

ANCESTRAL ENCOUNTERS IN HIGHLAND MADAGASCAR

Nineteenth-century highland Madagascar was a place inhabited by the dead as much as the living. Ghosts, ancestors, and the possessed were important historical actors alongside local kings and queens, soldiers, traders, and missionaries. This book considers the challenges that such actors pose for historical accounts of the past and for thinking about questions of presence and representation. How were the dead made present, and how were they recognized or not? In attending to these multifarious encounters of the nineteenth century, how might we reflect on the ways in which our own history writing makes the dead present? To tackle these questions, Zoë Crossland tells an anthropological history of highland Madagascar from a perspective rooted in archaeology and Peircean semeiotics, as well as in landscape study, oral history, and textual sources.

Zoë Crossland is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University. Her research focuses on the historical archaeology of Madagascar, as well as forensic archaeology and evidential practices around human remains. She is the coauthor of *A Fine and Private Place: The Archaeology of Death and Burial in Post-Medieval Britain and Ireland* (with Annia Cherryson and Sarah Tarlow). Her work has appeared in *American Anthropologist*, *Archaeological Dialogues*, and *Signs and Society*, among other journals. She established the U.S. branch of the Theoretical Archaeology Group, an international conference devoted to discussing archaeological theory.

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HIGHLAND
MADAGASCAR

MATERIAL SIGNS AND TRACES
OF THE DEAD

ZOË CROSSLAND

Columbia University



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Map of Madagascar showing major towns and regions mentioned in the text