

---

# Development of *Hail Mary* in Malagasy language

by Wojciech Kluj OMI

## Zusammenfassung

Der Beitrag beschreibt, wie sich die madagassische Version des Gebetes *Ave Maria* entwickelte. Es ist interessant zu bemerken, dass die älteste im Katechismus aus dem 17. Jahrhundert veröffentlichte Fassung praktisch völlig anders ist als die aus dem 19. Jahrhundert (die noch verwendet wird). Die aktuelle Fassung, die sich am Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts zu entwickeln begann, wurde nicht nur durch die Eigenart der madagassischen Sprache, sondern auch durch die damalige Lage der französisch-katholischen Missionare beeinflusst. Zunächst einmal arbeiteten sie zu Beginn auf den kleineren Inseln um die Hauptinsel Madagaskar herum. Zweitens hielten sie anfangs die verschiedenen Abweichungen in der Sprache für Dialekte und versuchten all diese Dialekte für ihre Arbeit zu verwenden, wobei sie verschiedene lokale Gebetsformen schufen. Aus linguistischer Sicht gibt es interessante Entwicklungen bei der Schaffung lokaler theologischer Wörter, z. B. »heilig« vom Begriff für »salzig«, und »Jungfrau«, die in der madagassischen Sprache oder Kultur vor der Ankunft der Missionare im biblischen Sinne nicht existierte. Auch die Entwicklung der Schreibweise der Namen Jesus und Maria in der madagassischen Fassung ist interessant.

## Schlüsselbegriffe

→ *Ave Maria*  
→ Madagaskar  
→ Linguistik  
→ Übersetzungen

## Abstract

This text describes how the Malagasy version of the prayer *Hail Mary* was developed. It is interesting to note, that the oldest version published in the Catechism from the seventeenth century, is practically totally different from the one developed in the nineteenth century (which is still in use). The actual version, which began to develop in the beginning of the nineteenth century was influenced not only by the specificity of Malagasy language, but also by the situation of French Catholic missionaries of that time. Firstly, they worked at the beginning on the small islands around main Madagascar. Secondly, at the beginning they considered different variations of the language as dialects, and tried to use all those dialects for their work, creating different local forms of prayer. From the linguistic perspective there are interesting developments in creating local theological words, e.g. »Holy« originating from »salty« or »virgin«, which in the biblical sense did not exist in Malagasy language and culture before the coming of the first missionaries. Also the development of the spelling of the names of Jesus and Mary in the Malagasy version is interesting.

## Keywords

→ *Hail Mary*  
→ Madagascar  
→ Linguistics  
→ Translations

## Sumario

El artículo describe el origen de la versión malgache del *Ave Maria*. Es interesante precisar que la versión más antigua publicada en el catecismo del siglo XVII es prácticamente totalmente diferente de la del siglo XIX (usada todavía). La versión actual, que comenzó a desarrollarse a principios del siglo XIX, muestra no sólo la influencia de la lengua malgache, sino también de la situación de los misioneros católicos de Francia. En primer lugar, los misioneros trabajaban al principio en las islas más pequeñas alrededor de la isla principal Madagascar. En segundo lugar mantuvieron al principio las diferentes variantes dialectales e intentaron utilizar todos esos dialectos para su trabajo, creando diferentes formas locales de oración. Desde el punto de vista lingüístico hay interesantes desarrollos al crear palabras teológicas locales, p.e. »santo« del concepto para »salado« y »virgen«, que en el sentido bíblico no existía en la lengua y cultura malgache antes de la llegada de los misioneros. También es interesante el desarrollo de la escritura de los nombres de Jesús y María en la versión malgache.

## Conceptos claves

→ *Ave Maria*  
→ Madagascar  
→ Lingüística  
→ Traducciones

---



The Christian community for common prayer must have some texts recognized by all the members. Apart from the most important prayer left to us by Jesus Christ himself, in the Catholic tradition, *Hail Mary* has also become a very important prayer. This paper will show how this prayer formula developed in the language of the inhabitants of Madagascar.

