...we have never been aware as we now are of how oddly hybrid historical and cultural experiences are, of how they partake of many often contradictory experiences and domains, cross national boundaries, defy the police action of simple dogma and loud patriotism. Far from being unitary or monolithic or autonomous things, cultures actually assume more ‘foreign elements, alterities, differences, than they consciously exclude (Edward Said 1994).

Since the island of Timor was first visited by Portuguese navigators, a mere twenty or so years after Columbus crossed the Atlantic ocean in 1492, and within years of the passage of the first caravels through the Straits of Malacca, Portugal has been the dominant external influence, at least on the eastern part of the island. Equally, many Timorese share at least part Portuguese ancestry while many more have adopted the religion of their former colonizer. The exception to this fact of life was the brief but destructive occupation of Timor by Japan (and Australia) during the Pacific War, and the near-genocidal impact of the Indonesian military invasion and annexation of the half-island commencing in 1975-76. Even so, as continuing acts of resistance to this occupation reveal, the Timorese have not easily acquiesced in their dominance by outsiders, now or in the past. No less important, with the reversion of Macau to Chinese sovereignty in 1999, East Timor along with, perhaps, Western Sahara and New Caledonia remains the major case of unrequited decolonization left in the world. As a work of historical sociology, this book seeks to explain the world-historical incorporation of Timor over long time, especially between the poles of colonial domination on the one hand, and accommodation and resistance, on the other.

Timor’s location on the map, which became well known to American whalers in the nineteenth century, was also evoked by the author of *Moby-Dick*, who observed that, stretching
southeastwards “in a continuous line” from the Malay peninsula, “the long islands of Sumatra, Java, Bally and Timor, which, with many others, form a vast mole, or rampart, lengthwise, connecting Asia with Australia, and dividing the long unbroken Indian ocean from the thickly studded oriental archipelagos.” [1] While the deep and narrow straits separating these islands offered passage to the first circumnavigation of the globe—and also to Melville’s migrating whales—the strategic importance of these passages for American submarines moving from the northern Pacific to the Indian oceans was also not lost upon Pentagon planners and their Australian counterparts at the time when Timorese clamoured for independence in 1975.

Stretching 470 kilometres along a southwest-northeast axis, 110 kilometres wide at its broadest part, the island of Timor occupies an area of 32,300 square kilometres. Lying some 430 kilometres distant from northern Australia across the Arafura or Timor sea, the island is situated some eight to ten degrees south of the equator. While more than one observer has commented upon the crocodile-like shape of Timor, the island takes its name from the Malay term for east, reflecting its easternmost location in the archipelago.

While colonial spheres of influence in the eastern archipelago were subject to change, by the modern period Portuguese administration extended over the eastern part of the island of Timor including the small enclave of Oecussi on the central north coast, the island of Atauro visible offshore the capital city of Dili, and Jaco island in the extreme east. With an area of 18,899 square kilometres and a population of 700,000 (1974 figures), Portuguese Timor was small. [2] Moreover, within the Portuguese empire Timor was extremely isolated, 3,200 kilometres from Macau on the coast of China, and 11,500 kilometres from Mozambique. Yet, as an independent state, East Timor—as the territory is known today in the counsels of the UN—would equal in size and population some forty independent states. In the Southeast Asian region,
the territory is four times larger than Brunei Darussalam and forty times larger than Singapore. The most arid and ecologically precarious of the Lesser Sunda islands, Timor nevertheless bears traces of both the luxuriant rain forests of tropical Indonesia, and the arid landscape of northern Australia. The visitor to Timor can be surprised at finding distinctive eucalyptus and acacia forests along with more typical Southeast Asian flora. As the visiting 19th century English naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace described it, a vast difference in the “natural productions” beset the eastern end of the chain from the west, matched by a great contrast in climate, moist in the west with only a short dry season, and “dry and parched up” in the extreme east with only a short wet season. [3] Such defined what the modern Dutch geographer, F. J. Ormeling called the “Timor problem,” a reference to the sharp contrast between the wet west monsoon that blows between November to April in the north and the very long dry monsoon. Even though the central highlands are subject to rain between May and August, variability of precipitation aggravates a number of climatically-related problems such as drought and erosion of landscape. [4] Timor, along with the easternmost of the Sunda chain, typically also expresses the well known contrast within “Indonesian” societies between those based upon intensive rice cultivation such as Java and Bali and those of the “outer islands” where, because of adverse ecological conditions, ladang or shifting cultivation predominated.

Ormeling also speaks of a “capricious” even “freakish” relief on Timor, a reference to the mountainous backbone of parallel ridges which divides Timor lengthwise and forms an important watershed dividing the northern coastal plains from those of the south coast. [5] Geographers find four broad natural climatic zones in Timor by altitude and location. These are, first, the hot and dry north coastal zone reaching up to 600m altitude and, second, the hot and humid south coast up to 600m. Directly influenced by the monsoon where there is a six month
dry period, the coastal plains of the north supports grasslands encroached upon by secondary forest and savanna, including species of eucalyptus and tamarind. Mangrove forest occupies a distinct niche on the banks of the tidal rivers, albeit of reduced area in eastern Timor. Coastal vegetation reaches fuller development on the south coast where there are two rainy seasons. Here are found stands of casuarinas on sandy soils, occasionally, palms and pandanus, giving away to more complex floral types of typical mixed forest. But it is the lontar palm (*borassus sundaicus*) which is the most useful plant and has led some to describe a lontar culture, especially in west Timor and Roti. While much reduced by burnings and agricultural reclamation, the south coast, the interior of Oecusse, and certain mountainous regions, carry the last remaining zones of primary forest. The third zone, the temperate mountain zone situated between 600 to 1200m, supports a savannah type vegetation, although from 800m upwards, *eucalyptus decaisneana* is the distinctive vegetation form. This zone is also host to the last remaining stands of Timor’s famed *santalum album* or sandalwood. The fourth or cold zone over 1200m features typical montagne type vegetation including mosses.

