

Material about **JOBIT** and **RUNJAT** cloths

from:

# Legacy in cloth

Batak textiles of Indonesia

by

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fig. sr 6.7 A Batak leader.  
 Early twentieth century. Photoarchives VEM 203-0195

The rugged appearance of this man contrasts with the tidiness of the men associated with the Church (*see other illustrations in this chapter*). It is not known where this photograph was taken but the clothing combination could have been found in Toba Silindung. He is wearing a **RUNJAT** Cat 6.10 hipcloth, and his shouldercloth is a **RAGIDUP** Cat 7.1.

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“There are features of change in the Silindung repertory that are also evident in the other style regions: the loss of design types that were once used as hipcloths (*e.g.* **JOBIT** Cat 6.8) *see* figs. **SR 6.10**; **sr 6.12** .....”



fig. SR 6.10 Wives of pastors and teachers.  
Pea Raja, Silindung. Early twentieth century.  
Photoarchives VEM 203–0462

As leading members of the church, these women were expected to teach by example in matters of cleanliness and appropriate dress. With the exception of one breast-feeding mother, the women are all well-covered and tidily dressed in their finery for the photograph.

The women seated first and third from the left are wearing plaid sarongs (*mandar*). The woman fourth from the left is wearing a **JOBIT** Cat 6.8 hipcloth.

All of the women seem to be wearing a **BAJU KURUNG** on the upper body. All those carrying children appear to be wearing a **MANGIRING** Cat 5.7 indicating their status as mothers. The woman seated furthest to the right and the woman standing furthest to the right are wearing **SURISURI** Cat 1.3.1. Perhaps the woman standing second from the right is wearing a **GATIPGATIP** or **SI TOLU TUHO** Cat 1.5.1. The women seated second and third from the left may be wearing **SADUM** Cat 7.5, probably from Angkola, or **SIRARA** Cat 7.6.



fig. SR 6.12 Christian Batak chief's family.  
 Silindung. Early twentieth century.  
 Photoarchives VEM 203–0214

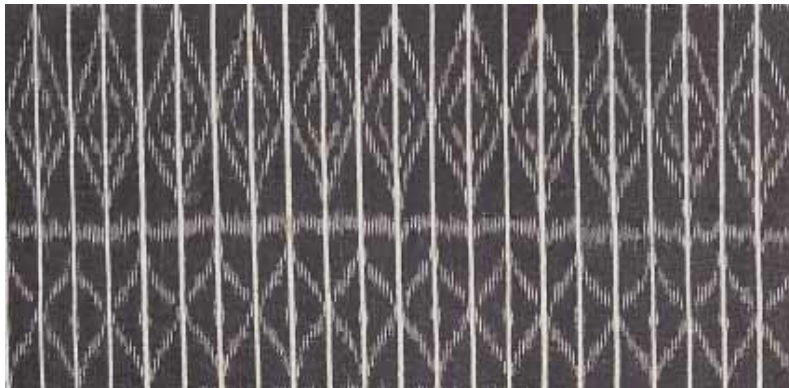
This group of people is standing in front of a colonial house.

The Christian chief is probably the man seated on the left with the unusual **RAGIDUP** over his shoulder. It does not have stripes in the centre panel, and may be a **RAGIDUP SI LINGGOM** [Cat 7.1](#). His headcloth may be of black or red (probably imported) cloth. The design of his hipcloth is not clear. The woman seated to the right of the chief is wearing a **SADUM** [Cat 7.5](#) shouldercloth, probably imported from Angkola. The woman beside her has a child wrapped in her **MANGIRING** [Cat 5.7](#), the lacy ends of which appear to be crocheted.

The woman seated on the far right is probably wearing, for the occasion of this photograph, the shouldercloth she wore on her wedding. It appears to be a silk import from Minangkabau or regions further south. The hipcloth of the woman with the child on her lap is a **JOBIT** [Cat 6.6](#). Clearly, men were the first to adopt Western dress.

## Catalogue 6

### Lozenge-and-Cross Ikat



Many Batak textiles in Toba, Karo, Simalungun and Si Tolu Huta are embellished with lozenge-shaped ikat motifs, and many of those by the combination of the lozenge and its inversion, the X-shaped ikat motif.

This category is large and comprises numerous variations. All Batak ikat patterning is constructed from short dashes or stipples that are combined to make different forms. Factors that influence the appearance of the lozenge ikat include:

- the number of warp yarns in the stipples that combine to form the motif;
- whether unpatterned background warp threads separate the stipples (this determines the density of the motif);
- the number of concentric layers that comprise the lozenge;
- whether there is an embellishment in the centre of the lozenge, or around its perimeter;
- whether the lozenges are arranged contiguously or discretely, in rows or columns;
- whether the edges are pointed or rounded;
- how the lozenge is combined with stripes and other motifs.