Besides missionaries stopping at the Big Island on the way to India, the first missionaries who permanently stopped in Madagascar were the Lazarists of St. Vincent de Paul (CM) in the mid-seventeenth century. Among the many fruits of their work was the oldest Malagasy catechism. Their efforts ended after a short period when all Europeans were either killed or forced to leave the island. Subsequent attempts of evangelization in the eighteenth century, especially by Catholic missionaries, were undertaken from the neighboring small islands. At the beginning of the nineteenth century a group of Protestant missionaries from London Missionary Society managed to settle on the island for 18 years (Catholics were not allowed). After the death of Queen Ranaivalona I (1861), Protestant missionaries were allowed to return to the island and the Catholic missionaries were allowed to settle down. Since that time, for a period of about half a century, there developed and shaped basic formulas of short prayers, including the *Hail Mary*.

## 1 Sources of research – catechisms and prayer books

In preparing an analysis six texts were researched from the past, compared with the English version of the prayer, and with the contemporary version in the Malagasy language. The authors of the first translation, that means the first Catholic missionaries from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, were dying very quickly because of malaria. They lived in Madagascar only for few months. Only two of them managed to survive a year and a half. In such a short period it was difficult to break through the secrets of the local language.

The oldest surviving text of *Hail Mary* in Malagasy exists in four slightly different versions. Two of them were printed in the catechism, two in the book of the governor Flacourt. The best known and most accessible text today is the first critical edition of the catechism entitled *Le catechisme malgache de 1657*.<sup>1</sup> In the library of the Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome there is also a corrected version of the catechism published a year later, in 1658. Title and publisher of both versions remains the same: *Petit Catechism avec les prieres du matin et du soir que les Missionnaires font et enseignent aux Neophytes et Cathecumenes [!] de de [!] l'Isle de Madagascar, le tout en François et en cette langue, contenant trente instructions. A Paris, chez Georges Iosse rue Saint Jacques à la Couronne d'Espines MDCLVII*.<sup>2</sup> In the both versions the text of this prayer is printed on the pages 58-59.<sup>3</sup>

1 Ludvig MUNTHE/Élie RAJAONARISON/Désiré RANAIVOSOA, *Le catechisme malgache de 1657. Essai de présentation du premier livre en langue malgache. Approche théologique, historique, linguistique et conceptuelle*, Antananarivo 1987.

2 In the facsimile version printed in the above mentioned critical edition there is year 1657 and letter »I« in the name »François« is missing. Edition from Urbanianum holds a year 1658.

3 In the book MUNTHE/RAJAONARISON/RANAIVOSOA, *Le catechisme malgache* (Anm.1), these are pages 180 and 182.



Also, two versions of the book of governor Flacourt<sup>4</sup> contain the text of *Hail Mary*. A copy found in the Urbaniana library bears the date 1658. A copy from the National Library in Paris (also available in electronic version) is the second edition and is dated 1661. This book is entitled *Histoire de la Grande Isle Madagascar composé par le Sieur de Flacourt, directeur general de la Compagnie Française de l'Orient, et commandant pour Sa Majesté dans ladite Isle et es Isles adjacentes. Avec une Relation de ce qui s'est passé es années 1655, 1656 et 1657 non encor veuë par la premiere impression*<sup>5</sup>. A Paris, chez Gervais Clouzier au Palais, fur les degrez en montant pour aller à la fainete Chapelle, MDCLXI avec privilege du roy. The text of *Hail Mary* in the version of 1658 is on the pages 187-188 and in the version from the 1661 on the pages 197-198.

