

# MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

## The Royal Archives (1824-1897)

(Madagascar)

Ref No 2008-47

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### PART A – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

#### 1 SUMMARY

##### Originality of the history of Madagascar and authenticity of the documents

The documentary heritage of the National Archives covers a fairly long period in the history of the people of Madagascar, since at least the beginning of the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century was a watershed in the country's history, being the starting point for a number of changes associated with the birth of the Kingdom of Madagascar and the country's entry into the modern era. It was a time of both internal and external expansion and development for the Kingdom as the country built itself up. For the first time, a single authority was exercised over the whole of the territory, while at the same time the power of the monarchy started to decline. The crown went on to become increasingly symbolic and its nominal prerogatives were gradually taken over by the Hova order represented by the Prime Minister, who held full executive authority. On the cultural level, the century witnessed the introduction of the Latin alphabet and with it school, Christianity, professions, western-style education, and so forth.

The nineteenth-century archives comprise the royal archives, old journals and Sakaizambohitra registers, and registry office documents under the monarchy from 1878 to 1898. They are highly significant as they represent a key element in the foundation of the country's identity. The royal archives contain written documents that come from the recovery in 1895 by General Duschesne, Resident-General at the end of the reign of Ranavalona III,<sup>1</sup> of the archives of high-ranking figures in the Kingdom of Madagascar, including Rainandriamampandry and Rainilaiarivony (Prime Minister).

The royal archives are primary documents dating from the period of the Kingdom of Madagascar which have not undergone any alteration (photocopy, photography...). They cover the period from 1824 to 1896 and recount events from the adoption of the Latin alphabet by King Radama I to the proclamation of the Law of Annexation.

These documents constitute what were the holdings of the Department of National Archives of Madagascar. They reflect the historical, identity and heritage values whose importance has grown since the fire in the royal residences (*Anatirova*)<sup>2</sup> which were among the few conscious and visible daily reminders of the past. They are unique documents.

##### Content and type of event related

These royal archives, the old journals and Sakaizambohitra registers, recount the major events of the nineteenth century. They include information and personal accounts of social and economic

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<sup>1</sup> Queen of Madagascar from 1885 to 1896 (when she went into exile in Reunion, and then in Algiers).

<sup>2</sup> Residences of sovereigns in a single complex, in Antananarivo, burnt down in 1995.

change and progress, the evolution of thought and morality, politics, the system of power, territorial functioning, relations with religious missions and with international partners. They provide information on the history of families, their genealogy, way and standard of living and property.

## **2 DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR**

2.1 Name: Department of National Archives

2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated: Custodian

2.3 Contact person (s): Ms Andriamihamina Ravoniharoson Sahondra Sylvie, Director of the National Archives

2.4 Contact details (include address, phone, fax, email):  
23, rue Karija Tsaralalàna, 101 Antananarivo, Madagascar  
261 020 22 235 34  
rijandriamihamina@malagasy.com

## **3 IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE**

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated  
The royal archives (1824-1897)

The nineteenth-century archives include royal archives 1824-1897, old journals and Sakaizambohitra registers from 1878 to 1898: royal edicts, registry office documents, acts of sale, acts of notoriety, journals, and so on.

### **3.2 Description**

The Royal Archives are original manuscript documents entirely in the form of paper, loose sheets, books and registers, together with some photographs on paper. The faded ink is illegible in most cases. The archives can no longer be transferred on grounds of conservation.

- Volume of the archives conserved: the nineteenth-century archives occupy, in terms of volume, 76.5 linear metres including:
  - 570 archive bundles or boxes in the form of a total of 1,199,502 loose sheets;
  - 906 bound archive registers with a total of 93,729 pages;
  - Old journals supplementing the archives including 711 large and medium format volumes;
  - Photographs: the royal archives are fully classified and inventoried in the series BB, II CC, III CC, DD, EE, FF, GG, HH, JJ, LL, MM, NN, PP, SS.

