

The colonial ethnological line: Timor and the racial geography of the Malay Archipelago

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This article examines the connected histories of racial science and colonial geography in Island Southeast Asia. By focusing on the island of Timor, it explores colonial boundaries as modes of arranging racial classifications, and racial typologies as forms of articulating political geography. Portuguese physical anthropologist António Mendes Correia's work on the ethnology of East Timor is examined as expressive of these productive connections. Correia's classificatory work ingeniously blended political geography and racial taxonomy. Between 1916 and 1945, mainly based on data from the Portuguese enclave of Oecussi and Ambeno, he claimed a distinct Malayan racial type for the whole colony of 'Portuguese Timor'. Over the years he developed an anthropogeographical theory that simultaneously aimed to reclassify East Timor and to revise the racial cartography of the Malay Archipelago, including Wallace's famous ethnological line.

In this article I examine the epistemic practices, theories, and classificatory imaginaries through which colonial boundaries in Island Southeast Asia became, or failed to become, racialised during the twentieth century. By looking at the case of East Timor, I explore the classificatory work required to hold racial typologies together with spatial distributions of colonial significance. This viewpoint builds on, and contributes to, a growing body of literature in colonial studies and the history of science and geography. Since the 1990s scholars have been exploring the close ties between mapping practices, colonial power, and cartographic representations in the period of European national and colonial expansionism.¹ Cartographic inscriptions of imageries of human difference may have a deeper history in European mapping

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1 Central works include: John B. Harley, *The new nature of maps: Essays in the history of cartography* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Matthew Edney, *Mapping an empire: The geographical construction of British India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). For a recent overview see: Heather Winlow, 'Mapping race and ethnicity', in *International encyclopedia of human geography*, ed. Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2009), pp. 1–11.

traditions. Yet racial mapping as such gained momentum during the nineteenth century, prompted by the establishment of geography and anthropology as companion scientific disciplines, and the strengthening of colonialism, racialism, and nationalist ideologies of ethnic identity.²

These historical processes bear singularly on the European imaginaries of Island Southeast Asia during the colonial period. As historian Bronwen Douglas recently argued, the geography and cartography of wider Oceania — encompassing Island Southeast Asia — was ‘inherently racialised’ since the early nineteenth century, a process clearly revealed in Dumont d’Urville’s seminal divide of Oceania into two racially opposed spaces, Melanesia and Polynesia, in 1832.³ As racial science hardened over the course of the century, ethnological reasoning became closely associated with the inscription of racialised visions of human difference onto space and onto maps.⁴ The terms *Indian*, *Indo-Malay* or *Malay Archipelago* came into being at the juncture of geographical and ethnological language in this context. By the 1840s to 1860s they were widely used by ethnologists to designate the vast world of islands lying in between Asia and the Pacific as a coherent ethno-geographical ‘region’.⁵ This circumscribed a space for intense classificatory debates over racial difference; it also circumscribed a space for political dispute between European colonial powers. While anthropologists sought to inscribe race types into maps and spatial distributions, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French, British, German, Japanese, and then North Americans struggled to appropriate and impose colonial forms of territorial rule in the archipelago. Race types were devised; geographical distributions were mapped; ethnological lines were drawn. Simultaneously, territorial claims for colonial control and for accompanying political borders were made. Boundary-making *among* as well as *within* islands was at stake. In this arena of multiple and conflicting lines, at once epistemic and political, problems of racial classification could emerge as problems of colonial geography. In some instances, racial lines challenged certain colonial orderings, but in other cases racial orderings came into being as doubles of colonial arrangements. The demarcation of race types blended with the demarcation of colonial borders.

Timor Island provides an illuminating case study for reflecting upon these issues. Located between the Asian and the Pacific worlds, at the southeastern tip of the Lesser Sunda Islands, Timor’s geographical position became critical to the international

2 See for example Jeremy W. Crampton, ‘The cartographic calculation of space: Race mapping and the Balkans at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919’, *Social and Cultural Geography* 7, 5 (2006): 731–52; David N. Livingstone, ‘Cultural politics and the racial cartographics of human origins’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35, 2 (2010): 204–21; Norman Etherington, ‘Putting tribes on maps’, in *Mapping colonial conquest: Australia and South Africa*, ed. Norman Etherington (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2007), pp. 11–40.

3 Bronwen Douglas, ‘Terra Australis to Oceania: Racial geography in the “Fifth Part of the World”’, *Journal of Pacific History* 45, 2 (2010): 202. See also Nicholas Thomas, ‘The force of ethnology: Origins and significance of the Melanesia/Polynesia division’, *Current Anthropology* 30, 1 (1989): 27–41.

4 See Claude Blanckaert, ‘Géographie et anthropologie: une rencontre nécessaire (XVIII^e–XIX^e siècle)’, *Ethnologie française* 34 (2004): 661–9; Bronwen Douglas, ‘Geography, raciology and the naming of Oceania’, *Globe* 69 (2011): 1–29.

5 See Chris Ballard, ‘“Oceanic negroes”: Early British anthropology of Papuans, 1820–1869’, in *Foreign bodies: Oceania and the science of race 1750–1940*, ed. Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard (Canberra: ANU ePress, 2008), pp. 157–201.

debate on the races of the Malay Archipelago by the mid-nineteenth century. The Timorese Islanders came to stand paradigmatically for the region's ethnological complexity. In particular, they epitomised in racial thinking the classificatory tension between the then two main categories of 'Oceanic races' in competition, the 'Malay' or 'Malayan' and the 'Papuan'. The history of these two plastic notions, or classificatory regimes, was closely connected with the consolidation of a racialised spatial imaginary of human difference in the region.⁶ Displaying apparently contradictory physical characters, the Timorese seemed to resist categorisation between the *Malayan* categories, representing an affiliation to Asia and yellow race types, and the *Papuan*, standing for affiliation with Melanesian and black race types. As such, Timor came over time to encapsulate the race-mixing problem of these two autochthonous types.

This trajectory as a contested and ambivalent scientific object in anthropological taxonomy coexisted with the turbulent political history of Timor as a colonial space. During the last three centuries Timor Island was a divided territory disputed by external powers. From the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, Timor was broken into two zones of European colonial influence: the Portuguese in the East, and the Dutch in the West. This colonial division may have partly articulated a former distinction between two great zones — *Servião* (West) and *Belos* (East) — that possibly preceded the Europeans.⁷ The geographical borders between the two colonial zones, as well as the shifting political allegiance of both Western and Eastern indigenous kingdoms to either Portuguese or Dutch rulers, remained unclear and ambivalent for many years. Dutch and Portuguese territorial enclaves were also preserved in both sides of the island until a late date. Portugal and Holland agreed with difficulty on demarcated borders, first in a treaty of 1859 and in a final, definitive agreement in 1914. The colonial border thereafter divided the island into two contiguous territories, West (Dutch) and East (Portuguese) Timor. Even after diplomatic agreements, 'Portuguese Timor' (Timor Português) included a small part of West Timor, the Oecussi and Ambeno enclave. In 1975 the Indonesian army invaded the country and expelled the Portuguese; in 1999, after decades of resistance, a popular referendum decided for independence, leading to the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste in 2002. Today, East Timor's political borders basically match those defined in the late Portuguese colonial period, including the preservation of the Oecussi enclave as a district of Timor-Leste in western territory.

What classificatory processes, I ask herein, are involved in transforming an ethnically heterogeneous and politically fragmented territory, such as Timor Island, into clear-cut categories of racial difference? How do race categories come to merge with bordered colonial territories in anthropological classificatory work? How and when, in particular, did the political and colonial unity 'Portuguese Timor' become a relevant object of racial taxonomy? In this article, I will address these questions in the anthropological work of António Augusto Mendes Correia (1888–1960),

6 See Warwick Anderson and Ricardo Roque, 'Introduction. Imagined laboratories: Colonial and national racialisations in Island Southeast Asia', this issue.

7 The precolonial origins of the *Servião*/*Belos* divide are the object of historical debate. See Hans Hägerdal, 'Servião and Belu: Colonial conceptions and the geographical partition of Timor', *Studies on Asia* III, 3, 1 (2006): 49–64.

arguably the most influential Portuguese racial and physical anthropologist of the first half of the twentieth century. Between 1916 and 1945, at the University of Porto in metropolitan Portugal, Mendes Correia put forward a novel anthropogeographical theory that took the Portuguese colony of Timor as its main object of classification. Correia began his anthropological writings on the colonies with a set of papers on Timor and Angola in 1916. Drawing primarily on anthropometric records from the enclave of Oecussi, he stood out for originally advocating the classification of the *East* Timorese of Portuguese Timor as distinctly Malayan, rejecting former views that associated Timor Island with a dominant Papuan racial type. From this Correia was to derive an alternative racial cartography of the Malay Archipelago that interfered with the 'ethnological line' famously set down by Alfred Russel Wallace in 1869. Correia's *coup de force*, however, was achieved through a singular conjunction of racial typology and colonial geography. The political divide of the island organised his approach to the problem of the ethnological line. Correia's classification of 'Portuguese Timor' as racially Malayan, Proto-Malayan, or Indonesian, was brought into being at the conjunction of a certain racial and colonial geographical imagination. In this context, the contradictory political and physical geography of the enclave of Oecussi would both enable and complicate Mendes Correia's classificatory work to tailor race science to colonial order.