The second known attempt to translate the Angelic Greeting into Malagasy comes from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This catechism was created on the neighboring island of Bourbon (now Reunion). There were many Malagasy slaves there and this catechism was created as part of the work among them. This book does not contain the author's name or date of printing, but it bears a decree of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith from 22<sup>nd</sup> of August of 1785 authorizing publication. This work bears the title *Catechisme abrégé en langue de Madagascar pour instruire sommairement ces peuples, les inviter et les disposer au baptême*. A copy of this book could also be found in Urbaniana Library. This catechism was published in Rome in 1785, but the texts contained in it have been created at least a few decades earlier.<sup>6</sup> For the text of *Hail Mary* see page 14.

To understand the context of the formation of the *Hail Mary* in the Malagasy language in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we must remember that at that time there were catechisms produced in the local dialects. Protestant missionaries (of English origin) arrived earlier to the capital and adopted as a standard language, a dialect used on the Central Plateau. Catholic missionaries (French) from the beginning were not allowed to go to the heart of the island and, therefore, undertook to work with the ethnic groups living on the shores of the island, which were not so dominated linguistically by the central government. They started to print catechisms in the various local dialects.<sup>7</sup> In the mid-nineteenth century there were three such catechisms published in the dialects of Sakalava people (1841),<sup>8</sup> Merina (1862)<sup>9</sup> and Betsimisaraka (1866).<sup>10</sup> These versions of the catechisms are quite different from the

4 About the author and his works see: INSTITUT NATIONAL DES LANGUES ET CIVILISATIONS ORIENTALES (ed.), *Autour de Flacourt. Actes du colloque »Etienne de Flacourt: à l'occasion du centenaire des Etudes Malgaches à l'Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (Orléans, 11 octobre 1996), Paris 1997*, especially the text Noël-Jacques GUEUNIER, *Le »Catechisme« de Flacourt comme témoin des relations linguistiques dans le sud-est de Madagascar au milieu du XVIIe siècle suivi du lexique du »Catechisme« de 1657*, 67-148.

5 A copy from Urbaniana does not have the sentence beginning with «Avec».

6 See Clément SAMBO, *Le catéchisme malgache de 1785*, in: *Le Christianisme dans le sud de Madagascar. Mélanges à l'occasion du centenaire de la reprise de l'évangélisation du Sud de Madagascar par la Congrégation de la Mission (Lazaristes) 1896-1996*, ed. by CONGRÉGATION DE LA MISSION (LAZARISTES), Fianarantsoa 1996, 106-121.

7 See Vincent BELROSE-HUYGHUES, *Considerations sur l'introduction de l'imprimerie à Madagascar*, in: *Omaly sy Anio* no. 5-6 (1977) 89-105.

8 *Exercices en langue sakalave contenant prières, catéchisme, cantiques et abrégé d'histoire sainte de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament*, par N. L'abbé DALMOND, préfet apostolique de Madagascar, Saint-Denis (Ile Bourbon) 1841.

9 *Katesisy Fampianarana Kristiana lazaina aminy fanontaniana sy ny famaliana hianarany ny firazanana Malagasy rehetra ny fanompoana marina an' Andriamanitra*, An-Tananarivo no tontaina taminy fanerany ny misionary katolika, ao Madagascar, fony Radama II vao nanjaka 1862.

10 *Katesisy va fampianarana kretieny aminy volana Betsimisaraka*, Antananarivo, no tontaina taminy fanerany ny misionary katolika ao Madagascar, août 1866.



official version of the Malagasy. However, in this study we will only examine the official version. Since the nineteenth century, the dominant group on the island were Merina, so the official version was more influenced by the dialect of this group.

The third text that will be examined was taken from the general catechism of the French colonies (1851).<sup>11</sup> That was *Catéchisme à l'usage des populations de Madagascar traduit du catéchisme des colonies françaises*, Ile de la Réunion: Typogr. de Lahuppe 1851. *Hail Mary* is on page 4.

The fourth version has a title in Malagasy but it comes from the catechism issued in France. It is *Katesizy na Fampianarana Kristiana lazaina aminy teny fohifohy hianarany ny Malagasy ny Fanompoana Marina an' Andriamanitra*, Clermont-Ferrand: Typographie Ferdinand Thibaud, Libraire 1868.