From a natural history perspective, Wallace found across the Timor chain an almost equal population of bird species derived from either Java and Australia, “but quite distinct from each other.” Of land mammals on Timor, he found not one in six was of Australian origin. While he found this surprising, especially as the continental shelf of Australia extends to within 30 kilometres of Timor, it nevertheless afforded evidence that the two were never connected in recent geological ages. Contra Darwin’s thesis of random population of oceanic islands, he found Timor a true example of an “oceanic island in miniature.” Not only did this suggest to Wallace that the Timor chain, including Timor, was never connected to the Australian continent, but enabled him to adduce an independent origin. Yet, the division he made as naturalist, did not
correspond with observed physical or climatic divisions. For Wallace, the world's first biogeographer, it was not the island of Timor but the Straits of Lombok which formed the great zoological divide in the chain, hence the “Wallace Line.” [8]

While we reserve a discussion of indigenous Timorese identity to an opening chapter, it should be well understood that colonialism bequeathed its own distinctive *mestiço* or mixed race culture, more predominant in the towns, including Sino-Timorese, Afro-Timorese, Goan-Timorese, and mixed Portuguese-Timorese. The political importance of all the major ethnocultural groupings of Timor, from the quintessential Tetum-speaking Maubere or indigène, to the so-called “Black Portuguese” of the Oecusse area, to the urbanized Portugalized *mestiço* elite, will become apparent in the telling of this history. José Ramos-Horta, co-winner of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize for his diplomatic efforts on behalf of East Timorese independence, has explained this heritage as, “Melanesian which binds us to our brothers and sisters of the South Pacific region; Malay-Polynesian binding us to Southeast Asia; and the Latin Catholic influence, a legacy of almost 500 years of Portuguese colonialization.” [9]

But while the first Western navigators to touch these shores in the sixteenth century were Portuguese, their more aggressive commercial and religious rivals, the Dutch, were not far behind. Both, to degrees, were obliged to accommodate to local and regional forms of tributary power. Locally, such power took the form of native coalitions that, surprisingly, endured over long time. Regionally, neither of the Western powers could survive or prosper without major accommodation with well entrenched Chinese trading-tributary networks. As this book unfolds, the role of Timor in the long distance trade in sandalwood gives this otherwise obscure island an unprecedented prominence in the attentions of outsiders.
By setting down the boundary dividing colonial spheres of influence on Timor, however, the two concerned powers, Holland and Portugal, unleashed a terrible hubris. Reminiscent of the colonial divide-up of Africa, the colonial powers failed to take into account the ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity of the island’s peoples, nor indeed the pre-colonial political “unity” of Timor. The question of colonial boundaries, as discussed in chapter 7, was only settled in 1916 after much complex litigation including numerous complex trade-offs of enclaves.10 But when control over Dutch Timor formally passed to the Republic of Indonesia on 2 November 1949, Portugal, under the Salazar and Cataeno dictatorships, delayed the decolonization process in Portugal’s territories. Paradoxically, then, the tantalizing prospect of independence that was thrust before the peoples of the half-island in late 1974 with the triumph of the left-wing Armed Forces Movement in Lisbon, as mirrored in the struggles of the peoples of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, and Cape Verde, and their subsequent transitions to full statehood, was extinguished with Indonesia’s illegal invasion, occupation, and annexation of the colony in 1975-76.

As various UN resolutions make clear, an internationally recognized act of self-determination has not transpired in East Timor. At this writing, Portugal, not Indonesia, is still considered by the UN as the “administering power” in East Timor. Altogether, two Security Council resolutions and eight General Assembly resolutions have been passed on East Timor following the Indonesian invasion and annexation of the territory. All are still binding. [11] To achieve a comprehensive solution to the problem, General Assembly resolution 37/30 of 23 November 1982 requested the UN Secretary-General to “initiate consultations with all parties directly concerned.” It is under this mandate that the UN today re-engages in the problem. [12]
While colonial historiography invariably assigns its military campaigns against rebellious subjects to a benighted “pacification” or “civilization” exercise, national reconstructions of colonial incorporation invariably view the doomed stands of rebel chiefs, warriors, and their followers, as heroic struggles, “wars of independence” and precursors to “national liberation.” For the colonizer, and the Portuguese in Timor were no exception, the civilizing mission could not proceed without the pacification of rebellious subjects while, ipso facto, the standard colonial agenda of development/exploitation awaited the participation of subjects in metropolitan rituals. Characteristically, also, in colonial settings, the missionization of erstwhile pagan masses was the test of colonial success. The matter is bound to be controversial. As the debate surrounding the quincentenary of Columbus’ “discovery” of America revealed, incorporation was not achieved without extremes of violence, acts of high plunder, and massive deracination if not genocide of the victims of such unequal exchanges in naval and military technology.