I first look at Correia's elaborations in the context of both the international debate on the ethnology of Timor, and the politics of his biography as a young academic eager for scientific authority. I then examine Correia's use of Fonseca Cardoso's records and the interaction established with Dutch and French scholarship. In describing these materials, it is my purpose to bring to light the political ontology behind Correia's scientific racialisation. Building on data from the enclave of Oecussi and Ambeno, located on the Western (Dutch) side of the island, Correia laid the basis for the creation of a sort of Malayan racial type for 'Portuguese Timor' as a whole. Finally, I look at how political geography translated into racial ontology in Correia's revised representation of Wallace's ethnological line in 1944–45.

The discovery of the Oecussi and Ambeno 'Malayan type'

'Travellers,' summarised the influential British ethnologist and traveller George W. Earl in 1853, 'have great difficulty in coming to a conclusion as to whether they [the Timorese] belong to Malayan or Papuan races, so balanced are their characteristics.'⁸ His comments followed a visit to Timor, including a sojourn in Portuguese Timor's capital, Dili, and alluded to the contemporary consensus in Europe over racial classifications of the island's population. The all-embracing 'Malayan type' proposed in the late eighteenth century by the German craniologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach was used in early anthropological classifications of the Timorese, but was soon considered insufficient. From the outset, the tendency to classify the islanders within a vague and undifferentiated Malayan type coexisted with the conviction that the Timorese represented a virtually inextricable 'juxtaposition', 'fusion', or 'mixture' of yellow and black, Malayan and Papuan, races. But whereas some saw Timor as

8 George Windsor Earl, *The native races of the Indian Archipelago: Papuans* (London: H. Baillière, 1853), p. 178.

a classificatory dead-end, others, including Earl, regarded it as a promising land for ethnological reasoning. George Earl returned to Europe persuaded that in Timor's intricate racial blend there lay a solution to the general problem of the archipelago's 'race-mixing' conundrum.⁹

Earl's vision of Timor as a productive brainteaser, a model case for testing broader racial geographies, was reinforced in the next three decades. By the 1850s scholars had abandoned the primacy of an Asian linkage and turned to a new hypothesis, that the essential racial identity of the islanders ought to be found in a primitive black race type. The idea that the Timorese belonged to a vague 'Malayan type' lost ground to the idea that they should be affiliated primarily with some sort of dark race, such as the 'Papuan race'. This viewpoint held sway largely as a result of Alfred Russel Wallace's book *The Malay Archipelago* of 1869. In this highly influential work, Wallace proposed a dualistic racial cartography of the region, expressed by an ethnological line that split up the archipelago into two opposed 'primary races': 'the Malays who inhabit almost exclusively the western half of the archipelago and the Papuans whose head-quarters are New Guinea and some of the adjacent islands'.¹⁰ It was an unambiguous categorisation of Timor that bypassed the mixed nature of the inhabitants while preserving the entire island as object of discussion. Timor was placed near the line of junction, acknowledging its peoples' state of 'commixture'. However, it was also classified unequivocally within the Papuan race, on the eastern side of the map. This influentially set Timor into a classificatory position as Papuan, and continued to force the debate to be addressed dichotomously: either the Timorese were Malays — or they were Papuans. More importantly, perhaps, as a consequence of continuing to appear on a borderline position in Wallace's map, Timor acquired a pivotal significance for undermining Wallace's construct. The remote island held the potential to interfere with the very configuration of the ethnological line, and the underlying logic of the map.

Wallace's line became a driving force of ethnological research on Timor. In this international context, the island constituted the valid spatial unit for racial classification. *The island*, not the colonial territories, was at stake in classificatory work. Internal physical geography, however, did matter for categorising the island, regardless of political borders. The distinction between coastal lowlands (where mixed populations and intrusive invading Malayan races presumably prevailed) and interior highlands (where the purest, aboriginal, darker-skinned, peoples were expected to survive) was critical for ethnological considerations.¹¹ Interpreted either as Papuan, Malayan, or Negrito, it mattered little whether evidence concerned Dutch, or Portuguese Timor. The purpose was to produce a classificatory generalisation, capable of disentangling aboriginal race-mixture and bringing the indigenous islanders together under one racial category. Therefore, in the context of the international debate, the ethnological line and the political geography of Timor followed separate lives. This separation faded away, however, as the debate settled in Portugal in the

9 Ibid., p. 179.

10 Alfred Russel Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago: The land of the orang-utan and the bird of paradise; a narrative of travel, with studies of man and nature* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1869), p. 15.

11 Ricardo Roque, 'Mountains and black races: Anthropology's heterotopias in colonial East Timor', *Journal of Pacific History* 47, 3 (2012): 263–82.

first half of the twentieth century, and an aspect of the international discussion was transformed. The relevant ethnological problem was not just whether one or many races existed on the island. It was rather whether or not one colonial space — Portuguese Timor — could, or could not, be condensed in one distinct race category.

The ethnological line in twentieth-century Portugal

Wallace's configuration left few clear traces in published works in Portugal.¹² While European scholars debated the races of the 'Malay Archipelago', Portuguese archaeology and ethnology focused on metropolitan matters; the emerging experts in racial science were dedicated principally to endogenous ethnogenic problems. Former colonial officials touched on the subject of Timorese ethnology and racial composition in generalist publications, but the issue was rarely addressed at length, from the perspective of race science, or using field or museum evidence gathered by Portuguese observers themselves.¹³ Timor and the ethnological line, in other words, entered only tangentially into self-proclaimed anthropological scholarship in metropolitan Portugal — until the arrival on the scene of young Professor Mendes Correia from Porto University.

In 1916, an article entitled *Timorenses de Okussi e Ambeno (notas antropológicas sobre observações de Fonseca Cardoso)* (Timorese of Okussi and Ambeno [anthropological notes upon Fonseca Cardoso's observations]) proposed to address the ethnological problem of Timor from the perspective of the latest racial theories and scientific evidence.¹⁴ Published in a Portuguese academic journal, the paper was based on a wealth of anthropometric field records — complete measurements of 107 living subjects — obtained in Timor by the late army captain and colonial administrator Artur da Fonseca Cardoso. It claimed to bring new evidence about yet unknown 'native' tribes from the secluded Portuguese enclave of Oecussi and Ambeno in Dutch territory, off the north coast of West Timor. In Porto, Portugal's second city, Captain Fonseca Cardoso was no ordinary colonial officer. He was a well-known intellectual figure, a pioneer of racial anthropology, and a respected author of anthropometric studies on metropolitan types.¹⁵ During his colonial service in Angola (1904–06) and Timor (1908–12), he also collected a great deal of anthropological materials. However, in 1912 Cardoso died suddenly in central Timor from malarial fever; he never returned home to publish his data.

The article thus did not appear under the captain's name; his authorship was acknowledged only for the raw 'data'. The named scientific author was António Mendes Correia, a lecturer in anthropology at Porto University. Within 15 years Correia would become the leading voice on race science in Portugal and a chief scientific authority on colonial matters, but in the 1910s he was still a young and

12 But see for example Alberto Osório de Castro, *Flores de coral: Impressões e poemetos sobre a Oceania Portuguesa* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 2004 [1908]).

13 But see also Ricardo Roque, *Headhunting and colonialism: Anthropology and the circulation of human skulls in the Portuguese Empire, 1870–1930* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 152–82.

14 António Mendes Correia, 'Timorenses de Okussi e Ambeno (notas antropológicas sobre observações de Fonseca Cardoso)', *Anais Scientificos da Academia Polytechnica do Porto* 11, 1 (1916): 36.