The illustrations in this chapter depict the range of possibilities.

The lozenge motif, common throughout Southeast Asia, is one of the most basic forms used to represent living creatures, both human and animal [Maxwell 1990:82](#). Among the Batak, the lozenge is just a geometrical motif. It is not clear whether the Batak see associations between the lozenge motif and the *bindu matoga*, the Toba symbol of power collapsing time and space [fig. Des 1.1](#).

Throughout Southeast Asia, the lozenge is often found in combination with hook, key and spiral patterning (*e.g.* in Laos, Toraja, Dayak textiles [Maxwell 1990:79, 81, 139](#)). In the Batak area, the hook and meander are the least common ikat motifs, occasionally found in combination with the lozenge in, for example, [RUNJAT Cat 6.10](#), [BALOBAT Cat 6.11](#), [TAMPUNE/GATIP GEWANG/ GATIP AMPAR Cat 6.13](#) and also in other textiles of high status, such as the [PINUNSAAN Cat 7.2](#), [GIPUL Cat 4.4](#) and [HOHOS Cat 7.3.1](#). The [BINTANG MARATUR Cat 6.1](#) and [SIMARPUSORAN Cat 6.6](#) are the largest design types in this chapter. The names designate categories that are closely related and not completely discrete; the overlap is potentially confusing.

Some of the indigo-dyed textiles in Cat 1 incorporate lozengeand-cross ikat (*see* [SIBOLANG Cat 1.1.1](#), [SIBOLANG RASTA Cat 1.2](#), [BOLEAN Cat 1.3.1](#), [HALANGBANGKE Cat 1.4](#) and [surisuri Cat 1.5.1](#)).

## Cat 6.8

see Cat 4.6

*Design Type Name*

**JOBIT**

– *jobit* (Simalungun): a kind of leaf [Hasyim et al. 1985:112](#).

– *jobit Mandailing* (Toba): a valuable referred to in local tales [Vander Tuuk 1861:207](#). This textile design may have originated in Mandailing.

**BOPBOPAN, BOLOPAN**

– *bopbopan* (Toba?): same as the **JOBIT** [Adam 1919a:13](#); [Winkler, unpublished documentation, MVH](#).

**BOPBOP**

– *bopbop*: a Toba textile [Van der Tuuk 1861:388](#); [Groeneboer 2002:188](#).

**ULOS BOKBOK**

Name recorded, probably in error, by Myers [u.p.:185](#).

The following name is modified by a design/technique term [see Table Des 4.1](#) as described under *Design Highlights*:

**RUNJAT NA MARBOTIKBOTIK**

See [Cat 6.10](#) for the definition of *runjat*. The name used in Laguboti (Toba Holbung/Uluan).

*Provenance*

– Toba: Silindung, Holbung

Archival photographs reveal that this textile was used in the Silindung Valley [figs sr 6.10](#); [sr 6.12](#). An elderly weaver there claimed that she learned how to weave it in the past. A weaver in Muara also recalled the textile. Its distribution in colonial times seems, therefore, to have spanned at least the Batak regions south of Lake Toba. The textile belongs to the past; few remembered its name.

*Descriptive Summary*

*warp border*: black stripe

*sides*: red; separately woven and sewn onto the centre panel

*centre/body*: red ground; blue-black warp stripes; elaborate ikat patterning in the blue-black warp, arranged in broad bands across the body of the cloth

*border between sides and centre*: stripes embellished with supplementary warp (*jugia*) and ikat patterning [Detail](#)

*weft border*: patterned twining

*fringe*: twisted

*Design Highlights*

The textile contains some of the most complex ikat patterning in the Toba Batak repertory. The prominent rows of ikat include the lozenge motif and its inverse, the cross, as well as a bunched stipple-ikat pattern [see figs Cat 6.8 Details](#).

**RUNJAT NA MARBOTIKBOTIK**: a variant with stipple-ikat patterns [Table Des 4.1](#).

See **RANDERANDE HODA** [Cat 4.6](#): the child's version of the *jobit*.

*Function*

*Clothing function*:

– hipcloth for men in the mid-nineteenth century [Groeneboer 2002:188](#).

– worn on ritual occasions by wives of men of high standing

[Meerwaldt 1919:13a](#); [see figs sr 6.10](#); [sr 6.12](#).



fig. SR 6.10 Detail. fig. SR 6.12 Detail



fig. Cat 6.8 **jobit**.  
Half cloth and details. 187◊125 cm + fringe 11 cm.  
Collection S. Niessen. Photograph Lotus Studio.

This textile was purchased as an 'antique' on the Tarutung market from a seller from Laguboti in 1986.

## Cat 6.10

*Design Type Name***RUNJAT**

*runjat* (Toba): wide, not closing tight [Tichelman 1938:66](#).

