

Colonies Lost: God, Hunger, and Conflict in Anosy (Madagascar) to 1674

Pier M. Larson

A fleet of thirteen Portuguese vessels under the command of Pedro Álvares Cabral set sail from Lisbon for the East Indies just two years after Vasco da Gama first rounded the Cape of Good Hope. In late May 1500, inclement weather at the Cape separated the vessel commanded by Diego Diaz from the others, blowing it well south of its intended course. Steering north to regain their way, Diaz and crew caught sight of land on 10 August along the coast of Anosy, Madagascar's southeast extremity (fig. 1). The day was the Feast of São Lourenço, and Diaz named the big island (Madagascar) for European cartography after the feast.¹ As far as it is known, this was the first sighting of Madagascar by seafarers hailing directly from the Atlantic via the Cape route. European sailors and mapmakers continued to identify Madagascar as São Lourenço (Portuguese) and Saint-Laurent (French) for centuries to come. From the early decades of the sixteenth century to the French abandonment of Madagascar in 1674, Anosy in southeast Madagascar was an important site of European-Malagasy interaction. The meeting grounds of Anosy played a significant role in the early modern history of the southwest Indian Ocean, much as the Cape of Good Hope or Kilwa and Mombasa did, but they are poorly known outside a close circle of francophone Madagascar experts. At the same time little secondary literature on Anosy and its Europeans in any language is broad and comparative in outlook, setting them in wider and interconnected historical narratives of the region.²

In part the early history of relations between the people of southeast Madagascar and transient Europeans is not well known by scholars of southeast Africa and the Indian Ocean because colonial linguistic legacies have separated francophone, lusophone, and anglophone scholarship in this region of overriding British influence from the late eighteenth century and in part because, espied across the waters by its neighbors, Madagascar can seem aloof from the main currents of the region's history and modern economies. Long-distance airline flights linking South Africa and Australia, Mauritius, and Southeast Asia, for example, sometimes leave their telltale vapor trails high over Anosy's coasts, dazzling children—including this author in his childhood—who often gather below to observe them. Madagascar has yet to appear in African history textbooks treating the early era of European ventures about the

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

1. Alfred Grandidier, ed., *Collection des ouvrages anciens concernant Madagascar*, 9 vols. (Paris: Comité de Madagascar, 1903–20), 1:3–5.

2. An exception is Mike Parker Pearson, "Close Encounters of the Worst Kind: Malagasy Resistance and Colonial Disasters in Southern Madagascar," *World Archaeology* 28 (1997): 393–417. This work covers a broad set of encounters between Europeans

and the inhabitants of southern Madagascar to the seventeenth century, mainly from an archaeological perspective. Anosy was one of several areas of European interest in Madagascar before the late seventeenth century, others being in the west, particularly the Bay of Boina and Saint Augustine Bay, which are not covered in this article. For these, see Pearson, "Close Encounters," the articles by Vincent Belrose-Huyghues cited in later notes, and William Foster, "An English Settlement in Madagascar in 1645–6," *English Historical Review* 27 (1912): 239–50.

Comparative Studies of
South Asia, Africa and
the Middle East
Vol. 27, No. 2, 2007
doi:10.1215/1089201X-2007-010
© 2007 by Duke University Press

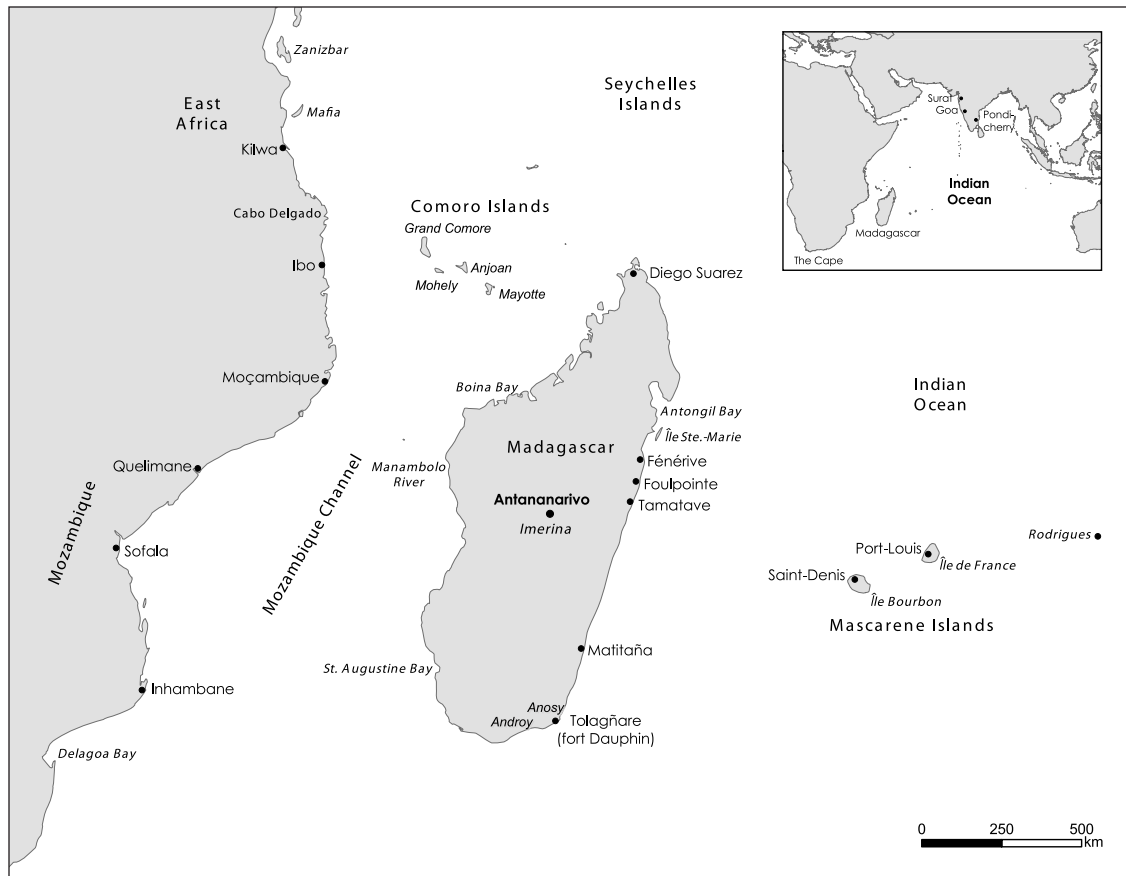


Figure 1. Madagascar and the southwestern Indian Ocean. Map drawn by author

continent or as a regular component of graduate syllabi in southern and East African history.

It is tempting to hypothesize that no satisfying and broadly conceived synthetic histories of early Portuguese and French colonization in Madagascar exist because publications on the Big Island are typically specialized in some way or because European colonizing efforts foundered when thrown up against the hierarchical agrarian societies of Anosy. Intruders from the Atlantic could not incorporate or push the people of Anosy off into the interior, as they did at the Cape, or squeeze a manageable profit from them, as happened in many parts of South Asia where land and maritime trade in local products generated considerable wealth. The histories of colonial “successes” in settlement, production, and commerce in places such as the Cape, South Asia, the Mascarene Islands,

and locations along the East African coast tend to populate early modern histories of the region and find pride of place in historical narratives of the western Indian Ocean. But colonial “failures” are as important to understanding a historical era as are successes, and in any case, success and failure are positioned, if not also rather coarse, judgments. Is little known about southeast Madagascar in the first centuries of European navigation in the Indian Ocean because the people of Anosy ultimately succeeded in preventing a permanent implantation of Atlantic foreigners on their territory?

There is relatively little work on Madagascar in Portuguese scholarship, which in the western reaches of the Indian Ocean is focused primarily on Mozambique, the East African coast, and India, key regions of the expansive Estado da India.³ The Big Island mostly remained on

3. Michael Naylor Pearson, *The Portuguese in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London: Routledge, 2003), 118–22.

the periphery of this empire of commerce and religion, though parts of western Madagascar were in frequent contact with the northern portions of Mozambique across the shared channel of water that separates them and suffered periodic destruction at the hands of Portuguese men of war in the early sixteenth century.⁴ Most writing on early Portuguese ventures about the Big Island has been the product of French colonial scholars researching Madagascar's history during the first half of the twentieth century and chronicles shipwreck and pioneering Jesuit missions.⁵ I employ these and other published primary and secondary sources in this article to tease out an intellectual, religious, and diasporan history of Malagasy-Portuguese interactions in southeast Madagascar and Goa during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. To write of a lost Portuguese colony in Madagascar is not accurate in the strict sense of the term, then, for Portuguese interests in Anosy were mostly religious in nature rather than commercial or administrative and often carried out by Jesuits who were not Portuguese by birth. Their failures mostly went down in the annals of Catholic mission rather than Portuguese expansion.

France in Madagascar was an altogether different matter, however, for its efforts in Anosy during the mid-seventeenth century at the end of frequent Portuguese navigation about the shores of southeast Madagascar created the first French colony in the Indian Ocean. This ordinary and disastrous Indian Ocean colonization deserves much greater attention than it has received, even in Madagascar. Its ragtag bands of hungry settlers and their ultimate military defeat have long made for embarrassing copy in France, in part because the *habitation's* ignominious end in August 1674 left more than half the European colonists dead and the rest scrambling to escape the island and in part because

of the gratuitous violence deployed by French colonists. The defeat in Madagascar stung the sensibilities of French colonial partisans and scholars for more than two centuries to come. "Since Richelieu, the possession of Madagascar became one of our ambitions," explained J. Charles-Roux of the late-nineteenth-century colonization of Madagascar in the preface to a much-used collection of primary documents on Madagascar's history. "It was not until the third republic that we achieved our goals thanks to our valiant army conducted by General Duchesne, and later by General Gallieni."⁶

Much writing about the seventeenth-century French settlement in southeast Madagascar depends heavily on the published work of one of its many governors, Étienne de Flacourt (in southeast Madagascar, 1648–55), whose *Histoire de la grande isle Madagascar* was first published in Paris in 1658, reissued in an expanded version in 1661, and today remains an important European source of seventeenth-century Malagasy history. Flacourt's book was republished by colonial historian Alfred Grandidier in the early twentieth century and, edited and with an introduction by Indian Ocean specialist Claude Allibert, was recently reissued by a major Parisian publisher of African studies (Karthala). Besides the work of Flacourt, a number of French colonial-era studies of the colony exist, all more or less narrowly based on Flacourt and the publications of other seventeenth-century colonists. Some of these works are celebratory in nature, and others are critical and designed to bring the lessons of history to a more perfect future French colonization of the Big Island. All are decidedly nationalistic works promoting French colonization in the Indian Ocean. The ill-fated French colony in southeast Madagascar receives scant mention in recent histories of France's ancien régime empire, and these are all based

4. Alfred Grandidier, "Histoire de la découverte de l'île de Madagascar par les Portugais (pendant le XVI^e siècle)," *Revue de Madagascar* (10 January 1902), 34–54; Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 1:14–44.

5. The major exceptions are not synthetic secondary studies but new editions of published and manuscript primary documentation such as Augusto Reis Machado's reedition of Gaspar de S. Bernardino's *Itinerário da Índia*, originally published in 1611, and Humberto Letião's compilation of manuscripts relating to Goan Jesuit pursuits around the Big Island.

Shorter still are the articles published in Madagascar by Vincent Belrose-Huyghues on early Portuguese ventures about Madagascar. Frei Gaspar de São Bernardino, *Itinerário da Índia por terra até à Ilha de Chipre* (1611; Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca, 1953); Humberto Leitão, ed., *Os dois descobrimentos da Ilha de São Lourenço mandados fazer pelo vice-rei D. Jerônimo de Azevedo nos anos de 1613 a 1616* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1970); Vincent Belrose-Huyghues, "L'information du Père Christoforro

Borro: Témoignage d'un compagnon du Père Mariano sur Madagascar, 1630," *Omalysy Anio* 12 (1981): 105–13; Belrose-Huyghues, "L'itinéraire de Frère Gaspar de San Bernardino: Une visite portugaise à la côte ouest de Madagascar en 1606," *Taloha* 9 (1982): 39–87; Belrose-Huyghues, "La Baie de Boina entre 1580 et 1640: Une critique des sources anciennes et récentes," *Omalysy Anio* 17–20 (1984): 165–94.

