

1 The Context

This is the hitherto untold history of some 100 ‘Madagascar Youths’ who, in the 1810s and 1820s, British authorities accepted for education and training in Britain, on Mauritius, and on British naval vessels. Their agreement to do so followed a diplomatic mission in 1816 to Radama I (r. 1810–28), king of the small landlocked kingdom of Imerina, in the central highlands of the large Indian Ocean island of Madagascar. This mission led first to a draft accord in 1817, which was amended and confirmed in a full Britanno-Merina treaty in 1820 through which the British aspired to suppress the slave trade from Madagascar and secure political and economic hegemony over the island. They promised the Merina king compensation for loss of slave-export earnings, notably in the form of military aid, to enable him to subject the rest of Madagascar to Merina rule, and educational and technical assistance, in the form of British missionary teachers and artisans, as well as secular craftsmen from neighbouring Mauritius. This history is well known.¹ However, there was an additional facet to the Britanno-Merina alliance that is almost completely absent from the historiography. As a result notably of the 1820 treaty, and an additional agreement in 1824, British authorities agreed to pay for ‘Madagascar Youths’, selected by Radama, to be educated and trained abroad. Accounts of two of these youths, the twin brothers Raombana and Rahaniraka, have appeared in French and Italian.² However, what is almost completely unknown is that the twins formed part of a group of about 100 Madagascar Youths selected for training outside Madagascar, under British supervision. The British authorities envisaged that, once they had completed their apprenticeships and returned to Madagascar, these youths would help to cement British

¹ Jean Valette, *Études sur le règne de Radama I* (Tananarive: Imprimerie Nationale, 1962); Hubert Jules Deschamps, *Histoire de Madagascar* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1972); Mervyn Brown, *Madagascar Rediscovered: A History from Early Times to Independence* (London: Damien Tunnacliffe, 1978); Gwyn Campbell, *An Economic History of Imperial Madagascar, 1750–1895: The Rise and Fall of an Island Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

² Simon Ayache (ed.), *Raombana l'historien (1809–1855)* (Fianarantsoa: Ambozontany, 1976); Simon Ayache (ed.), *Raombana: Histoires* (Fianarantsoa: Ambozontany, 1980); Liliana Mosca, *Il Madagascar nella vita di Raombana primo storico malgascio (1809–1855)* (Napoli: Giannini Editore, 1980).

2 The Context

political, economic, and religious paramountcy in the island. However, in 1826, Radama decided to break the British alliance, a decision endorsed by his successor, Queen Ranavalona I (r. 1828–61). This rupture had profound implications for Britanno-Merina relations, the Mauritian and Malagasy economies, and the Madagascar Youths.

This volume comprises seven chapters. This chapter sets the context for the story of the Madagascar Youths. It outlines the history of European interest in Madagascar that led to the first Malagasy visiting Europe and to the emergence of the island as a significant supplier of provisions and slaves to European colonies in the region. It discusses the reasons for a specifically British focus on Madagascar that resulted in the 1816 mission and the Britanno-Merina accord of 1817, and the main authorities involved. It analyzes why that accord was undermined and the fallout of its failure. Finally, it examines the renewal of the alliance and its outcome in the form of the 1820 treaty that included the decision to send a select group of ‘Madagascar Youths’ abroad for training under British supervision. Chapters 2–4 investigate, in sequence, the histories of the youths sent to Britain, to Mauritius, and for training aboard British naval vessels. Chapters 5 and 6 explore the history upon their return to Madagascar of the youths sent abroad for technical training. The final chapter examines the careers of those Madagascar Youths who, upon their return, were employed for various periods as court officials and diplomats for the Merina crown. Central to this theme were the twins Raombana and Rahaniraka, who in Britain received a liberal education, rather than technical training, and who upon their return to Madagascar served the Merina court, notably as foreign secretaries.

