



An Outline of

# BATAK ANCESTRY, CULTURE AND ARTS

by

Bostang Radjagukguk

March 2020

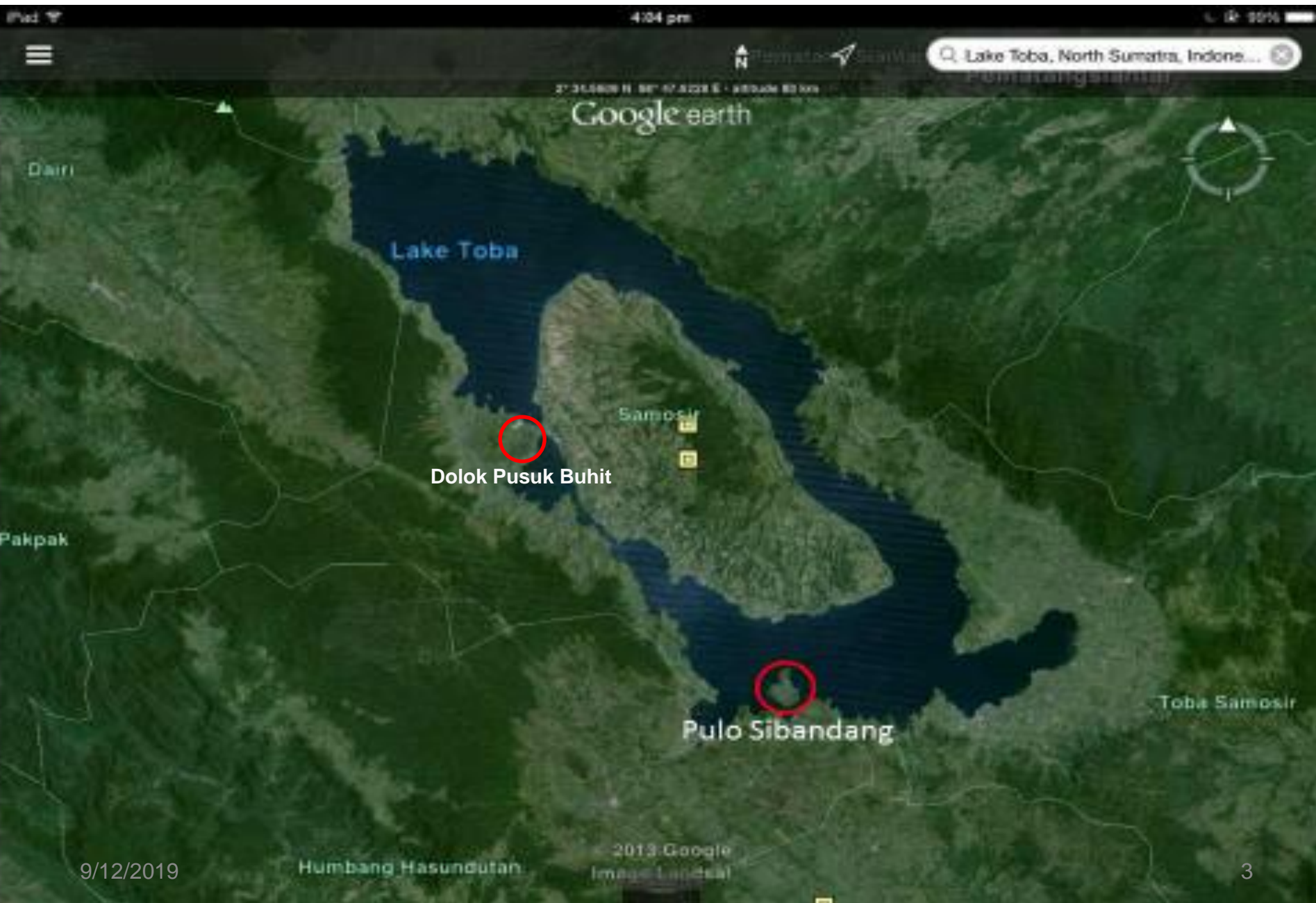
# **BATAK ANCESTRY**

## **SI RAJA BATAK**

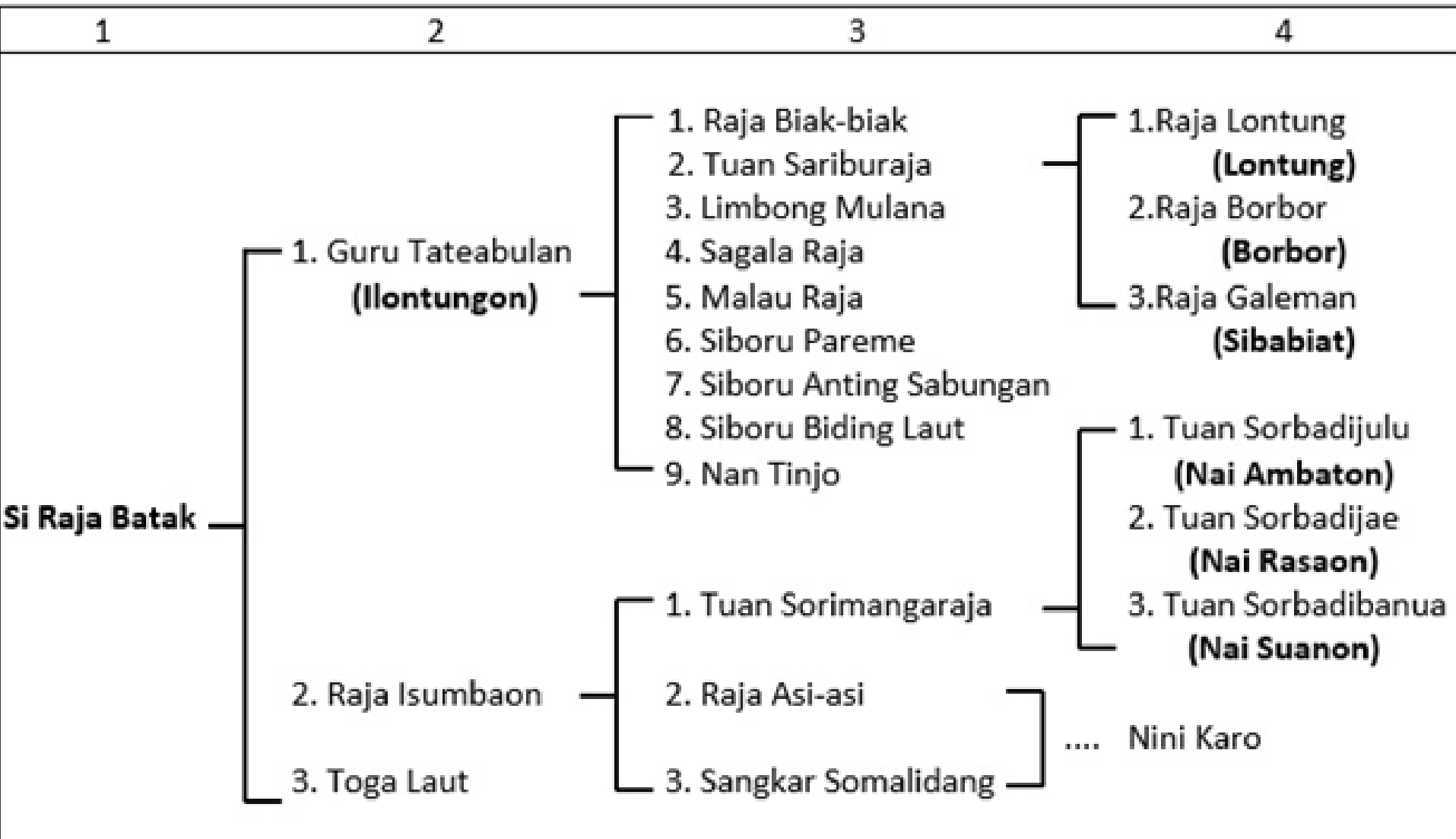
**There are two versions on the origin of Si Raja Batak. The first version says that Si Raja Batak came from Thailand (around the year 1200). Si Raja Batak and his entourage traveled from Thailand towards the Malaysian Peninsula. Their journey did not end there, but they continued to travel towards Sumatra by crossing the Malacca Strait. On arrival in Sumatra, Si Raja Batak and his entourage decided to settle in Sianjur Mula Mula, at the foot of Dolok (Mount) Pusuk Buhit, near Pangururan. This version is supported by similarity in body posture, facial appearance, and food preference. Moreover, cultural values of the Batak people have close resemblance to those of the native Thailand people (the majority of Thais are of Chinese descendants). It was not known as to why Si Raja Batak and his entourage left Thailand.**