6. J. Charles-Roux, "Avant-Propos," in Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 1:vii.

on the aforementioned colonial publications, treating Madagascar only in passing in narratives concerned with more successful colonization projects around the world. Defeat has sunk the history of France's first Indian Ocean colony and contemporary to Dutch settlement at the Cape into near oblivion and unfortunately, too, shut it out of most narratives of Indian Ocean and southeast African history.⁷ To examine this abortive early effort and the reasons for its failure, I employ both published primary and secondary materials, but also the letters of Catholic missionaries from the archives of the Congrégation de la Mission (rue de Sèvres, Paris), communications from clerics who periodically evangelized in the settlement and critically reported on it from the inside.

But first I turn to Anosy. The land that people of southeast Madagascar call Anosy runs nearly 150 kilometers from Manantenina in the north to the Mandrare River in the south (fig. 2). The abundant water of the region is the apparent reason for its name, which translates as "land of the islands." Two principal rivers water the larger province and drain its lands of seasonally high rainfall, the Fanjahira (now Efafo) toward the south and the Manampanihy in the north (near its mouth, this river is also known as the Manantenina). When the lower Fanjahira river waters were pregnant with rain between January and April, and its estuary to the sea blocked by sand and silt, the waters spilled over their customary banks and turned the nearby heights into seasonal islands in an elongated plain of muddy water. The numerous lakes, marshes, and streams on the sometimes narrow, sometimes broad, coastal plain between the sea and the inland mountains still offer a splendid

aquatic vista to modern visitors swooping out of the sky on one of Air Madagascar's Boeing 737s or bumping along Anosy's sorely neglected roads in a land-bound vehicle. Today the largest urban center in southeast Madagascar, Tolagnaro (also commonly known as Fort Dauphin), is located on a scenic Y-shaped peninsula jutting into the blue-green waters of the Indian Ocean in the southern reaches of Anosy. In the early centuries of European navigation about the region, the people of Anosy knew the peninsula as Tolagnare (pronounced *Too-lahng-yare*) and in the mid-seventeenth century estimated its immediately surrounding inhabitants at some ten thousand.⁸ The population of Anosy proper would have been several times this figure. Of the possible meanings of Tolagnare is "mixed bones" (*taolana + aharo*), a fitting metaphor for its long and thorny history of immigration, *métissage*, and violence as a meeting ground for people hailing from disparate reaches of the Indian and Atlantic oceans.

Anosy's societies were deeply stratified. The region's rulers were collectively known as *Raondriana*, a term invoking political mastery and often translated as "princes" at the time. Raondriana sovereigns claimed distant Arabian origins and ruled over sometimes densely populated chiefdoms and mini-kingdoms with royal residences inland along the rivers, sometimes a good day's walk from the sea. The harbors and roadsteads at the waterside where Europeans tended to alight, like Ranofotsy, Tolagnare, and Manafiafy, lay on the periphery of power in southeast Madagascar, not at its center. It is possible this geography of political authority reflected a defensive adaptation to actual and potential foreign enemies arriving from across the ocean,

7. Etienne de Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande île Madagascar, composée par le Sieur de Flacourt, Directeur general de la Compagnie Française de l'Orient, et Commandant pour sa Majesté dans ladite Isle, et Isles adjacentes* (Paris: Chez Gvillavme de Lvyne, Librairie luré, au Palais, dans la Gallerie des Merciers, à la lustice, 1658); Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande île Madagascar composée par le Sieur De Flacourt, Directeur General de la Compagnie Française de l'Orient, et Commandant pour sa Majesté dans ladite Isle et és Isles adjacentes, Auec vne Relation de ce qui s'est passé és années 1655. 1656. et 1657. non encor veuë par la premiere Impression* (A Troyes, chez Nicolas Oudot, et se vendent A Paris, Chez Gervais Clovzier au Palais, sur les degrez en montant pour aller à la sainte Chappelle, 1661); Henri Froidevaux, *Un mémoire inédit de M. de*

la Haye sur Madagascar (Paris: Augustin Challamel, 1897); Arthur Malotet, *Étienne de Flacourt, ou les origines de la colonisation française à Madagascar, 1648–1661* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1898); Alfred Grandidier, Henri Froidevaux, and Guillaume Grandidier, eds., *Histoire de la grande île de Madagascar Par Flacourt (1642–1660): Première Partie, Nouvelle édition, Collection des ouvrages anciens concernant Madagascar*, bk. 8 (Paris: Union Coloniale, 1913); Henri Froidevaux, *Les derniers projets du Duc de la Meilleraye sur Madagascar, 1663* (Paris: Édouard Champion et Émilie Larose, 1915); Guillaume Grandidier, *De la découverte de Madagascar à la fin du règne de Ranavalona Ire, 1861*, ed. Alfred Grandidier and Guillaume Grandidier, vol. 5, bk. 1, *Histoire physique, naturelle et politique de Madagascar* (Paris: Imprimerie Paul Brodard, 1942); Eti-

enne de Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande île Madagascar, édition annotée et présentée par Claude Allibert* (1661; Paris: Karthala, 1995). The seventeenth-century colony in Madagascar receives some mention in Jean Meyer, Jean Tarrade, Annie Rey-Goldzeitger, and Jacques Thobie, *Histoire de la France coloniale, des origines à 1914* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1991); and Philippe Haudrière, *L'empire des rois: 1500–1789* (Paris: Éditions Denoël, 1997).

8. "Autre Lettre dudit Sieur, dudit jour, à M.^{rs} les Intereessens" [Nacquart to Syndics of the Compagnie des Indes Orientales, Fort Dauphin, 9 February 1650], Archives of the Congrégation de la Mission, rue de Sèvres, Paris (hereafter ACM), Recueil (Collection) 1501, 14.

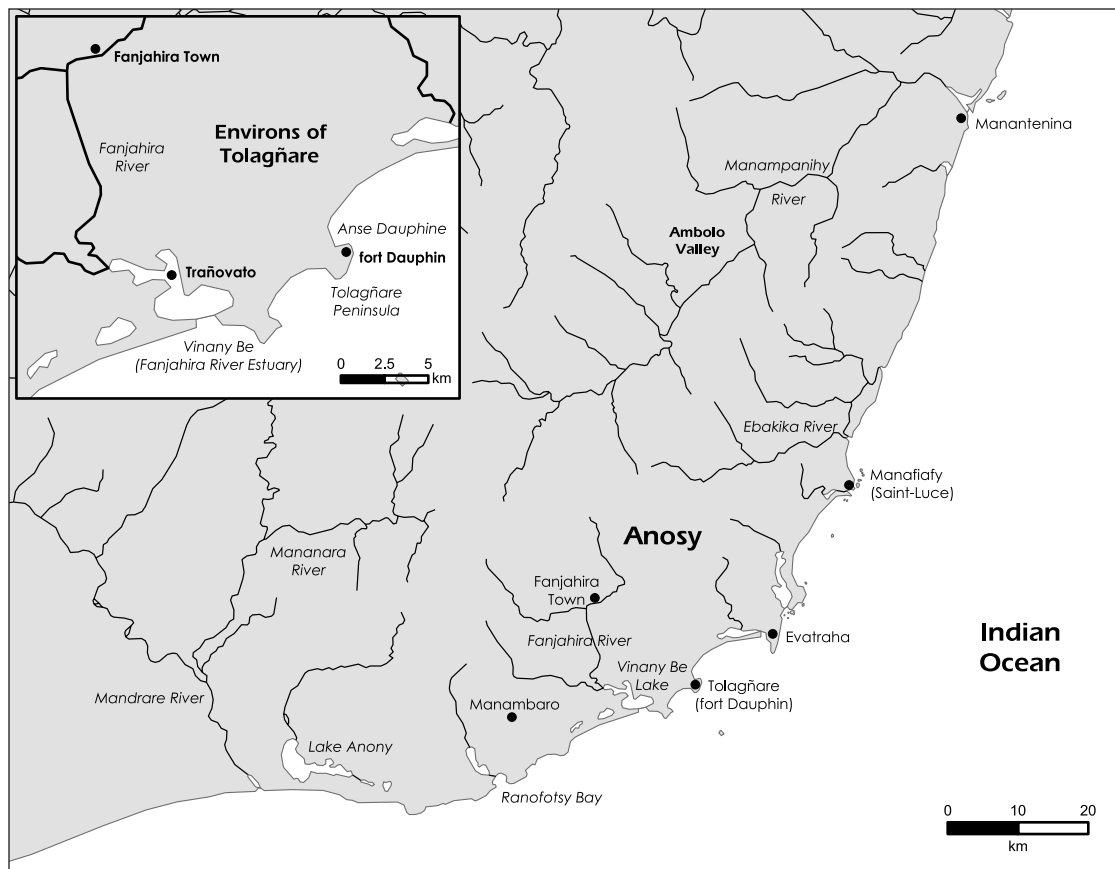


Figure 2. Anosy in the mid-seventeenth century. Map drawn by author

either to those intruding from the sea in earlier times such as the ancestors of the Raondriana or to Portuguese and French seafarers arriving on southeastern Malagasy shores from early in the sixteenth century.⁹ Raondriana ruled over various categories of inhabitants roughly analogous to chiefs, commoners, and slaves. The power of Anosy's Raondriana depended on the number of warriors they could muster on the battlefield and on their alliances with scribes and diviner-healers known as *ombiasy*, whose knowledge included Malagasy language literacy in Arabic script, the writing and reading of books (most commonly known as *soratse*), and healing the sick.¹⁰ The people of Anosy lived off both land and sea. Domestic and chiefly economies tended

to mix farming of rice and dry-land crops with modest raising of chickens, sheep, and the humped zebu cattle, for which the Big Island is now famous, and some hunting of nuisance wild boars that tended to ravage plantations. Anosy's aquatic environment provided ample opportunities for both freshwater and saltwater fishing. It was Anosy's location; its chiefs, intellectuals, and Arabic-script writing; and its imagined potential to feed visitors from the Atlantic that attracted European attention over the years. But it was also probably its resilient economic and social organization that ultimately prevented Atlantic foreigners from establishing themselves firmly there until the twentieth century.¹¹

9. For histories of the Raminia and their descendants, see Gabriel Ferrand, *La légende de Raminia d'après un manuscrit arabo-malgache de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1902); Ferrand, "La légende de Raminia," *Taloha* 6 (1974): 150–62; Marcelle Urbain-Faublée and Jacques Faublée, "Rabefañian, souverain zaframinia en Anosy," *Etudes Océan Indien* 23–24 (1997): 41–56; and Jean-Aimé Rakotoari-soa, *Mille ans d'occupation humaine dans le Sud-Est*

de Madagascar: Anosy, une île au milieu des terres (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), 91–95. Many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century kings in western Madagascar also maintained their residences well back from the coast.

10. Philippe Beaujard, "Les manuscrits arabo-malgaches (*sorabe*) du pays antemoro," *Omalysy Anio* 28 (1988): 123–49; Narivelo Rajaonarimanana,

Savoirs arabo-malgaches: La tradition manuscrite des devins Antemoro Anankara (Madagascar) (Paris: Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, 1990).

11. Lettre de M^r Nacquart, prestre de la mission, à M^r Vincent, général de ladite mission, de Madagascar, du 5 Fev. 1650, ACM, Recueil 1501, 22–23; Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle Madagascar* (1661), 106–8, 111–14.