Madagascar in the European Mind

From the time of the ‘Voyages of Discovery’, Madagascar figured large in the minds of Europeans. It did so for two very different reasons. First, it was considered to be a tropical island Eden possessing exotic animals, plants, and human inhabitants. Second, it was thought to be of significant economic and strategic importance, due to its natural resources and its strategic location on the maritime route to the East.³

With a total land surface of 587,041 km², and a coastline of 9,935 km, Madagascar is the world’s fourth largest island (after Greenland, New Guinea, and Borneo), approximately the size of Texas or 2.4 times the size of

³ See for example Bruce McLeod, *The Geography of Empire in English Literature, 1580–1745* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Richard H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism 1600–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Jason H. Pearl, ‘Desert Islands and Urban Solitudes in the “Crusoe” Trilogy’, *Studies in the Novel* 44.2 (2012), 125–43.

the British Isles. It is widely believed to hold the world's greatest concentration of unique flora and fauna: 98 per cent of Madagascar's land mammals, 92 per cent of its reptiles, 68 per cent of its plants, and 41 per cent of its indigenous bird species are found nowhere else in the world.⁴ Madagascar also possesses a distinctive human population. Early European voyagers noted small communities of Swahili, who they called 'Arab' and the Malagasy termed *Antalaotra*, and Indians, called locally *Karana*, who probably arrived in Madagascar from, respectively, East Africa in the ninth to tenth centuries and India (notably Gujarat) in the eleventh to twelfth centuries.⁵ Excluding these groups, Madagascar appeared to be inhabited by two ethnic groups: a lighter-skinned people resembling Malays who inhabited the high central plateau that runs on a north–south axis almost the entire 1,592 km length of the island and a darker-skinned African-looking people who occupied the lowlands. This was confirmed by recent DNA research revealing that, while the island's population is of mixed 'Bantu' (African) and 'Austronesian' (Indonesian) genetic heritage, the degree of African ancestry was less (42 per cent) in the Merina of the central plateau than amongst, for example, the coastal Vezo, Mikea, and Taimoro (62–65 per cent).⁶ However, all speak variants of what Europeans commonly called a 'Malay' or 'Malayo-Polynesian' (linguists now use the term 'Austronesian') language. This indicated that the forebears of at least some Malagasy originated from the east, from the broader Malayo-Indonesian-Polynesian region. Additionally, they possessed certain distinctly southeast Asian cultural traits, such as irrigated riziculture and rectangular huts.

The only groups in Madagascar with a clear idea of their origins were the Swahili, the Indians, and the Zafimaniry of the southeast coast who claimed that their ancestors had sailed from Mecca in the fourteenth century.⁷ Other Malagasy communities had at most a vague indication that their ancestors had come from somewhere 'overseas'. Indigenous names for Madagascar are as indeterminate. The island was traditionally termed *Izao rehetra izao* ('this whole') in accordance, claimed English LMS missionary James Sibree (1836–1929), with the Malagasy concept that their land was the centre of the universe, *Nosin-dambo* ('Island of Wild Hogs'), or *Ny anivon'ny riaka* ('the

⁴ Gwyn Campbell, 'Madagascar', in Shepard Krech III, J. R. McNeill, and Carolyn Merchant (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Environmental History* (New York: Routledge, 2004), vol. 2, 796–8.

⁵ Paul Ottino, 'The Malagasy *Andriambahoaka* and the Indonesian Legacy', *History in Africa* 9 (1982), 221–2.

⁶ Trefor Jenkins et al., 'B-Globin Haplotype Analysis Suggests That a Major Source of Malagasy Ancestry Is Derived from Bantu-Speaking Negroids', *American Society of Human Genetics* 58 (1996), 1303–8; Jason A. Hodgson, 'A Genomic Investigation of the Malagasy Confirms the Highland–Coastal Divide, and the Lack of Middle Eastern Gene Flow', in Gwyn Campbell (ed.), *Early Exchange between Africa and the Wider Indian Ocean World* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 231–54.

⁷ Pierre Vérin, *The History of Civilisation in North Madagascar* (Rotterdam: A. A. Balkema, 1986), 27.