<b>SYMBOLS</b>	<b>TITLES</b>	<b>ARCHIVE BOXES</b>	<b>No. REGISTERS</b>	<b>FORMAT</b> L L x la x ep	<b>No. BUNDLES</b> <b>(24*35)</b>	<b>No. SHEETS</b>
<b>BB</b>	CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE PROVINCES		<b>152</b>	22 x 34.5 x 9		<b>35,483</b>
<b>II CC</b>	ADMINISTRATIONS OF PROVINCES		<b>167</b>	31.5 x 48.5 x 5.5 26.5 x 39.5 x 4.5	<b>3</b>	<b>4,150</b>
<b>III CC</b>	CORRESPONDENCE	<b>417</b>		37.5 x 24.5 x 10	<b>8,484</b>	<b>177,216</b>

	FROM THE PROVINCES					
<b>DD</b>	DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS		<b>90</b>	28.5 x 44.5 x 3.5 23.5 x 36 x 1 20 x 28.5 x 3	<b>22</b>	<b>36,904</b>
<b>EE</b>	FINANCES		<b>29</b>	17.5 x 20.5	<b>9</b>	<b>3,879</b>
<b>FF</b>	JUSTICE AND PASSPORT		<b>151</b>	48 x 32 x 2.5 36 x 23.5 x 4 31 x 20 x 2.5 21 x 17 x 3.5		<b>9,526</b>
<b>GG</b>	EDUCATION		<b>61</b>	23.5 x 19.5 x 3 21 x 17.5 x 15		<b>42,184</b>
<b>HH</b>	RELATIONS WITH MISSIONS		<b>1</b>	43.5 x 28.5 x 3 35.5 x 24 x 2.5 29 x 23 x 2 23.5 x 18.5 x 2.5	<b>9</b>	<b>1,009</b>
<b>JJ</b>	PUBLIC WORKS		<b>13</b>	17.5 x 21.5 x 1.5 20.5 x 34.5 x 1.5 27 x 42.5 x 4.5		<b>2,939</b>
<b>LL</b>	INDUSTRIES AND MINES MM		<b>41</b>	43.5 x 28.5 x 3	<b>2</b>	<b>9,526</b>
<b>MM</b>	ROYAL HOUSE		<b>29</b>	29 x 40 x 4.5 17.5 x 20.5 x 4 20.5 x 30 x 2	<b>5</b>	<b>6,527</b>
<b>NN</b>	ARMY		<b>103</b>	28.5 x 45 x 3 29 x 22.5 x 26 23 x 19 x 1.5	<b>29</b>	<b>995</b>
<b>PP</b>	FAMILY		<b>45</b>	20 x 23 x 4.5 23.5 x 36 x 3.5 10 x 16.5 x 1.5 45 x 29.5 x 5.5	<b>5</b>	<b>18,100</b>
<b>SS</b>	SCHOLARS		<b>31</b>	29 x 44 x 6 27 x 40 x 3 19 x 23 x 2 20.5 x 29 x 4	<b>1</b>	<b>7,828</b>

The language used in the documents is mostly Malagasy. French, English, Italian and German are also used.

### 3.3 Experts

#### 1- Ms Faralalao Rakotoniaina

Archivist-palaeographer  
Lecturer at the University of Antananarivo  
8, rue Dunant  
94500 Champigny sur Marne  
Tel./Fax: 00 33 14 98 30 148

#### 2- Mr Gabriel Rantoandro

Lecturer-researcher  
Professor at the University of Antananarivo  
Director of the History Department  
Tel.: 261 32 40 312 78

#### 3- Mr Jean Roland Randriamaro

Lecturer-researcher  
Lecturer in contemporary history

History Department, University of Toamasina  
Tel.: 261 32 04 563 24

#### **4 JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA**

##### **4.1 Is authenticity established?**

The Royal Archives are authentic original manuscripts in the form of paper, loose sheets, books and registers. The journals and periodicals are original documents from the time and not copies. The authenticity of the documents is unquestionable.

##### **4.2 Is world significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability established?**

The Royal Archives are unique and irreplaceable. The journals and periodicals are often the only extant examples remaining.

These documents, in addition to their value in terms of history, identity and heritage, are used in academic research and studies on Madagascar, its population, culture and economy. They allow the past to be explored in greater depth, and facilitate understanding of the present.

##### **4.3 Is one *or more* of the criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) form and style satisfied?**

###### **(a) time**

The nineteenth century was the time of the birth and construction of the Kingdom of Madagascar and the country's entry into the era of writing, the division of labour and paid employment. Until the eighteenth century, Madagascar consisted of a juxtaposition of a multitude of feudal territories and rival principalities. The unification of the Merina kingdom<sup>3</sup> at the end of the eighteenth century strengthened its foundations, established the conditions of its power and gave it opportunities to rise to other challenges, such as the conquest of other territories for unification, and from the first quarter of the nineteenth century control over the country as a whole, which became the Kingdom of Madagascar. The nineteenth century saw the formation, consolidation and abolition of the Kingdom. The people who took part in these transformations recorded their experiences in writing through personal accounts, acts and so on. The unification of the country had a number of consequences, including the standardization of units for measuring capacity, distance and weight, the currency, writing with the Latin alphabet, the culture with education, and so on. This marked the start of a new process breaking with the previous century. The economy was no longer based on warfare and conquest but on labour and production.