Translators, Manuscripts, and Kidnappers

After their first sighting of São Lourenço in 1500, Portuguese navigators visited several parts of the Big Island seeking its wealth, rumored to consist of silver and possibly gold. Following reports in 1506 by Ruy Pereira Coutinho from the Bay of Boína in northwest Madagascar that silver bracelets were manufactured in the island's southeast, vessels were dispatched in later years to the Matitaña River in search of silver and took several hostages and examples of silver-work back to Lisbon. While these are the first known Malagasy "visitors" to Europe, it is likely that Malagasy slaves, sailors, or hostages taken aboard Portuguese ships had earlier reached the Atlantic.¹² Portuguese vessels sailing to and from the Indian Ocean sometimes sought refreshment in the Big Island's bays, which lay, inconveniently for purposes of speedy navigation, astride the emerging maritime routes between the Atlantic and the Indies. The most unfortunate of Portuguese mariners found themselves cast suddenly onto Madagascar's unexpected shores by foul weather or inattention at the helm. The *carreira da Índia* between Iberia and Asia was an exceedingly dangerous voyage, especially in the regions of southeast Africa and Madagascar on the return to the Atlantic when vessels were routinely overloaded. Between 1580 and 1640 more than seventy of the four hundred ships departing Goa for Lisbon were wrecked on their voyages of return to the Atlantic, some 16 percent of the total. An unknown though not insignificant number of the more than thirty vessels lost in the decades between 1500 and 1579 were shipwrecked on Madagascar, many of them along the seaboard of Anosy.¹³ Europeans who found themselves stranded elsewhere in

southern Madagascar over the years made their way toward those known to have gathered in the island's southeastern extremity of Anosy. Anosy supposedly became the premier rendezvous for Europeans early washed up on the Big Island's shores.¹⁴

In 1508, for example, Diego Lopes de Sequeira and his crew retrieved only two young Portuguese sailors at Tolagnare Bay. Conveying local knowledge gained from conversations with the natives of Anosy, de Sequeira called the bay "Turubaya," the first known European reference to Tolagnare. One of de Sequeira's sailors "knowing the language of the country" was likely the purveyor of this information, for he acted as interpreter between de Sequeira and Diamom, a Raondriana ruler of the area.¹⁵ Three Portuguese vessels were said to have attempted a trading post somewhere in Anosy in 1510. It is unclear what became of this project, for no records of its implementation or aftermath have been located. In 1527 two vessels carrying orders from the king of Portugal to the viceroy of India were wrecked on the sandy southeast coast of Madagascar. Three years later, the Portuguese crown dispatched additional ships to Madagascar in search of stranded sailors, who were reputed to exist there in significant numbers. But only four Portuguese and one French speaker were taken aboard in the Bay of Tolagnare by the search party. They reported that many more had found their way into Anosy's interior, perhaps seeking after centers of population and power.¹⁶ Rescues failed to validate the persistent rumors.

In 1613 a man named Diamanoro recalled to European visitors that his ancestors had embraced the Portuguese foreigners and attempted to domesticate them to country ways.

12. Malotet, *Étienne de Flacourt*, 8–10; Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 1:10–45.

13. A partial list of known wrecks to 1538 can be found in Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 1:44–45 n. 1. They include three ships in 1504, one in 1505, one in 1507, four in 1527, four in 1534, and one in 1538. A briefer list of shipwrecks along the coast of southern Madagascar, with a map, can be found in Pearson, "Close Encounters," 405.

14. James Duffy, *Shipwreck and Empire, Being an Account of Portuguese Maritime Disasters in a Century of Decline* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), 21, 30–31, 53–64, 95; Charles Ralph Boxer, ed., *The Tragic History of the Sea, 1589–1622: Narratives of*

the Shipwrecks of the Portuguese East Indiamen Sao Thomé (1589), Santo Alberto (1593), Sao Joao Baptista (1622), and the Journeys of the Survivors in South East Africa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Hakluyt Society, 1959), 24–25; Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415–1825* (New York: Knopf, 1969), 381; Belrose-Huyghues, "L'itinéraire de Frère Gaspar de San Bernardino," 51. See also Charles Ralph Boxer, ed., *Further Selections from the Tragic History of the Sea, 1559–1565: Narratives of the Shipwrecks of the Portuguese East Indiamen Aguia and Garça (1559), São Paulo (1561), and the Misadventures of the Brazil-Ship Santo António (1565)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Hakluyt Society, 1968).

15. Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 1:47–50.

16. Joseph-Étienne Canitrot, "Les Portugais sur la côte orientale de Madagascar et en Anosy," *Revue d'histoire des colonies* 9 (1921): 203–7. See also Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 1:51, 55–59, 76, 85–88.

Many whites had been shipwrecked on the coast of Anosy in earlier times, he claimed, and had established themselves at Trañovato (literally “stone house”), a seasonal island in the Fanjahira River nine kilometers west of Tolagnare.¹⁷ It became known to the Portuguese as Ilha de Santa Cruz; parts of the structure they occupied—much of it probably already existing at their arrival—remain standing.¹⁸ There they married the daughters of Diamanoro’s male forebears. The son of the chief of the shipwrecked whites, known in local memory by the sobriquet Diamasinoro (from Malagasy *Dian*, “prince/royal,” and Portuguese *meu senhor*, “my lord”), had wedded King Diamanoro’s “aunt” and issued two children by her, one of whose daughters was Diamanoro’s wife. Others fathered many descendants with local women. Some of the Portuguese departed after a time, having constructed an escape vessel for themselves of local timber, he said. They sailed off toward Mozambique. What became of them, he continued, was unknown, for they never returned to retrieve their wives and children as they had promised.¹⁹

While the offspring of Portuguese sailors and women of Anosy became effectively integrated into the societies of southeast Madagascar, relations between the stranded Portuguese gathered at Trañovato and surrounding Raondriana may have turned sour after a time. In the early seventeenth century when Portuguese expeditions from Goa repeatedly sought out traces of these earlier shipwrecked sailors, Anosy’s memories were divided over their fate. No one disputed their existence. The rulers of Anosy repeatedly stressed that European sailors had met no violent end and that some of the men had escaped the Big Island on their own. Others reportedly told Goan sailors and missionar-

ies different stories that implicated erstwhile Raondriana rulers in a slaughter of foreigners. Accounts of a massacre of Portuguese at Trañovato first originated in the minds of Jesuit missionaries frustrated by their inability to convert Anosy’s rulers to Catholicism in the years after 1613. They determined that Bruto Chambanga, king at Fanjahira town, together with his father, had been complicit in killing Portuguese sailors only after Chambanga refused to willingly hand his son over to them as a hostage to be removed to Goa for a Catholic education.²⁰

All accounts of a massacre of whites in early-sixteenth-century Anosy date to 1613 and later, nearly a century after the supposed incident, and are based on hearsay evidence.²¹ As Flacourt told it in 1661, for example, enemies of the Europeans proposed celebrating a *missavats* ritual to commemorate the construction of a new building on the Fanjahira island of Trañovato, or Ilha de Santa Cruz. The ritual and ensuing feast were to take place outside the stone residence of the Portuguese and their Malagasy wives and children. The Europeans were invited to bring along all their accumulated riches to display (these may have been goods from the Indies salvaged from wrecked ships). At the conclusion of the meal, and as the treasure boxes were opened, warriors fell upon the Europeans, killing some seventy of them. Only the five Portuguese sentries who remained to guard the residence at Trañovato are reported to have survived the ambush. They were later rescued by a passing European vessel.²² It is not known precisely how or when this killing occurred—if it did at all—but by 1550 few Portuguese remained in Anosy and the people of the Big Island had earned a reputation among European mariners for being extraordinarily

17. Trañovato at the time probably consisted of existing structures in stone at a site previously associated with Raondriana rulers. The structures were not due, at least originally, to Portuguese constructions and are often mistakenly called a “fort.” See Grandidier, *De la découverte de Madagascar*, 18–19; Claude Allibert, “Tradition et modernité à Madagascar, présentation de l’oeuvre d’Etienne de FLACOURT,” in Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle Madagascar, édition annotée et présentée par Claude Allibert*, 16; Rakotoarisoa, *Mille ans d’occupation humaine*, 79–86.

18. Georges Sully Chapus, “Fort-Dauphin: La ‘trano vato’ des Portugais,” *Revue de Madagascar* (October 1936): 53–62; G. Kling, “Le fort des Portugais, premier

établissement européen à Madagascar,” *Bulletin de Madagascar* 7 (1954): 523–37; Pierre Vérin and Georges Heurtebize, “La tranovato de l’Anosy, première construction en pierre,” *Taloha* 6 (1974): 117–42.

19. Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 2:43–46, 52.

20. *Ibid.*, 2:58–60, 62–63.

21. For three such accounts of the supposed massacre dating from the seventeenth century and later, see *ibid.*, 1:60–62, 265–68, 486–87. See also Henri Froidevaux, *Les Lazaristes à Madagascar au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: C. Poussielgue, 1902), 5–8. The earliest mention of the killing of Europeans—at a Portuguese *fate-*

rie that cannot be tied to Anosy in any direct way—is found in Jean Alfonse, *Les voyages aventureux du Capitaine Ian Alfonse, Sainctongois: Contenant les Reigles et enseignemens necessaires à la bonne et Seure Navigation; Avec Priuilege du Roy* (Poitiers: Par les de Marnesz et Boucher freres, 1559), 59v. The manuscript for this book was apparently composed in 1547.

22. Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle Madagascar* (1661), 32–33. A description of the *missavats* (*misana-sana*) ritual is offered in Allibert, “Tradition et modernité à Madagascar,” 61–62.

“mean” (French, *meschans*).²³ Portuguese ships continued to alight and to founder along the shores of Anosy from time to time during the second half of the sixteenth century, but there are few detailed accounts of crews’ interactions with Malagasy.²⁴

One dimension of the elusive early-sixteenth-century Portuguese presence in Anosy left an enduring impression on local memory and practice. A “towering” cross that stranded sailors were said to have erected at Trañovato during their residence there (this may well have been a *padrão*, pillar, of the sort Portuguese navigators commonly posted along their routes of “discovery”) continued to attract Raondriana and their subjects to the seasonal “island” in the Fanjahira well after the reported killings of the sixteenth century. Diamanoro claimed in his conversations with Jesuits many decades later that he and his subjects frequently “prayed” at the cross and deposited offerings there, requesting fulfillment of desires, for the cross was thought to bring rain and sun and to keep insects from pestering cattle, ensuring prosperity to surrounding people. Diamanoro’s accounts of the early-sixteenth-century presence of Portuguese around Trañovato derive from the store of Anosy’s collective memory and come through his reported conversations with captain Paulo Rodriguez da Costa and fellow passengers aboard the caravel *Nossa Senhora da Esperança*, which was first dispatched to Madagascar from Goa in 1613 to conduct a hydrographical survey of the Big Island’s coasts, to form treaties of friendship

with coastal chiefs, and to seek out possible sites for new Catholic missions from Goa.²⁵

Captured by the Portuguese in 1510, Goa was not only the capital of the Estado da Índia but became a diocese of the Province of Lisbon in 1533, then an archdiocese in 1557, and finally an ecclesiastical province in 1558. Its administrative domain comprised the entire Indian Ocean, and many mission activities in the Arabian Sea were coordinated from the city, including those to the island of São Lourenço.²⁶ Among the passengers of the *Nossa Senhora da Esperança* was one Luigi Mariana, a Genoese Jesuit stationed at Goa seeking a suitable location at which to evangelize in Madagascar.²⁷ Mariana was set aboard the *Nossa Senhora* by Jeronimo de Azevedo, viceroy of Goa, acting on information earlier supplied by one Gaspar de São Bernardino, a Franciscan who had been briefly shipwrecked in the Bay of Boina and importuned Iberian authorities for a mission to the Big Island.²⁸ Although in 1567 the Council of Goa provided for Dominicans to evangelize along the coast of Africa and its nearby islands, Jesuits were substituted for the task at Madagascar when the Dominicans proved wanting in personnel and funds.²⁹

Departing from Goa in January 1613 carrying Mariana and his colleague, Father Freire, together with five “Muslim interpreters” who may have been natives of Mozambique, the *Nossa Senhora da Esperança* first anchored on 15 April at New Masselage (Antsoheribory island), one of Madagascar’s major trade entrepôts at the time

23. Alfonse, *Les voyages aaventureux du Capitaine lan Alfonso* (1559 ed.), 59v.

24. Most Portuguese accounts of Madagascar from the second half of the sixteenth century refer to regions other than Anosy. See Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 1:109–11, 139–43, 155–59. Relations between Mozambique and northwest Madagascar remained stronger and more frequent in these years, for ships at Mozambique island frequently resorted to the bays of northwest Madagascar for provisions. Belrose-Huyghues, “L’itinéraire de Frère Gaspar de San Bernardino,” 47–53; Belrose-Huyghues, “La Baie de Boina,” 165–94.

25. Original Portuguese language accounts of the ship’s travels can be found in Leitão, *Os dois descobrimentos*. In this article I rely on French translations of these accounts.

26. Boxer, *Portuguese Seaborne Empire*; Philip Carman, *The Lost Empire: The Story of the Jesuits in Ethio-*

pia, 1555–1634 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985); John Correia-Afonso, *The Jesuits in India, 1542–1773* (Anand, India: Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture, 1997), 43–45; A. J. R. Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire, 1415–1808: A World on the Move* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Hervé Pennec, *Des Jésuites au royaume du prêtre Jean (Éthiopie): Stratégies, rencontres et tentatives d’implantation, 1495–1633* (Paris: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2003).