4 The Context

[land] in the midst of the flood’).⁸ In many Arabic texts it was termed *Kamar* or *Komr* (‘Island of the Moon’) or ‘Bukini’.⁹ The famous English explorer Richard Burton (1821–1890) considered that ‘Madagascar’ derived from ‘Mogadishu’, after the sheik of that city who had once invaded the island.¹⁰

Merina oral traditions complicate rather than clarify the issue. They assert that the forebears of the present-day Merina were the last wave of migrants to reach Madagascar, the result of a shipwreck around the start of the sixteenth century.¹¹ On the coast, they suffered from disease (probably malaria) and encountered hostility from local people, so quickly made their way to the malaria-free highlands where they encountered the Vazimba, a dark-skinned Stone Age population of hunter-gatherers who spoke an unintelligible language. Many Western scholars initially assumed that the Vazimba were either a group indigenous to Madagascar or the earliest immigrants from Africa – possibly related to the Wazimba or the Khoi. The encounter between the two groups was unbalanced as the Merina, equipped with Iron Age technology, swiftly conquered the Vazimba, who they killed, assimilated, or forced to flee west.¹²

Human settlers greatly impacted the environment of Madagascar. The current evidence is that people established permanent settlements in the island from the eighth to ninth centuries CE.¹³ They deliberately introduced plants and animals of Southeast Asian and African origin, such as rice, bananas, dogs, and oxen, and, inadvertently, the rat and diseases – including malaria. They probably hunted to extinction the pygmy hippopotamus, a giant tortoise, and several species of giant lemur, some larger than female gorillas.¹⁴ The island’s enormous flightless elephant birds, including the world’s largest avian species

⁸ James Sibree, ‘Malagasy Place-Names; Part 1’, *Antananarivo Annual & Madagascar Magazine* (hereafter *AAMM*) 20 (1896), 404.

⁹ Vêrin, *History of Civilisation*, 4; Sibree, ‘Malagasy Place-Names’, 404.

¹⁰ John H. van Linschoten, *Voyage to the East Indies*, vol. 1 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1885), 19.

¹¹ Ottino, ‘Malagasy *Andriambahoaka*’. The possibility of shipwreck off Madagascar was high. Madagascar was first sighted by Portuguese mariners in 1500 and was paid the first intentional visit in 1506. Between 1507 and 1528, at least five Portuguese shipwrecks occurred off the island, almost all on its southeast coast – see Alfred Grandidier et al. (eds.), ‘Republication of All Known Accounts of Madagascar’, *AAMM* 22 (1898), 234–5.

¹² Gerald M. Berg, ‘The Myth of Racial Strife and Merina Kinglists: The Transformation of Texts’, *History in Africa* 4 (1977), 1–30; Lin Poyer and Robert L. Kelly, ‘Mystification of the Mikea: Constructions of Foraging Identity in Southwest Madagascar’, *Journal of Anthropological Research* 56.2 (2000), 163–85; Jean-Claude Hébert, ‘Les “sagaies volantes” d’Andriamanelo et les “sagaies à pointes d’argile” des Vazimba: Un problème de critique de la tradition orale merina’, *Études océan indien* 31 (2001), 165–89; Sarah J. Dugal, ‘What’s the Story with Vazimba? Oral History, Social Change, and Identity in Highland Madagascar’ PhD, Tulane University (2004).

¹³ Gwyn Campbell, ‘Africa and the Early Indian Ocean World Exchange System in the Context of Human-Environment Interaction’, in Gwyn Campbell (ed.), *Early Exchange between Africa and the Wider Indian Ocean World* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 16.

¹⁴ Campbell, ‘Madagascar’, 796–8.

(*Aepyornis maximus*), probably met the same fate, as did the giant eagle, *Stephanoartus mahery*, which preyed on primates such as lemurs. These birds almost certainly inspired Marco Polo's story of the elephant-carrying *ruk*:

it was for all the world like an eagle, but one indeed of enormous size; so big in fact that its wings covered an extent of 30 paces, and its quills were 12 paces long, and thick in proportion. And it is so strong that it will seize an elephant in its talons and carry him high into the air, and drop him so that he is smashed to pieces; having so killed him the bird gryphon swoops down on him and eats him at leisure. The people of those isles call the bird *Ruc*, and it has no other name.¹⁵