Maxwell's 1990:136 claim that the *rujat* [sic] is etymologically related to *parang rusak* is incorrect *see also* [Maxwell 1990:70, 96](#).

**RONJAT**

– *ronjat* (Karo): loose, not tightly bound; a beautiful Toba textile type [Neumann 1951:261](#).

**RUNJATRUNJAT?**

– *runjatrunjat* (Karo): Jasper and Pirngadie [1912:226](#) list this textile type as part of the Karo repertory, but the appearance of the cloth is unknown.

**BARUNJAT?**

See Cat 6.12.3.

**RAGI**

Not to be confused with Cat 4.3.

The name can be modified by design/technical terms *see* [Table Des 4.1](#) as explained under *Design Highlights*.

**RUNJAT NA GELLENG****RUNJAT NA BOLAK**

See Cat 7.2 for **PINUNSAAN RUNJAT**.

*Provenance*

– Toba: Holbung/Uluan, Silindung

– Karo?

The **RUNJAT** appears to have been used from Balige through to Lumban Julu. If the Karo textile called **RONJAT** had the same design features, then the textile had a wider distribution. It was apparently once sold in Tiga Raja [Van der Chijs 1877](#), a market that catered to Karo and Simalungun Batak. The origin of one museum cloth [mwf a.g.27](#) is given as Karo while the design features of the cloth indicate that it was made in Uluan.

*Descriptive Summary*

*warp border*: black, ikat-patterned stripe *sides*: red; plain; may be woven separately and sewn onto the centre panel

*centre/body*: regular blue and red stripes; either or both may be ikat-patterned [fig. Cat 6.10](#); ikat patterning consists primarily of variations of the lozenge-and-cross motifs, but may include a meander ikat; the major ikat stripes may be bordered by stripes embellished with supplementary warp (*ullopullo* [Tech 6.3.1](#)) or ikat stipples (*gatipgatip*); supplementary-weft patterning at the fringe ends of the cloth (*tupe* [Tech 7.8.1](#)).

*border between sides and centre*: supplementary-warp and ikat patterned stripes

*weft border*: patterned twining

*fringe*: twisted; may be cut off

*Design Highlights*

There are three varieties of **RUNJAT**:

**RUNJAT NA BOLAK**: wide variants; these appear to be the most common. The side panels are woven separately and sewn onto the centre panel. This is the most elaborately embellished variant [Tillman 1940:10, 11, figs. 4, 4a](#). The fringes can be cut off so that they don't drag on the ground when the cloth is worn around the hips [fig. Cat 6.10b](#); *see* [fig. sr 6.7](#).

**PINUNSAAN RUNJAT**: The end fields of the centre panel are white with elaborate supplementary-weft patterning typical of the **PINUNSAAN** [Cat 7.2](#).

**RUNJAT NA GELLENG**: smaller single-panel version, worn as a shouldercloth.

A nineteenth-century textile, labelled a Karo

**TJOEMANTJOEMAN** in the museum documentation [rmv 340-68](#); *see also* [Cat 5.2.1](#), has the features of a Toba **RUNJAT NA GELLENG**. Made by Toba weavers for Karo consumption, it may be the Karo variant, **RONJAT**.

*Function*

*Clothing function*:

– shouldercloth.

– hipcloth *see* [fig. sr 6.7](#).

– high-class (*raja*) textile once worn only by women or men of high standing on ceremonial occasions [Meerwaldt 1919](#).



fig. SR 6.7 Detail





fig. Cat 6.10a **RUNJAT NA BOLAK**.  
Whole cloth. 184x160 cm.  
Collection Thomas Murray.

There is no red ikat patterning in this version



fig. Cat 6.10b **RUNJAT NA BOLAK**.  
Half cloth. 152x114 cm. Collection RJM.

The ikat patterning, including the meander motif, is found in both the red and the blue stripes. The textile is hand-spun and dates, therefore, from at least early in the twentieth century. Made in Toba Uluan.



fig. Cat 6.10b Detail. fig. Cat 6.10b Detail.

## Email exchange with Sandra Niessen 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Oct 2013

On 8<sup>th</sup> October Sandra Niessen wrote:

Hi Pamela,

Your textile is the cover of Motifs of Life. :)

But yours is a red variant and the cover of Motifs is a blue variant.

I saw one of these in Balige. They are very rare. The cover of Motifs is a photo I took of a very ragged variant, I think also from Balige. The cloth is definitely Toba-- and that is precisely the kind of jugia that I want to "save" as it is so very special and complex -- has a lot of similarities with the ragidup jugia, so is probably not the Porsea (Uluan) variant. Perhaps this kind of textile was woven in Silindung in the past as well.

It seems to be somewhere between a runjat and a jobit. In fact, there are several cloths of that ilk that I truly have difficulty naming. They are no longer worn or made and few people have them and nobody knows their name anymore. Sebastian Hutabarat's mother had one, and alas she gave it to Merdi Sihombing [Batak fashion designer], of all people. She lives in Balige.