###### **(b) place**

In the nineteenth century, Madagascar, in the south west of the Indian Ocean, held an important position in the geostrategy of the great powers, which were roaming around the Mascarene Islands and in southern Africa. This push resulted in the annexation of the island at the end of the century, in 1896. The Royal Archives bear witness to these events. The Kingdom of Madagascar has conserved in writing records of all these events. They are the first official documents in the Latin alphabet. The documents were gathered together at the Palace of the Queen in Antananarivo, the capital of the Kingdom of Madagascar.

###### **(c) subject and theme**

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<sup>3</sup> A kingdom in the centre of the island, with Antananarivo as its capital.

The main subjects and themes are the exercise of the royal authority, the end of the monarchy and the ascension of the common people, external relations, change and social and economic progress, evolution in thought and morality, the history of families, and the way and standard of living.

4.4 Are there issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management that relate to this nomination?

These documents are unique. They have been affected by time, various sorts of attack and handling. The main threats are:

- Natural disaster: Madagascar, a tropical country, suffers from frequent cyclones and heavy rainfall for five months in the year (from December to April). Every year, torrential rain floods the low-lying areas of Antananarivo, including the area of Tsaralalàna where the Department of National Archives is located. The cyclones often hit the city of Antananarivo, albeit with less intensity than in coastal regions. The threat is constant however.
- Theft: the archives are often vandalized. Malicious readers steal or rip important pages from documents.
- Fire risk: fire cannot be ruled out as the electrical wiring in the administrative buildings is very old. The Department of National Archives is located in the centre of the conurbation of Antananarivo: the commercial, densely-populated area of Isotry.
- Excessive handling: the increase in the number of readers and excessive handling of documents is damaging them.

## **5 LEGAL INFORMATION**

5.1. Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

State of Madagascar

5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details, if different to owner)

Office of the Prime Minister – Department of National Archives  
23, rue Karija Tsaralalàna  
BP 3384  
101 Antananarivo, Madagascar  
Tel.: 261 020 22 235 34

5.3 Legal status:

- (a) Category of ownership: land and property assigned to the Office of the Prime Minister
- (b) Accessibility: consultation on site with agreement of the Department
- (c) Copyright status: documents over one hundred years old may be consulted
- (d) Responsible administration: Department of National Archives, 23, rue Karija Tsaralalàna, BP 3384, 101 Antananarivo, Madagascar, Tel.: 261 020 22 235 34
- (e) Other factors: As archives produced by the government, the Royal Archives are, from a legal standpoint, national in nature

## **6 MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### 6.1 Is there a management plan in existence for this documentary heritage?

The management of the archives is defined by Law No. 2007-019 of 27 July, which in practical terms entails:

- Budgeting for work to conserve the heritage (PIP)
- Use of the binding workshop
- Microfiche/film system
- Development of a filing and inventory plan
- Establishment of an antitheft system to improve surveillance of the reading room
- Reorganization of the reading room
- Systematic protection of documents before and after consultation by readers (inspection and verification)
- Establishment of inventories on the basis of the filing plan
- Use of metal shelving resistant to attack by destructive insects such as termites and silverfish, and solid enough to be able to bear considerable amounts of documents.
- Introduction of a suitable organizational structure: three services are already operational and research officers are strengthening the above-mentioned services. The installation of regional archive offices is currently part of the Annual Work Programme.
- The computerization of data (under way) to improve space management.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

### 7.1 Provide details of consultation about this nomination with (a) the owner of the heritage (b) the custodian (c) your national or regional *Memory of the World* committee

This nomination is submitted to:

- the Secretary-General of the Government
- experts
- the Secretary-General of the National Commission for UNESCO

## **PART B – SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION**

### **8 ASSESSMENT OF RISK**

#### 8.1 Detail the nature and scope of threats to this documentary heritage

- Natural disasters: cyclones, flooding
- Theft

- Excessive handling of documents by readers
- Accidents: fire, water
- Climate, war
- Fungus, mould
- Acidity
- Insects

## **9 ASSESSMENT OF PRESERVATION**

### 9.1 Detail the preservation context of the documentary heritage

- Strengthening of control over the collections
- Improvement of storage conditions
- Conservation of original documents

## **PART C – LODGEMENT**

This nomination is lodged by:

(Please print name) Andriamihamina Ravoniharoson, Sahondra Sylvie

(Signature)..... (Date) 14 March 2008