Yet, the characterization of anti-colonial rebellions that typically confronted outside intruders and erstwhile civilizers alike is not so straightforward and, in any case, is the subject of much theorizing as much hyperbole. First, such rebellions were not of a piece. Second, not all rebellions were anti-colonial but could equally be ascribed to revolts against traditional power or as internecine revolts that pitted one clan or ethnic group against another. Another phenomena, widely described in the literature on incorporation, is the proclivity to revolt by devotees of some messianic belief, albeit a practice that predates and postdates the colonial encounter. Second, what such mono-causal accounts often downplay is the destabilizing impact of the colonial encounter, especially as colonial agents and their local collaborators were called upon to lean more heavily upon the subject people to supply military details, corvées, and, in a later stage,
taxes and dues, redeemable in money form. Besides taking into consideration the degree of incorporation or, in other language, the differential impact of colonial capitalism upon an erstwhile pre-capitalist setting, it is also important to consider the changing balance of military technology; whether the victims of colonial fire-power were able to breast their opponents through the adoption of more sophisticated forms of weaponry, and, of no less importance, the question of ideology and organization. By this is meant, whether the revolt is led by men and women with a national vision, one that subordinates primordial loyalties into a quest for “national independence” and statehood or whether it is backward or regressionist in character? While there have been notable exceptions—the slaves revolt in Haiti was one—such national struggles characteristically awaited the great decolonization struggles of the last half of the twentieth century, led by scions of the colonial education system, nationalist intellectuals whose world view, sophistication, and military prowess was such as to turn colonial rhetoric of liberty, equality, and democracy back upon erstwhile colonial masters.

The case of Portuguese Timor is illustrative, standing out in the Southeast Asian context, not especially for the level of violence used to neutralize rebellion, but for the longevity of rebellion, and even the inter-generational character of the rebellions down to modern times. Indeed, the exceptional and ritualized character of warfare in Timor—the Timorese *funu*—was recognized by such Portuguese writers as Governor Affonso de Castro, writing in the 1860s: “...as rebelios em Timor teem sido successivas, podendo dizer-se que a revolta e ali o estado normal e a tranquilidade o excepcional.” [13] While the longevity of the rebellions is not controversial, the same cannot be said of attribution of cause.

Typically, nationalist historiography ascribes hero status to rebels against colonial
authority. The Boaventura rebellion in Timor, ending only in 1912 is a case in point, although, as discussed in detail in the text, it has significant preludes and certain sequels. To take another “Melanesian” example, the Kanak insurrection of 1878, albeit crushed, is seen by modern nationalists in New Caledonia as a major historical event in the drive for self-determination and for control over land otherwise dispossessed by the colonial invader.[14] Elsewhere I have written of the rebellions that sundered the paix françaises in another French colony, Laos, driven as much by messianic dreams as resistance to incorporation through corvée and tax regimes beyond their mental horizons.[15]

Another way that Portuguese Timor stands apart from the nationalist upheavals that transpired in Southeast Asia in the wake of the Japanese occupation was that no such nationalist/independence movement was spawned by the Japanese, such as transpired in Indonesia under Sukarno, Burma under Aung San, Malaya under Ibrahim Yacuub, and so on. Postwar, with the connivance of the Allied powers, Portugal eased its way back into power in Dili, as if the war was but an interruption to empire. Alone, in colonial Southeast Asia, no underground communist movement emerged in Portuguese Timor, in either the prewar or postwar period. In part this owed to the successes of Salazar’s secret police, but also to the failure of the state in Timor to even succour an educated class such as in neighbouring Dutch, British, and French colonies. All the more the irony, then, in 1975 when Indonesian propaganda convinced some that an independent East Timor under the rule of the first Jesuit-trained native elite would emerge as a Southeast Asian Cuba.

To be sure, as Rowland, the compiler of one recent compendium of writings on Timor has written, there exists a large body of literature devoted to an island of its size. But while
numerous documentary and technical studies were produced on Timor in, respectively, Portugal and the Netherlands during colonial times, the period after 1974, Rowland continues, stands out for its “isolation from the world press, numerous restrictions on information, and questionable facts and figures.” Writing of the post-annexation literature, Rowland asserts, “The issue of truth and falsehood weigh heavily with the reader.” [16] True, but not necessarily the case for the scientific investigator. In any case one axiom of historical reconstruction is that the basic facts of historiographical bias have to be laid bare before even the facts can be assembled into any coherent picture.

As the bibliographer of Portuguese Timor, Kevin Sherlock, has written, most books in Portuguese language about the history of Timor have concentrated on the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Very few books have covered the history until the twentieth century. Those that do offer but superficial coverage of the twentieth century and ignore nineteenth century developments. As products of Portuguese colonial historiography, they tend to accentuate the more positive aspects of relations with the mother country. In English language writing, by contrast, Sherlock identifies two genres of writings; those who have used Portuguese language documentation, but who report principally on the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, and those which deal with East Timor in the 1970s, but which included one or two chapters on the earlier history based upon writings of the first category, and on English and Dutch travel accounts, occasional newspaper reports, and diplomatic correspondence from the nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, ipso facto, material not particularly sympathetic to the Portuguese position. [17]

The documentation of Timor of course has long antecedents and goes back to the origins
of the Dominican missions in Solor and Timor, and it is to them that Europe first gained knowledge of Timor’s basic anthropology and ensemble of strategic resources including timbers and other botanical resources, minerals, saltpetre and so on. While certain of the Dominican studies remained in obscure manuscript form others went through a number of printings and translations in Europe. Notable in this sense were João de Santos’ *Ethiopia Oriental* and Luís de Sousa’s *Historia de S. Domingos*. While of course the major impetus behind such publications was Christian proselytization, one should not ignore the effect of the Renaissance on the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake. Outstanding in this sense was the undated folio by the Dominican missionary Fr. Alberto de S. Thomaz entitled “*Virtudes de algumas Platas, Folhas, Cascas e raizes de differentes Arvores da Ilha de Timor*” or “the virtues of some plants, leaves, barks and roots of various trees and bushes of the island of Timor,” a collection of watercolour drawings with description of various trees and plants along with medicinal properties. Believed to have been executed in the late eighteenth century, this work would have been near contemporaneous with Carl Thunberg’s celebrated *Flora Japonica* (1779), to strike another example from Asia.