27. Like Mariana, Italian Jesuits dispatched to Goa were usually destined for further missions. See Charles J. Borges, *The Economics of the Goa Jesuits, 1542–1759: An Explanation of Their Rise and Fall* (New Delhi: Concept, 1994), 30–31.

28. Frei Gaspar de São Bernardino, *Itinerario da India por terra ate este reino de Portugal com a discripcam de Hierusalem, dirigido a raynha de Espanha Margarita de Austria nossa senhora: Composto pour Frei Gaspar de Sao Bernardina da Ordem do Seraphico Padre*

Sam Francisco da Provincia de Portugal Com licenca da Sancta Inquisicam E ordinaria (Lisbon: Na Officina de Vicente Aluares, 1611), chaps. 1–3. The account of shipwreck found in this work and analyzed, with translation into French, in Belrose-Huyghues, “L’itinéraire de Frère Gaspar de San Bernardino.”

29. For the history of Portuguese mission interests in Madagascar and the western Indian Ocean, see Vincent Belrose-Huyghues and Jean-Louis Peter, “Les premières missions à Madagascar à la lumière des matériaux de la ‘propagande’ du Prof. Dr. Schmidlin de Munster,” *Omalysy Anio* 11 (1980): 113–27; Belrose-Huyghues, “L’information du Père Christoforro Borro,” 105–13; Belrose-Huyghues, “L’itinéraire de Frère Gaspar de San Bernardino,” 64–69; Belrose-Huyghues, “La Baie de Boina,” 165–94.

and located in the Bay of Boïna on the north-west coast of the Big Island.³⁰ The Muslim interpreters aboard ship were probably competent in Arabic as well as Kiswahili, or its Malagasy variant, since it was well known that in north-western Madagascar of the time the people could “speak, near the sea, a language similar to that of the Cafres, that is to say the countries of Mozambique and Malindi.”³¹ At New Massage, the vessel took aboard two additional interpreters by written agreement with the king of the country, Tsimamo. The interpreters were probably native Malagasy speakers competent in translating among Kiswahili, Malagasy, and Portuguese, each common languages of trade in the Mozambique Channel and along the west coast of the Big Island.³² Heading farther south along Madagascar’s west coast, the *Nossa Senhora* made contact with one King Kapitapa, whose populous capital of some ten thousand lay inland from the mouth of the Manambolo River. Kapitapa put his son, Lokeha, aboard the *Nossa Senhora* as an aide and translator (his languages of competence in addition to Malagasy are not specified).³³ Beyond its growing elite corps of translators competent in different Malagasy dialects, the *Nossa Senhora da Esperança* also carried with it many slaves “from different provinces of the island.” Enslaved sailors, some of whom had been aboard ship for some time, could well have acted as direct interpreters between the Big Island’s dialects and Portuguese, as they were known to have done on other Portuguese vessels.³⁴ Taking on translators at virtually every stop as it moved counter-clockwise around Madagascar, the *Nossa Senhora da Esperança* was a polyglot “floating Babylon” with Malagasy of varied dialects aboard and equipped to handle most challenges to communication that might be encountered about the coasts of São Lourenço.³⁵

After rounding the southernmost extremity of Madagascar, the caravel anchored in Anosy’s Ranofotsy Bay on 17 October. Word of the vessel’s arrival spread quickly, for onlookers and those seeking to provision the ship soon began gathering on the adjoining beach. Even the captain of a Dutch ship then riding at Manafiafy, farther north in Anosy by some forty kilometers, learned by overland intelligence about the presence of a European vessel at Ranofotsy. Believing it was another Dutch ship, he dispatched a letter in Dutch to the captain of the *Nossa Senhora* by means of local messengers. To ward the enemy Protestants off, Captain Paulo Rodriguez da Costa spread a rumor among Malagasy messengers to Manafiafy that the *Nossa Senhora* was the lead ship in a Portuguese fleet soon to arrive at Ranofotsy Bay. Meanwhile Bruto Chambanga, the principal ruler of the immediate region with his residence at Fanjahira town, met the *Nossa Senhora* with five hundred armed men, prepared to defend himself from any potential Portuguese depredations. And facing suspicion on the part of the Portuguese, Chambanga also composed a letter to Captain da Costa affirming that “I have never killed any Portuguese or strangers who came to my country.”³⁶ Such a literate disavowal in the Arabic-script *soratse* of Anosy translated by one of the on-ship interpreters was a prerequisite for alliance, for suspicions of the massacre of Portuguese at Trañovato nearly a century earlier remained strong among the Portuguese crew and exposed Chambanga and his people to possible vengeance from the sea. As he had done elsewhere along Madagascar’s coast prior to arrival in Ranofotsy Bay, Captain da Costa for his part sought to negotiate a treaty of friendship with Chambanga.

Competent in the *soratse* of southeast Madagascar and having several *ombiasy* diviners and other scribes at his disposal, Chambanga played

30. Belrose-Huyghues, “La Baie de Boïna,” 165–94. Canitrot suggests the interpreters were Mozambicans. Canitrot, “Les Portugais,” 217.

31. Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 2:21. See also Alfred Grandidier, “Un voyage de découvertes sur les côtes occidentales et méridionales de l’île de Madagascar en 1613–1614, Relation du P. Luiz Mariano, traduite et résumée,” *Bulletin du Comité de Madagascar* 4 (1898): 581. For details on this dialect, see Noël J. Gueunier, ed., *Si mimi mwongo, watu wa zamani: Ce n’est pas moi qui mens, ce sont les gens*

d’autrefois; Contes en dialecte swahili du village de Marodoka (Nosy Be, Madagascar) (Antananarivo, Madagascar: Imprimerie Nationale, 1980).

32. Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 2:16.

33. Lokeha was returned to the shore north of the Manambolo River at the completion of the ship’s visit to Anosy.

34. São Bernardino, *Itinerario da India*, chap. 2; Grandidier, “Un voyage de découvertes,” 597; Belrose-Huyghues, “L’itinéraire de Frère Gaspar de San Bernardino,” 78–79.

35. Charles Ralph Boxer, ed., *The Tragic History of the Sea* (1959; repr., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), vii.

36. Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 2:59.

his own part in shaping the terms of the ensuing treaty. The final document was made at Fanjahira town, Chambanga's residence, after the king agreed to put his nephew aboard the *Nossa Senhora* as hostage to guarantee the safety of one Antonio Gonçales and Jesuit father Freire to negotiate on the part of the Portuguese. Little is known about the substance of the official negotiations and the crafting of the final document except that it was drafted by Chambanga and his scribes "in the *bouque* language [Malagasy] in Arabic characters, in which he obliged himself," the European negotiators reported without producing the original text, "to send to the Portuguese his oldest son Anria Serivai to be taken to Goa to the viceroy to teach him the customs and the grandeur of the Portuguese." Chambanga also showed the priests a book written in Arabic character, no doubt a *soratse* manuscript crafted in the dialect of southeast Madagascar. Knowing that documents proffered to members of the Portuguese expedition about their fellow sailors' fate might protect them from future pillaging, Chambanga also put into Portuguese hands a manuscript said to have been written by the head of the erstwhile shipwrecked Portuguese at Trañovato during the sixteenth century. It "was filled with prayers, litanies, and psalms, half in Latin, half in Portuguese." In early meetings between Europeans aboard the *Nossa Senhora da Esperança* and people of Anosy, the production and exchange of books and manuscripts in different languages and writing systems served as important media of diplomatic and intellectual exchange.³⁷

But it was not only the ruling class of Anosy who met the Portuguese and their interpreters at Ranofotsy in 1613. Commoners from across the countryside turned up at the beach to provision the vessel, exchanging their rice, "yams," beans, lemons, ginger, cattle, sheep, goats, eggs, poultry, cotton cloth, and silver bracelets for minted pistres and glass beads, typical items of exchange

in the early seventeenth century.³⁸ During the first two weeks of the *Nossa Senhora's* sojourn in Ranofotsy Bay more than two thousand hawkers and gawkers collected daily on the strand. In conversation with the throng on the beach, the crew of the *Nossa Senhora* quickly learned that an eclectic set of Portuguese words had already worked themselves into the vernacular of Anosy, including *camisa* (shirt), *calçaõ* (breeches), *romã* (grenade), *filho meu* (my son), and *espingarda* (musket). In curiosity, many of the islanders attended the daily mass performed on shore by Jesuit fathers Mariana and Freire, whose coterie of interpreters alternately provided explanations of the proceedings and shooed away crowds anxious to kiss the image of Saint Luke or touch the temporary altar erected on the sand. What those gathered about actually understood of the clerics' pronouncements can only be guessed, for interpreters aboard Portuguese vessels "were naturally better acquainted with market prices and bazaar gossip than with subtle theological arguments."³⁹ Some of his audience, Mariana reported, sported pewter crosses hanging from their necks, signs of previous contact with Portuguese and a confirmation of the impression offered by King Chambanga that the large cross once elevated by castaway Portuguese at Trañovato in the Fanjahira River (it had since fallen) had become integrated into local practices of prayer and desire. A few of those listening on the beach even stepped forward to display crosses "tattooed" on their bodies.⁴⁰

Some weeks into their stay, Father Mariana set out for Trañovato with a suite of three Portuguese sailors and "many of our slaves," intending to construct a chapel and house in timber there for himself and Father Freire, who intended to remain in Anosy to make Christians out of King Chambanga and his subjects. The construction consumed nearly two weeks, during which Mariana preached daily through the indispensable service of his interpreters to

37. Grandidier, "Un voyage de découvertes," 590; Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 2:38 (book in *soratse*), 49 (treaty in *soratse*), 51 (manuscript in Latin and Portuguese).

38. Beads remained an important item of exchange along Madagascar's east coast to at least the mid-eighteenth century. W. G. N. van der Sleen, "Ancient Glass Beads with Special Reference to the Beads of

East and Central Africa and the Indian Ocean," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 88 (1958): 203–16.

39. Boxer, *Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, 65.

40. Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 2:40–41. For additional information on pewter crosses, see 2:51; on Portuguese terms in the dialect of Anosy, see 2:52.

those who gathered around him. They were visited at Trañovato by a *faqy* (itinerant holy man) competent in reading and writing the *soratse* (probably an *ombiasy*) who sought to debate the characteristics of cherubim, seraphim, and the archangels Michael and Gabriel. Mariana unveiled for the inquirer his sacred images on paper, including a picture of the cross. The *faqy* was so pleased, Mariana reported, that he pledged to send his son to the priests to learn to read and write in roman character and to study the “law of God.” The church and house complete, the work crew threw up a lofty cross some ten meters in height. Another was planted on an eminent rock by the entrance to Ranofotsy Bay and close to the anchored Portuguese caravel. It loomed over the beachside masses conducted by Father Mariana.⁴¹

If the relationship between the passengers of the *Nossa Senhora da Esperança* and the Raondriana of southern Anosy commenced propitiously enough, things deteriorated over time. On 30 November, nearly six weeks after the party anchored in Ranofotsy Bay, Captain da Costa commanded his crew to bring Drian-Ramaka, Chambanga’s son, aboard the Portuguese caravel by force. As Mariana told it, Chambanga had agreed in his treaty to send a son named Anria Serivai to Goa aboard the *Nossa Senhora* but had later reneged on the deal, offering a younger and presumably less influential relative instead. The Jesuits and their captain, da Costa, spurned this offer and burned hot with anger over the change of mind, a “great affront so prejudicial to the honor and name of the Portuguese.” It was at this point the Jesuits first determined Chambanga must have killed “a good third of the shipwrecked Portuguese” in earlier times. For his part, Chambanga denied he had ever promised to send his son off to an unknown fate in Goa or that he had killed Europeans. (The treaty he was said to have composed was never produced.) A scuffle broke out on the beach as sailors and soldiers employed a ruse to part son

from father and then shoved Drian-Ramaka unceremoniously aboard a dinghy; Chambanga’s warriors and subjects tried unsuccessfully to free the young man from the clutches of his European kidnappers that day. They were driven away by musket fire and artillery from the ship. Efforts to ransom Drian-Ramaka back to freedom from his Jesuit captors proved futile. It is unlikely Chambanga was comforted by promises shouted ashore that his son would be returned to Anosy in a few years after a course of religious instruction in far-off Goa.⁴²

Goan Interlude

Among Jesuit mission strategies in the Indian Ocean was the creation of a European-friendly indigenous coterie of helpers and clergy. Elite students from about the region were to be brought, by force if necessary, to a course of religious study at Goa, an education potentially leading to the priesthood. The College of Santa Fe (Holy Faith), to which Drian-Ramaka was carried, had been established in 1541 to train non-Portuguese students between about ages thirteen and fifteen recruited from among the highest castes and social groups in their places of origin; its direction was assumed by Jesuits under François Xavier some years later. After several decades of operation, over two thousand students from across the subcontinent and the Indian Ocean filled its classrooms. It was the largest educational institution in the Portuguese empire and also the most expansive religious edifice in Goa. In 1610, only four years before Drian-Ramaka’s arrival, the college was transferred to a new location on a hill overlooking the city. When it was shifted to its new location, the college also became known as the New College of Saint Paul (*o novo São Paulo*), or more popularly still, referring to the hill, São Roque.⁴³ “Boys of all races and classes were admitted,” wrote one scholar of the institution, “including a few Abyssinians and Bantu from East Africa, although Indians naturally predominated. The

41. *Ibid.*, 2:53–56.