Voyager accounts of Madagascar stimulated the curiosity of European savants and royalty, some of whom requested the captains of ships visiting the island to return with both natural history and human specimens. Probably the first Malagasy to reach Europe were two boys from the southeast of Madagascar. Seized by the Portuguese captain Ruy Pereira in 1506, following his nation's 'discovery' of the island, they were shipped to Mozambique from where in early 1507 his superior, Tristan da Cunha (c.1460–c.1540), despatched them to Portugal aboard the *Santa Maria*, under the command of Antonio de Saldanha. They arrived in August 1507 and were presented to King Manuel I (1469–1521), who ordered further exploration of Madagascar.¹⁶

In the mid-seventeenth century, several Malagasy were also taken to France as examples of exotic savages. The first to arrive, in 1655, were brothers, sons of a ruling house, again in southeastern Madagascar, where the French had founded a settlement under Étienne de Flacourt (1607–1660) which lasted from 1643 to 1674. One of the brothers was aged five years, the other was somewhat older. In France, they entered the household of Cardinal Jules Mazarin (1602–1661), chief minister to Louis XIV (r. 1643–1715), who sought to educate them as gentlemen. The eldest boy found difficulty adjusting to life in France and died of 'grief'. However, his brother thrived in his new environment and became standard bearer in the cavalry of the cardinal, accompanying his master when he was appointed governor of Alsace, a region bordering German provinces that France had conquered in 1639. The Malagasy was described in 1675 as

a young man of about twenty-five, very well made, of average height, a perfect dancer. He had . . . the complexion of a negro, but it was not pure black; he was rather of an olive

¹⁵ Marco Polo, 'Concerning the Island of Madagascar', in Henry Yule and Henri Cordier (eds.), *The Travels of Marco Polo* [1298] (Adelaide: eBooks@Adelaide, 2014), bk. 3, ch. 33; see also Anon, *The Arabian Nights: Tales from the Thousand and One Arabian Nights* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1924).

¹⁶ Guillaume Grandidier, *Histoire physique, naturelle et politique de Madagascar* (Paris: Imprimerie Paul Brodard 1942), vol. 5, book 1, 8, 12; Pierre Van den Boogaerde, *Shipwrecks of Madagascar* (New York: Strategic Book Publishing, 2009), 28.

6 The Context

reddish-brown colour. What seems to me particular, is that unlike most Moors, he has straight flat hair . . . he had only a confused memory of his native country: did not know even two words of his mother tongue; but remembered his abduction well enough.¹⁷

Of a third Malagasy, who was sent to Nantes, a French nobleman commented in 1658:

We came across a monster . . . who, however, is not so ugly or frightful that no woman in Nantes has asked M. de la Milleraye, to whom he came from Madagascar, for his hand in marriage. Avarice is at its peak, and triumphs over love and all that is invincible for those [women] who ask for him want only to run around the country displaying him for money.¹⁸

This very much set the trend whereby, as part of a pattern of conspicuous consumption intended to reflect their wealth and status, the wealthiest members of the European elite ‘collected’ and displayed individual non-Europeans.

Madagascar was also considered to be of great strategic importance on the maritime route to the East and rich in natural resources such as tropical hardwoods. Further, contrary to conventional accounts of African gold production which largely exclude Madagascar, the island possesses significant rift and alluvial gold deposits. This was suspected by all early European voyagers and confirmed in the eighteenth century. Thus, English astronomer William Hirst (d. 1769/1770), who visited Madagascar in 1759, supported the 1729 observation by Robert Drury (1687–c.1743–50) that Madagascar produced three sorts of gold – one of which, called ‘malacassa’, was pale, as easy to cast as lead, and worth up to 20 florins an ounce.¹⁹

As a result, Madagascar figured in a number of European schemes of colonization. From the time Vasco da Gama (c.1460s–1524) rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1497 en route to India, the Portuguese sought to supplant Muslim commercial influence in the Indian Ocean, including Madagascar. However, initial projects to colonize the island were quickly abandoned when the Portuguese encountered hostility from its inhabitants and found scant evidence of precious metals or spices. In the seventeenth century, Dutch and English attempts to establish colonies on the island also failed due to local hostility and the ravages of malaria. By the early eighteenth century, the

¹⁷ H. de L’Hermine (1675) quoted in Anne Lombard-Jourdan, ‘Des Malgaches à Paris sous Louis XIV’, *Archipel* 9 (1975), 88–9.