Outside of Dutch and Portuguese colonial records, largely treated as political intelligence, the documentation of Timor began to expand conterminous with the age of great voyages of scientific discovery, albeit often disguising political or commercial motives on the part of other European powers. As Portuguese investigator Ruy Cinatti has written in a survey essay, botanical exploration was one leitmotif connecting the interest of outsiders in Timor commencing with the albeit chance arrival in Kupang of Captain William Bligh of Bounty fame in June 1789 whose botanical collections undertaken on the Timorese littoral eventually found their way to the Kew Gardens in London. Beginning in the opening years of the nineteenth
century Kupang became the major port of call for a number of visiting European naturalists; including the French visitors Riedle, Sautier and Guichenot on board two French vessels, the *Naturaliste* and the *Géographe* which both reached Kupang in 1801. Gaudichaud, on board the *l’Uranie* (1818), part of the second major French expedition to Timor commanded by Louis de Freycinet, also had the distinction of being the first botanist to visit Dili. Dumont d’Urville, commander of the French vessel *Astrolobe*, was another. Other distinguished European visitors to the Portuguese colony included the British empire builders Allan Cunningham and Captain King (1818-19), and the scientist-travellers Wallace, who resided four months in Dili and some weeks in Kupang between 1857-61, and Henry O. Forbes and wife (1882-83) who travelled extensively in the colony while studying its botany. The Dutch were hardly disengaged from this enterprise and visitors of this nationality included Reinwardt (1822), Spanoghe, the resident of Kupang who published the results of his botanical investigations, and Teysmann (1830-80), occasional visitor to Timor for the Buitenzorg gardens in Java, among others. [18]

The first Portuguese to systematically enter the scientific field, however, was José Gomes da Silva (1887), then head of medical services in Timor and author of “*Catelogo de plantas de macau e timor,*” published in the *Boletim Oficial do Governo de Macau e Timor* (Vol. 33, no.1 a 26, 1887). Just as the collections of European botanists found their way back to, respectively, Kew Gardens, Paris, Buitenzorg or Leiden, so Gomes da Silva’s collection found its way back to the Botanical Institute of the University of Coimbra. [19]

Moving from botany to anthropology to more specifically physical anthropology, Timor also attracted the attentions of the “Victorians,” According to A.A. Mendes Corrêa, this field of investigation in Timor can be traced back to Péron (1807), and de Freycinet (1825), carried on,
inter alias by Earl (1853), Wallace (1865 and 1879), Forbes (1885), and Ten Kate (1893). The
overriding preoccupation of these investigators was the question as to whether the Timorese
were of Papuan or Indonesian origin, or some kind of mixture. The fascination with physical
anthropology continued in the interwar period, albeit with a dominance—although not complete
—by the Dutch. [20]

There is no question, however, that the research environment improved in Portuguese
Timor only to the extent that the government could put the 1912 Boaventura rebellion behind
them. Similarly the cartographic work of the Portuguese-Dutch Frontier Commission in the last
decades of the nineteenth century was contingent upon the overall pacification of the frontier
peoples. Again it might be said that while Dutch researchers led the first attempts to
scientifically analyse the social structure of the Timorese, namely that by the Dutch civil
servant, Grijzen (1904), who researched the Belu, along with Fiedler (1927), Bijlmer (1929), and
Meyer (1936), it is important to recall the important research by Portuguese scholars on the
broad area of social anthropology including linguistics undertaken in the interwar period, albeit
on a fairly ad hoc level. Notable are the works of Osório de Castro (1908), the writings of
António Leite de Magalhaes on Atauro, especially on linguistics (1918), J.A. Fernandes (1923),
Humberto Leitão (1929), Garces de Lencastre (1931-34), Armando Pinto Correia (1934), Paulo
Braga (1935), and José S. Martinho (1943). [21]

The first to raise the question of history, historiography and sources, albeit from within a
colonial framework, was Governor de Castro who commented in his 1867 book, As possesões
portuguesa na Oceania, that next to nothing had been written on Timor outside of official
memos and colonial reports. In fact, de Castro goes far to rectify this lacunae, drawing from
surviving archival sources along with insights gained in office. Divided into two parts, one addressing history, and the other addressing economics and politics, this work remains an essential source, especially for its statistical compilations and economic data. But while standing in the mainstream of colonial historiography, de Castro’s was a revisionist text for its time, urging a more concerted developmentalist project in the colony similar to that undertaken in the neighbouring Dutch East Indies. [22]

Writing of west Timor in the middle of this century, Ormeling observes that reports on Timor are slight in the records of the Dutch East India Company that represented Dutch commercial and political authority in Kupang until the early modern period and that the Kupang records were lost during the British interregnum of 1812-15. But while the extant record addresses the struggle with Portugal, political relations with native chiefs, and profits of the sandalwood trade, the Dutch were confined during most of the period to their stronghold in Kupang and immediate surroundings and later Atapupu. [23] Nevertheless, in the writing of a history of Portuguese Timor, it is important, following Ormeling’s method, to track contemporaneous political and social developments in the Dutch colony especially where they impact upon inter-colonial relations.