15 Mendes Correia was also responsible for the posthumous invention of Fonseca Cardoso as founding-father of 'Portuguese colonial anthropology'. See Ricardo Roque, 'Equivocal connections: Fonseca Cardoso and the origins of Portuguese colonial anthropology', *Portuguese Studies* 19 (2003): 105–24.

ambitious anthropologist, eager for academic prominence and public recognition. Born of a respectable upper-class Porto family, Correia followed the footsteps of his father, a medical doctor and local politician and intellectual, and graduated in medicine at the Porto Medical-Surgical School in 1911 with a dissertation on *The Genius and Talent in Pathology*. The young graduate eventually caught the attention of his academic mentors. In 1912, aged 24, he was asked to lecture the new course in anthropology at the recently founded Faculty of Sciences of the University of Porto.¹⁶ The Porto Anthropology Course drew on a vision of anthropology inspired by the work of the French anthropologist Paul Broca in the 1860s — an eclectic pluridisciplinary field centred on the primacy of comparative anatomy and physical characteristics with a view to racial analysis. Until 1919 Correia also lectured on geography and ethnology at the Porto Faculty of Humanities, where he likely began to develop his anthropogeographical visions.¹⁷

Encounters with anthropometric records

Correia never met the captain, who was twenty years his senior, in person. But he was aware of his reputation as an anthropologist. Sometime in 1913, while struggling to establish an academic reputation, he encountered Fonseca Cardoso's notebooks. He became a close acquaintance of one of the captain's sons, Armando da Fonseca Cardoso, who lived in Porto. In March 1915, through the latter's intercession, he persuaded the family to bequeath to the Anthropology Cabinet of the university the rich collections of artefacts and manuscript records that the late captain left behind.¹⁸ Prior to his encounter with Fonseca Cardoso's papers, Correia's knowledge of Timor — a most remote colony of little interest in Portugal — was unlikely to have been more than a jumble of imperial-nationalistic generalisations and prejudices. Yet he was quick to recognise the power of these records to interfere with wider ethnological debates abroad. Data from Timor in particular was highly valued in the ongoing discussion about the racial geography of the 'Malay Archipelago'. Moreover, Fonseca Cardoso's anthropometry was methodologically opportune. At a juncture when craniology was losing credibility, field anthropometry 'in the living' fed on new hopes for solving the enigmas of racial typology. In possession of Fonseca Cardoso's notes, then, perhaps Mendes Correia saw a golden opportunity to establish his scientific authority as an expert in race science, both at home and abroad. A trove of anthropological data from the colonies had suddenly landed upon his desk. He wasted no time.

The unexpected appropriation of the captain's records would put the colonial at the centre of Correia's concerns and help him put his academic career on track. This

16 In 1911, the Portuguese Republican government undertook a major reform of higher education, creating two new universities in Porto and Lisbon. The first anthropology course was offered at Coimbra University in 1885.

17 Friedrich Ratzel coined the term 'anthropogeography' in his two-volume work *Anthropogeographie*, published between 1882 and 1891. See Alexandre Oliveira, 'A influência da antroposociologia e criminalística na trajetória intelectual de Mendes Correia', in *Miguel Bombarda (1851–1910) e as singularidades de uma época*, ed. Ana Leonor Pereira and João Rui Pita (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 2006) pp. 180–81.

18 Director of the Faculty of Sciences of Porto University, José Diogo Arroyo, to Armando da Fonseca Cardoso, Porto, 12 Mar. 1915. Private archives of Fonseca Cardoso family.

archival encounter came at a vigorous yet stressful period in Correia's early career. In the mid-1910s Correia was under attack by academic rivals and his anthropology position at the university was at risk.¹⁹ He was called to compulsory military duty and only by special ministerial favour was he excused from fighting with the Portuguese army on the deadly front in France. Yet Correia's devotion to research, teaching, and publication remained obsessive and diverse. He alone taught the anthropology course and struggled to provide the university cabinet and museum with fresh collections and research materials. Dominated by a fierce dedication to the problem of the racial ethnogeny of Portugal, he wrote and published prolifically on archaeology, social hygiene, eugenics, education, and criminology, always with reference to metropolitan populations.²⁰ This thematic profusion was marked by an underlying nationalism; his racial science was patriotically 'Portuguese' by definition. At home as well as overseas, Correia routinely merged his scientific objects with authoritarian, conservative, nationalistic and imperialistic ideologies. In 1919, he expressed his convictions that the existence of one biologically homogeneous and ancient metropolitan 'Portuguese race' could guarantee the nation's prosperity and a vigorous colonial empire.²¹ Patriotic verve underpinned his epistemic endeavours. It pervaded his anthropological thinking, and guided the selection and analysis of his research objects — an orientation that also henceforth prevailed in his creative 'coordination' of Fonseca Cardoso's anthropometric records as a revelation of *Portuguese Timor* races.

Timorese of Oecussi and Ambeno would also launch Correia's international reputation and spearhead his political vision to institutionalise a research field of 'colonial anthropology' in Portugal. Centred in metropolitan universities, led and supervised by the authority of university experts, and supported by the imperial state, Correia's colonial anthropology was presented as an aid to the governance of indigenous populations.²² 'Colonial administration,' he wrote in 1915, 'should to a great extent draw inspiration from directions found in the study of native populations.'²³ Because colonial anthropology was intended to contribute to Portugal's empire building, its object of knowledge was the 'natives' inhabiting the colonies under Portuguese rule. Mendes Correia's ultimate attachment to a nationalistic vision of colonial anthropology thus cannot be dissociated from his continuing insistence on making 'Portuguese Timor' the geographical unit for the purposes of racial classification. He would not be alone in his attempts to explain the Timorese races by claiming a Malayan affiliation

19 See Mendes Correia to José Leite de Vasconcelos, s.l. [11 Jan.]-1917. Lisbon, Epistolário José Leite de Vasconcelos, Museu Nacional de Arqueologia, ref. 5494.

20 Correia's prolific scientific and political career has recently become the object of revisionist historical research in Portugal. See Oliveira, 'A influência da antroposociologia'; Bruno Henriques, *A ressurreição da raça portuguesa no pensamento de Mendes Correia: História, antropologia, eugenia (1911-1960)* (MA diss., University of Porto, 2012); Patrícia Ferraz de Matos, *Mendes Correia e a escola de antropologia do Porto: Contribuição para o estudo das relações entre antropologia, nacionalismo e colonialismo (de finais do século XIX aos finais da década de 50 do século XX)* (PhD diss., University of Lisbon, 2012).

21 See A.A. Mendes Correia, *Raça e nacionalidade* (Porto: Renascença Portuguesa, 1919).

22 See Ricardo Roque, 'A antropologia colonial portuguesa c. 1911-1950', in *Estudos de sociologia da leitura em Portugal no século XX*, ed. Diogo R. Curto (Lisbon: FCG/FCT, 2006), pp. 789-822.

23 A.A. Mendes Correia, *Sobre três crânios de negros Mossumbes* (Porto: Tip. Porto Médico, 1915), p. 15.

for the Portuguese colony, but these early works and the authority they inspired would be crucial in drawing out an association between one race and one colony, between a Malayan racial type and Portuguese Timor.²⁴

Batak in Oecussi

In the months following the acquisition of Fonseca Cardoso's records, Mendes Correia dedicated himself fully to their 'coordination' for publication. It was not a work of field observation but an armchair work of data interpretation and classificatory synthesis: 'among Fonseca Cardoso's papers,' Correia claimed at the start of his piece, 'I did not find any manuscript containing a synthetic notion of the Timorese of Okussi and Ambeno.'²⁵ Fonseca Cardoso's records were precious, but they lacked anthropological order. Correia saw his contribution as a grand synthetic view that would bring order upon otherwise fragmented notes.

The location of Fonseca Cardoso's originals is now unknown. Nonetheless, I am led to believe that Correia's emphasis on the raw, uncoordinated, nature of the records subtly dismissed the presence of an embedded anthropogeographical theory that presumed a distinction between (aboriginal, pure, black) highlanders and (mixed, invading, Malayan) coastal types — a highly popular theory amongst late nineteenth-century ethnologists, as mentioned above. Correia's own text suggests that Fonseca Cardoso's survey, including his preliminary organisation of the records, explicitly followed a spatial opposition between coast and mountains — *not* a Dutch/Portuguese geo-colonial divide.²⁶ Moreover, in the vein of international scholars in the late 1890s, he was probably inclined to assume the dominance of black racial types in Timor's aboriginal identity. According to a close acquaintance in Dili in 1908–09, Fonseca Cardoso eventually reached the hypothesis that the Timorese mixture was above all defined by a 'primitive Australian strata'.²⁷

In his synthesis Correia selectively used Fonseca Cardoso's coast/mountains divide. He dismissed the latter's inclination to a dark race hypothesis, while turning evidence from the highlanders into a pillar of his Malayan classification of Oecussi. Moreover, the underlying highland/lowland order of the records became instrumental to a racial argument that privileged political over physical geography. Correia's proposed 'synthesis', in effect, is expressive of an effort to implicitly subordinate literature and evidence to a presupposition: his inner determination to see a certain anthropogeographical distinction alongside a certain geopolitical divide.