¹⁸ Philippe de Villiers, journal, 22 Mar. 1658, quoted in Lombard-Jourdan, ‘Des Malgaches à Paris’, 83.

¹⁹ William Hirst to Duncombe, on the *Lenox*, off Madagascar, 6 Sep. 1759, in Biographicus, ‘Biographical Sketch of an Old Indian Chaplain’, *Oriental Herald and Journal of General Literature* 2 (1824), 405; see also Robert Drury, *Madagascar; or Robert Drury’s Journal, during Fifteen Years’ Captivity on that Island* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1890[1729]), 136; Gwyn Campbell, ‘Gold Mining and the French Takeover of Madagascar, 1883–1914’, *African Economic History* 17 (1988), 99–126.

British and the Dutch valued Madagascar only as a provisioning base for their East Indiamen— merchant ships sailing to and from the East, notably India.²⁰

In 1642, Richelieu (1585–1642), chief minister to Louis XIII of France (r. 1610–43), granted the *Compagnie française de l’Orient* a charter and ten-year monopoly to colonize and exploit Madagascar. In the same year, a settlement was founded in the southeast of the island, governed (from 1648) by Étienne de Flacourt. However, in addition to malaria and the enmity of the Malagasy, it suffered a rupture in supplies from Europe during the Fronde civil wars in France (1648–53), and in 1654 the fourteen remaining colonists were removed to Réunion (called Bourbon from 1642 to 1793). In 1664, Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683), first minister of state (1661–83) under Louis XIV, created the *Compagnie des Indes*, in emulation of the Dutch and English East India companies. As the French were excluded from large parts of the East by their European rivals, the *Compagnie* sustained a more durable interest in less contested fields, such as Madagascar and the Mascarenes. Colbert envisaged transforming Madagascar, termed *La France orientale*, into a centre for French imperial and commercial activity east of the Cape (see Map 1.1). The seat of the ‘Supreme Council of Trade with India’, it would supervise imperial expansion in India and China, and cultivate cash crops for export and food crops to provision French fleets. In 1665, a colony was established in southeast Madagascar, but the last settlers abandoned it in January 1676 for Réunion. Internecine conflict, along with malaria, local hostility, and lack of metropolitan support, precipitated its collapse.²¹

²⁰ A. B. Grosbart, ‘Madagascar Two Centuries Ago: A Proposal to Make It a British Plantation’, *AAMM* 2 (1876), 51–6; William Bontekoe, *Memorable Description of the East Indian Voyage 1618–1625* (New York: McBride, 1929), 7–10; C. Northcote Parkinson, *Trade in the Eastern Seas, 1793–1813* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937), 111, 258, 293; Frank Haight, *A History of French Commercial Policies* (New York: MacMillan, 1941), 3–5; Georges Hardy, *Histoire de la colonisation française* (Paris: Librairie Larose, 1953), 45, 52–3; Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1972), 257–8; Jean-Michel Filliot, *La traite des esclaves vers les Mascareignes au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: ORSTOM, 1974), 19–20; Brown, *Madagascar Rediscovered*, 39–48; Malyn Newitt, *The Comoro Islands* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 3, 17.