It is also of interest to observe that it was not until the military pacification of Dutch Timor, essentially completed by 1910, that west Timor became the object of scholarly enquiry by both governmental and non governmental agents in such areas as forestry, agriculture, and anthropology. But it was the Leiden School of anthropology, notably the influential work of F.A.E van Wouden in the early 1930s that placed the societies of eastern Indonesia, including the island of Timor on the anthropological map. As James J. Fox has explained in a preface to a
collection authored by a range of Western anthropologists working within van Wouden’s structuralist framework in Timor in the 1960s and early 1970s, the anthropology of eastern Indonesia is distinctive in the way of development of structuralist theories of marital exchange and symbolic classification. As Fox explains, an appreciation of alliance relationships in Timor, whether mythic, symbolic, or otherwise, is critical to a political understanding of those peoples formerly organized into small states that had their own rulers and local communities centred around certain cult sites and ceremonial leaders incorporated into administrative systems of indirect rule under, variously, Dutch and Portuguese domination. [24]

Compared with Dutch Timor, where scholarly investigation went hand in hand with colonial penetration, in Portuguese Timor, it was the Catholic church that took the lead in areas of scholarship bound to assist with the project of evangelization. Such was Pe.Sebastio Maria Aparicio da Silva’s, Catecismo da Doutrina Cristã em Tetum (1885), Manuel Maria Alves da Silva, Metodo para Assistis a Missa em Galoli, (1888) and the same author’s Dicionario Portuguese-Galoli (1905). To these pioneering works in lexicography and language, all published in Macau, might be added Rafael das Dores, Dicionario Teto-Portuguese, (1907), P. Abílio Fernandes, Esboço histórico e do estado actual das missões de Timor (1934), and P. Manuel Patricio Mendes, Dicionario Tetum-Portuguese (1935). In this sense, Macau served as a surrogate press for Timor, otherwise supporting a minuscule reading much less literate population. It was also the church which published the first non-official publication in the colony. This was Seara, first launched in January 1949 and still published, albeit as a new series, the Boletim Eclesiastico da Diocese de Dili–Timor Oriental, under the editorship of Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, with José Ramos Horta, joint winner of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize. Otherwise the periodical press in Portuguese Timor did not exist until the establishment in Dili in
1900 of the Imprensa Nacional de Timor and the launching in the same year of the Boletim Official do Distrito Autonomo de Timor, although official notices on Timor were earlier published in the Boletim do Governo da Província de Macau, Timor e Solor commencing on 5 September 1838 and in the Boletim Oficial de Macau e Timor which, from 1897, ceased to include Timor in the title. Beginning with the publication in 1909 of Memória Descriptiva dos recursos Agrícolas da Possessão Portuguesa de Timor; by António Leite de Magalhaes, the Imprensa Nacional in Dili printed a small list of titles at irregular intervals down unto the outbreak of war, notably including the Boletim de Comércio, Agricultura e Fomento de Timor (1912-20).[25]

Postwar, the official publication program revived with the publication of Crónica de Timor (1949) and, commencing in October 1946, Boletim Oficial de Timor, which had been suspended during the war years. The first regular newspaper in the colony did not commence until 1960, namely A Voz de Timor, followed in 1964 by A Provincia de Timor, albeit targeted at members of the military. Timor Leste: Journal do Povo Mau Bere, organ of the pro-independence Fretelin movement proved to be as short-lived as its period of administration in Dili. Launched in late September 1975, it folded with the Indonesian invasion in December that year. As discussed below, Timor Leste also pioneered publication in romanized Tetum. We should also not neglect a genre of writing that included missives and defences by government officials and even Governors. Some of these were written to set the record straight or to deflect criticism. Examples are the anonymously written Timor: Latrocinios, Assassinatos e Perseguições (1911), Teofilio Duarte’s Timor: Ante camara do Inferno (1944), right down to Maria Lemos Pires’ aptly titled work on his hapless role in extricating Portugal from Timor in the wake of the Indonesian invasion of Dili, Descolonização de Timor: Missão Impossível, (1991).
Others took a more reflective or even critical position. Still others had literary presumptions. An example is Alferes António Metello, *Timor fantasma do oriente*, (1923). But outstanding in this sense is Alberto Osório de Castro’s *Flores de Coral: Ultimas poemas* (1908), not only the first book published in Dili, but an enduring work of literary as well as scientific observation. This tradition of human geography, ethnography and philology was carried on by another administrator-scholar, Armando Pinto Correia, in his *Gentio de Timor* (1934). But it was Ruy Cinatti, the renaissance man of Timor studies on history, art, architecture and landscape, who also bequeathed the finest legacy in terms of literary appreciation. Ruy Cinatti’s three volumes of poetry *Uma Sequencia timorense* (1970), *Timor Amor* (1974), *Paisagens Timorenses com vultos* (1974) are exemplary, and acknowledged as such by a lusophone Timorese audience.