Mendes Correia began by tentatively reviewing the early literature on the races of Timor. He listed Wallace, Quatrefages, Hamy, Lesson, Forbes, and Cunha, summarising their arguments. It is doubtful that Correia himself read all of them directly, including Wallace's classic, *The Malay Archipelago*. Wallace and Forbes, for instance, were footnoted 'cit. by Barros e Cunha'; Freycinet as 'cit. by Lesson'; Hamy's 1875 paper on Timor was misquoted.²⁸ Clearly, though, Correia's main references were

24 Correia sought to ally himself with influential former colonial officers in Timor, most notably Leite de Magalhães. See Roque, *Headhunting and colonialism*, ch. 6.

25 Correia, 'Timorenses de Okussi e Ambeno', p. 36.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

27 Castro, *Flores de coral*, p. 409.

28 Correia, 'Timorenses de Okussi e Ambeno', pp. 36–7, nn. 1–5.

not the early works, in which he disliked the ‘out dated’ emphasis on the ‘predominance’ of a black or Papuan racial type.²⁹ Principally, he envisaged a dialogue with the work of Dutch anthropologist and adventurer Herman Ten Kate, where ‘the question’, Correia observed, ‘appears better clarified’.³⁰

In 1890, after studying medicine in Leiden and then anthropology with Armand de Quatrefages and Paul Topinard in Paris, Ten Kate was officially invited by the Royal Netherlands Geographical Society to undertake anthropometric fieldwork in the Timor Archipelago. In the wake of Wallace, his ‘scientific mission’ was to determine the exact Papuan imprint on the Timorese, and thereby decide where to draw the ethnological line in the Timor Archipelago.³¹ Ten Kate’s commissioned expedition is thus revealing of the centrality of Timor as regards the problem of Wallace’s line. Between 1890 and 1893 Ten Kate travelled and collected numerous materials in the west and centre of Timor Island; in 1893–94 the first results of his field anthropology were published as articles in *L’Anthropologie*, then the main French journal on racial science.³² Ten Kate’s observations reiterated the old European puzzlement over the ‘Melanesian and Indonesian’ mixed nature of the islanders and also tended to presume the Papuan element as more authentic and primitive. However, they also pointed to new directions. In particular, Ten Kate suggested a twofold categorisation of the island, Papuan/Atoni and Malayan/Belos, and a corresponding internal geographical distribution, opposing western and central areas. For Ten Kate, it was possible to say that the Papuan, ‘black element’, predominated in West Timor among the Atoni, whereas the Malayan, ‘yellow element’, prevailed in the centre, among the so-called Belos or Belus (or Ema-Belos), the ethnonym commonly applied by colonial writers and travellers to generally designate the inhabitants of East Timor.³³

Correia promptly appropriated this latter idea from the Dutch anthropologist to contest the view ‘that a Papuan type’ was ‘dominant all across the island’.³⁴ Additionally, he concluded that there was an unmistakable affiliation of the Oecussi-Ambeno people to a Malayan racial type because, in his view, the highlanders displayed a ‘lesser Papuan influence’. ‘Fonseca Cardoso,’ he claimed, ‘recorded Papuan influence in some cases on the coast, in none on the mountain.’³⁵ Thus inventively using the opposition coast/mountains contained in Fonseca Cardoso’s

29 See A.A. Mendes Correia, *Timor Português: Contribuição para o seu estudo antropológico* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional; Junta das Missões Geográficas e de Investigações Coloniais, 1944).

30 Correia, ‘Timorenses de Okussi e Ambeno’, p. 38.

31 Established in 1915, the Netherlands Indies Bureau for Ethnology chose Timor as its first area of interest and lobbied the Indies Committee for Scientific Research for research support on the Timor Archipelago. See Fenneke Sysling, *Racial science and human diversity in colonial Indonesia* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2015), pp. 126, 129.

32 Herman Ten Kate, ‘Contribution à l’anthropologie de quelques peuples d’Océanie’, *L’Anthropologie* 4 (1893): 279–300.

33 Ten Kate, ‘Contribution à l’anthropologie’, p. 290.

34 Correia, ‘Timorenses de Okussi e Ambeno’, p. 47. This opinion contradicted Deniker, another of Correia’s main references. For Deniker, except for Malay influence on the coast, ‘Papuan blood’ prevailed among the ‘Ema-Belos of the middle of the island’. Correia disregarded this for the sake of his argument. Joseph Deniker, *The races of man: An outline of anthropology and ethnography* (London: Walter Scott, 1900), pp. 491–2.

35 Correia, ‘Timorenses de Okussi e Ambeno’, pp. 40, 48.

anthropometry, Correia classified the Oecussi and Ambeno enclave as primarily 'Malayan'. This latter 'type' was dominant in the interior mountains of the enclave; therefore it had to be considered more 'primitive' and aboriginal than the mixed people on the coast.³⁶ 'Anthropological heterogeneity' followed a rule according to which people were more racially Malayan as one moved up into the hilly regions, the true racial heart of the country. Henceforth based on this inference, Correia made a case contesting Papuan homogeneity in the island: 'This anthropological study on the territories of Okussi and Ambeno, however, does not allow the statement that a Papuan, Melanesian or Australian type may be dominant in the whole island,' Correia concluded. 'On the contrary, in both territories [Oecussi and Ambeno], types of principally Malay origin prevail.'³⁷

Correia finally proposed to express visually what anthropometry revealed. No anthropological photographs survived from Fonseca Cardoso's journeys in Timor, but in one of Armand de Quatrefages's publications, Correia found the archetypal image of the Timorese race that he had never met in person. He thus prompted readers to accompany his conclusions with an illustration from Quatrefages: 'In my view and based on the conclusions at which I arrive, the average Timorese studied herein should resemble much with the *batak* of which Quatrefages offers us a good portrait in his *Histoire générale des races humaines* [of 1887].'³⁸ Quatrefages's portrait of what he designated as a *Battak*, or 'Batta from Sumatra' — an exemplary sub-type of his 'Indonesian race' (*race Indonésienne*) — was perceived by Correia to be the visual quintessence of the anthropometric Malayan type discovered in Oecussi and Ambeno (fig. 1). The illustration itself was not reproduced in Correia's article, though. Readers were left to either consult Quatrefages's images or to imagine the *batak* type themselves.

Hypothesising an anthropogeographical rule

Timorese of Oecussi and Ambeno postulated a 'Malayan race' of Indonesian affiliation in the Portuguese enclave, thereby undermining a classification of all Timorese as Papuan. But another implicit classificatory claim, I believe, was also being announced: the author's intention to determine a distinct racial identity for the Portuguese colony, devising an anthropogeographical rule that would merge racial category and political borders. Mountains and hills, as we saw, were instrumental in reclassifying Oecussi as Malayan. The next step was to make this assertion valid not only for the enclave, but for the whole Portuguese territory. Political geography, rather than physical geography, was then to lead anthropological explanation. Soon the arguments made on the racial type of the Oecussi enclave were *generalised* to the Portuguese colonial territory as a whole.

Correia's imagery of the Oecussi type materialised in Quatrefages's illustration of a *batak*. A couple of months later, this visual insight translated into a bold anthropogeographical hypothesis. Indeed, still in 1916, Correia published a companion

36 A surprising conclusion, perhaps, considering that ethnologists generally presumed that highlanders were darker skinned and as a rule representative of black races, in contrast with the mixed coastal populations, tendentiously argued as more infused with a Malayan character.

37 Correia, 'Timorenses de Okussi e Ambeno', p. 40.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 47.



Figure 1. 'Battak from Perak in Malaysia [Malaisie]'.

Source: A. de Quatrefages, *Histoire générale des races humaines: Introduction à l'étude des races humaines* (Paris: A. Hennuyer, 1887), p. 518.

reflection, *Antropologia Timorensis* (Timorese Anthropology) that complemented his anthropometric conclusions with further synthetic speculations.³⁹ Two reasons were offered for writing again on the topic. First, new evidence arrived. Correia claimed to have 'just received further manuscript notes from Fonseca Cardoso's passage in Timor'. The captain's new manuscripts made synthetic claims concerning an 'Ambeno type' with 'marked negroid characters' as representative of the 'autochthonous or native of Timor'.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, Mendes Correia dismissed Fonseca Cardoso's suggestions as impressionistic. Instead, for Correia, Cardoso's new notes offered only further credence to his Malayan thesis. Second, new relevant international publications by Ten Kate had just appeared. Correia claimed that he had not had time to 'integrate' the Dutch anthropologist's recent work in the first piece and wished to do so now.⁴¹

Ten Kate was a model, but also a competitor. In 1915, he published a new series of articles in *L'Anthropologie* where he advanced broader arguments about the 'Timor Archipelago'. Ten Kate's analysis presumed a distinction between West and East. He saw the 'West Timorese', the *Atoni Timor* 'inhabiting the western part of the island' as

39 The article was published also in Portuguese, in Porto, originally in the journal *Revista dos Liceus*. Mendes Correia, *Antropologia Timorensis* (Porto: Typographia da Renascença Portuguesa, 1916).