Its authors were the missionaries who worked with the Madagascan population, mainly on Réunion. *Hail Mary* is printed on page 4-5.

The last Catholic Malagasy catechism of the pre-colonial period was the catechism of 1892.<sup>12</sup> Here, there was one important issue related to language. The catechism began to use the word »Andriamanitra« to denote God throughout the whole island (in the Merina version this had already existed). Previously, the word was »Zanahary«. Besides this issue, the catechism did not contribute anything new in the formulation of the Angelic Greetings, so we will not take it into account.

The two last publications selected for this paper were published in the colonial period. The first catechism (1908) comes from the period of enforced atheism. After a few years, when one could only print in France, this was the first catechism, which was released again in Madagascar. However, it shows colonial attempts to impose some unification on Madagascar. It is about *Katesizy na Fampianarana ny Fivavahana Katolika*, Tananarive: Imprimerie de la Mission Catholique – Mahamasina, 1908. *Hail Mary* is on page 4-5.

The last text that will be taken under examination comes from a prayer book, which had many editions. Here we will look at the issue from the year 1916. Thus from the period when the colonial authorities began to depend on the Malagasy soldiers who could fight in the First World War under the French flag. This is the eleventh edition *Fihirana (Manuel de piété)*, Tananarive: Imprimerie catholique, 1916. *Hail Mary* is on page 20.

<sup>11</sup> At that time Madagascar was not yet colony. It became one only in 1895. However, the island of Reunion (place of printing) was already a territory controlled by France.

<sup>12</sup> *Ny Fivoasana ny Katesizy ho Any ny Malagasy*, Antananarivo 1892.



## 2 The text of Hail Mary

In the text below, in the two first cases we will present given text in the double form. The first text is in the original version, and is followed by a text in parentheses. The latter is a contemporary attempt to write the original text. In the case of the first text, it is a version of the above-mentioned critical edition by L. Munthe, E. Rajaonarison and D. Ranaivosoa. A contemporary version of the second text was composed by C. Sambo.

### Figure 1

In the seventeenth-century catechism (1657) on the greeting uses the word *Salama*, which is still used regionally in some areas of Madagascar. When it comes to the »fullness of grace«, the catechism uses the word meaning »fullness of holiness« (*masimpeno*).<sup>13</sup> This expression was clarified with suggestive linguistic association – may the »Lord above« be with us here »low«. That might have been a mistake of printer or interpreter, or application of the specificity of the Malagasy language.<sup>14</sup>

In the eighteenth-century catechism, we have the same expression for the greeting, however interesting, is the following passage, which is probably a kind of catechesis. Words *mihole tsi tacats dahe* literally mean »girl not corrupt by man« that is »virgin«. This is probably an attempt to teach about Mary's virginity, inserted in this place of the prayer.

### Figure 2

In this passage, we see that theology comes to the fore and not grammar. Although there were differences in the description, there were no major difficulties with the terms »you«, »between« and »women«. The main reason for the diversity in the translation of these words, is a problem with the concept of »blessing.«

Literally, the phrases *Anau missahots* and *Ano missahotse*, from the first two catechisms, create a number of problems. According to the authors of the critical edition of the first catechism the phrase literally means »you thank, you pray«. <sup>15</sup> According to other experts consulted, this could be translated as »you carry good, you have good, you can wear over, you're beautiful between«. Version of 1851 can be translated as »you have a lot of (spiritual) values over all women«.

Version 1868 eventually became the standard.

The word *nosoavina*, now adopted for the blessing comes from *soavina*, which in turn derives from the core *soa*. The word means goodness, beauty, pleasure, being nice, profit, benefit, advantage. In this way, the passive verb *soavina* (God bless you), primarily means being privileged to be in the situation of the benefits.