Building upon de Castro’s pioneering study which historian Charles Boxer praised in a 1949 review of the literature on Timor as not diminished in value after a lapse of nearly a century, a number of studies on Timor, mostly by former serving colonial officials, began to appear in the first half of this century. Many of these fall into Sherlock’s first genre of writing, especially given over to facts of discovery and conquest. Notable in this sense were the works of A. Faria de Morais *Subsidios para a historia de Timor*, published in 1934 and his *Solor e Timor* published in 1944. While Boxer is dismissive in chastising Morais’ tendency to long “discursive asides” and “much jejune moralizing,” he concedes their value in publishing extracts from the Goa archives. Boxer was much more impressed with Humberto Leitão’s now dated *Os Portuguese em Solor e Timor de 1515 a 1702* (1948), which he styled the best book on Timor’s history at that time. More focused than Morais, Leitão offers much new material and prints many documents for the first time. Yet, like all other works by Portuguese authors on the subject, Boxer comments, he supplies neither index nor bibliography.[26]
The same period and much of the same material is also covered in the massive 1,200 page trilogy by Luna de Oliveira, *Timor na historia de Portugal* (1949, 1950, 1952). While encyclopaedic in scope and written from a classic Portugalized perspective, this work also suffers from a none too clear identification of sources. Boxer’s own contribution, as professional historian in a number of less ambitious studies is to impose order, context, and synthesis upon otherwise diffuse archival and church sources.[27] Although covering the same period, Artur Teodor de Matos’ *Timor Português, 1515-1769: contribução para a sua história* (1974) is cited by one bibliographer as “the best single volume on Portuguese rule yet available.”[28] Originating as a university thesis, de Matos’ study brings to bear on Timor a new detachment and professionalism.

However, it was not until 1996 that a major work emerged on Timorese history outside of a colonialist perspective covering the hitherto neglected nineteenth century. This, however, has been accomplished in French language not Portuguese, and by an Africanist, not an Asianist. In thus meeting Sherlock’s objections, René Pélissier, author of *Timor en Guerre: Le Crocodile et les Portugais (1847-1913)*, has achieved a new level of informed and critical scholarship on Timor. Pélissier has not only tapped a reservoir of archival and non-archival sources on Timor to reconstruct this period, but has entered a critical interrogation of these sources, especially where he matches Dutch with Portuguese. But while philosophical as to the limits and uses of colonial documentation, he is less conscious as to historical method. Thus where he is strong on events, he is less revealing as to social structures, and where he is illuminating in drawing comparisons between Timor and Portuguese Africa, he ignores the rich and relevant work on theory of colonial capitalism as creatively engaged by French Africanist scholarship in the 1970s. [29]
While prewar Dutch scholarship placed west Timor squarely on the map of scientific
endeavour, postwar the reverse was the case. In any case major impetus to systematic research
such as was drawn up in Portuguese Timor in the prewar period was drastically interrupted by
the Japanese occupation of the island in 1942. Postwar, however, research in Timor as in other
Portuguese colonies began to gather momentum under the auspices the Centro de Estudos de
Antropobiologia or at least its pre-1962 predecessor Etnologie do Ultramar, currently known as
the Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical. Under this program António de Almeida (1994),
A.A. Mendes Corrêa (1954), Ruy Cinatti (1950), and J. Camarate Franca, on mission for the
Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, laid down the foundations of a body of scientific research
in Timor in such fields as prehistory, geology, soil-types, ethnozoology, parasitology, botany,
ethnology, linguistics, art, architecture, and cognate fields, otherwise published or presented at
international conferences. Significant monographs produced under this program include Felgas
(1956) on economy, Lains e Silva (1956) also on economy, and Basilio de Sá (1958), on history.
[30] Other laudable monographs to appear in Portuguese language in the colonial period include
António Duarte de Almeida e Carmo’s ethnology on the Mambai (1965) and Jorge Barros Duarte

It is certainly not the case that Timor has been neglected in Portuguese letters, but just
that few of the massive histories and compilations of documents went beyond a Portugalizing
perspective. Few could see Portuguese colonialism in the mid-twentieth century for what it was;
an anachronism, although that also held for many other colonialisms and their boosters,
Australian, French, British and others. Not surprisingly no Portuguese language study of Timor
before 1975, perhaps outside of anthropology, could look ahead at an autonomous view of
Timorese culture and history. [31] A more damaging criticism, perhaps, is that, dominated by ex-
officials, the Timor field hardly produced a single methodologically self-conscious work, one that set Timor within any particular political economy framework. In this sense, few rose above the above-cited work of Governor de Castro.

Undoubtedly unique in Southeast Asia, if not the former colonized world owing to the facts of Indonesian annexation, a national historiography of East Timor has developed outside of state sponsorship and springs exclusively from the pens of Timorese intellectuals in the diaspora. Nevertheless, even prior to the Indonesian invasion, youthful Timorese intellectuals and erstwhile nationalists articulated an entirely coherent historicist position concerning their past as much the character of Timor’s world-historical incorporation. Progenitors of this tradition were the future leaders of the major political parties that burgeoned in East Timor after the “Carnation revolution” in Portugal in April 1974, almost to a man (and woman) graduates from either the Jesuit seminaries of Timor and Macau, or, from metropolitan universities. Finding outlet at first in the church publication, Seara, full exposition awaited the publication of the Fretilin newspaper, Jornal de Povo Mau Bere.

This tradition, continued in exile, found its most developed form, at least in historical reconstruction, in the writings of (expelled) Fretilin leader and historian, Abilio Araujo, in his Timor Leste: Os Loricos Voltaram a Cantar: Das Guerras Independentistas a Revolução do Povo Maubere, published in Lisbon in 1977. [32] It is also a tradition continued by José Ramos-Horta. In his 1987 work, Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor, [33] Ramos Horta expounds upon East Timor’s predicament vis-à-vis the UN and the organized hypocrisy of certain nations in setting down double standards on such international issues as East Timor. It is also a tradition carried on in tremendous adversity by East Timorese resistance leader, José (Xanana) Gusmão,
in a large corpus of analytical politico-strategical writings, first from the mountains of East Timor, and later from Cipinang prison in Jakarta, evoking the image of, variously, a Timorese Che Guevara, Gramsci, and Abraham Lincoln. [34]

Abilio Araujo, as historian, has written that historical events recorded by Portuguese historians writing on Timor usually reflected Portuguese interests. [35] While this is perhaps understandable, it is also the case that Timorese history is subject to official Indonesian interpretation, especially in the way of emphasizing the cultural and political unities on the island, a view of history serviceable to the political integration of the two halves of the island into the larger Indonesian ensemble. Publications and sponsored scholarship of the Centre of Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Jakarta, might be taken as representative of this school, although this institution has no monopoly.