40 *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

41 But see Correia, 'Timorenses de Okussi e Ambeno', p. 38.

Melanesians. The Atoni were the real representatives of ‘the Timorese properly called’, representing a mixture of ‘negroid and yellow race characters, with predominance of Papuan blood’.⁴² In contrast with Correia’s thesis, then, Ten Kate saw the Papuan as defining the authentically aboriginal of Timor, the western Atoni. However, Ten Kate also acknowledged a lesser variant of this essentially Papuan type, a suggestion Correia later appropriated for his own purposes. Among the so-called Belos (or Ema-Belos) of the centre and the north coast of Timor, Ten Kate recognised ‘little trace of negroid blood’, overall acknowledging a lesser manifestation of negroid characteristics.⁴³ He only observed this so-called Eastern Belos in Dutch territory, especially in the settlement of Atapupu — not far, curiously, from Oecussi. But in spite of these tentative considerations, Ten Kate refused to advance an anthropogeographical rule for the island — something that could not, he believed, be achieved. ‘If one seeks a correlation of certain physical characters among the natives of the Timorese Archipelago,’ he stated conclusively, ‘one finds no “law”, no ruling principle.’⁴⁴ Rather than a ‘fusion’, then, Timor was a ‘desperate confusion, a blend that challenges every analysis’.⁴⁵ After years of travel and hundreds of anthropometric measures, Ten Kate came to the conclusion that Timor was anthropogeographically unruly — that no ethnological line could be drawn.

Correia relied on Ten Kate’s work to devise a Malayan affiliation for Oecussi-Ambeno. But he could not share the latter’s classificatory scepticism. He was determined to trust his little anthropometric treasure from Oecussi to advance a lawful hypothesis on the racial geography of the island. The Portuguese enclave, again, was meant to give him leverage in the debate. In a convoluted rhetorical manoeuvre, Mendes Correia both acknowledged *and* contradicted Ten Kate. He partly agreed with Ten Kate; he ‘did not find a law of the criss-crossing [*entrecruzamento*] of characters in Timorese peoples’ so that ‘from East to West, from North to South, one general anthropogeographical rule’ was yet to be found.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, the young Portuguese challenged the eminent Dutch scholar by in fact venturing an anthropogeographical rule. In extrapolating Oecussi-Ambeno’s revelations to the whole island, Mendes Correia brought forward a new anthropogeographical division:

Subjecting this synthesis to new confirmations, I consider: that an Indonesian spot spreads out from the centre of the Belos territory mainly to the East; that the North (Okussi) is principally Malay with greater or lesser Melanesian infusion; finally that the West (and Southwest) is more negroid, excluding the region of Kupang, which is close to the Belos from the anthropological point of view.⁴⁷

Based upon data collected by Fonseca Cardoso in Oecussi, Mendes Correia offered a grand claim about an anthropogeographical divide between East and West. The valid anthropological unit was now the Portuguese colonial territory. The enclave’s

42 Herman Ten Kate, ‘Mélanges anthropologiques (III). Indigènes de l’Archipel Timorien’, *L’Anthropologie* 26 (1915): 524.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 531.

44 *Ibid.*, pp. 562, 564.

45 *Ibid.*

46 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

47 *Ibid.*

anthropometric records became evidence for racial genealogies in Portuguese Timor. In other words, because Oecussi (a Portuguese territory in *West* Timor) was Malayan, the Portuguese colony in *East* Timor should also be classified as Malayan. Papuans in the Dutch country, and Malayans in the Portuguese land: this absolutely diverged from previous suggestions on the dominance of Melanesian or Papuan races in Timor; it also diverged from former classificatory attempts that took the island only as the unit of analysis. Furthermore, Correia's argument closely followed the island's political borders. In spite of its physical location in *West* Timor, then, Oecussi was formally understood as a part of *Portuguese* Timor. It was, moreover, a historical and symbolic stronghold of Portuguese sovereignty on the island. Indeed *Portuguese* Timor was not a spatially contiguous or continuous country. Throughout most of the European colonial period, Dutch and Portuguese enclaves were preserved in both sides of the island, the last and most resilient of which was Oecussi. The Oecussi and Ambeno enclave had a complex history of military and political fighting for local hegemony. In Oecussi, in the settlement of Lifau, the Portuguese first arrived in the sixteenth century and later established the seat of government, until they were forced to flee to Dili in 1769 under pressure of a powerful local mestizo aristocracy, the Topasses. Yet the local indigenous rulers preserved a formal allegiance to the King of Portugal over the centuries. Perhaps coincidentally, Correia's publications came out when the enclave's political boundaries were being settled at the highest diplomatic level. In 1914, Dutch and Portuguese governments agreed over the Oecussi and Ambeno borders, further confirming Portugal's sovereignty in the territory.⁴⁸

Mendes Correia's anthropogeographical hypothesis constituted an extrapolation of racial typology from a singular political geography. The Oecussi Malayan type stood for the whole Timorese population inhabiting the Portuguese colony. Findings from the enclave were generalised to its companion political territory in the East, even if the two colonial territories were in fact physically discontinuous. Racial order followed political order. In Correia's eyes, in fact, the two seemed to be one and the same. These were bold claims on the international debate on Timor and the Malay Archipelago, and they did not pass without notice abroad.

A review from France

In the late nineteenth century it was not uncommon for Portuguese publications to be reviewed on the pages of leading French anthropology journals. As a rule this international visibility was reserved for studies on the archaeology and ethnogeny of Portugal and the Iberian Peninsula; rarely did French anthropology take note of Portuguese racial research on overseas territories. Yet, although voiced from the periphery of the international scene, Correia's works caught the attention of French scholars, perhaps because of their unusual anthropometric evidence, and their verve. Correia's papers were reviewed in *L'Anthropologie* the year they were published, by the eminent *Professeur* René Verneau, Chair of Anthropology at the Paris Museum

48 See Arend de Roever, 'The partition of Timor: An historical background', in *A Ásia do Sudeste: História, cultura e desenvolvimento*, ed. M.J. Schouten (Lisbon: Vega, 1998), pp. 45–56; Fernando Augusto de Figueiredo, *Timor: A presença portuguesa (1769–1945)* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Históricos, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2012), pp. 61–7.

of Natural History. Formerly E.T. Hamy's laboratory assistant, Verneau became after the latter's death in 1909 one of the leading voices of mainstream racial anthropology in Paris.

Verneau praised the timely publication of the papers. In the light of the scarce evidence available, and the great difficulty in reaching a consensus on the racial character of the Timorese (*'il ne renferme pas une race unique'*, he stated), Correia's analysis of Cardoso's 'precise data' was to be welcomed.⁴⁹ Verneau read Fonseca Cardoso's evidence and Correia's 'interesting conclusions' on the Oecussi Malayan type principally as a means to resume the old French case (made first by his mentors Quatrefages and Hamy in the 1870s) against Wallace's line: 'contrarily to Wallace,' he observed, 'it is not the Papuan, Melanesian or Australian element that predominates in the whole island.'⁵⁰ The Portuguese evidence proved Wallace's anthropological categorising wrong about Timor *Island*. The *island*, in effect, was the valid geographical unit in Verneau's reading. It is meaningful that Verneau misinterpreted the enclave as if it was *part* of a Dutch rather than Portuguese political geography: 'These two districts [Oecussi and Ambeno] are placed in the north of the island in the Dutch part.'⁵¹ But Verneau's critique did not concern the study on the enclave *per se*. Instead, it was directed towards Correia's disavowal of Ten Kate and the irreverent proposal of an anthropogeographical rule for Timor: 'contrarily to the opinion of [Dr. H. Ten Kate]', Verneau observed, 'published in our journal', '[Mendes Correia] considers that it is possible to establish a rule concerning the geographical distribution of anthropological types in Timor.'⁵²

For decades, Portuguese academics looked to French anthropology for a model. Paris was the apex of academic visibility and reputation. Thus Correia possibly received Verneau's critical review with a mixture of thrill and preoccupation. He was quick to try to soothe the damage. Correia wrote Verneau a letter to 'correct some errors' and make some 'precisions'.⁵³ Accordingly, Verneau decided to add an 'Errata' to his review in *L'Anthropologie*, in which excerpts of Correia's letter were transcribed, accompanied by Verneau's comments. It seems clear that Correia's message was principally aimed at toning down his opposition to the senior figure of Ten Kate. 'Mendes Correia states in the letter,' Verneau paraphrased, 'that he would not dare to cut into pieces in just two words an hypothesis advanced by M. Ten Kate, who, besides the consideration he rightly deserves, has visited the island in person.'⁵⁴ Not without ambivalence, Correia further remarked to Verneau that he did not claim to have 'found a general anthropogeographical rule that allowed to determine summary ideas about the distribution and coexistence of races in the Timorese territory'; instead, he simply offered a 'synthesis', 'provisional' and 'subject to further confirmations'.⁵⁵ 'This is,' Verneau concluded, correcting Correia's correction: 'the opinion that I have exactly

49 René Verneau, 'Timorenses de Okussi e Ambeno & Antropologia Timorense', *L'Anthropologie* 27 (1916): 481.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid., p. 480.