42. Grandidier, “Un voyage de découvertes,” 595; Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 2:55–63.

43. Carlos Mercês de Melo, *The Recruitment and Formation of the Native Clergy in India, Sixteenth to Nineteenth Century: An Historico-Canonical Study* (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca, 1955), 33–85; Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540–1750* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 44–45.

colored students who graduated from this seminary were ordained as secular priests, only very rarely were they admitted to any of the religious orders before the second half of the eighteenth century.” Graduates of Santa Fe and São Paulo were primarily employed as assistants to European clergy in India and other parts of the Church’s Province of Goa.⁴⁴

A young man of some twelve years at the time he was rustled aboard the *Nossa Senhora da Esperança*, Drian-Ramaka had been born just after 1600 to King Chambanga and Anria Fatema, the granddaughter of a sixteenth-century Portuguese castaway at Trañovato. He was destined for a crash course in Portuguese literacy and Catholicism at the hands of Jesuits and at the College of São Paulo in Goa, rubbing shoulders with an elite of young men like himself from about the Indian Ocean who Jesuits thought likely to become politically significant in their time.⁴⁵ Father Mariana writes that Drian-Ramaka arrived in Goa in mid-May 1614 by way of Mozambique and first studied reading and writing in Portuguese with the fathers of São Paulo and afterward enrolled at the college, where he surprised many by his intelligence. He was provided with a stipend to acquire Portuguese clothing. Christoforro Borro, who claims to personally have instructed Drian-Ramaka during a period of five months, writes that the young abductee learned to read, write, sing, ride a horse, and “in a word, to practice all the arts we instructed him in with great facility.” He was taught basic Portuguese literacy and carefully instructed in the Latin catechism, able to respond in Latin to basic questions posed on Catholic doctrine. From his vantage on the hill overlooking Goa and the sea from which he had come, Drian-Ramaka progressed with rapidity through the literate course of instruction laid

out for him, becoming quite knowledgeable in “religion” and able to respond to all questions put to him relating to it.⁴⁶

How the training proceeded, linguistically speaking, is unclear. The Jesuits at São Paulo specialized in teaching children from across the Estado da India and beyond both Portuguese language and the catechism. Whether they employed an interpreter with Drian-Ramaka is unclear, but it is likely, at least during the first months of his captivity aboard the ship that brought him to Goa. Malagasy speakers may well have been among the slaves and servants employed at the College of São Paulo, and able to work between their native tongue and Portuguese.⁴⁷ Such translators in the capacity of both slaves and sailors could be found on Portuguese vessels alighting at Madagascar. While in Goa, Drian-Ramaka enjoyed a close relationship with the viceroy, who was personally responsible for teaching him to ride a horse. At some point during his sojourn in Goa, Drian-Ramaka was baptized with the name Don André de Souza by the archbishop, the viceroy serving as his godfather.⁴⁸

With a working knowledge of Portuguese, literate in Roman character, instructed in the catechism, and baptized, Drian-Ramaka departed Goa in early February 1616 after nearly two years of study and returned to Anosy’s shores two months later with eight “white companions,” among whom were several sailors and Jesuit missionaries Luigi Mariana, Custodio da Costa, and Manuel d’Almeida. The Jesuits carried instructions to form a mission at Trañovato under the influence of their young protégé and his Raondriana father. Mother and father were delighted to learn their son was alive, but Jesuits refused Drian-Ramaka permission to go ashore until Chambanga put two relatives on board the cara-

44. Grandidier, “Un voyage de découvertes,” 598–99; Charles Ralph Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion, 1440–1770* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 12, 123–24, including n. 19 (123–24).

45. Charles J. Borges, “Jesuit Education in Goa (Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries),” in *Goa: Cultural Trends*, ed. P. P. Shirodkar (Panaji, India: Goa Directorate of Archives, Archaeology and Museum, 1988), 153–64.

46. Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 2:71–75; Belrose-Huyghues, “L’information du Père Christoforro Borro,” 111–12.

47. For African and Malagasy slaves traded to India and laboring at Jesuit establishments there, see Alden, *Making of an Enterprise*, 514–15; Thomas Vernet, “Le commerce des esclaves sur la côte swahili, 1500–1750,” *Azania* 38 (2003): 84–85. Alden talks of “Mozambican” slaves at Goa, but some of these may well have been from Madagascar.

48. Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 2:71–75.

vel as hostages. While he eventually complied, Chambanga was immeasurably angered by this demand. Matters only deteriorated from there. It was the Jesuits' intention to return Drian-Ramaka to the ship unless Chambanga provided them with at least another of his sons (if not two) to take to Goa for a similar course of study. Chambanga angrily refused, keeping Drian-Ramaka from the clutches of the priests and their soldiers and explaining to them that "he felt the Portuguese had the custom of sending some missionaries first to lands they desired and following later to take possession" of them. Incensed by Chambanga's savvy affront to their plans and orders from the viceroy, the Jesuits and crew of the ship planned a "war without mercy" upon the king and his people. They later came to their senses, though, reasoning that their plans for a mission would fail entirely if they waged war in Anosy. They eventually concluded another treaty with Chambanga (again in the Arabic-script *soratse* of Anosy) allowing missionaries to remain in the country to evangelize in exchange for taking just one of the chained hostages aboard the ship to Goa.⁴⁹

Fathers Custodio da Costa and Manuel d'Almeida installed themselves under the shadow of the cross erected three years earlier at Trañovato as the caravel that brought them sailed for Goa with Anria Çambo (whose name can translate, ironically, as Prince Boat). But the mission soon failed. The priests were searching quite openly for precious metals and unwisely targeted the *ombiasy* writers of Anosy as the enemies of God; in retaliation the *ombiasy* threatened poisoning.⁵⁰ The *soratse* of southeast Madagascar and the Word of God had come into direct conflict. All the Portuguese fell sick with fevers. By December Chambanga forbade his subjects to supply or exchange anything to the Portuguese at Trañovato, starving them into exile. Custodio

da Costa reported that spies were repeatedly sent to determine if the Portuguese were still alive. It seems clear Chambanga sought to rid himself of the potential dangers to his kingdom of a continuing commerce with the Portuguese. The priests, meanwhile, chalked up their failure to the inclinations of Anosy's inhabitants for Islam. The Jesuits baptized but one individual before departing Anosy toward the end of April 1617.⁵¹ Goan and Mozambican Jesuits completely abandoned their evangelistic activities in eastern Madagascar around 1620, never to return.⁵²

A Hungry Colony

France came relatively late to the *mer des Indes*. A few private French vessels, some of them corsairs, ventured beyond the Cape of Good Hope as early as the 1520s, but with French colonizing efforts focused on New France (Quebec) during the sixteenth century and Portuguese enjoying a virtual monopoly of European shipping in the Indian Ocean, the French crown showed little interest in Madagascar and its surrounding ocean.⁵³ This changed only in the mid-seventeenth century with the decline of Portuguese maritime hegemony and the formation of the Compagnie française d'Orient, the first French East India Company, in 1642, under the direction of Cardinal Richelieu. With the subsequent rise of Jean-Baptiste Colbert in the Conseil des finances, colonizing projects in the Indian Ocean received continuing and firm support. Colbert was instrumental, for example, in creating the third *compagnie* in 1664 and defining its plans for Madagascar. Each of the seven successive Compagnies des Indes orientales chartered by the French crown (hereafter simply designated in the singular as "the compagnie") was granted an *exclusif* for trade in the Indian Ocean and charged with promoting French interests through colonization and commerce.⁵⁴

49. *Ibid.*, 2:119–39, 143–55.

50. Stories about the poisoning of missionary João de S. Thomas in the Bay of Boina on Madagascar's northwest coast in 1587 probably made these threats credible to the Jesuits at Tolagnare. Belrose-Huyghues, "La Baie de Boina."

51. Froidevaux, *Les Lazaristes*, 10–14; Grandidier, *Collection des ouvrages anciens*, 2:159–61, 167–70; Belrose-Huyghues, "L'information du Père Christoforro Borro," 111–12.

52. "Lettre écrite de Madagascar le six de Februrier 1655 par Monsieur Mousnier Prestre de la Congregation de la Mission à Monsieur Vincent de Paul Supérieur Général de ladite Congregation," ACM, Recueil 1501; Belrose-Huyghues, "L'information du Père Christoforro Borro," 109.

53. Isidore Guët, *Les origines de l'île Bourbon* (Paris: Librairie Militaire de L. Baudoin et C^e, 1885), 41–44; Grandidier, *De la découverte de Madagascar*, 18, 21–23; Louis Dermigny, "East India Company et Compagnie

des Indes," in *Sociétés et compagnies de commerce en orient et dans l'océan Indien*, ed. Michel Mollat (Paris: Service d'Édition et de Vente des Productions de l'Éducation Nationale, 1970), 453–66.

54. Histories of the compagnie include François Charpentier, *Relation de l'établissement de la Compagnie Française pour le commerce des Indes Orientales* (Paris: Chez Sebastien Cramoisy et Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1665); Du Fresne de Francheville, *Histoire de la Compagnie des Indes, avec les titres de*

Emissaries of the first compagnie arrived in southeast Madagascar in 1642, only months after the syndicate was formed in Paris, to commence the first French colonizing project in the Indian Ocean. The aim of the compagnie's inaugural project was both extravagant and broad: to transform Madagascar into a vibrant colony of exploitation and settlement and into a hub of Indian Ocean commerce and colonization, a *France orientale* linking all future envisioned metropolitan ventures in the region. If colonists succeeded in squeezing any kind of a profit from a sea few French actually knew, in other words, the compagnie's syndics would be satisfied.

The ill-fated colonial experiment commenced at the Bay of Manafiafy some forty kilometers north of Tolagnare when commander-governor Jacques Pronis and a ragtag band of sailors and settlers rowed ashore from the *Saint-Louis* in late 1642 after having rounded the Cape of Good Hope and visited Bourbon, Antongil Bay, and Sainte-Marie.⁵⁵ Things went badly from the start. Religious dissension between the Protestant governor and his Catholic subordinates eroded solidarity from within. Many of the forty passengers who arrived with Pronis quickly expired from fevers (no doubt malaria) or were slain while scrounging for provisions along the coast; only fourteen of the forty remained after two months in Anosy.⁵⁶ Seeking a more healthy and secure location, Pronis moved his people south to Tolagnare sometime in 1643 and constructed a "fort" of shrubs on the northern portion of the peninsula, which rises steeply above the water and is constantly refreshed by sea breezes. The French habitation at Tolagnare was baptized Fort Dauphin in honor of the then five-year-old king (*dauphin*), Louis XIV.

Relations between the newly arrived French settlers and the several Raondriana rulers of Anosy soured quickly, reverting to shifty, volatile alliances and then degrading into bloodshed. Ambiguity toward the foreigners stemmed in part from Anosy's experience with Portuguese sailors and Jesuit missionaries in earlier times and in particular from memory of the kidnapping and transportation to Goa of Drian-Ramaka and Anria Çambo in the second decade of the seventeenth century. Matters were not helped when Governor Pronis captured Malagasy servants, employees, and visitors near the French homestead one day and sold them all off to a passing Dutch vessel seeking laborers for its fledgling colony at Mauritius.⁵⁷ King Chambanga, Drian-Ramaka's father, was dead by 1642, but Drian-Ramaka had succeeded him and taken possession of the key chiefship at Fanjahira town in the interior, northwest of Tolagnare, where he usually resided. The Malagasy graduate of the College of São Paulo, Goa, was now in his political prime and engaged in heated competition with other Raondriana for political mastery in Anosy.