I don't know what a ragi parbue is and have often wondered if this is a ragi parbue. Don't think so, but it is always tempting to attach a name that you don't know the design of with a design that you don't know the name of.

Yes, it could very well be handspun. It has the vintage. And handspun yarn was as fine as the factory yarn of today. Remarkable, really.

Congratulations on this purchase, Pamela. I don't know what is given to grandfathers at the birth of their first grandchild. But certainly it is an important occasion because it changes the name of the grandfather. He becomes Ompu ni.... somebody instead of Ama ni....somebody (Grandfather of rather than Father of). I didn't know that the hulahula gave a cloth on such an occasion, but it would make sense.

Cheers,

Sandra

Sandra Niessen

Co-ordinator Project Pulang Kampung III

<http://bataktextiles.blogspot.nl>

[www.facebook.com/PulangKampungIII](http://www.facebook.com/PulangKampungIII)

7<sup>th</sup> October 2013, Pamela A Cross wrote:

Hi Sandra

I have taken some photos of my new Batak textile but it is very difficult to get an overall shot as the camera finds it very difficult to focus on the ikat as there is just too much going on for the autofocus. I have made a web page of some of the shots and made a few comments

[www.tribaltextiles.info/pacross/pac\\_collection/Batak/Batak-061013.html](http://www.tribaltextiles.info/pacross/pac_collection/Batak/Batak-061013.html)

To my eyes the nearest comparison in LIC is a Jobit, Cat 6.8 pages 334/5. The basic design/construction of the textile is similar. The ikat is not identical but, to my eyes, in a similar spirit. Do you think it is Toba or Simalungun? It is very sad that there are several holes in the cloth as well as staining.

Any comments on my new cloth gratefully received!

Best,

Pamela

Pamela A Cross

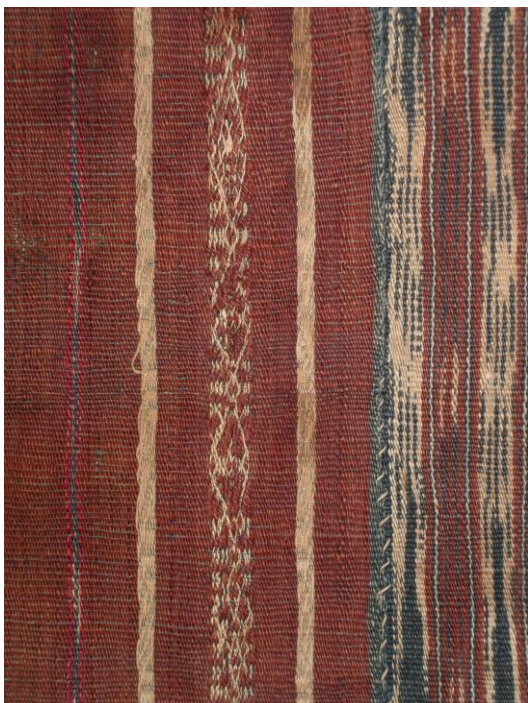
[www.tribaltextiles.info](http://www.tribaltextiles.info) hosting the

[www.tribaltextiles.info/community](http://www.tribaltextiles.info/community) forum

Permission received via email exchange 11 Oct 13 with Sandra Niessen to share this document which includes material copied from *Legacy in cloth* with Hennie Stolk: "Enjoy!...Of course I don't mind! It is a compliment!"



cloth is 182 cm long (+ fringes of 10 cm) and 125 cm wide



Wed 09/10/2013 20:32

Hennie Stolk [hjjstolk@kpnmail.nl](mailto:hjjstolk@kpnmail.nl)

Dear Pamela,

It was a big surprise to meet you during the ATF [06.10.13] and I can tell you that in the four shows I did in recent years you were the first admirer of textiles who went on her knees. A common attitude seeing pictures in Hali, but I knew directly what kind of "textile lover" was in my stand.

For me, a textile lover in first place and sometimes a dealer in second place, I'm happy and proud that you are the new owner of this impressive ulos. I'm curious to hear what Sandra can tell you about this textile. I send a picture of our visit to the Batak in 2010.

You were so busy with the Batak piece that you hardly looked at the tapis (if I'm right). These are the core of my collection and if you do know people which are looking for this kind of Indonesian textile than I'm willing to send them images. Some are in very good condition and prices are reasonable. I did mail Lesley and Diccon a week before the show but they were not able to attend the ATF this time.

Hope that you will enjoy this textile very often and very much. You made me happy because I do know that this ulos is in very good hands.

I do hope to hear from you and in case of finding and willing to sell a beautiful Batak textile I will let you know.

All the best from the Netherlands,

Hennie