52 Ibid., p. 482.

53 René Verneau, 'Errata', *L'Anthropologie* 27 (1916): 609.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

expressed.’ Thus claiming to have the upper hand, Verneau paternalistically recommended Correia’s ‘prudent reservations’ as indicator of ‘true scientific spirit’, and urged the Portuguese scholar to continue his investigations.⁵⁶

Correia’s studies on Timor brought him to the attention of senior international authorities in the field. He soon took strategic advantage of this exposure to expand his networks and build his own authority. In 1918, Mendes Correia launched a new anthropological society in Porto, the *Sociedade Portuguesa de Antropologia e Etnologia* (Portuguese Society of Anthropology and Ethnology) (SPAÉ). Both René Verneau and Herman Ten Kate accepted an invitation to join the society as ‘corresponding members’.⁵⁷ Eventually, Correia also ended up maintaining a friendly letter exchange with Ten Kate himself. In 1931, Ten Kate died poor and lonely in Cartago. In a posthumous eulogy, Correia praised him as ‘glorious intellectual wanderer’, and came to refer to him affectionately as ‘my late dear colleague and friend, the eminent Dutch anthropologist’.⁵⁸ In the decade following his publications on Timor, Mendes Correia’s scientific career prospered and so did his political career. He became an active supporter and a leading political voice of the nationalist and imperialist Estado Novo regime, the fascist dictatorship established in Portugal in 1933. He presided over the Porto City Council between 1936 and 1942; became a Deputy to the National Assembly from 1945 to 1956; gained prominence as head and ideologue of scientific policy for the colonies; and was appointed by the minister to the presidency of the Geographical Missions and Colonial Research Board in 1946. For almost two decades, he did not return to Timor as a subject in his publications. Interest in the ethnological line did not, however, die out.

Redrawing the ethnological line

In 1934, Correia wrote a short notice aimed at a non-academic audience which recalled his early works on Timor and confidently reiterated his thesis of Malayan affiliation.⁵⁹ These were prosperous times for his vision of ‘colonial anthropology’ as a discipline allied with the imperial project. From the colonies the government had just sent more than one hundred ‘natives’ — among them a handful of East Timorese — intended for public display at the First Portuguese Colonial Exhibition held in Porto in 1934, to celebrate the grandeur of the Portuguese Colonial Empire. Over the years, he grew more confident about the ‘ethnogenic conclusions’ achieved in 1916. How ‘glad’ he had felt when in 1918, a talk by Colonel Leite de Magalhães — a colonial officer and amateur ethnologist, contemporary of Fonseca Cardoso in Timor in 1910–12 — ‘explicitly confirmed’ his view that the ‘average Timorese of Oecussi and Ambeno should physically resemble the *batak* (Indonesians of Sumatra) portrayed by de Quatrefages’.⁶⁰ This officer’s data moreover supported

56 Ibid., pp. 609–10.

57 Ten Kate joined SPAÉ in June 1919, after being proposed by Correia; Verneau joined in December 1918, and was proposed by Aarão de Lacerda.

58 Mendes Correia, ‘Herman Ten Kate (Um amigo de Wenceslau de Moraes)’, *Trabalhos de Antropologia e Etnologia* 5, 3 (1932): 1–40; Mendes Correia, ‘Antropologia de Timor’, *Boletim Geral das Colónias* 108 (1934): 206.

59 Correia, ‘Antropologia de Timor’, pp. 205–7.

60 Ibid. See António Leite de Magalhães, ‘Subsídios para o estudo etnológico de Timor’, *Trabalhos da Sociedade Portuguesa de Antropologia e Etnologia* 2, 1 (1920): 37–65.

Correia's visionary claim that the Oecussi Malayan type was, in reality, not limited to Oecussi. It was representative of all East Timorese, of all *Ema-Belu*, in Portuguese Timor.

Taking place parallel to the 1934 Exhibition was the First National Congress of Colonial Anthropology, sponsored by the imperial state and under the aegis of Correia and the Porto academics. One of the chief lines of discussion proposed by the Congress Committee was 'Timor and Wallace's ethnological divide'. Although no paper on the topic came out in the proceedings, the decision to single out Timor and Wallace's line as a problem of 'Portuguese colonial anthropology' clearly indicated its central significance in Correia's research programme. It perhaps also signalled Correia's desire to become an authority on the subject. At the Congress he did not address the ethnology of Timor, but in the next decade he built up his intellectual notoriety and, in 1944, proposed a novel configuration for the ethnological line in Timor and the Malay Archipelago.

A new line for 'Portuguese Timor'

Timor Português: Contribuição para o seu Estudo Antropológico (Portuguese Timor: Contribution to its Anthropological Study) was Mendes Correia's *magnum opus*. Funded by the Geographical Missions and Colonial Research Board and published in 1944, it was luxuriously printed and illustrated and over 200 pages long. This was the outcome of his decade-long dedication to Timorese ethnology at his university office. For the book, Correia again did not visit Timor and used mostly secondary evidence provided by colonial officials. In fact, although he would finally pay a one-month visit to 'Portuguese Timor' later in life, Correia embraced the role of arm-chair anthropologist, laboratory scholar, and data 'coordinator': 'I am a modest anthropologist,' he declared in 1950, 'more precisely, a cultivator of the sciences of Man. I am, preferably, a cabinet scholar, a laboratory and museum worker, more than a field worker, a bushman, a jungle man, and, even less, a sea man.'⁶¹ During the colonial exhibitions — 1934 in Porto; 1940 in Lisbon — Correia received special permission to 'observe' a handful of East Timorese natives. Now he believed his early observations would be crucially complemented with the analysis of new and decisive anthropological evidence: an album of over 100 portrait photographs of indigenous 'types'. Representing different language groups and regions of East Timor, the album had been prepared in the colony of Timor by Governor Álvaro de Fontoura in the late 1930s. The album, which came to bear the governor's name as the Fontoura Album, was originally prepared for the colonial Exhibition of the Portuguese World in Lisbon in 1940, and was then handed to Correia for anthropological analysis.⁶²

61 Mendes Correia, Sessão da Assembleia Nacional, 20 Jan. 1950, cit. in de Matos, *Mendes Correia e a escola de antropologia do Porto*, p. 331. See Mendes Correia, 'Um mês em Timor', *Boletim da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa* 32, 10 (1955): 5–24.

62 Anthropometric photography and the use of face/profile portraits as evidence in racial analysis had become an acceptable procedure since the late nineteenth century. On the history of the album see Alexandre Oliveira, 'A imagem colonial de Timor: O álbum fotográfico do Governador Álvaro da Fontoura', in *Os Portugueses e o Oriente: História, itinerários, representações*, ed. Rosa Maria Perez (Lisbon: D. Quixote, 2006), pp. 319–36.

Correia's general theories were aimed at both a national and an international audience.⁶³ Based on 'the coordination of national and foreign works already produced,' he explained to readers, 'together with the new materials that I have been happy to obtain, I will dare to express still a synthetic opinion on some general anthropological problems related to the populations of Australasia and Oceania.'⁶⁴ First, as a solution to the lasting debate on the Timorese mixed race, he rehearsed a polygenist argument: ethnic heterogeneity was less a product of the history of contact, migrations, and mixing, than of a 'spontaneous' internal process. Timor, in Correia's words, was a 'primeval centre of ethnic differentiation' rather than 'a zone of racial metamorphism of contact'.⁶⁵ Second, from a colonial ontology ('Portuguese Timor') he proposed a revised anthropogeography — a point the book's title, *Timor Português* (Portuguese Timor) subtly announced. Due to its closeness to the line, Timor Island had the potential to transform the drawing of the racial map of the archipelago. Taking on this potential, he set forth to revising Wallace's ethnological line.