While they were generally disliked and feared by the Raondriana, French governors and armed settlers also proved useful allies against domestic opponents. "They are in constant division with their neighbors," noted one observer of the Raondriana rulers of Anosy, forming and reforming often ephemeral alliances with other kinglylets and with the newly arrived French at Tolagnare peninsula to ward off enemies, including many among their own subjects who surreptitiously offered their loyalties to other princes and to the French governor when it suited them.⁵⁸ It was a volatile political mix even

ses concessions et privilèges, dressés sur les pièces authentiques (Paris: Chez De Bure l'aîné, 1746); Garonne, *Mémoire historique et politique sur le commerce de l'Inde* (Paris: Chez Ant. Baillul et P. Mongie, 1802 [An X]), 37–45; Louis Pauliat, *Madagascar sous Louis XIV: Louis XIV et la Compagnie des Indes Orientales de 1664, d'après des documents inédits tirés des archives coloniales du Ministère de la marine et des colonies* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1886); Marcel Giraud-Mangin, *La Compagnie des Indes orientales à Madagascar de 1664 à 1672, épisode de la conquête française* (Nantes, France: Imprimerie Centrale, 1895); Henri Froidevaux, *Documents inédits relatifs à la constitution de la Compagnie des Indes Orientales de 1642* (Paris: Challamel, 1898); Charles Montagne, *Histoire de la Compagnie*

des Indes (Paris: Émile Bouillon, 1899); Henry Weber, *La Compagnie Française des Indes (1604–1875)* (Paris: Arthur Rousseau, 1904); and Jules Sottas, *Histoire de la Compagnie Royale des Indes orientales, 1664–1719* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1905).

55. The last two destinations are on Madagascar's east coast. Etienne de Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle Madagascar* (1661), 204.

56. François Cavche, "Relation du voyage que François Cavche de Roven a fait à Madagascar, Isles adjacentes, et coste d'Afrique, Recueilly par le Sieur Morisot, Avec des Notes en marge," in *Relations véritables et cvrievses de l'Isle de Madagascar, et du Bresil, Avec l'Histoire de la dernière Guerre faite au Bresil, entre les*

Portugais et les Hollandois, Trois Relations D'Egypte, et vne du Royaume de Perse, ed. Claude Barthélemy Morisot (Paris: Chez Avgvstin Covrbé, au Palais, en la Gallerie des Merciers, à la Palme, 1651), 1:89, 110–11.

57. Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle Madagascar* (1661), 219–20.

58. Gabriel Dellon, *Relation d'un voyage des Indes orientales, dédié à Monseigneur l'Evêque de Meaux*, 2 vols. (Paris: Chez Claude Barbin, au Palais, sur le Perron de la sainte Chapelle, 1685), 1:36–37.

before the compagnie entered the picture, but seemed to unravel thereafter into a chronic state of hostility and civil war. Both Raondriana and French governors sought mastery over Anosy's limited resources in food, livestock, and followers. To these basic designs, French settlers, like the Portuguese before them, added extraordinary dreams of metals and precious stones, all of which failed to materialize in the malaria-ridden aquatic environment of Anosy.⁵⁹

Affairs deteriorated significantly during the governorship of Étienne de Flacourt (1648–55), who sought to submit all of Anosy to the French chief at Fort Dauphin and in the process sent waves of violence and destruction rippling across the land. In the space of two years, Flacourt's dawn raids "pillaged and burned more than 50 villages" with the object of forcing the people of Anosy into starvation and the necessity of surrendering to the French at Tolagnare lest they be unable to return to their fields and cultivate their crops.⁶⁰ It was superiority in weapons and military logistics that enabled such savagery. In 1651 Flacourt's troops killed the Goa-educated Drian-Ramaka in a sunrise attack on his residence at Fanjahira town, shooting him and his son "between the shoulders," and presumably in the back, on the banks of the river as they were attempting to cross in flight. Drian-Ramaka had recently besieged Fort Dauphin with his armies.⁶¹

When the chief Dian Manangue executed the French priest Étienne and his party after Étienne irreverently ripped charms from the king's neck in 1664, the French retaliated with extreme vengeance, laying waste to settlements along the Mandrare River. "During six days more than 150 villages were burnt and more than 1000 people killed, men as well as women and children," wrote a participant, "and we took at least 4000 cattle."⁶² The ever-shifting politics of alliance and repression between the core French settlement at Fort Dauphin and sur-

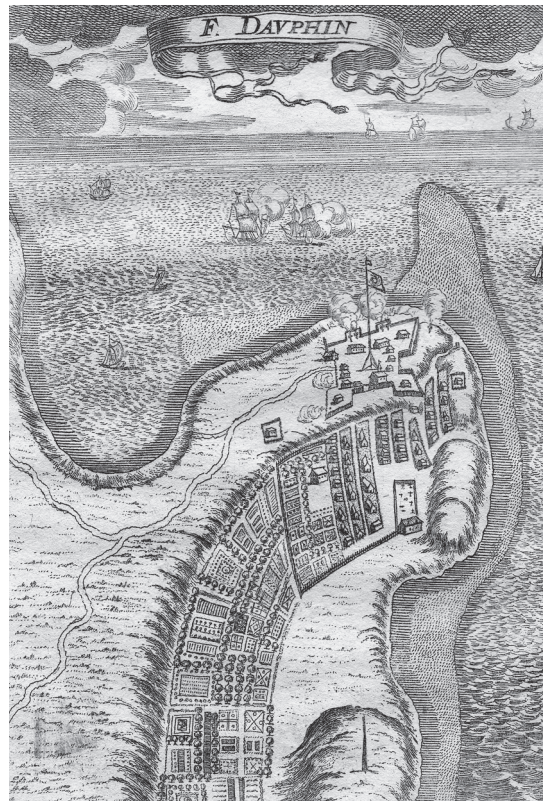


Figure 3. Fort Dauphin on the Tolagnare peninsula and its nearby gardens, woodcut published by Allain Manesson Mallet in 1719 after a seventeenth-century original by Governor Flacourt. From the author's personal collection

rounding Malagasy rulers stretched as far as the Matataña River to the north and the Linta River to the west, each some three hundred kilometers from Tolagnare peninsula.

To a significant extent, the complex and chronic cycle of plunder and recrimination between the French intruders and the people of Anosy stemmed from the exasperating challenges chronically hungry European colonists faced in feeding themselves in a land of seeming plenty. Although colonists set gardens in the vicinity of their fort (fig. 3), they did not have sufficient land on which to cultivate or

59. Urbain Souchu de Rennefort, *Histoire des Indes orientales*, ed. Dominique Huet (1688; Sainte-Clotilde, France: ARS Terres Créoles, 1988), 114, 409.

60. The strategy is laid out in Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle Madagascar* (1661), unpaginated introduction to the second volume and 46. As the two volumes of this work are bound together and successively paginated, I do not indicate volume numbers in succeeding citations. See also Émile-Félix

Gautier and Henri Froidevaux, *Un manuscrit arabico-malgache sur les campagnes de La Case dans L'Imoro de 1659 à 1663* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1907); Jean-Claude Hébert, "Les coureurs de brousse, informateurs de Flacourt géographe," *Études Océan Indien* 23–24 (1997): 157–209.

61. Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle Madagascar* (1661), 298–99.

62. M. de V., *Voyage de Madagascar, connu aussi sous le nom de l'Isle De St Laurent*, Par M. de DE V... *Commissaire Provincial de l'Artillerie de France: Dedié à S.A.S.M. le Prince de Conty*, ed. Carpeau du Sausay (Paris: Chez Jean-Luc Nyon, Libraire au premier Pavillon des Quatre Nations, à Sainte Monique, 1722), 237. The identity of the author of this narrative, who was in southeast Madagascar in 1663 and 1664, is unclear.

the knowledge with which to turn themselves into successful tropical planters.⁶³ And unable to retain captive labor at Tolagñare, they did not tend the fields well themselves. Security for farming colonists, too, was always a problem in the gardens, which lay in exposed positions to the south of the fort. Insects complicated an already difficult situation. “Once the plague of Egypt in the time of Moses,” locusts repeatedly appeared over the western horizon to devour crops. In a span of minutes they could leave fields looking “as if a fire had passed through them.”⁶⁴ From Fort Dauphin, matrimonial alliance, commerce, and pillage appeared surer solutions to full stomachs than did steady investment in agriculture.

At first the competition over food, wealth, and followers in Anosy was not unlike that experienced by Khoikhoi and employees of the Dutch East India Company in nearly the same period at the Cape of Good Hope. But at the Cape, Dutch colonists eventually converted themselves into farmers and herders, pushing pastoral Khoikhoi into the interior or incorporating them into their own society as subordinates, while in Anosy compagnie employees and settlers lurched inexorably toward a political economy of murder and plunder; they were eventually driven from the land in 1674 by its exasperated farmers when the balance of power and weaponry shifted in the other direction.⁶⁵ And unlike the slaving forts of Atlantic Africa or the emerging European *établissements* and *comptoirs* in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, no steady income-generating commerce flowed from the colony to contain the internal dissension over resources within it. The ebony, leather, wax, aloe, benzoin, wild pepper, and slaves entering the holds of the few compagnie ships departing Tolagñare Bay (Anse Dauphine)

returned little benefit to most of the desperate and largely abandoned colonists eking out a living there.⁶⁶ If one was not a governor—and even, sometimes, if one was—colonial life at Tolagñare could be utter misery.

Most French settlers and soldiers in Anosy during the thirty-two-year duration of the *établissement* were an impoverished, ill, and nearly naked lot. Sickness and death stalked everywhere. Colonists were “dressed like the blacks,” lamented an arriving priest. They wore “neither socks nor shoes nor coats [*pourpoints*], nor shirts for the most part.”⁶⁷ The sick “complained of dying, lacking both food and medicine” and “sold the shirts off their backs to purchase chickens” with which to nurse themselves back to health, “or they tore up their clothing to wrap their wounds.”⁶⁸ No wonder the ailing Frenchmen were scantily clad. When hunger knocked at the gates of the fort it provoked internal dissension over acquisition and allocation of food. Victuals essential to the colonists did arrive from many directions. Some provisions came aboard vessels hailing from as far afield as the Atlantic, India, and Bourbon. But these were few and very far between, and they were extremely dear. Years sometimes passed before a single compagnie ship appeared in the harbor of Tolagñare. None arrived between 1648 and 1654, for example, leading desperate Governor Flacourt to attempt a voyage into the Atlantic on a locally constructed boat. The impossible undertaking on such a small vessel failed after ten days at sea (they had run into a storm that nearly capsized the boat), and Flacourt returned in despair, but with his life, to a brewing mutiny at Tolagñare.⁶⁹

Even when it was possible to trade for rice and beef during lulls in the violence, Malagasy farmers demanded in return the scarce trade goods arriving aboard compagnie ships from

63. Tolagñare actually lies just south of the Tropic of Capricorn.

64. “Lettre écrite de l’Isle de Madagascar, touchant le succès du Voyage et de l’Employ des Missionnaires, qu’on y a envoyez de Saint Lazare lez Paris, particulièrement depuis l’An 1655 à Monsieur Vincent de Paul, Sup.^r General de la Congregation de la Mission, Par Monsieur Bourdaise, Prestre de la mesme Congregation, du 19 Feurier 1657,” ACM, Recueil 1501, 92. See also Dellon, *Relation d’un voyage*, 1:52, 58.

65. Richard Elphick, *Kraal and Castle: Khoikhoi and the Founding of White South Africa* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977); Nigel A. Worden, “VOC Cape Town: A Dutch-Asian City in Africa,” in *Globalization and the South-West Indian Ocean*, ed. Vinesh Y. Hookoomsing (Réduit: University of Mauritius, 2000), esp. 18–19.

66. Cavche, “Relation dv voyage,” 1:90; Rennefort, *Histoire des Indes orientales*, 268, 370.

67. “Lettre De M^r Bourdaise du 8. feurier 1655: A Madag^{ar} ce 8. feurier 1655” [Toussaint Bourdaise to Vincent de Paul, Fort Dauphin], ACM, Recueil 1501, 133 (habilez

en naigre); “Memoirs enuoyez de Madagascar par M.^r Monsnier à Mons.^r Vincent touchant les choses qu’il y faut enuoyer, et les moyens d’empescher qu’elles ne se gastent ny derrobent par les chemins. 5. febu. 1655,” ACM, Recueil 1501, 53.