**The second version holds that Si Raja Batak originated from India. Around the year 1200, Si Raja Batak left India and traveled towards Sumatera. At first, he arrived and settled in Barus. According to Prof. Nilakantisasri (a Professor of Indian Archaeology), forces of Chola Empire from India attacked the Sriwijaya Empire in Sumatera. The Chola Empire dispatched around 1,500 Tamils to attack the Sriwijayans in Barus. This version says that Si Raja Batak was an official of the Chola Empire. However, due to a conflict among the Tamils in Barus, Si Raja Batak took a refuge further inland and settled in Portibi. This is strongly supported by the existence of Portibi Temple which has ancient Indian inscription.**

# Lake Toba, Icon of Batakland



# SI RAJA BATAK AND HIS DESCENDANTS UP TO THE FOURTH GENERATION



## The Directions of Initial Dispersal of Descendants of Si Raja Batak from Sianjur Mula-mula at the Foot of Pusuk Buhit Mountain





## **BATAK IS ONE OF OVER 300 ETHNIC GROUPS OF INDONESIA**

**The population of Batak ethnic group in Indonesia in 2010 ranked third after the Javanese and the Sundanese. The population of Bataknese in Indonesia according to the 2010 Population Census was 8,432,327 (3.55% of the 237,424,363 total population of Indonesia). According to the ethnicity code of the Central Statistical Bureau, the Batak ethnic group consisted of seven sub ethnic groups. The populations of these sub ethnic groups were as follow: Angkola Batak (623,214 = 7.39%), Karo Batak (1,232,655 = 14.62%), Mandailing Batak (1,742,673 = 20.67%), Pakpak Dairi Batak (180,393 = 2.14%), Simalungun Batak (441,382 = 5.23%), Tapanuli/Sibolga Batak (539,567 = 6.40%) and Toba Batak (3,672,443 = 43.55%).**