Mendes Correia returned to his early argument in full force, and again had to deal with the rival visions of authoritative Dutch anthropologists. In the 1910s–20s, another Dutch fieldworker and physical anthropologist, Hendrik J. Bijlmer, went in Ten Kate's footsteps to confirm the latter's data in Timor. By choosing Timor as the focus of his anthropological studies, Bijlmer aimed also to reconfigure Wallace's ethnological line. He too thought Timor fell outside the Malayan category: 'In Timor and East Flores,' he remarked, 'one feels one is absolutely no longer among Malays.'⁶⁶ Instead, Bijlmer argued that the Timorese islanders should be classified dominantly as Melanesian, an opinion he grounded mostly on his understanding of the negroid nature of the Western Atoni. And with regard to the demarcation problem between 'Melanesian' and 'Mongolian' within the island, he, like Ten Kate, distrusted the possibility of drawing a perfectly clear-cut line.⁶⁷ But Bijlmer's observations concerned mainly the western side of the island, a fact that Correia used to his advantage. Because he did *not* visit the 'Portuguese part of the island', Bijlmer's classificatory argument could not be held valid for the *Belos* of East Timor.⁶⁸ As such, Correia argued, the peoples of *Portuguese* Timor belonged to a different sort of racial type: they were 'predominantly' 'Proto-Malay' or 'Proto-Indonesian'. In racial science, since the late nineteenth century, the 'Proto-Malay' category had been used to refer to those most ancient inhabitants of the archipelago who

63 Correia's main anthropogeographical conclusions were translated into English at the end of the book. Correia, *Timor Português*, pp. 179–215, and also into Spanish: Mendes Correia, 'Los Timorenses y la posición sistemática de los indonésios', *Investigación y Progreso* 15 (1944): 257–61.

64 Correia, *Timor Português*, p. 7.

65 *Ibid.*, pp. 213–15.

66 Hendrik J. Bijlmer, *Outlines of the anthropology of the Timor-Archipelago* (Wetevreden: G. Kolff, 1929), p. 189.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 83. Dutch distrust of ethnological demarcation resumes, for example, in Henk Schulte-Nordholt, *The political system of the Atoni* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1971), p. 23: 'Our conclusion must be, then, that Timor is indeed a marginal area as regards its physical types, although it is impossible to draw an accurate line of demarcation.'

68 See Correia, *Timor Português*, p. 38.

had presumably migrated from the Asian mainland in a remote past.⁶⁹ Drawing on this reclassification, Mendes Correia confidently put forward a new ethnological line, alternative to that of Wallace. ‘First of all,’ he concluded, ‘Wallace’s and Bijlmer’s divides do not correspond to ethnological reality in what concerns the centre and east of Timor and even other islands close by. [...] Given the lower number of Atoni in relation to the Belos, we can even say that, altogether, Timor belongs, racially, to Indonesia.’⁷⁰ Portuguese Timor — and perhaps even the island itself — was racially Indonesian. Accordingly, it was necessary to redraw the ‘bio-ethnic limit between Indonesia and Melanesia’ (Fig. 2).⁷¹

Mendes Correia’s ethnological line cut the island into two halves basically coincidental to the colonial border: Portuguese Timor was racially ‘Indonesian’; Dutch Timor (excluding the Kupang area) was of ‘Melanesian’ race. Correia’s scientific theories merged with his avowed imperial nationalism. Only half of the island, after all, belonged to Wallace’s Papuan divide. However, in order now to sustain this ethnological line, Mendes Correia seemed close to sacrificing the piece that led him originally to classify Portuguese Timor within the ‘Proto-Malay type’. It was time for Oecussi to suffer a final classificatory shift.

Twisting the Oecussi enclave

Correia’s ethnological line evolved from his extrapolations of the Oecussi Malayan type to the whole political territory of ‘Portuguese Timor’. His early racial synthesis of Oecussi and Ambeno, then, became a generative and critical piece in shifting Wallace’s line. Surprisingly, though, in his 1940s speculations, Correia elaborated an ambivalent, even contradictory, reversal of his original argument. For a moment he seemed ready to give Oecussi away.

In 1944–45, Correia came to regard Oecussi as much less Malayan than Portuguese Timor itself. He even hypothesised that Oecussi could be classified as Melanesian on account of being an enclave in *West Timor physically* closer to the Atoni type. However, he simultaneously held firmly to the *political* affiliation of Oecussi to keep on claiming a racial classification of this territory as Malayan. Correia now was especially absorbed in his analysis of Fontoura’s photographs, in which he eventually recognised a strong imprint of Melanesian characters on Oecussi types, for instance, in the notably curly or frizzy hair of the people.⁷² Against his own beliefs about the Batak prototype of Oecussi, he admitted that some sort of ‘special Melanesian type’ could characterise the enclave. Yet, he now refused to extrapolate the Melanesian type altogether to Portuguese Timor. ‘Perhaps [the Oecussi and Ambeno type] is not perfectly comparable to the Batá of Samatra [*sic*], which, years ago, I wrote that it resembled, upon agreement with Leite de Magalhães.’ Nonetheless, Correia continued firmly defending his Malayan

69 See Armand de Quatrefages, *Histoire générale des races humaines: Introduction à l’étude des races humaines* (Paris: A. Henuyer, 1889), p. 513.

70 Correia, *Timor Português*, p. 156. See also Mendes Correia, *Raças do Império* (Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias, 1945), pp. 596–7.

71 Correia, *Timor Português*, pp. 213–15. Correia’s anthropogeography also tried to integrate archaeological and sociocultural data. I will not explore these connections here.

72 Correia, *Timor Português*, p. 71. See also pp. 96, 117–18.

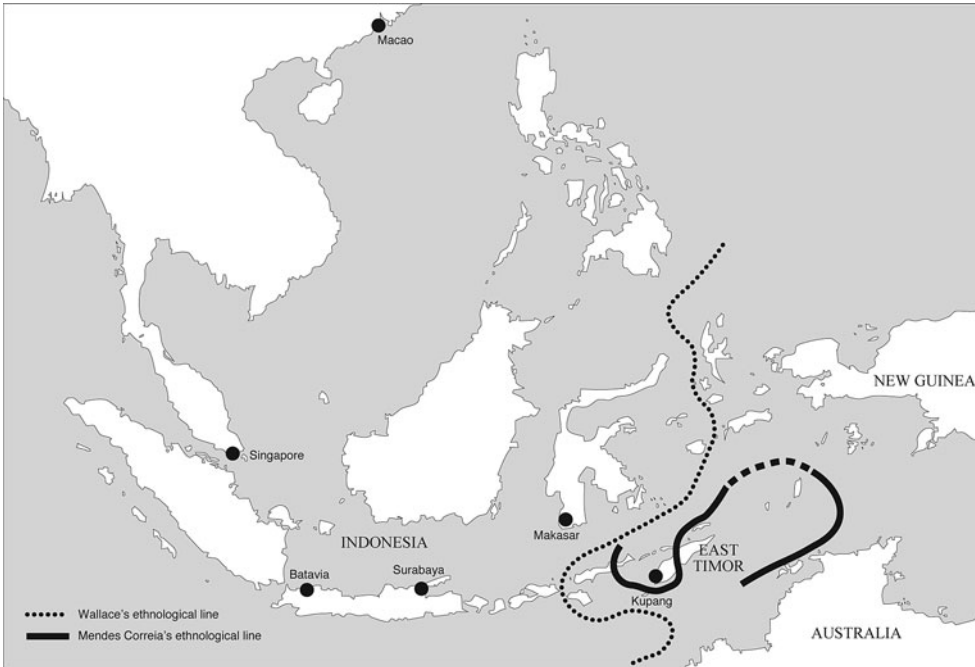


Figure 2. Mendes Correia's ethnological line.

Based on the map in A.A. Mendes Correia, *Timor Português: Contribuição para o seu estudo antropológico* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional/Junta das Missões Geográficas e de Investigações Coloniais, 1944), facing p. 146.

categorisation: 'But the Indonesian exists,' he observed, 'and pervades strongly in Oecussi, just like it happens across almost all Portuguese Timor territory.'⁷³ Indeed, even before contradictory evidence, Correia was not willing to give up his classificatory order. 'The Indonesian did not disappear there submerged by Melanesian blood', he claimed; 'And, if no relatives or descendants of the Batá are here to be found, they must exist in some other point of the island.'⁷⁴ Oecussi was *Portuguese* territory, and therefore racially (Proto-)Malayan it ought to remain.

Correia thereafter maintained an uncomfortable and ambiguous relationship with his own acknowledgement of the Oecussi inhabitants' negroid or Melanesian features, yet he never moved his ethnological argument away from colonial geography (fig. 3). This discomfort was expressed in a couple of publications written almost immediately after his monograph, in 1945. There, he ambivalently declared Oecussi-Ambeno people to have more 'negroid figures' while at the same time defending the predominance of the 'Indonesian-malayan' race.⁷⁵ At times, the

73 Ibid., p. 118.

74 Ibid.

75 See Correia, *Raças do império*, p. 596; and *Sobre um problema de biologia humana em Timor Português* (Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias, 1945), p. 11.