Even before the armed annexation of East Timor, however, such Indonesian nationalist historians as Mohammad Yamin viewed Timor as part of a great historical entity centred upon ancient Javanese empire. While that view has been more serviceable to Indonesian nationalist politics than accurate, Indonesian writings on Timor post-1975 are even more dismissive of an autonomous East Timorese history. Today, Timorese history, with the island of Timor treated as a spurious unity, is relegated as one aspect of the Indonesian struggle against the Dutch and—anomalously—the Portuguese, as part of the history of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia. Timorese history, refracted through the prism of the Indonesian state ideology of Panca Sila, serves to minimalize the role and legacy of half a millennium of the Latin contact, ipso facto, and mirroring the active de-Latinization wrought by the Indonesian civil and military authorities since the invasion, the East Timorese resistance—erstwhile inheritors of state power
—are, today, treated in this discourse as mere bandits or separatists. While it is not the purpose here to rewrite Timorese history from a nationalist standpoint—a project better left to East Timorese historians—it will suffice in this work, however, to explain how the world-incorporation of Timor was achieved, what social changes were engendered by colonialism and how the Timorese responded to their encounter with colonialism.

In the sense of standing above both Portuguese and Indonesian historiography, we should also look to the labours of what might be called an “Anglo-Saxon” school of Timor studies, Sherlock’s second genre of writings. Members of this school, whose publications saw the light of day in the mid to late 1970s, include the anthropologist James Fox, along with a number of American and British anthropologists who studied in Timor in the fading months of colonial rule. To these must be added the journalists Bill Nicol, Jill Jolliffe, and Helen Hill, and the ex-diplomat, James Dunn, each of whom authored monographs or theses on Timor or produced various works of advocacy in favour of their erstwhile subjects of study and observation.

The question remains, however, as to the veracity of colonial documentation of the life and times of colonial subjects. The limitations of history from above are as obvious as the attractions of a people’s history are compelling. One attempt is Michele Turner’s salutary Telling, an attempt at oral reconstruction of events within living memory. [36] Still, the limitations of verbatim memory are obvious in a history encompassing long time. Moreover, the actors that Turner so vividly brought to life are also players on a larger stage hostage to larger forces and drives. Without burdening the discussion with theory, this greater force might be labelled as colonialism, a shorthand term that draws in such subtextual questions as capitalism, imperialism, rivalry, subjugation, and exploitation.
The problem of periodization of Timorese history has engaged colonial historiography as much as Timorese historians. [37] From a Westernizing perspective, or at least a perspective that engages the colonial incorporation of Timor as a dependent tributary within a broader “modern world-system,” several discrete stages are identifiable, albeit within a 500 year framework. A first stage commences in 1515 with the formation of Christian communities on Solor and Timor but with the seats of religious and temporal power actually sited in, respectively, Solor and Flores. This period also coincides with Timor’s incorporation into long distance maritime trading networks, part of a global Western-dominated system of capital accumulation. A second stage commences in 1695 with the advent of rule by the Portuguese Crown from its seat of power in Lifau in the enclave of Oecusse. A third period coincides with the eastward shift of the capital from Lifau to Dili in 1769. A fourth period starts in 1836 with various administrative rationalizations linking Timor with, respectively, Goa and Macau, or after 1896, as a colonial dependency of Portugal. To degrees, this period also represents a transition from indirect rule based upon the extraction of goods in kind to experimentation with pre-capitalist and even capitalist forms of accumulation, especially in the plantation sector. Though this period is interrupted by the Japanese interregnum of 1941-45—an intra-imperialist conflict—the colonial status quo was not only restored but existed up until the short-lived Fretilin administration of October-December 1975 ending with the Indonesian invasion of that month.

But especially with the Indonesian annexation of Timor, can the 500 year history thesis as defended by Wallerstein (1974) and Samir Amin (1991) be sustained against the argument developed by Frank and Gills (1993), that much of the periphery was home to world-systems of its own long before the Colombian revolution, stretching back at least five thousand years? In the case of Timor, archaeology, naturally, myth and legend, albeit more tenuously, but also
Timorese pride in their Melanesian roots would tend to support this view. So, as discussed below, would Timor's seminal importance as the eastern terminus of a Hinduized trading-tributary network, and, far better documented, as the southern-most outpost of a Chinese trading tributary networks in the south seas. Such a perspective would fit with the thesis of Japanese scholar Takeshi Hamashita (1995) supporting an integrated East Asian tributary trade system to which Western interlopers were forced to accommodate, but never came to dominate. While Indonesia does not base its legal claims to occupied Timor upon such tributary considerations, it is also easy to see how Sino/Islamic/Indo and other parochial alternatives to Eurocentric history can be turned to national advantage. After all, the Portuguese and their Western successors were mere 500 years interlopers in these waters. Or were they?

