



Madagascar: A Short History

Solofo Randrianja, Stephen Ellis

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Two thousand years ago, the island of Madagascar was likely uninhabited. Its unique flora and fauna had gone totally undisturbed by human contact until the first navigators landed on its shores. No one knows where those first inhabitants hailed from, but over the centuries Madagascar developed its own distinctive language and cultural systems. The only recent history of its kind in English, *Madagascar*, traces two millennia of human activity in one of the world's most fascinating, yet least-known, societies.

In graceful prose, Solofo Randrianja and Stephen Ellis, both leading historians of Madagascar, elucidate the three main phases of its history: the earliest settlements, the age of kingdoms, and the island's entry into intercontinental systems of commerce and exchange, including over sixty years under French rule. Through the course of this colorful and turbulent history, Randrianja and Ellis explore the tensions between the development of a unique culture and the absorption of immigrants, the development of strong social hierarchies, and the long-lasting effects of slavery and the slave trade.

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