### **Towards an anthropology in life.  The astrological architecture of Zanadroandrena land in West Bezanozano, Madagascar.**

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The dissertation focuses on astrological practices of the Zanadroandrena who dwell in a limited area called ‘Zanadroandrena land’.  I identify Zanadroandrena astrology as a poi?sis of life, shaping the land and all its inhabitants as emergent moments in the world’s perpetual becoming.

              In an introductive part I place the Zanadroandrena in the land and outline their history, both of their migration from North Merina and of their present settlement.  They see this settlement as born of a drama.  Through fruitful relations with the new land, the Zanadroandrena turn this drama into one of growth and expansion.  The land and all its inhabitants carry specific destinies, due to astrological practices that identify the initiation of any activity or creation with the emergence of new life.  Each inhabitant emerges in a specific place and at a specific moment, giving it a destiny that it carries throughout life.

Before turning to my detailed ethnography, I set out a theoretical perspective.  My main argument is that the Zanadroandrena see the world much in the same way as the anthropologist Tim Ingold does.  I explain that astrological practices give a particular shape to the land, which is understood as an entanglement of life-paths of all its inhabitants – trees, animals, sun, moon, stones, plants, human beings, ancestors, the winds – with their different time-spans.  I show how astrological practices are a vital part of Zanadroandrena traditions that I define as, walking the paths of and with the ancestors, taking part in and creating specific streams of energy and material exchanges.

              I then describe ethnographically how the Zanadroandrena conceive their living bodies as emerging from ‘the lowlands in the low sky’ through the metamorphosis of marshes into rice fields and the consumption of rice.  I explain that Zanadroandrena generative forces arise through their entanglements with prairie land, grass, zebus and ‘the highland in the far sky’ in general.  I also show how ancestral bodies appear through life-giving practices for the dead and, finally, how the Zanadroandrena invisible body emerges through practices at their territorial ritual centre, regarded as a place where all the caring forces of the Zanadroandrena land are concentrated.

              The ethnographic examples show that Zanadroandrena astrology is not at all totalizing because of the invariable, uniform and repetitive character of the destinies.  Each destiny has also to be seen as an emergent moment in the world’s becoming.  The most important manifestations of this process of becoming, for the Zanadroandrena, are the phenomena of weather.

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