To understand the process of development this word, one needs to remember the traditional Malagasy concept of blessing. Receiving the blessing (*voatso-drano*) from someone who has the authority in the family (older), was made by splashing water over one who received a blessing. It meant the fact of being cleaned from all impurities derived from failing to respect the elderly, community or societal values and beliefs.

<sup>13</sup> It is interesting because in other places of the catechism, »grace« was translated as *fiandriana* or *haihay*. Here »grace« is translated as »holiness«. See MUNTHE / RAJAONARISON / RANAIVOSOA, *Le catechisme malgache* (Anm.1), 275.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 181 and 275.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.



1	Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord be with you
1657	Salama Ramariama,* masimpeno Tompon antsica hotangh aminau (Salama i Maria feno hasina. [Ny] Tompontsika ho tany aminao.)
1785	Salama Ra Mariama, mihole tsi tacats dahe, Massin penou Tompontsiq aminao (Salama ry Maria virjiny, tsy azon-dehilahy, feno hasina. Ny Tompontsika ao aminao).
1851	Koezy anao, Mary, feno hasoavana, ny Tompo amy nao
1868	Izaho miarahaba anao Mary, feno hasoavana, ny Tompo ao aminao
1908	Izaho miarahaba anao, Mary, feno hasoavana; ny Tompo ao aminao
1916	Arahaba, ry Mary, feno hasoavana; ny Tompo ao aminao Arahaba ry Maria feno hasoavana ny Tompo ao aminao

\* According to the version from the National Library from Paris it is Rama d'riama.

2	Blessed are Thou among women
1657	Anau missahots taunanga vaivave abi (Ianao misaotra teo anivon' ny vehivavy rehetra)
1785	Ano missahotse ambonne valiave abi (Mihoatra ny vehivavy rehetra ianao)
1851	be hasina ambony ny viaive ziaby anao
1868	be hasina ambony ny vehivavy rehetra hianao
1908	nohasoavina noho ny vehivavy rehetra hianao
1916	nosoavina noho ny vehivavy rehetra hianao, nosoavina noho ny vehivavy rehetra ianao



**Figure 3**

The oldest version of this part of prayer (1657) can be translated as »thanks to the Son, whom you give life (in the womb), Jesus«. According to the authors of the critical edition, the word *nitondranau* – literally means, »whom you gave birth« – in the adverbial form, should be replaced by *entinau*. Interestingly, in the oldest catechism, the word »Amen« is also added.<sup>16</sup>

The second version, from the eighteenth century, can be translated as »thanks to Him, the Son, whom she gave birth to Jesus«. The name was repeated in Arabic and Latin.

Catechisms that were created outside Madagascar deviate a little more from a literal sense, heading more towards a direction of explanation. The version of 1851 can be translated as »This one, to whom you gave birth, Jesus, has a lot of spiritual values.« Practically almost to the end of the nineteenth century one can see various attempts of translation of different words. It might be surprising again to see the difference between the text from 1868 and the text of the catechism of 1908, where we encounter a completely different wording. Almost contemporary version of this part of prayer gives catechism of 1916: »And blessed Jesus, born of your womb (lit.: of your abdomen).« This appears in it the word *nosoavina*.

**Figure 4**

The catechism from 1868 had set a certain standard. The modern version was adopted from the catechism of 1908. The changes were not related to theology, but the issue of language.

The title »Mother of God« in the history of Christian thought has quite a rich history. In the theological context it is worth noting that in Madagascar title »Mother Zanahary / Andriamanitra« did not sound strange at all. Since each major ancestor, progenitor, or any important person was becoming Zanahary – it was clear that he/she had to have a mother.

**Figure 5**

The concept of »sin«<sup>17</sup> underwent a long development. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Malagasy language also had to gradually cope with it. From the perspective of language itself, this is a term that was gradually shortened. There was however, some difficulty in finding words for »sinners« and intercessory prayer.

