled very much and have had longstanding contacts with the coasts of Borneo, although historical sources do not provide evidence for any Buginese voyages and migrations prior to the 17th century (Leonard Andaya p.c.). South Sulawesi history from before that period is simply unknown. However, what we do know from historical linguistic research is that the Tamanic communities (including the Embaloh or Maloh) living in the Upper Kapuas area in the northeastern part of West Kalimantan speak a number of related dialects which are very closely related to the South Sulawesi languages and in fact form a branch of the South Sulawesi language subgroup. Within this subgroup, Tamanic dialects appear to share most sound changes with Buginese. How and when the Tamanic communities ended up in central Borneo remains a mystery, and the argument for their relationship with South Sulawesi is still entirely linguistic. The Tamanic speakers themselves have no record of a homeland outside Borneo, although references to links with Macassarese or Buginese in scholarly literature have occasionally

fed back into oral history⁷. Be that as it may, the Tamanic case suggests that contacts between South Sulawesi and Borneo may be older and more complex than those documented in written records. If today there are some South Sulawesi loanwords in Malagasy, it most probably means that there must already have been inter-insular contacts between South Sulawesi and Borneo long before the beginning of written history in that area. It could of course be argued, as various scholars have done in the past, that at some stage in history the Buginese were in direct contact with Madagascar, but that would definitely be at a higher level of speculation, and an unnecessary one at that.

The following are some of the more conspicuous South Sulawesi loanwords (cf. Adelaar 1995 for a detailed argumentation):

- Huta* ‘a chew’, Maanyan *kota* ‘eaten’ corresponds with Proto South Sulawesi **kota* ‘to chew’ (Buginese *ota* ‘id.’); it does not have corresponding forms in other Austronesian languages. The *-a* instead of expected *-i* in *huta* betrays that this word is borrowed.
- Leha* ‘to go’ agrees with Buginese (Sinjai’ dialect) *ləkka* ‘id.’ (other Buginese dialects have *lokka*); again, the fact that **-a* has not changed to *-i* indicates that this word is borrowed.
- Ma-lutu* ‘troubled, impure’ corresponds with Buginese (Soppeng dialect) *ma-lutu* ‘worn out’ (no corresponding forms elsewhere).
- Matua* ‘the eldest’ (used in conjunction with kinship terms) corresponds with Macassarese, Buginese, ST *ma-tua* ‘old’. The Malagasy default term for ‘old’ is *antitra*. *Matua* is derived from Proto Austronesian **tuqah* ‘old’ but must ultimately be borrowed on account of its *-a* (compare this to another Malagasy term *ma-tui* ‘old, mature, serious, reasonable’ which does exhibit the expected *-i* and must be inherited).
- Sulu* ‘a substitute’: compare Macassarese, Buginese *pas-soloʔ*, Duri *soloʔ* ‘present (money, goods) given at celebrations’, South Toraja *pas-suluʔ* ‘money borrowed on short term and without requiring interest’ (< Proto South Sulawesi **sulu(r)* ‘exchange, pay’). This set has no corresponding forms in other Austronesian languages. Malagasy *sulu* must be borrowed because it has maintained *s-* (elsewhere, Proto Austronesian **s* > Malagasy \emptyset).
- Ta-* this is a prefix forming an ethnic name or geographically definable group of people, for instance, *ta-lautra* denotes an ethnic group of Muslims who (partly) came from across the Mozambican channel’. It derives from Proto Austronesian **taw* ‘human being, person’. This etymon survived as a free form **taw* and a prefix *ta-*, *to-* or *tu-* in South Sulawesi languages (cf. *To-raja* lit. ‘people from the inland’, the name of an ethnic group). In East Barito languages, however, it was replaced by **hulun* (Malagasy *uluna*) as a default form for ‘human being’. If Malagasy has a supplementary *ta-*, this could theoretically be an inherited reflex of Proto Austronesian **taw*, but it is more likely to be a loan-prefix from South Sulawesi languages.

⁷ In the same way, incidentally, as academic knowledge has provided a historical awareness “after the facts” among the Maanyan about their links with the Malagasy.

- Taneti* ‘high and flat terrain, slope, hill; hill placed between two valleys and without trees; mainland, terra firma’. This word has no Proto Austronesian etymon but it does have corresponding forms in South Sulawesi languages: Macassarese *tanete* ‘rolling(hills), hilly terrain’; Buginese *tanete* ‘elevated terrain, high country’, South Toraja *tanete* ‘hill, low mountain’.
- Untsi* ‘kind of banana’ agrees with Macassarese *unti*, Buginese *utti* (< *unti) ‘banana’; all these forms ultimately derive from Proto Austronesian *punti ‘banana’. However, the loss of *p- is happens frequently in Buginese, but not in Malagasy: it is therefore likely that Malagasy *untsi* is borrowed from South Sulawesi.
- Vadi* ‘spouse’ corresponds with Macassarese *paʔbalibalian* ‘spouse’, South Toraja *bali* ‘partner, associate, spouse, opponent’, also South Toraja *si-bali-an* ‘to get married’. The latter three forms derive from Proto Austronesian *baluy/*baliw. This etymon must have meant (among others) ‘to oppose, opposite part; friend, partner’; it has two reflexes in Malagasy, the aforementioned *vadi* ‘spouse’, and *valu* ‘alteration’. The Proto Austronesian final diphthong *-uy regularly becomes –u in Malagasy; I therefore assume that *vadi* is borrowed from a South Sulawesi language, and *valu* is inherited. Note also that the original Proto Austronesian words for ‘spouse’ were respectively *sawa ‘wife’ and *bana ‘husband’.
- Vuhu* ‘the back of something’ and *i-vuhu* ‘behind’ correspond with Buginese, South Toraja *bokoʔ* ‘back (body-part)’. These forms are reflexes of Proto South Sulawesi *boko(t?) ‘back’, which replaced an earlier Proto Austronesian *likud ‘back’ (the latter has many reflexes throughout the Austronesian language family).

2.6 Borrowing from other Austronesian languages?

Various cases have been made for borrowing from other Indonesian languages, but, apart from the occasional loanword from Ngaju Dayak, which is spoken in an area bordering that of the South East Barito languages⁸, the evidence is as a rule weak and of little structural relevance. A recent systematic approach to lexical borrowing from Austronesian and Indian languages into Malagasy is Beaujard (2003). Beaujard also claims to have found loanwords from Philippine languages, Dravidian languages, and Sulawesi languages other than those of South Sulawesi, but I do not find this part of his evidence convincing. In the first place, his Philippine and Sulawesi loanwords are collected from a large pool of alleged source languages. However, the more lending languages are brought in from a certain area, the less persuasive the case for borrowing will be. In most contact situations involving the existence of many potential lending languages in a certain region, the receiving language will borrow systematically from one language only, or at best, from a restricted number of these languages. Furthermore, Beaujard’s case for borrowing from Philippine and Sulawesi languages lacks a clear historical, cultural or geographical context. In the context of Indonesian history, it is evident that many regional languages all over insular South East Asia have been strongly influenced by Malay or Javanese, or both. It is also well-documented that the Buginese and other South Sulawesi peoples played dominant roles in Indonesian maritime trade, and that the Buginese have had colonies in Borneo for many centuries. However, in the

⁸ Cf. Dahl (1951).

case of linguistic influence from other Sulawesi languages and languages from the Philippines, such context is lacking. Finally, in some cases, more attention should have been paid to the regularity of sound correspondences, and some of the semantic connections are not quite in agreement with the Austronesian cultural reality. Beaujard's (two) Dravidian loanwords are phonologically unjustified: *horaka* 'rice field' cannot be derived from Tamil *kulam* 'water reservoir'; *amberiky* 'Vignata radiata (L.) Wilczek' may be derived from Malayalam *avarakka*, *amarakka* 'id.' but probably via Réunion French *ambérique* 'id.', not directly from Malayalam. I also do not see a strong argument for borrowing from Bajau. One of the only two Sama Bajau loanwords proposed by Beaujard (viz. *òdi* 'charm, remedy', allegedly from Sama Bangingi *uli?* 'to look after') is a regular inherited reflex of Proto Malayo Polynesian **uliq* 'go back; return home; return something; restore, repair; repeat; motion to and fro' and must be inherited⁹.

Incidentally, a link between Malagasy and Bajau languages does seem to exist, but it is a genetic one. Robert Blust (to appear) argues that the Samalan languages (to which Bajau belongs) are a branch of the wider Barito subgroup.

3. Migration routes

There has been some discussion in the literature as to whether the early migrants travelled to East Africa by navigating along the coasts of the Indian Ocean or by crossing it. Most scholars tend to believe that the route must have been coastal. It is easy to see why they do so, because transoceanic crossings were apparently rare until very recently in navigational history. However, one advocate for such crossings is Faublée (1970), who uses philological and oceanographic arguments to make his point. He draws attention to a Taimoro myth relating the arrival of Islam in Madagascar. In the story, Taimoro sailors return from Mecca to their country on the east coast of Madagascar, while coming from the east. Mecca, however, lies to the north of Madagascar. According to Faublée, the name 'Mecca' must be a copyist's typo for an earlier 'Malacca'. He speculates that the myth refers to voyages back to South East Asia, where the Taimoro would have learnt about Islam. As a matter of fact, Malakka lies to the east of Madagascar, but given the relatively recent foundation of Malakka in the early 15th century AD, this is an unlikely hypothesis (Islam had already been introduced to the Taimoro at that time). Faublée also argues that there is an Indian Ocean current which favours sailing from Sumatra to Madagascar. When Mount Krakatoa exploded at the end of the 19th century, pumice was washed ashore on Madagascar's east coast in a region where the Mananjary River opens into the sea. When in the Second World War Japanese aircraft bombed ships sailing between Java and Sumatra, pieces of wreckage ended up in this area, including a lifeboat with a survivor (Faublée 1970:282).

Aside from the anecdotal nature of Faublée's evidence, transoceanic navigation may yet explain how Indonesian ships reached East Africa. For one thing, it would have saved these ships considerable travel time to make use of the ocean currents.

⁹ Even if a borrowing hypothesis were justified, the semantic connection between 'charm, remedy' and 'to look after' is not obvious; moreover, there are countless reflexes of **uliq* in other Austronesian languages that have a more straightforward semantic connection and would have been more obvious candidates as a lending form.

Furthermore, Portuguese travelogues from the early 17th century mention “Javanese”¹⁰ sailors in the Indian Ocean on their way to Madagascar. They also mention the availability of cloves on this island, a commodity which is demonstrably Moluccan in origin. Manguin (1993), using Chinese and Portuguese sources, claims that South East Asian cargo ships of up to 500 tonnes used to sail between South East Asia and the Middle East between the 3rd and 16th centuries AD. These ships were originally built using “lashed-lug” and “stitched-plank” techniques, which were gradually replaced by techniques using planks and bulkheads fastened with doweling (and occasionally iron nailing). Manguin found that these techniques were also used on the Maldives, where they must have been introduced from South East Asia. He is also able to trace an alternative navigation route between the eastern and western coasts of the Indian Ocean, which followed geographical latitudes instead of coasts, and which was used by South East Asians. This route would connect the Sunda Strait to the Chagos Islands (with Diego Suarez) along the 6° South parallel, the Chagos Islands with the Maldives to the North, and the Maldives with Pulo We at the northern tip of Sumatra along the 6° North parallel. It would take Indonesian sailors less than ten days¹¹ to reach the Maldives along this route, which they used for slave trading. According to Manguin (p.12): “We thus have proof, in the late 15th or 16th century, of shippers from insular South East Asia sailing along a route which is nowhere documented in Arabic, Chinese or Portuguese sea-pilots.” Finally, the linguistic evidence is generally not in favour of early contacts between India and Madagascar. Indian loanwords in Malagasy are sometimes assumed to be borrowed directly from Indian languages, with which the early migrants were allegedly in contact during their voyages from Indonesia to East Africa¹². This assumption requires that the migrants also made use of coastal navigation. However, once it has become clear that almost all Indian loanwords were already in the language of the early migrants before they left Indonesia, this line of thinking becomes less critical.

4 Migration dates

Dahl (1951) used the presence (in his counting) of 30 Sanskrit loanwords in Malagasy as evidence that the migrations to East Africa must have taken place after the introduction of Indian influence in Indonesia. The oldest written evidence of Indian presence in this area is a Sanskrit inscription from around 400 AD found in Kutai, South East Borneo. Dahl therefore proposed the 5th century AD as the most likely migration period. In my 1989 article I interpret the Sanskrit influence in a different way. All but one of the Sanskrit loanwords in Malagasy have corresponding forms in Malay and/or Javanese. Moreover, many Sanskrit loanwords show the same phonological adaptations as their Malay and Javanese counterparts; I therefore conclude that the loanwords in question were actually borrowed via Malay or Javanese. As a consequence, the migration date should not be correlated to the beginning of Indianisation in the archipelago, but more specifically to

¹⁰ Portuguese sources often use the term “Javanese” to refer to people from insular South East Asia in general, in the same way as British sources use the term “Malay”.

¹¹ Six or seven days according to the Portuguese author Pires of the Summa Oriental (Manguin 1993:12).

¹² Compare also Ottino (1977), who argues for the occurrence of Tamil loanwords in Malagasy terminology pertaining to rice cultivation (refuted by Adelaar 1996).

the emergence of Sanskrit influence on Malay. This influence was the manifestation of an Indian Malay civilisation, which was evidenced for the first time in the emergence of the maritime polity of Srivijaya in the seventh century AD in South Sumatra (Adelaar 1989:32).

Dewar (1995:307) points out that the dates proposed by Dahl (1951) and Adelaar (1989) should be re-assessed in the light of Ardika and Bellwood (1991), who found that trade relations between India and insular South East Asia go back much further in time, possibly as far as the 2nd century BC. While I appreciate the general importance of this finding, I do not think that it is immediately relevant to the Malagasy migration(s). The date in question is the oldest recorded date with regard to trade exchange with India. It is unlikely that such relations had an instant cultural impact on insular South East Asia. The Indianised polities that developed in this area were of half a millennium later (cf. Andaya and Andaya 2001:15-18). On the other hand, evidence from the 7th century Old Malay inscriptions unequivocally shows that a thorough Indianisation process was taking place in Srivijaya, reflected, among others, in political organisation, religion, architecture, lexicon, the use of an Indian-based script, and, not to forget, the adaptation of writing itself. In the 7th century there had already been other Indianised polities in South East Asia, but Srivijaya was the first one clearly involving speakers of Malay. These inscriptions do not just provide a convenient “post quem” date for the first manifestation of Indian influence on Malay. They put a date to the emergence of a basically Malay society that (at least in outer appearance) embraced many aspects of Indian civilisation. The language of Srivijaya must have affected Malagasy, as the latter contains many Malay loanwords that reflect *e* for Malay penultimate *a*. These loanwords can be opposed to Banjarese Malay loanwords in Malagasy which reflect Malay penultimate schwa as *a* (cf. §2.3). Moreover, some of the Malay loanwords in Malagasy unmistakably stem from a South East Sumatran environment, such as terms for cardinal directions and wind names, which could hardly have developed in Borneo, such as *varatraza* (< **barat* *daya*) and *tsimilotru* or *tsimilautra* (< **timur* **laut*) (cf. §2.3 and Adelaar 1989:9-11, 1996). One could add to this the occurrence of a few lines at the beginning of the Old Malay Telaga Batu and Kota Kapur inscriptions of 686, which seem to be a form of Maanyan (cf. Aichele 1954; Dahl 1991:49-55), although attempts at their translation have not been entirely successful.

Correlating the immigration date with the beginning of Indian influence also involves another problem. It appears that several artefacts, food plants and diseases had already been transmitted between South East Asia and Africa long before the migration dates proposed by Dahl and Adelaar. However, these events are not in contradiction and can be combined in a relative chronology, as will be discussed in the concluding section.

5 Genetic research

Past research into the genetic origins of the Malagasy often yielded incomplete and conflicting results, which was partly due to the fact that only a subset of lineages present at any single locus could be identified. These results suggested that the Malagasy primarily descended from “Bantu-speaking Negroids” (Hewitt et al 1996) or that they

were genetically most closely linked to Javanese (Migot et al. 1995) or to Polynesians (Soodyall 1995).

This year, Hurles et al. issued a study involving “the detailed phylogenetic and geographic resolution of paternally inherited Y-chromosomal lineages and maternally inherited mitochondrial DNA lineages to apportion Malagasy lineages to ancestral populations.” They claim that with their approach, “the contributions of different ancestral populations to the modern Malagasy gene pool can be estimated directly, and likely geographic origins can be pinpointed with precision” (Hurles et al. 2005:894-895).

The main findings of Hurles et al. are as follows:

1. The Malagasy are of mixed African-South East Asian origin.
2. The Malagasy do not exhibit the same reduced genetic diversity as found in other recently colonised islands (as, for instance, in Pacific Island settlement). This supports direct, rather than multi-step, migrations, or, alternatively, that successive waves of migration from Asia may have brought different sets of lineages to Madagascar.
3. Gene diversity for Asia-derived and Africa-derived maternal lineages in the Malagasy shows that Asian lineages are significantly more diverse. This would mean that migrations from Africa may have been more limited than those from Indonesia (p.899).
4. The paternal and maternal estimates of the proportion of African ancestry in the Malagasy are statistically indistinguishable, which means that there is no evidence of ancient sex-based admixture (899 column 2).
5. There is a “mitochondrial Polynesian motif” among maternal Malagasy lineages (cf. Soodyall et al. 1995). However, direct migration from Polynesia can be discounted “since the predominant y-chromosomal haplogroups found in Polynesians (O3 and C) are not found at all among Malagasy paternal lineages”.
6. Among ten potential ancestral populations elsewhere in the Austronesian world, the Borneo populations (of Banjarmasin and Kota Kinabalu) had y-chromosomal haplogroup distributions that were the most similar to those observed among the Malagasy.

The attraction of Hurles et al. (2005) is that it is the first genetic study of the Malagasy population that appears to be compatible with the linguistic evidence. It vindicates a more than half-century old argument entirely based on historical linguistics, which claims that the Asian origins of the Malagasy primarily have to be sought in South Borneo. The publication is therefore good news, although one wonders why the researchers had selected the city of Banjarmasin as one of their testing areas, instead of the Maanyan speaking area itself, which is not far from Banjarmasin. Assuming that the approach of Hurles et al. (2005) is generally sound and that it is a methodological improvement over previous research, it is a major step forwards towards solving the problem of the origins of the Malagasy.

The research also leaves open the possibility that there were several South East Asian groups migrating to Madagascar at different times. This correlates with the (socio)linguistic theory that the Asian ancestors of the Malagasy may have come from different parts of South East Asia, provided that the first group of migrants were

predominantly South East Barito speakers who became a nuclear group to whom all subsequent migrants would assimilate linguistically. Later migrants may have contributed to Malagasy regional and mainstream culture to such an extent that its distinct South East Barito features became less prominent or were lost. Linguistically, however, they would have had to adapt to the language of the nuclear group (Adelaar 1991, 1995a). It also accommodates another theory proposing that links between South East Asia and East Africa were primarily established by Malays, who were also the agents behind the migrations of South East Barito speakers to Madagascar (Adelaar 1991, 1995b)¹³. The latter must have been used as subordinates (ship crew or slaves) in Malay-led voyages to East Africa. This theory supports the fact that neither the South East Barito Dayaks nor the Malagasy have ever developed the sort of seafaring skills required for the ambitious voyages that their ancestors made, while the Malays have. The Malays have a remarkable maritime past, were historically in contact with Sri Lanka and other places in the Indian Ocean, and held the cultural and political hegemony in insular South East Asia for a long time. Their presence is evidenced by a very large number of cultural loanwords in Malagasy: as shown in §2.3, Malagasy terminology pertaining to the sea, winds, cardinal directions, and maritime skills, is largely borrowed from Malay. Both the nuclear group theory and the theory proposing the Malays as the agents behind the Malagasy migrations - which are compatible – presuppose that the migrants belonged to more than one ethnic group.¹⁴

Hurles et al. (2005) point out that there is no indication of a sex-based admixture in the African ancestry of the Malagasy. This contradicts Dahl's observation that at an early stage in Malagasy society migrants from Asia may have been predominantly males and that they married Bantu women. Many Bantu loanwords in Malagasy refer to names of edible plants and their fruits as well as to terms related to food preparation, which are "words that have a special relation to women and their occupations" (Dahl 1988:126). However, I am not convinced that these words are symptomatic of a gender bias in Bantu loanwords in general. Dahl's evidence consists of the following 14 correspondence sets (which are taken from Dahl 1988):

(Merina) *mumba* 'sterile woman', Swahili *m-gumba* 'id.'; < Proto Bantu **gumba*

Food plants and their fruit:

(Merina) *mangga-hazu* 'cassava' (< Bantu *mangga* 'cassava' + Proto Austronesian

**kaSiw* 'wood; tree'; (various Bantu languages have *mangga* 'cassava')

(Merina) *ampembi*, (Sakalava) *ampemba* 'millet'; < Proto East Bantu *-*pemba*

(Merina) *akundru* 'banana', cf. Ngazije *ng-kudu* 'id.'; Proto Western Bantu

*-*kondo/koondro*

vuan-tanggu 'melon' (< Proto Austronesian **buah* 'fruit' + Proto Bantu *-*tangga*

'pumpkin, cucumber, melon'), cf. Swahili *tanggo* 'pumpkin, watermelon'

¹³ A similar theory was launched in the 1970's and abandoned later on by Paul Ottino.

¹⁴ However, there is no serious evidence for the scenario developed by Dahl (1991). In this scenario, some Ma'anyan had migrated to Bangka Island (where some of them would still live on in what has nowadays become the Lom community). From there they would have been shipped to Madagascar by the Sekak, a maritime people also living on Bangka Island. (See Adelaar [1995] for a critical assessment).

vu-andzu ‘ground-nut’ (< Proto Austronesian **buaq* ‘fruit’ + Proto Bantu **-jugu* ‘groundnut’), Swahili *n-džugu* ‘id.’
tunggulu ‘onion’, cf. Swahili *ki-tungguu* ‘id.’; Proto Bantu **-tungguda*

preparation of meals:

(Merina) *hufa* ‘to shake, sift, winnow’, *akufa* ‘chaff’; *Proto East Bantu **-kup-* ‘to shake off’

(Merina) *ampumbu* ‘husk, bran’, cf. Swahili *pumba*, Mambwe *pumbu* ‘id.’

(Merina) *sa-hafa* ‘winnowing pan’; Proto Bantu **-kapa* ‘to spill moving to and fro’

(Sakalava) *mutru* ‘fire’, Swahili *m-oto*, Comoro *m-oro* ‘id.’; < Proto Bantu **-yoto*

(Merina) *nunggu* ‘earthen pot’, cf. Swahili *nyunggu* ‘id.’; < Proto Bantu **-yunggu* ‘clay pot’

(Merina) (*mu-*)*kuku* ‘crust in pot’, cf. Swahili *u-koko* ‘id.’; Proto Bantu **-koko*

(Merina) *mulali*, (Sakalava) *mulale* ‘soot’, cf. Swahili *m-lale* ‘id.’

Vocabulary related to food preparation such as cooking terms and names of dishes are in most cultures gender-related, but this is not necessarily the case with terms for edible plants and their fruits, which make up a considerable part (six) of Dahl’s loanwords. Another term, meaning ‘soot’, does not typically belong to the female domain either. The remaining seven terms are interesting, but they have to be seen in the overall context of Bantu loanwords. Some other loanwords definitely belong to the male domain, which clearly undermines Dahl’s claim. Many terms for animals are of Bantu origin. They include terms for the main domestic animals such as dog, goat, cow, sheep, donkey, chicken and guinea fowl. Compare the following correspondence sets (taken from Dahl 1988):

Domestic animals:

ambúa ‘dog’, cf. (Comoro) Swahili *mbwa*; < Proto Bantu **-bua*

(Merina) *usi*, (Sakalava) *uze* ‘goat’, cf. (Comoro) Swahili *mbuzi*; < Proto Bantu **-budi*

(Merina) *umbi*, (Sakalava) *a-umbe*, (Vezo) *anumbe* ‘cattle’, cf. Swahili *ngombe*,

Ndzwani, Maore *ny-ombe*, Ngazije *mbe*; < Proto Bantu **-gombe*, **-ngombe*

(Merina) *undri*, (Sakalava) *angundri* ‘sheep’; cf. Maore *gondzi*, north-east Bantu languages *ondi*, *gondi*, *gonzi*

akuhu ‘chicken’, cf. Swahili *khuku*, Maore *kuhu*, Ngazije, Ndzwani *ng-kuhu*

< Proto Bantu **-kuku*

ampundra ‘donkey’, cf. Swahili *punda*, Maore *pundra*, Ngazije, Ndzwani *m-pundra*

akangga ‘guinea-fowl’, cf. Swahili *khangga*, Ngazije *ng-kangga* < Proto Bantu **-kangga*

other animals:

pili ‘large tree serpent’, cf. Swahili *phili* ‘big, dangerous snake’ <Proto Bantu **pidi* ‘puff-adder’

(Merina) *papanggu* ‘k.o. kite’, cf. swahili *phunggu* ‘k.o.vulture’, Maore *papanggu* ‘carrion-eater’ < Proto Bantu **-punggu* ‘k.o. eagle’

(Merina) *lulu* butterfly, cf. Swahili *m-lulu* ‘insect; boogey man’

(Sakalava) *ampaha* ‘wild cat’, cf. Swahili *phaka*, Maore *paha*, Ndzwani *m-paha*;

< * Proto East Bantu **-paka* ‘id.’

(Merina) *kúngguna*, (Sakalava) *kunggu* ‘bedbug’, cf. Swahili *kungguni*;
 < Proto Bantu *-kunguni

(Vezo) *luvu*, *uluvu* ‘k.o. fish’ < Proto Bantu *-dûb ‘fish’

(Vezo) *amban-tsui* ‘k.o. fish’ < Proto Bantu *cûi/cûi ‘fish’

mamba ‘big crocodile’, (Vezo) *ambamba* ‘k.o. fish’, cf. Swahili *mamba* ‘scale of fish or reptile; crocodile; poisonous snake’; < Proto Bantu *-bamba ‘k.o. poisonous snake’, also ‘fish-scale’

The large number of Bantu animal names, especially the terms for large domestic animals, suggests a gender bias opposite in direction from the one claimed by Dahl. In Madagascar as well as in Africa in general, the treatment of cattle is very much a male concern. It seems that the early Malagasy relied heavily on their Bantu neighbours to get acquainted with the local fauna and with cattle breeding, even where this involved animals also present in Borneo. Indonesian names for domestic animals seem to have been lost or to have become lexically unstable (e.g. Malay *lambu* means ‘cow, bull, ox’ which was borrowed into Malagasy as *lambu*, ‘pig’).

On balance, Dahl’s inventory of Bantu loanwords includes domains that appear gender-related, but there are male as well as female domains, and Bantu loanwords in their totality are not biased towards any gender in particular.

6 The advent of Islam

Islam was introduced at different times and in various places in Madagascar. The Antalaotra (Antalaotse) on the West coast and the Antaimoro on the East coast, are traditional Muslim Malagasy communities; other Muslim communities were converted in the 19th century (among the Antankarana in the Northwest) or are ethnically Indians or Comorans Gueunier 1991).

The Antalaotra have always had established links with the Comoros and Africa’s east coast. They are more closely linked to Muslim centres outside Madagascar. They are also bilingual, using Malagasy as well as Swahili.

The Antaimoro, on the other hand, have a much more indigenised form of Islam, so much so that Gueunier (1991) decided not to include them in his inventory of Muslim communities. The Antaimoro practise male circumcision, the ritual slaughter of animals, a taboo on pork meat, the use of the Arabic script and various divination techniques (geomancy and astrology including a zodiacal calendar). However, as Gueunier points out, ritual slaughter of animals, pork taboo and circumcision are practices that already existed in some form before Islam. Moreover, slaughtering animals is traditionally a prerogative of Antaimoro aristocrats (one they already had before the advent of Islam), and pork is prohibited for a certain clan only (other clans being characterised by different food taboos); divination is not part of orthodox Islam. Dahl (1991) believed that this traditional and hybrid form of Islam was introduced via Oman. This is understandable, given the relative proximity of this Arab sultanate and the leading political and religious role it played in East Africa in the past. However, the Antaimoro language and use of the Arabic script provide clues that suggest an Indonesian source and may be very important for dating postmigratory contacts with Indonesia. As I have demonstrated elsewhere (Adelaar 1989, 1995a), the Antaimoro word *sumbili* ‘slaughtering in a ritual way’ must be an adaptation of Malay *sambelih*, a word that nowadays means ‘slaughtering’ in

general but historically had a sacral meaning specifically referring to slaughtering in a Muslim ritual way. It is the Malay transformation of the spoken Arabic term *b'ismil-lāh*, which means 'the utterance of *b'ismi'llāhi* as a requirement for the ritual slaughter of animals' and is in turn derived from the Classical Arabic formula *b'ismi'llāhi* 'In the Name of God'. The Antaimoro script, which is nowadays called Sorabe, shows several adaptations that were also made in the Jawi (Malay) and Pégon (Javanese) adaptations of the Arabic script, e.g. ف (p) and ع (ng) (Jawi has respectively ف and ع), and د (d) and ط

(t) (Pégon has respectively د [retroflex d] and ط [retroflex t]). (It should be pointed out that Javanese uses the retroflex series *ɖ* and *ʈ* for the pronunciation of alveodental *d* and *t* in loanwords). Dahl's tracing of Sorabe ع [g] to Omani Arabic (where ع would allegedly also be pronounced as [g]) is based on an erroneous interpretation of Omani phonology (Adelaar 1995a:338).

A question that Dahl left unanswered is whether any particular branch of Islam can be recognised in the religion of the Antaimoro, as it may help to find out the source of these adaptations. Indonesian Islam is basically Sunni, although it also shows (or showed in the past) some Shi'a tendencies. Oman, however, is remarkable for being neither Sunni nor Shi'a. It has always embraced its own, Ibadi, version of Islam. This is a moderate form of the Khariji doctrine rejecting a dynastic Caliphate and demanding that the role of Imam be given to the most pious Muslim in every community. It also maintains some formal distinctions such as different postures during prayer. Does Taimoro Islam exhibit these features? If so, then Dahl probably had a point; if not, this would argue for a possible Indonesian origin for this particular form of Islam in East Madagascar. The matter clearly deserves further attention.

7 A distinction between the first contacts between Indonesia and East Africa, and the migration date of South East Barito speakers to Madagascar

Blench (1996) has made a study of cultural items, food plants and diseases that were transmitted between South East Asia and East Africa. Leaving out some doubtful instances, he provides a conservative inventory, which includes the following items:

1. food plants: the sweet banana, water yam and taro
2. boat types: outrigger boats, boats made of skins sewn together, and certain canoe types
3. diseases: elephantiasis
4. musical instruments: the xylophone

The three first categories are demonstrably introduced from South East Asia to Africa. The fourth category basically consists of the xylophone (there are also other musical instruments that occur on both sides of the Indian Ocean, but these may have been invented independently). This instrument is usually considered to have been borrowed from South East Asia into Africa, but Blench makes a good case for a transmission in opposite direction. His arguments are that Africa has wide typological variety of xylophones including prototypical ones, whereas Asian xylophones basically represent one type of xylophone only; furthermore, xylophones are not known among Malagasy

speakers in Madagascar itself, Austronesia's westernmost outpost (Blench 1996). Another aspect of material culture mentioned elsewhere that might have been transmitted between South East Asia and Africa is metallurgy (cf. Mahdi 1988 revisiting an earlier study by Frobenius).

Be it as it may, some of these cultural items, plants and the disease elephantiasis can be shown to have been introduced in East Africa at dates much earlier than the 5th or 7th century AD. The first contacts between South East Asia and East Africa may have happened more than 2000 years ago (Blench 1996), but this is no reason to change the period that Austronesians were said to migrate to Madagascar. Rather, it shows that these contacts may have lasted for more than half a millennium. A drastic distinction should therefore be made between the era that the first contacts were established between Indonesians and East Africans, and the actual period that South East Barito speakers migrated to East Africa. This migration must have taken place much later, and most likely in the 7th century AD after the foundation of Srivijaya.

This migration date, speculative in itself, should not automatically be equated with the time that Madagascar became populated. As proposed by Deschamps (1960) and various later scholars, it is possible that the Malagasy immigrants from Indonesia first spent time on the African mainland before they came to Madagascar. This is less far-fetched than it seems. Madagascar is linguistically remarkably monolingual, and all Malagasy are to some extent of mixed African and Asian descent (Hurles et al. 2005). Furthermore, recent archaeological excavations show that the island only became systematically inhabited from the 8th century AD onwards, and there is no continuation between archaeological sites (ceramics, animal domestication) in the Austronesian world and those found in Madagascar, which are distinctly East African and Comoran in character (Dewar 1995, Dewar and Wright 1993, Wright and Rakotorisoa 2003)¹⁵. All these factors fit in rather nicely with a mainland African "anteroom" scenario. But if the Asian ancestors of the Malagasy first arrived on the East African coast before they settled in Madagascar, the obvious questions are why they made this detour, and why there are no Malagasy any more on the African mainland. Also, is there any evidence left of mainland settlements? The obvious and usual explanation is that the Bantu migrations from Central Africa into eastern and southern Africa, which began in the first millennium AD, must have swept away most evidence of earlier populations along the African coast. In the process, the ancestors of the present-day Malagasy population must have been pushed back into the Comoros and later on into Madagascar, which, it must be remembered, was basically uninhabited before the 8th century AD. A supplementary explanation is that the perceived lack of evidence of an earlier Indonesian presence in East Africa may be due to a lack of research, and to a possible reluctance among archaeologists and historians working on East Africa to interpret their data from this angle. These scholars understandably do not want to get into undue speculations. But it is also evident that Indonesians somehow must have had connections with mainland East Africa in the light of the genetic, linguistic and archaeological research discussed above.

¹⁵ One could add to this list Dahl's Bantu substratum theory, although this theory leaves room for alternative explanations as it claims that Malagasy had a common phonological history with languages presently spoken on the Comoros, and not with Bantu languages in general.

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APPENDIX Sound-correspondences between Proto Austronesian, Malagasy and Malay

N.B.: In the following list, a hyphen indicates that no Malagasy inherited words were found having a reflex of the Proto Austronesian phoneme in question. The symbol \emptyset indicates that the Proto Austronesian phoneme in question was lost.

Proto Austronesian	Malagasy (inherited)	Malagasy (borrowed)	Malay
*a	a	a	a
*-a, *-a(S,s,H,ʔ,R,l)	-i	-a, -i	a
*e	e	e; a	e (a in dialects)
*e (last syllable)	i	a	a
*i	i	i	i (e)
*u	o	o	u (o)
*-ew	o	o	u
*-aw	o	o	-aw
*-iw, *-ey	-i	-i	-i
*-ay	-i	-i	-ay
*-uy	-o	-i	-i
*b	v,b; -kã (-trã)	v,b	b
*c	-	ts (s)	c
*d, *j	r; -trã	tr, d; -trã	d, -t
*D	r; -trã	tr, d	d, -r
*g	h	h, g	g, -k
*k	h,k; -kã	h,k; -kã	k
*l	l, - \emptyset	l, -nã	l
*li	di	di	li
*m	m; -nã	m; -nã	m
*n, *N	n; -nã	n; -nã	n
*ŋ	n; -nã	n; -nã	ŋ
*ñ	n	n	ñ
*p	f, p; -kã, -trã	f, p; -kã, trã	p
*q	\emptyset	\emptyset	h
*r	-	r; -trã	r
*R	\emptyset	r; -trã	r
*s	\emptyset (s)	s, - \emptyset	s
*t, *T, *C	t; -trã	t; -trã	t
*ti	tsi	tsi	ti
*w	v	v	\emptyset -, -w-
*y	\emptyset (Mahdi p.150)	z	y
*z	-	z	j
*Z	r	z	j
*ʔ, *S, *H	\emptyset	\emptyset	\emptyset