²¹ William Ellis, *History of Madagascar* (London: Fisher, 1838), vol. 2, 44; Conrad Keller, *Madagascar, Mauritius and the Other East African Islands* (London: S. Sonnenschein, 1901), 104; Louis Peltier, ‘La traite à Madagascar au XVIIe siècle’, *Revue de Madagascar* (August 1903), 105–6; R. E. P. Wastell, ‘British Imperial Policy in Relation to Madagascar, 1810–96’, PhD, London University (1944), 32; Marcel de Coppet (ed.), *Madagascar* (Paris: Encyclopedie de l’Empire Français, 1947), vol. 2, 288; Patrick Joseph Barnwell and Auguste Toussaint, *A Short History of Mauritius* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1949), 41; Raymond Decary, ‘Contribution à l’histoire de la France à Madagascar’, *Bulletin de l’Académie Malgache* (hereafter *BAM*) 31 (1953), 51; Hubert Deschamps, *Méthodes et doctrines coloniales de la France* (Paris: Colin, 1953), 35, 43; Hardy, *Histoire de la colonisation française*, 35–42, 45, 52–3, 62; André Scherer, *Histoire de la Réunion* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1966), 11; Filliot, *La traite*, 21–3, 25–6; Robert Cornevin and Marianne Cornevin, *La France et les Français outre-mer de la première Croisade à la fin du Second Empire* (Paris: Tallandier, 1990), 92, 94, 137–9; Etienne de Flacourt, *Histoire de la*

8 The Context



Map 1.1 The Western Indian Ocean
 © IOWC

In 1649, Flacourt had asserted French sovereignty over the Mascarene Islands, east of Madagascar, claims consolidated for Réunion in 1674 and for Mauritius (called Ile de France until 1810) in 1712. The Mascarene economy flourished after Bernard-François de la Bourdonnais (1699–1753) transformed Réunion into a granary to provision both islands and passing ships and Mauritius into a major Indian Ocean entrepôt. He also encouraged the

Grande Isle Madagascar, edited and commentary by Claude Allibert (Paris: Karthala, 1995 [1658]); James Kay, 'Etienne de Flacourt, L'histoire de le grand Île de Madagascar (1658)', *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* 21.4 (2004), 251–7.

cultivation of a variety of cash crops.²² Nevertheless, local supplies of food and labour proved insufficient, so both were increasingly sought from external sources.²³ The closest and cheapest source was Madagascar. From 1773 to 1810, 77 per cent of the 739 regional maritime expeditions from the Mascarenes charged at Madagascar, most for rice but 56 per cent also for slaves.²⁴ Following the decisions by Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) that slavery could be maintained in the colonies (in 1802) and that the French slave trade be legalized (in 1803), it is estimated that between ten and twelve Mascarene ships, each carrying on average 100 slaves, made several return trips each year to Madagascar.²⁵

Following the collapse of the Flacourt settlement in 1674, French claims to Madagascar were maintained through a series of royal edicts. However, lest it come to be considered more important than the Mascarenes, the white population of Réunion and Mauritius generally opposed plans, periodically hatched in France, to colonize Madagascar. In its turn, Paris blocked Mascarene projects to colonize Madagascar on the grounds of expense and the alleged harshness of Mascarene settlers towards the Malagasy.²⁶

British Interest in Madagascar

In the seventeenth century, there was a brief period of English fascination with Madagascar. In 1637, Endymion Porter, a courtier, presented Charles I (r. 1625–49) with a project for the colonization of the island, the virtues of which were subsequently lauded in works published in 1640 and 1641 by passengers who had been aboard visiting English ships. The first of these volumes was written by Walter Hamond, a surgeon on the East India

²² Deschamps, *Histoire de Madagascar*, 43; G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville, *The French at Kilwa Island* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 8–10; Derek Hollingworth, *They Came to Mauritius* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 1–2.

²³ Deschamps, *Histoire de Madagascar*, 66–7, 69–70; Auguste Toussaint, 'Early American Trade with Mauritius', *The Mariner's Mirror* 39.1 (1953), 46; Marie-Claude Buxtorf, 'Colonie, comptoirs et compagnie: Bourbon et l'Inde Française, 1720–1767', in *Les relations historiques et culturelles entre la France et l'Inde, XVIIe-XXe siècles*, vol. 2 (Sainte-Clotilde: La Réunion: Association historique internationale de l'Océan indien, 1987), 173; Rafaël Thiébaud, 'An Informal Franco-Dutch Alliance: Trade and Diplomacy between the Mascarenes and the Cape, 1719–1769', *Journal of Indian Ocean World Studies* 1.1 (2017), 130–48.