In the oldest Catechism (1657) we find the expression »intercede« (*mitambetambe*) for us who are sinners. This term literally means »to comfort, to appease, appease, to seek clemency from ..., – sneak in good grace.«

In the version of the eighteenth century it was considered necessary to add to whom (»to God«) Mary was praying for – for us, sinners.

In the text from 1868 we have a change in the order of words and, therefore, in this place there was the word »now« (*ankehitriny*), which normally belongs to the following part of the prayer.

The catechism of 1908 had already established the final form of this part.

<sup>16</sup> At the end it will appear once more but in a form »let it be done«.

<sup>17</sup> See A. RAZAFINTSALAMA, Essai sur le sens du péché chez le Malgache, in: ACM (1960) no. 8, 214-219; no. 9, 230-233; R. FAVRE, »Fady« ou tabous malgache. Etude pastorale, in: ACM (1953) no. 5, 109-116; (1954) no. 1, 164-168; (1956) no. 4, 233-242.



3 And blessed is the fruit of Thy womb, Jesus	
1657	Nare nissahotse enghe zanaca, nitondranau rahyssa. Amin (Ary nisaotra ny zanaka nitondranao i Jesoa. Amena)
1785	Aman missaots izi-zanne Zanaq, nitondrano Raitssa Jesus (ary misaotra anao nohon' ny zaza izay nentinao dia i Kristy Jesoa **)
1851	Be hasina ny nateraky ny kibo nao i Zezo
1868	be hasina i Jeso nateraky ny kibo nao
1908	ary be hasoavana Jeso voahary an-kibonao
1916	ary nosoavina Jeso nateraky ny kibonao Ary nosoavina i Jesoa nateraky ny kibonao
**	At this point one can see a discrepancy between the text of the catechism from Urbaniana Library, and the text available in the center Ambozontany in Fianarantsoa. In the »Roman« version was Raitssa Iesus in »Malagasy« Raitsa Iesosy. This may show a certain evolution to create the correct vocabulary.
4 Holy Mary, Mother of God	
1657	Ramariama masin, reine nih Zahanhare (Maria Masina, renin'i Zanahary)
1785	Ra Mariama masin, reine gni Zanahar (Ry Maria, masina, Renin' ny Zanahary)
1851	Masina Mary, Reny ny Zanahare
1868	Masina Mary, Reny ny Zanahary
1908	Masina Mary, Renin' Andriamanitra
1916	Masina Mary, Renin' Andriamanitra Masina Maria, Renin' Andriamanitra
5 Pray for us sinners	
1657	mi tambetambeho hanau ahinri nahonai ompanghota (mihantà ianao aminy mba ho anay olona mpanota)
1785	Miantambeho ano ahinri [albo] alo-azo nahonaie ompiratsi (mivavaha ho anay eo anatrehany (Zanahary), izahay izay olon-dratsy)
1851	Mijoroa nihy nay, ampanao ratsy
1868	Ivavaho ankehitriny izahay mpanota
1908	mivavaha ho anay mpanota
1916	mivavaha ho anay mpanota Mivavaha ho anay mpanota



## Figure 6

Here, too, there was no need to search for new concepts. As in the above, these words are within the scope of everyday terminology. In the oldest version of the word, *Izanheuezanhe* is likely to double (often found in Malagasy language) *izau izau* (now now).

In this last passage, we see the formation of the Malagasy *Amen*. For a time (1868) there was a slight change in the word order in this part of prayer, but the version introduced in 1908 appeared to put the issue to rest. *Ankehitriny* is already directly in this section. It is also worth noting that the catechism of 1908, in this case, opted for a more Malagasy version of the conclusion, i. e., *Amena*. Symbolically, this evolution seems to be interesting – from *Amin* with Muslim influence, through *Amena* or »so be it«, to the contemporary *Amen*.

It is worth noting that in Hail *Mary* prayer we find very important names of Jesus and Mary. It is worthwhile to take a look at the process of the formation of the Malagasy form of these holy names. The name of Mary occurs at the beginning, both in the first and in the second part. The name of Jesus is at the end of the first part.