Figure 3. In the original Fontoura Album, this photograph bears no caption and appears in a section titled 'Characteristic types in general'. Yet in his book Mendes Correia retitled this photo 'Men from Oecussi' and presented it as evidence of Oecussi's 'Melanasoide or Papuasian affinity, not lacking, however, Indonesian traits'. This is another example of Correia's epistemic shifts. Correia, *Timor Português*, pp. 74–5.

Source: *Álbum Fontoura, Tipos característicos em geral*, Arquivo de História Social do Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa. PT AHS-ICS AF-2-16822. Courtesy of ICS-ULisboa and Pedro Cardim.

Malayan identity of Oecussi seemed to fade away, diluted in the wider Melanesian type of Dutch West Timor. And yet Correia did not give the whole away. The 'Portuguese region' — the Oecussi enclave included — *corresponded* to a Malayan race type. The enclave ambivalently classified as Melanesian and Malayan, depending on the explanatory value differently accorded to either physical or political geography. If physical geographical location was preferred, Oecussi seemed to be Melanesian; but if political geographical belonging was emphasised, the enclave's population counted as an instance of a Malayan race. Ultimately, Correia preferred the latter option. Perhaps expressing this tension, the 1944 map of Correia's new ethnological line did not include the enclave. Viewers were thus left with the decision of either subsuming the Oecussi racial type in its western physical geography, or in its eastern political affiliation.

Conclusion

The racialisation of an insular territory in Southeast Asia was here explored as a process at the juncture of geographical, colonial, and ethnological theories, categories, and imaginaries. I approached the ways through which anthropological classifications constituted two connected entities: geographically bounded race categories, on the one hand; and racially circumscribed colonial spaces, on the other. In early twentieth-century Timor, I have argued, problems of classification of human races configured problems of political, and particularly colonial, geography. Racial categories and colonial spaces were mutually constitutive entities that reinforced each other's existence. The scientific making of race categories was entailed in political geography and colonial demarcation. This conflation between racial and colonial lines came into being as the unstable and contingent outcome of a process of classificatory work, here unfolding in the Portuguese anthropologist Mendes Correia's racial theories during the first half of the twentieth century.

Between 1900 and 1945, Correia put forward Malayan versions of racial identity for a unified category of people, so-called 'Belos', thought to be the indigenous inhabitants of a distinct political country under colonial rule, 'Portuguese Timor'. Portuguese 'colonial anthropology' was the meaningful framework within which to understand Correia's continuing efforts to constitute one race and one colony simultaneously. Enclaves are complex and ambivalent units in the politics of boundary-making. They are also complex and ambivalent units in racial classificatory work. In this light, Correia's classificatory extrapolations regarding Oecussi and Ambeno are exemplary. Correia's boundary-work in anthropology struggled to convert a disconnected spatial entity (Oecussi and Ambeno) into a valid racial prototype, to be used to generalise about the anthropogeography of a broader political territory. This classificatory work repeatedly projected racial topology onto political geography, and vice-versa. In this process of spatial racialisation, political geography was privileged, to the detriment of physical geography. But over time, as we have seen, it became hard to hold colonial and racial geographies together in classificatory work. The story of Correia's Malayan type of Oecussi and Ambeno, from its invention in 1916 to its epilogue in 1944–45, expresses the difficult work required to keep colonial borders and race lines stably together. Despite the anthropologist's contorted efforts to 'coordinate' and 'synthesise' available data, the two worlds, race and colony, seemed constantly on the verge of drifting apart.

In Portugal and even beyond, Mendes Correia's 1944 monograph *Portuguese Timor* was for years considered the definitive perspective on the subject of the racial anthropology of Timor.⁷⁶ In a private letter to Correia, British physical anthropologist Sir Arthur Keith, then retired and elderly, praised the book for 'such excellent additions to our knowledge, not only of Timor, but of the region you have happily named Insulaind? [*sic*]', and complimented his ingenious use of photographs: 'if you cannot diagnose a man's race from his photograph, you will never succeed by callipers or mathematics'.⁷⁷ In the 1950s to 1960s, Portuguese anthropologist António de

76 See for example, Geoffrey Gunn, *Timor Loro Sae: 500 years* (Lisbon: Livros do Oriente, 1999), p. 32; Luís Filipe Thomaz, *País dos Belos: Achegas para a compreensão de Timor-Leste* (Lisboa: Fund. Oriente, 2008), p. 378.

77 Arthur Keith to Mendes Correia, 6 Feb. 1945, in *Processo individual de A.A. Mendes Correa*, vol. I, Lisboa, Arquivo Histórico da Universidade de Lisboa.

Almeida came in the wake of Correia to lead a series of state-sponsored anthropobiological field surveys in Portuguese Timor, with a view to proving Correia's thesis of a dominant 'Indonesian Mongoloid affiliation'.⁷⁸ Still, principally abroad, the work may not have received the unanimous praise for which Correia, presumably, yearned.⁷⁹ Furthermore, contrary to Correia's declaration, the issue was, and still is, far from settled. The position of Timor Island, and East Timor in particular, remains ambivalent in geography, politics, and anthropology. In his geohistorical atlas, geographer Frédéric Durand emphasises East Timor's 'transitional space lying between the two worlds of Asia and Melanesia'.⁸⁰ New research in human biology and genetics has been conducted in order to ascertain whether it is possible to decide about the 'Austronesian or Papuan ancestry' of the East Timorese.⁸¹ The merging of ethn racial categories and political geography has resumed as a powerful political issue in East Timorese nation-building. During the Indonesian period, as Rebecca Strating observed, the ethnic association of the East Timorese with either Indonesia or Melanesia was a contested political terrain.⁸² Indonesia's propaganda sought to legitimate its domination internationally by claiming 'close ethnic and cultural links between the peoples of East Timor and Indonesia'; no actual political or ethnic divide presumably existed between West (Indonesian) and East Timor peoples.⁸³ The East Timor resistance movement, in contrast, repudiated ethnic affiliations to Indonesia and instead emphasised Melanesian and Pacific roots for the East Timorese. 'In fact,' José Ramos-Horta stated at the United Nations in 1976, 'there is good reason to think of ... [East Timor] as having more ethnic and cultural affiliation not with Java to the west, but with Papua and New Guinea to the east.'⁸⁴ New forms of racialisation, alongside constructs of 'culture', 'ethnicity', or 'people', for example, can follow attempts at creating a distinct national geography — just as they have accompanied the making of colonial geography in the past.

78 António de Almeida, 'Os povos actuais do Oriente Português', *Províncias Portuguesas do Oriente: Curso de extensão universitária, ano lectivo 1996–67* (Lisboa: Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas Ultramarinas; Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 1967), p. 22; and 'Do factor Rh na antropologia de Timor Português', *Memórias da Academia das Ciências de Lisboa. Classe de ciências* 8 (1959): 12. 79 In the United States, for example, Krogman dispassionately acknowledged Correia's 'efforts to acquaint colonial authorities with the bio-social problems with which they must cope'; in Australia, Capell wrote a rather critical review. Arthur Capell, 'A.A. Mendes Corrêa, *Timor Português*', *Oceania* 16 (1945/46): 177–8; Wilton M. Krogman, 'Book reviews: Physical anthropology', *American Anthropologist* 50, 2 (1948): 319–22.

80 Frédéric Durand, *East Timor: A country at the crossroads of Asia and the Pacific. A geohistorical atlas* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 2006), p. 30. Also ambivalent geopolitically: Armando Marques Guedes, 'Thinking East Timor, Indonesia and Southeast Asia', *Lusotopie* (2001): 315–27.

81 See Luís Souto, Leonor Gusmão, António Amorim, Francisco Côrte-Real, and Duarte N. Vieira, 'Y-STR haplotype diversity in distinct linguistic groups from East Timor', *American Journal of Human Biology* 18, 5 (2006): 691–701.

82 Rebecca Strating, 'Contested self-determination: Indonesia and East Timor's battle over borders, international law and ethnic identity', *Journal of Pacific History* 49, 4 (2014): 469–94.

83 Anwar Sani, Representative of Indonesia at the United Nations, Speech made before the 4th committee on the question of East Timor 8 Nov. 1977, p. 4. Arquivo & Museu da Resistência Timorese. DRT — Documentos Resistência Timorese — Espaço por Timor, Pasta 05006.012. See also Strating, 'Contested self-determination', pp. 482–3.

84 José Ramos-Horta cit. in Strating, 'Contested self-determination', p. 492.