²⁴ Ellis, *History of Madagascar*, vol. 2, 70; Albert Lougnon, 'Vaisseaux et traites aux îles depuis 1741 jusqu'à 1746', *Recueil de documents et travaux inédits pour servir à l'histoire de La Réunion* 5 (1940), 27; Auguste Toussaint, 'Le trafic commercial des Seychelles de 1773 à 1810', *Journal of the Seychelles Society* 4 (1965), 20; Auguste Toussaint, 'Le trafic commercial entre les Mascareignes et Madagascar de 1773 à 1810', *Annales de l'Université de Madagascar*, series Lettres et Sciences Humaines 5 (1966), 99–101.

²⁵ Barnwell and Toussaint, *Short History of Mauritius*, 112, 133; Deschamps, *Histoire de Madagascar*, 95.

²⁶ Gwyn Campbell, 'Imperial Rivalry in the Western Indian Ocean and Schemes to Colonise Madagascar, 1769–1826', *Revue des Mascareignes* 1 (1999), 80.

10 The Context

Company (EIC) vessel, the *Jonas* (or *Jonah*), who on one occasion spent four months in Madagascar.²⁷ The second book was authored by London merchant Richard Boothby. After a stopover of three months in Madagascar on a return voyage from Surat, India, Boothby enthusiastically advocated the island to rivals of the EIC as an ideal location for a European colony:

without all question, this country far transcends and exceeds all other countries in *Asia*, *Africa*, and *America*, planted by *English*, *French*, *Dutch*, *Portuguese*, and *Spaniards*: and it is likely to prove of far greater value and esteem to any Christian prince and nation, that shall plant and settle a sure habitation therein, than the *West Indies* is to the king and kingdom of *Spain*: and it may well be compared to the land of *Canaan*, that flows with milk and honey a little world of itself, adjoined to no other land, within the compass of many leagues or miles, or the chief paradise this day upon earth . . . In further commendation thereof, I will take the liberty of extolling it, I hope, without offence, as *Moses* did the land of *Canaan*: 'It is a good land, a land in which rivers of waters and fountains spring out of the vallies and mountains; a land of wheat and barley, of vineyards, of fig-trees and pomegranates; a land wherein thou shalt eat without scarcity, neither shalt lack any thing therein; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose mountains thou mayest dig brass.'²⁸

However, an attempt in 1645–6 by wealthy English merchant William Courteen (1572–1636) to found a colony of 145 men, women, and children in Saint Augustin Bay collapsed within a year, following the death of over 50 per cent of the settlers.²⁹ Efforts in 1649–50 to establish an English colony in northwest Madagascar also failed, due to malaria and the hostility of local Malagasy.³⁰

Subsequently, from 1680 to the 1720s, Madagascar commanded English attention because European pirates, chased from the Caribbean, made it their main base for raids on East Indiamen. The pirates included Scotsman William Kidd (c.1654–1701), Englishmen Henry Every (1659–c.1699–1714) and Thomas Tew (1649–1695), and Bermuda-born Creole, John Bowen (d. 1704). Piracy in the Indian Ocean inflicted such losses to European

²⁷ Walter Hamond, *A Paradox. Prooving, That the Inhabitants of the Isle called Madagascar, Or St. Laurence, (In Temporall things) are the happiest People in the World* (London: J. Raworth, B. Alsop, T. Fawcet, and M. Parsons, 1640); Louis B. Wright, 'The Noble Savage of Madagascar in 1640', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 4.1 (1943), 112–13.

²⁸ Richard Boothby, 'A brief Discovery or Description of the most famous Island of Madagascar, or St. Laurence, in Asia, near unto the East-Indies' [orig. pub. London, 1646], in Thomas Osborne (ed.), *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, vol. 2 (London: Thomas Osborne, 1745), 628–9, 634.

²⁹ Gwyn Campbell, *David Griffiths and the Missionary 'History of Madagascar'* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 416.

³⁰ See for example Robert Hunt, 'Île d'Asada', in Alfred Grandidier and Guillaume Grandidier (eds.), *Collections des ouvrages anciens concernant Madagascar*, vol. 3 (Paris: Comité de Madagascar, 1905), 264–5.