# North Sumatra Regencies With Majority Batak Population (Coloured)



# TRADITIONAL BATAK VILLAGE





# BATAK CULTURAL IDENTITY

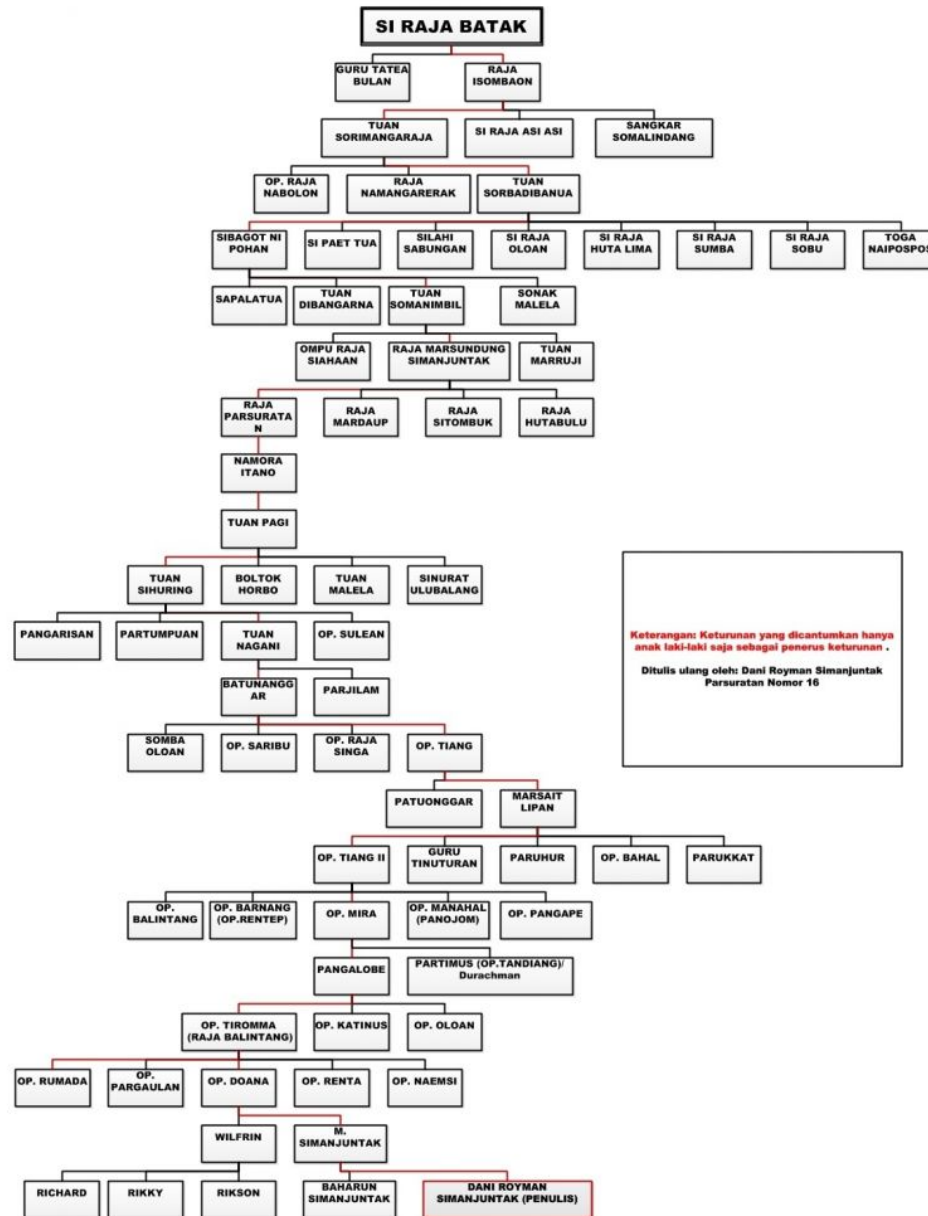
- **Clan Name (*Marga*) & Family Tree (*Tarombo*).**
- **Kinship and Titles (*Partuturan*).**
- **The Tripod (*Dalihan Na Tolu*) Customary Principle :  
(Be Respectful to *Hula-hula* = *Somba Marhula-hula*,  
Be Considerate to Fellow Clan Members = *Manat Mardongan Tubu*, Be Persuasive to *Boru* = *Elek Marboru*).**
- **Batak Language (*Hata Batak*).**
- **Place of Origin/Homeland (*Bona Pasogit*)**

# **AROUND 400 CLAN NAMES (*MARGA*)**

**Ambarita, Angkat, Aruan, Baho, Bakara, Banjarnahor, Bangun, Baringbing, Barus, Cibero, Colia, Damanik, Daulae, Doloksaribu, Ginting, Girsang, Gultom, Harahap, Hutabarat, Hutagalung, Hutasoit, Jadibata, Jampang, Kembaren, Ketaren, Kudadiri, Limbong, Lubis, Lumbantobing, Lumbantoruan, Maha, Manalu, Manik, Manullang, Manurung, Marpaung, Nadeak, Nainggolan, Nasution, Ompusunggu, Pakpahan, Pandia, Panjaitan, Pasaribu, Purba, Rajagukguk, Rangkuti, Ritonga, Sagala, Saing, Sarumpaet, Siagian, Siallagan, Sianturi, Sibarani, Siburian, Sidabalok, Silaen, Simamora, Simangunsong, Simanjorang, Simanjuntak, Simarmata, Sinaga, Siregar, Sitinjak, Sitompul, Sitorus, Situmorang, Sukatendel, Surbakti, Tambunan, Tampubolon, Tanjung, Tarigan, