During March and April 1996 a three-week season of field survey was conducted in the area of western Androy, on and between the hills of Faritsoke, Bevotry and Angavo. The main aim of this research was to continue our study of the earliest monumental stone tombs in Androy, as part of a broader investigation of the context and development of funerary monumentality. These early tombs, which date to the nineteenth century, were built in the cattle grazing areas of newly colonized land by migrating middle-ranking clans of the Tandroy. These empty regions of northern Androy had once been settled but were largely abandoned by the seventeenth century. We identified a 25-kilometre wide frontier zone of the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries which once separated the Tandroy from their northern neighbours, the Bara or possibly the Masikoro. This zone was later encroached upon from the south in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by a junior but ascendant branch of the royal clan (the Tekonda lineage of the Andriamianarana) and by a newly arrived middle-ranking clan, the Afomarolahy. The region had previously been occupied in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries by groups who constructed a network of large stone-walled enclosures. These appear not to have been defensive but are associated with large quantities of fine wares and unfragmented cattle bones, thought to be the debris of feasting. Two enclosures were previously known, at Andranosoa and Amanda. During this season's research a further three were located at Bevotry, Faritsoke and Mafelefo. Mandamariwa at Mafelefo consists of two wall lengths enclosing an occupation area of 800 m by 300 m.

**Monumental stone tombs of the nineteenth century**

We were especially interested in establishing who was buried in these, where they were built and what was happening in terms of settlement and migration in their vicinity. The research focused on the edge of the rock massif where the Afomarolahy and associated clans, the first Tandroy groups to settle off the sands, migrated to in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We were able to identify the tombs of some of the individuals listed in the genealogies of these clans (Heurtebize 1986) and we estimate that the earliest rectangular cairn burials with vatolahy (standing stones) date to between 1860 and 1880. Burials marked only by vatolahy began earlier, in the eighteenth or even seventeenth century.

Those buried in the stone tombs were not powerful clan leaders but men renowned for their wealth in cattle. They were members of clans who were subordinate to the ruling Andriamianarana clan but were ranked above other clans. The tombs were constructed in regions previously deserted and forested, and in grazing areas; they were hidden deep in the forest away from the communal cemeteries of tseke (wooden fenced tombs). In simple terms the tombs were built because stone was now...
available. However, they appear at a time of con-
siderable upheaval and many factors are probably
involved. The Afomarolahy were moving into new
territory away from the constraints of traditional
authority. They were encountering hostile Bara
cattle herders in competition over grazing areas.

They may also have been influenced by the Bara’s
styles of stone tombs but, as far as is known from
oral histories, did not intermarry. The numbers of
the Afomarolahy clan were expanding rapidly and,
around this time, new group identities of lineage
and sub-lineage may have been created partly
through monument construction. The first men to
be honoured with this style of burial were rich in
cattle but had neither political office nor marriage
connections with the royal clan. The centralized
power of the royal clan also seems to have waned
at this time. The form of these stone tombs has
changed, from small stone cairns (akin to ruined
houses) to metaphorical cattle pens in stone. Early
tombs have paired vatolahy (‘man stones’) whose
ends are shaped like the tenons of house posts, and
are also similar to the human form. The stone tomb
tradition was not widely adopted by other clans until
the twentieth century, but today they are found
throughout Androy. Whilst the more ancient tra-
dition of forest burial within small wooden enclo-
closures still continues, the construction of promi-
nently-placed stone tombs is an overt demonstra-
tion of wealth and status.

The northern frontier of the Tandroy kingdom

The early stone tombs were one of several
aspects which helped to constitute the northern and
western limits or frontier of the Tandroy, in that
they were constructed in areas of dense and pre-
dominantly uninhabited forest which were not set-
tled until the nineteenth century. Additionally, these
areas were, according to oral tradition, zones of
conflict between the Tandroy and other tribal group-
ings. The development of this frontier area can be
traced from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth
century, with Tandroy expansion into these areas
increasing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centu-
ries. These northern and western limits to the
Tandroy kingdom were also used as burial places
for eighteenth and nineteenth century rulers
(roandria), a practice which continues today with
the Andriamañare clan’s continued use of

Ampitobe, the place of gathering prior to burials
of roandria (royal leaders) at Angavo. An eight-
eenth century manda (100 m east-west by 60 m
north-south) was found on top of Angavo. It may
be the one visited by Robert Drury at the beginning
of that century (Drury 1729 [1890: 135, 165, 168,
189-90]), ruled by ‘Deaan Afferrer’ (Andriafara;
Molet-Sauvaget 1992: 122 n.172), a nephew of the
king at Fenoarivo (see Parker Pearson et al. 1994).
The locations of royal centres on the edges of the
Tandroy kingdom (Angavo, Ambaho/Fenoarivo and
perhaps Ambaby, west of the Manambovo river) raise
the possibility that royal succession was ensured by
moving cadet and potentially rival successors into
new lands on the edges of the kingdom.

The stone-walled enclosures of the
eleventh to thirteenth centuries

The discovery of large stone-walled enclosures
dating to the eleventh to thirteenth centuries in parts
of this area indicate that, in more distant times, this
region was more of a centre than a periphery. Stone-
walled manda (enclosures) similar to those found at
Andranosoa (Radimilahy 1988) and at Amanda
(Parker Pearson 1992) were found at Faritoske (240
m east-west and 170 m north-south) and Bevotry
(180 m east-west and 110 m north-south). A third,
unusually large enclosure, Mandameriñe, was found
at Mafelefo, some 20 km north of Andalatanosy
near the source of the Manambovo river. With one of
its two wall circuits over 1 km in length, this enclosure
is comparable in size to one found in Mahafaly
country at Gogogo, at the source of the Linta-
Manakaralahy river (Radimilahy pers. comm.).

Mandameriñe consists of two sections of rub-
ble walls, 3-4 m wide and 1.5 m high in places,
enclosing an area of 20 ha either side of a small river.
The western wall has a narrow entrance at its north
end, where spreads of ceramics, bone and charcoal
are dense on both sides of the river. The eastern,
smaller length of wall encloses an archaeologically
sterile area on the river’s east side.

The lowland settings of all five enclosure sites,
their apparent indefensibility, their regular spacing
in the landscape (Bevotry, Amanda and Faritoske
are spaced 14 km apart), the copious fineware ce-
ramics and the large fragments of cattle bones sug-
gest that these may have been ceremonial centres.
That the larger enclosures are well to the north
suggests that their builders may have come from the plains to the north rather than from the sandy coastal belt to the south. On none of the three newly discovered enclosures were there any imported Islamic and Chinese ceramics, as found at Andranosoa.

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Figure 1: The eleventh to thirteenth century stone-walled enclosures of Androy (Andranosoa (a), Manda Merinie (b), Bevotry (c), Amanda (d) and Faritsoke (e)). The adjacent stream beds are marked by dotted lines.