First, let us take a look at the formation of the Malagasy version of the name of Jesus. In the oldest text (1657) we find the word *Rahyssa*. It can be assumed that this was the first attempt to give a Malagasy name. The first catechism, as it is known, was built in the south, where Islamic influences were present. In the word *Rahyssa* we can see clearly Malagasy prefix *Ra-*, but also the Islamic version of the word »Jesus« – *Issa* (*Hyssa*). People who have been in contact with the Muslim tradition on the island probably heard that the prophet Issa was a great prophet. Of course lesser than the greatest of the prophets – Mohammed. But certainly it was not the Son of God. The use of this version of the name of Jesus could have its ambiguous consequences. The Catechism of the eighteenth century (1785) repeats this version in a slightly modified form of writing, as *Raitssa*, adding, however, to that *Jesus*. So we have in this form a kind of Malagasy-Arabic version and a Latin as well.

Since the 1870s Catholic circles adopted the spelling *Jeso*.<sup>18</sup> This spelling is assumed henceforth as the standard Catholic spelling, which will be changed only by the ecumenical endeavors towards the end of the twentieth century for *Jesoa*. The change of spelling *Zezu* to *Jeso* was practically unnoticed by the population, which in the vast majority was unable to write. The change of the pronunciation (*Jeso* to *Jesoa*), which had taken place at the end of the twentieth century, created a certain challenge and required some Christian faith effort.

Looking at the name of Mary, we also see such a process. The Catechism of the seventeenth century called her *Ramariama*. There we find a similar Malagasy prefix *Ra-* at the beginning of the name. The version from the eighteenth century divided up the spelling as *Ra Mariama*. Since 1851, the principle of spelling *-i* at the end, as *-y* was applied. Hence arose *Mary*. This resulted from the Malagasy grammar, even though it may look like the English spelling. This version has been accepted for a long time. Today we have a form of writing and pronunciation as *Maria*.

18 The letter »o« is pronounced in Malagasy like »oo« in »book«.



6	Now and at the hour of our death. Amen.
1657	Izanheuezanhe amaleha tanh Zahai hofate amin. (Izao dia izao sy rehefa izahay ho faty. Amena.)
1785	Izanne vezanne ama leatangh [albo] ama ouvia zahaie hofatte. Amen. (amin' izao ary mandra-pahatongavanay any ambany tany [albo] hatra amin' ny fahafatesanay. Amen)
1851	Atonio indraiky amy ny hifatesa' nay. Amena.
1868	ankehitriny . ary aminy andro hafatesa nay. Amen.
1908	ankehitriny ary amin' ny andro hahafatesanay. Amena.
1916	ankehitriny ary amin' ny andro hahafatesanay. Amena.
	Ankehitriny ary amin ny andro hahafatesanay. Amen.

### 3 Some final observations

Comparing the formation of the standard version of the prayer *Hail Mary*, one may see that it has not developed quickly. It took time. There were some other situations requiring a choice of other terms. The most important here seem processes shaping the Malagasy forms of sacred names of Jesus and Mary, which is best seen just in this prayer. In addition, the Angelic Salutation can also serve as a good example of attempts to use those prayers in »theologizing« or »catechesis«. Certain terms were introduced that were not in the original, but in the context of a new culture should be explained, e.g., »Mary untouched by man« – meaning Immaculate.

The two oldest versions from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, formed practically the world for themselves. Since then there was no possibility of deepening the roots of faith in Madagascar, therefore, these texts remained practically without a continuation of development. However, some of the efforts of the early translators left interesting examples of formulations, even if some of them were eventually not accepted in the faith community.

The French colonial catechism (1851) tried to unify certain things. These catechisms were first created to be essentially out of Madagascar. Once the actual work on the mainland could begin, these versions were very quickly accepted. In fact, the amendment of the 1880s and 1890s, and especially of the later ones were slight and more grammatical in nature. ♦