68. “Lettre de Monsieur Nacquart Prestre de la Mission à Mr. Sup. General, Monsieur Vincent,” Au Fort Dauphin ce 9. Feurier 1650, ACM, Recueil 1501, 8.

69. Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle Madagascar* (1661), 360–62.

India.⁷⁰ Rice and other foodstuffs were obtained from the natives, colonists lamented, for “glass beads [*rassades*] of all kinds and colors as well as copper manillas, with which [they] make necklaces and bracelets.” The manillas also came in silver and pewter; coral beads and Indian textiles were likewise popular items of exchange, when they could be had from passing compagnie ships.⁷¹ Although they sought silver in Anosy, the French actually supplied most of it in the form of coins and jewelry.⁷² To stave off hunger, governors at Fort Dauphin dispatched emissaries up the east coast to establish provisioning stations at Antongil Bay, Sainte-Marie, Galem-boulle (Fénérive), and the Matataña River, from whence the food (mainly rice) was to be freighted southward on locally constructed supply boats or compagnie ships. The distance and expense was too great to sustain, however, for the outposts “cost the Company much without offering it any advantage.”⁷³ Administrators at Tolagnare also dispatched exposed colonists into the immediate interior of the peninsula, including to Manambaro west of the Fanjahira River, to secure both food and intelligence useful in defense of the core settlement, but these helped matters little.⁷⁴

The syndics of the compagnie put few European women aboard vessels to Anosy, trusting that most young men they dispatched there would strike up friendships and sexual liaisons with local women. It seemed a sensible plan, but it dispersed both men and loyalties away from the fort. Many a man who survived several years in Anosy fathered children with a native female partner and learned to speak the local dialect with at least halting fluency. “There is absolutely no punishment for scandalous Frenchmen,” lamented missionary Nacquart to his superiors about sexual relations between colonial men

and Malagasy women, and even those who “marry the women of the country will choose far off and out of the way places” to live where they could furnish themselves with food.⁷⁵ Such intimate relations—alliance for food—whether near the core settlement on the Tolagnare peninsula or further afield, confounded a neat politics of race and brought great influence over the colony to some women of Anosy. The French were dependent for survival on local alliances, while acquaintances, wives, and children spanned the blurry divide of hostility between European and Anosy communities. Yet the racial line was unbearably crossed when Governor Pronis married Dian Ravellom Manor (or Andianramariuelle), the daughter of the “great lord of this region” and niece of Drian-Ramaka. Colonists fearful of the dire consequences of their *leader’s* matrimonial alliance mutinied, clapped the governor in irons, and held him imprisoned in his darkened bedroom. He languished there with nothing but candlelight and a pillow for six months during 1646. Mutineers accused Pronis of diverting rice meant for French colonists to his Raondriana wife and extended family.⁷⁶ When the governor recuperated his freedom, he exiled the head rebels and their Malagasy wives to Bourbon, where they founded the second French colony in the Indian Ocean. Once allied in cohabitation or matrimony with the women of Anosy, who ensured them food and comfort, colonists loosened their loyalties to the governor and to the even more distant syndics of the compagnie, in France.

When commerce and matrimony proved insufficient to match demands for rice and beef at Tolagnare, punitive raids by colonists most loyal to the French fort and aimed against “treacherous natives” set off into the interior or northward along the coast. They were designed

70. Père Roguet to Unknown [probably Alméras], du Fort Dauphin ce 26ème octobre 1671, ACM, Recueil 1502, 5r.

71. Du Bois, *Les voyages faits par le Sievr D. B. aux Isles Dauphine ou Madagascar, et Bourbon, ou Mascarenne, és années 1669. 70. 71. et 72. Dans laquelle il est curieusement traité du cap Vert de la Ville de Surate des Isles de Sainte Helene, ou de l’Ascension: Ensemble les moeurs, Religions, Forces, Gouvernemens et Coûtumes des Habitans desdites Isles, avec l’Histoire naturelle du País* (Paris: Chez Claude Barbin, au Palais, sur le second Petronde la Sainte Chapelle, 1674), 123, 126, 157; Dellon, *Relation d’un voyage*, 1:33; François

Caron, *Journal du voyage des grandes Indes: Contenant tout ce qui s’y est fait et passé par l’Escadre de Sa Majesté envoyée sous le Commandement de Mr de la Haye, depuis son départ de la Rochelle au mois de Mars 1670*, 2 vols. (Paris: Robert et Nicolas Pepie, 1698), 1:84–85; V., *Voyage de Madagascar*, 91 (quotation).

72. The ship conveying François Cauche to Anosy in 1638 carried “chaisnes, bracelets, [and] pendans d’oreilles” as trade goods. Cavche, “Relation dv voyage,” 1:2. See also Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle Madagascar* (1661), 147; Dellon, *Relation d’un voyage*, 1:33. The gold of Anosy was not brought by French vessels.

73. Dellon, *Relation d’un voyage*, 1:59.

74. Rennefort, *Histoire des Indes orientales*, 62.

75. “Lettre de Monsieur Nacquart Prestre de la Mission à Mr. Sup. General, Monsieur Vincent,” Au Fort Dauphin ce 9. Feurier 1650, ACM, Recueil 1501, 8 and 9, respectively.

76. Cavche, “Relation dv voyage,” 1:111; Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle Madagascar* (1661), 208, 214–15.

primarily for pilfering cattle and rounding up slaves. “They say we cannot procure cattle to feed the settlement without making war in the future,” newly arrived missionary Nacquart informed the head of his ecclesiastical order, Vincent de Paul, in 1650.⁷⁷ During the governorship of Champmargou (1659–68), one expedition conducted with allies from Anosy into the Matitaña country, well to the north of Tolagnare, came away with the spectacular and probably exaggerated number of five thousand slaves and twenty thousand cattle. Most of the slaves were distributed among supporting Matitaña chiefs to secure friends at a distance, but 13,800 head of the cattle, it was said, were marched south into Anosy and shared with supporters there. “We returned to fort Dauphin after having destroyed the country,” explained M. de V., who took part in the expedition, “weighed down with booty, slaves, bulls, and cows, such that [the defeated rulers of Matataña] had to come and seek protection from us and sue for peace.”⁷⁸ The terms were cooperation and a supply of slave labor.⁷⁹ Military expeditions spearheaded by the legendary Vacher de La Case and supply outposts set up along the coast and in the Ambolo valley along the Manampanihy River to the north failed either to secure protection or to sufficiently supply the French fort at Tolagnare.⁸⁰ When La Case pilfered twelve thousand cattle from the land of the Vohitsangombes far to the interior northwest of Anosy, only fifteen hundred of them actually arrived at Fort Dauphin some time later.⁸¹ Violence and plunder had taken on senseless lives of their own.

Matters at Fort Dauphin and among those who moved away from it were usually in a con-

tinuous state of distress. “This is a fortress whose walls are a hedge [*une haye*], and the houses are like small barns covered with leaves and walls of reeds or sticks,” reported a resident of the fort in 1650.⁸² Twenty years later the fort was “merely a yard enclosed by walls [*une basse-cour enceinte de murailles*] in which stood the Company armory.”⁸³ The highly combustible fortification of sticks and leaves and its accompanying structures offered little protection in themselves. Only cannon, firearms, and a careful economy of ammunition (*se servir bien à propos de munitions*), Flacourt felt, kept enemies at bay, but these posed risks of their own.⁸⁴ Fort Dauphin caught fire in February 1655 during festivities marking the return of Governor Pronis when cannon and small weapons fire ignited thatched roofs. The flames consumed the fort and burned nearly the entire surrounding settlement of brush to the ground.⁸⁵ Mutinies and insubordination among the colonists were commonplace. In 1671 Père Roguet warned of the exposed situation of the fort and its *habitans* and of the disturbing number of firearms falling into the hands of the French settlement’s enemies. These were employed in frequent ambushes of Europeans venturing beyond the confines of the garrison or their domestic locations. “The country,” he wrote, “is incomparably worse off today than it has ever been.”⁸⁶ It would be difficult to disagree with Fortuné Albrand’s assessment two centuries later that “the first establishments planted at Fort-Dauphin were marked by the spirit of violence and injustice that presided in all European enterprises in the Indies.”⁸⁷ The outcome, however, was entirely unique in the annals of French colonization in the Indian Ocean.

77. “Lettre de Monsieur Nacquart Prestre de la Mission à Mr. Sup. General, Monsieur Vincent,” Au Fort Dauphin ce 9. Feurier 1650, ACM, Recueil 1501, 11.

78. V., *Voyage de Madagascar*, 62–66, 184 (quotation); Rennefort, *Histoire des Indes orientales*, 130–32, 409. M. de V. was at Fort Dauphin during the 1660s.

79. See Caron, *Journal du voyage*, 1:58. Once they became allied with the French at Fort Dauphin, these chiefs rendered an annual tribute. Rennefort, *Histoire des Indes orientales*, 126.

80. R. de la Blanchère, *Un épisode d’histoire coloniale: Le Vacher de la Case à Madagascar* (Algiers: Adolphe Jourdan, 1884); M. de Richemond, “Vacher de La Case, prince d’Amboule,” *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie de Rochefort* 22 (1900): 137–44; Gautier and Froidevaux, *Un manuscrit arabico-malgache*; Rennefort, *Histoire des Indes orientales*, 73–85, 264–65.

81. Rennefort, *Histoire des Indes orientales*, 249–50.

82. “Autre Lettre dudit Sieur, dudit jour, à M.^{rs} les Interessens,” [Nacquart to Syndics of the Compagnie des Indes Orientales, Fort Dauphin, 9 February 1650], ACM, Recueil 1501, 15. It did not appreciably change in ensuing years: Urbain Souchu de Rennefort, *Relation du premier voyage de la Compagnie des Indes orientales en l’isle de Madagascar ou Davphine* (Paris: Chez François Clovzier au Palais à l’Image Notre-Dame, proche l’Hostel de Mr le premier President à la section de Boutique, 1668), 73–74.

83. Caron, *Journal du voyage*, 1:45–46.

84. Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle Madagascar* (1661), unpaginated front matter to second volume.

85. “Lettre escrite de Madagascar le 10e janvier 1656 A Mons.^r Vincent de Paul Superieur General de la Congregation de la Mission par M.^r Bourdaise pbrestre de la mesme Congregation,” ACM, Recueil 1501, 56–57; Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle Madagascar* (1661), 410–14.

86. Roguet to Unknown [probably Alméras], du Fort Dauphin ce 26ème octobre 1671, ACM, Recueil 1502, 2v. In part, the arms were supplied by ships of other nations (especially Dutch) trading at Madagascar. See Rennefort, *Histoire des Indes orientales*, 393.

87. Fortuné Albrand, “Mémoire sur la province d’Anossi et le fort Dauphin, par M. Albrand,” *Annales maritimes et coloniales* 32 (1847): 537.

The French colony in southeast Madagascar consumed the lives of at least half the four thousand soldiers and colonists dispatched there between 1642 and 1674. Most fell victim to malaria, dysentery, malnutrition, and combat with local enemies; those spared either returned to France over the years or moved on to emerging outposts in the Indian Ocean, such as Surat, Pondicherry, and Bourbon.⁸⁸ Mired in enmity and failure, the settlement in Anosy became the nursery for French establishments elsewhere in the Indian Ocean, ironically fulfilling (just) one of its original missions. The quick succession of governors in the colony's last years proved unable to contain hostility from within or security threats from without. "It may seem strange," admitted Governor Flacourt in 1661, "that a small number [of settlers] succeeded in resisting such a great multitude of Barbarians."⁸⁹ In the end, they could not. Exasperated by the role of French governors and their soldiers in intra-Raondriana politics, chronic war making, Fort Dauphin's grinding demand on precious resources, and the overly zealous evangelistic efforts of its Catholic missionaries from about 1663,⁹⁰ surrounding Raondriana under the leadership of Dian Manangue of the Mandrare River to the west of Tolagnare combined in 1674 to rid themselves of the French, dispatching their servants (*marmites et nègres de service*) to kill seventy-four colonists living outside the fort on 27 August. The massacre wiped out more than half the French population in Anosy. The remainder huddled both stunned and in fear of a previously unthinkable annihilation inside their fort of sticks, leaves, and hedges at Tolagnare.