But from a nationalist perspective, as expressed by Abilio Araujo, can East Timor’s history be glossed as simply a two part movement, namely a first period of guerras independentistas, waged from 1642 to 1912, and a second phase, running from 1912 to 1975 of resistência passiva, punctuated by the rise of Japanese-backed anti-Portuguese colunas negras during the Second World War and the revolt of 1959, out of which emerged a national liberation movement at the vanguard of a struggle leading to the proclamation of the Democratic Republic of East Timor? While this schema is seductive, and merits our attention as an authentically East Timorese interpretation, one that refutes Portuguese, although not necessarily Indonesian historiography, it is, after all, a reductionist view of history, that diminishes the complexities of Timor’s world incorporation, the building of elite coalitions, the whole question of collaboration, not to mention the broadband question of elite nationalism of which Araujo was evidently such a product.
Modern Timor thus presented itself to the world as a paradigm of underdevelopment, an exemplar of a backward, dependent colonial periphery where pre-colonial and even tributary modes of production coexisted with an embryonic plantation economy and where non-economic motives of imperialism appeared to be primordial. But, as with Mozambique, Angola, and other African colonies of Portugal, Timor—or at least the zones of primary colonial and church contact—entered the modern world as a Latinized creolized society par excellence. Grafted upon an Indonesian/Melanesian tributary society and culture system, Timor displayed features both Afro-Indian and Latin, as explained in this book, the fruits of the 450 year Portuguese mission. The fragility of this legacy under the twenty year Indonesian military domination suggests that Portugal erred, not by being there, but by not doing enough.

It is tempting in this to apply to the Timor case certain of the ideas of centre-periphery in the context of the expansion and penetration of European capitalism. But, if by the nineteenth century, the major centres of development in the colonial peripheries were centred on Java and Singapore, later extended to the estate zones of Sumatra and Borneo, then backward zones like Dutch New Guinea, Dutch Timor, and Portuguese Timor may be seen, in the words of one modern historian, as “extremely unimportant backwater reserve(s)” or, like American Indian reservations or South African “homelands,” “deliberately left dormant as outposts and borderlands confirming the importance of the centres and semi-peripheries and ‘true’ peripheries.” [38] While this author comes close to accepting the logic of Indonesian incorporation as a culmination of the unfulfilled social engineering of Dutch imperialism in the East Indies, such a mechanistic or reductionist reading of colonial logic does little service to the Timorese as actors or as victims. While we are also concerned to trace the world-incorporation of Timor into a European-centric networks of accumulation, it is also important to acknowledge
that, unlike American Indian or other aboriginal societies, the Timorese did not collapse under the weight of Portuguese colonialism. The long history of Timorese rebellion suggests that from the earliest times until the first decades of this century, the Portuguese were bound to accommodate themselves to local forms of tributary power. Unlike in aboriginal Australia or post-Colombian America, exterminism was not on the agenda. While the technological means to exterminism had certainly arrived by the early decades of this century and, while the principle was severely tested in the crushing of the Boaventura rebellion and even the 1959 rebellion, the fact of the matter is that the genocide of the Timorese was not a crime committed by the Latin conquistador but by post-colonial successors; a reference to what the Norwegian Nobel Peace Prize Committee described in 1996 as the systematic oppression of the people of East Timor by Indonesia post-1975 leading to “an estimated one-third of the population of East Timor [who] lost their lives due to starvation, epidemics, war and terror.” [39]

Notes
2. By 1980 the population had decreased to just 425,000 owing to the Indonesian invasion in actions deemed by many as genocidal. By 1998 the population had increased to 887,686 including 85,000 immigrants (Updated note, See Frederic Durand, *Timor Lorosa’e, Pays au carrefour de l’Asie et du Pacifique: Un atlas géo-historique*, Presse Universitaires de Marne-Le-Vallée/IRASEC, Champs sur Marne/Bangkok, 2002, pp.87-92).
A wide disparity exists as to the exact area of East Timor, ranging in various publications from 14,600 sq. km to 19,000 sq.km. The range 14, 925 to 14, 609 sq. km appears to be the standard (communication, Kevin Sherlock).
5. Ibid.
   The diplomatic shadowplay behind the Indonesian invasion and annexation of Portuguese Timor is best found in James Dunn, *Timor: A People Betrayed*, The Jacaranda Press, Milton, Queensland, 1983.


18. See Ruy Cinatti Vaz Monteiro Gomes, *Explorações Botânicas em Timor, Estudos, Ensaios e Documentos*, No.IV, Ministerio da Colonias, Lisboa, 1950, pp. 15-17, which carries reproductions of seven plates of this folio (between pp.18-19) along with some interpretation. In this context it is of interest to record that a “historia naturel” of Timor is the subject of a letter written on 15 December 1786 by Governor João Baptista Vieira Godhino (AHU Macau cx 12 No.17 doc 48). Several hyphotheses as to the connection between this letter, the real artist, and the historical personage of Frei Alberto de São Tomás is discussed in great detail in Francisco Leite de Faria, *Estudo Sobre Alberto de São Tomás: Missionário Dominicano em Timor*, Ministério do Ultramar, Lisboa, 1969.

19. Ibid.


21. Ibid.


31. In this sense the work by Luís Filipe F.R. Thomaz, *O Problema Político de Timor*, Livraria Editora Pax, Lda., Braga, Abril de 1975, is exceptional, but explainable by the political conjunctur in which this scholar turned soldier found himself in the last years of colonial rule in Timor.


33. José Ramos-Horta, *Funu*.


35. Araujo, *Timor Leste*.


39. Statement by Norwegian Nobel Committee on Friday, October 11, 1996.