Isidore Guët suggests the killing occurred only shortly after more than a dozen French

women arrived at Tolagnare aboard the compagnie ship *le Dunkerquoise* and began marrying male settlers, causing great jealousy among the women of Anosy who had heretofore "enjoyed" the "privilege" and who, in revenge, withdrew their protection of exposed men by assisting their countrymen in destroying them. The breaking of marriage alliances with Anosy's women may have played a role, but it is more likely that local Raondriana subordinates of the French abandoned them and joined up with their longtime domestic enemy to the west, Dian Manangue, when well-founded rumors of the imminent departure of many of their gun-bearing European allies began circulating, leaving them exposed to the vengeful anger of their more powerful neighbor at the Mandrare River. Rather than be killed by Dian Manangue's spears and firearms when the French departed (as rumor had it they would be), they joined Dian Manangue to rid him of his long-standing European enemies.⁹¹

Of some four thousand European settlers sent to the hapless "colony" of Fort Dauphin over more than three decades, only sixty-three remained after the attack of August 1674 to sneak unceremoniously from the miserable fort at night, board the *Blanc-Pignon* then fortuitously riding in the harbor, and effect a permanent escape from the Big Island.⁹² Many of these later washed up on Bourbon by a circuitous route that took them through Mozambique and Surat. The bitter collapse of France's imperial ambitions on the Big Island of the Indian Ocean solidified French stereotypes of Malagasy as *fort traître*—unruly, rebellious, and treacherous.⁹³ It was a perception French colonists transferred to Malagasy slaves they later owned in the Mascarene

88. For navigation between Madagascar and Surat, see Bois, *Les voyages faits par le Sievr D. B.*, 61; Rennefort, *Histoire des Indes orientales*.

89. Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle Madagascar* (1661), first page of unpaginated front matter to the second volume.

90. Principally Lazarist Père Étienne, who was killed by Dian Manangue in the region of the Mandrare River after having ripped the king's *oly*, or charms, from his neck. But the zealous included also his colleague, Père Manier, who marched at the head of vengeful French raiders holding high a crucifix and an image of the virgin. See V., *Voyage de Madagascar*, 186–94, 230–31.

91. Guët, *Les origines*, 107, 113–17; Rennefort, *Histoire des Indes orientales*, 401–2.

92. Sonia Elisabeth Howe, *The Drama of Madagascar* (London: Methuen, 1938), 52; Meyer et al., *Histoire de la France coloniale*, 136. At times the mortality took on appalling proportions. Père Roguet reported from Fort Dauphin that fewer than thirty of the fourteen hundred persons who arrived there in 1670 with him were still living a year later. Roguet to Unknown [probably Almérás], du Fort Dauphin ce 26ème octobre 1671, ACM, Recueil 1502, 3r.

93. Parat [governor of Bourbon] to Pontchartrain, "Mémoire," 19 septembre 1714, Dépot des Fortifications des Colonies, Sainte-Marie, Carton 1, Pièce 3, 222r, reproduced in Jean-Claude Hébert, "Le mémoire de Parat sur Madagascar (1714)," *Bulletin de l'Académie Malgache* 56 (1978): 48; see also 224r–226r (51–52). Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle Madagascar* (1661), 83; Dellon, *Relation d'un voyage*, 1:35; Alexis Marie de Rochon, *Voyage à Madagascar et aux Indes orientales* (Paris: Chez Prault, 1791), 42.

Islands.⁹⁴ The lost colony of Anosy continued to rankle French advocates for the colonization of Madagascar into the late nineteenth century and was only exorcised more than two hundred years later when in 1895 a colonial army of the Third Republic captured the Big Island and exiled its most powerful rulers to Algeria.⁹⁵

Postscript: Anosy and its Europeans

In a recently published study of relationships between Malagasy and Europeans in the southern regions of the Big Island, archaeologist Mike Parker Pearson argues that “the colonial encounters between Europeans and the people of southern Madagascar between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries were unlike anywhere else.” Examining the record of mistrust and bloody relationships between Europeans and Malagasy, Parker Pearson is struck by the repeated failure of Europeans to successfully colonize the Big Island or to enter into lasting relationships of trade, alliance, or cultural exchange. The only European commodity in which Malagasy were particularly interested, he writes, was weaponry, especially muskets, which were turned back on Europeans or employed in internal political struggles in which Europeans inevitably became embroiled. Little else entered the island. As for exports, Madagascar did not have much to offer. Malagasy captives would not even make desirable slaves, he writes. The persistently alternating relations of “hospitality and hostility” between indigenes and foreigners and the prevalence of diseases such as malaria that killed Europeans, he continues, were among the reasons for the failure of foreign colonization on the Big Island. It was visitors from the Atlantic who died of disease, not indigenous people, a pattern inverse to that of the Americas. Other reasons for colonial failure included “half-hearted” colonization efforts and poor leadership. In addition to these, the contacts between Europeans and Malagasy led to “no lasting or visible creolization” or cultural

exchange. Madagascar was merely a stopping-off point between the Atlantic and the East Indies rather than a site of engagement. These multiple characteristics of colonial encounter in southern Madagascar to the late seventeenth century differentiated European-Malagasy relationships from those of analogous type prevailing in the Atlantic and nearby Mozambique or South Asia, he argues, posing a distinct contrast to most experiences of European expansion and marking southern Madagascar and its people as unique in their foreign relations during the early modern period.⁹⁶

One of the unacknowledged difficulties Parker Pearson faced in forming his theory of European-Malagasy relations was that the two colonization projects he examines (the English at Saint Augustine Bay in 1645–46 and the French in Anosy between 1642 and 1674) were quite different in intent and in the nature of their relations with Malagasy than those of the human flotsam and jetsam of the several shipwrecks that he also discusses. The diverse programs and desires of the varied groups of Europeans who washed up on southern Malagasy shores over the centuries do not unite well under a single pattern of colonial encounters. Portuguese missionaries sought to win souls for Christ by engaging the people of Anosy in conversation. The English attempt to plant settlers on the southern reaches of Saint Augustine Bay lasted hardly a full year before starving survivors were evacuated; the French in Anosy remained at and around Tolagnare, though hungry, for more than three decades. Further, Parker Pearson’s research experience lies primarily in Androy, a portion of southern Madagascar to the west of Anosy, where it was primarily European shipwreck survivors who temporarily settled or were held in captivity by Malagasy inhabitants.⁹⁷ He tends to generalize the ephemeral history of foreign relations in Androy to all of southern Madagascar. But it was at Tolagnare and in Anosy more broadly—the locus of this

94. See Pier M. Larson, “Enslaved Malagasy and *Le Travail de la Parole* at the Pre-revolutionary Mascarenes,” *Journal of African History* 48 (2007), in press; Larson, “Malagasy at the Mascarenes: Publishing in a Servile Vernacular before the French Revolution,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49 (2007): 582–610.

95. Hubert Gerbeau, “De l’esclavage à la liberté: L’enigme de la diffusion des trois jours,” in *La dernière traite: Fragments d’histoire en hommage à Serge Daget*, ed. Hubert Gerbeau and Eric Saugera (Paris: Société Française d’Histoire d’Outre-mer, 1994), 176.

96. Parker Pearson, “Close Encounters,” esp. 393–94, 402, 409–10; quotation from 393.

97. See also Mike Parker Pearson and Karen Godden, *In Search of the Red Slave: Shipwreck and Captivity in Madagascar* (Thrupp, England: Sutton, 2002), which reiterates many of the central arguments of Parker Pearson’s article “Close Encounters.”

article—that the most sustained relationships between Malagasy and Europeans of various origins occurred between the sixteenth and the late seventeenth centuries. It is here, in the most important center of “colonial encounter,” where Parker Pearson’s generalizations about Euro-Malagasy relations break down.

While shipwreck, evangelization, and colonization in Anosy by both the Portuguese and the French led to colonial failure by late 1674, a close examination of relationships reveals much material, cultural, and linguistic exchange over several decades across the seemingly incessant violence and misunderstanding. As we have seen, the people of Anosy early assimilated a number of Portuguese words and clothing styles as well as veneration for the cross. Surrounding inhabitants offered their prayers at the cross of Trañovato, and crowds of onlookers sought in 1613 to touch the Jesuit altar at Ranofotsy and their image of Saint Luke. The *Nossa Senhora da Esperança* floated around Madagascar with a coterie of interpreters adept at translating Malagasy dialects, variants of Kiswahili, and European tongues. Two of Anosy’s sons traveled to Goa and underwent courses of evangelistic study before they returned home. When both the French East India Company and English settlers first turned their sights to the Indian Ocean, they sought not to touch at the island with their vessels but to plant colonies of trade and settlement in southern Madagascar, hoping that those colonies would emerge as robust plantation societies and entrepôts of Indian Ocean trade. The English colony quickly failed.⁹⁸ But French settlers in Anosy sank much deeper roots. They found that beads, copper, and silver were highly prized by the people of Anosy, together with weapons. The hoards of beads and copper located by archaeologists in southwest Madagascar, mentioned by Parker Pearson, testify to a similar pattern there.

In a forthcoming publication, I will explore the intense vernacular conversations between Europeans and the inhabitants of Anosy

in the mid-seventeenth century about the things of religion. These resulted in hundreds of Malagasy baptisms by 1674 and the printing, in Paris, of a French-Malagasy dictionary and a catechism in the speech variety of southeast Madagascar.⁹⁹ In the same period, a number of Malagasy-European vocabularies and speech aids were issued from presses in Atlantic Europe, some of them the fruit of conversation with the people of southeast Madagascar in their homeland and aboard European ships, where many served as sailing crew. Essential to francophone publishing in the tongue of Madagascar were the unions between European settlers and the women of southeast Madagascar, which not only enabled the French colony to survive for more than three decades but also generated a group of bilingual Malagasy-French speakers in the region. Some of these bilingual settlers and their Malagasy consorts were the first colonists at the French island of Bourbon and in other French settlements of the time in South Asia. Ironically, it was ultimately the intimacy between colonist and host that undid the French settlement in Anosy: in a single day the European intimates of Anosy’s women were murdered, forcing those remaining to flee the island for their lives. The evidence for Anosy during the periods of Portuguese and French interest examined here suggests an ongoing process of cultural and religious, as well as commodity, exchange with broader implications for the history of southeast Madagascar and the western Indian Ocean.

Parker Pearson is certainly right to point out that poor planning, lackluster leadership, ineffective or entirely lacking lines of supply, and an insufficiency of knowledge about local politics and environments contributed to the ultimate failure of European colonization in southern Madagascar. At the same time, his study appears to neglect what was probably the most important determinant of failure not easily ascertained by archaeologists—incessant hunger. Starvation governed the evacuation of English settlers at Saint Augustine in 1646; the inability

98. Foster, “An English Settlement.”

99. Etienne de Flacourt, *Dictionnaire de la langue de Madagascar, avec vn petit recueil des noms & dictions propres des choses qui sont d’vne mesme espèce* (Paris: Chez George losse, ruè S. lacques à la Couronne

d’Espines, 1658); Flacourt, *Petit catéchisme avec les prières dv matin et dv soir, que les missionnaires font & enseignent aux néophytes & cathécumènes de l’isle de Madagascar* (Paris: Chez Georges losse, ruè Saint lacques à la Couronne d’Espines, 1657).

to produce or procure food for Fort Dauphin and its inmates at Tolagñare led seventeenth-century French settlers to seek nourishment through matrimony and convinced the governor of the colony to send his armies on far-ranging missions to plunder cattle, creating enemies on every side. Blood, fear, enmity, and disloyalty stalk most early histories of Malagasy and European relationships in the southern reaches of the Big Island. The climate and vegetation of southern Madagascar is altogether more tropical than that at the nearby Cape, where company employees successfully transformed themselves into free farmers and husbandmen of crops and animals that thrive in temperate regions.

There was plenty of violence in Anosy, but violence did not preclude the exchange of commodities and ideas that shaped quotidian life, for example, or the history of Malagasy language literacy in Roman character. By the late eighteenth century, Madagascar's east coast had emerged as an arena of cultural and human *métissage*, and Malagasy captives came to supply a large proportion of the slave labor forces at both the Cape of Good Hope and the Mascarene islands.¹⁰⁰ If there was far more cultural and material exchange between Malagasy and Europeans in southern Madagascar than Parker Pearson allows or the as yet meager archaeological work in the region suggests, the loss of colonies in southeast Madagascar was less a function of Malagasy obstreperousness than of the subtropical climate, the economic and social strength of indigenous agro-pastoral economies, and the poor choices exercised by would-be colonizers. S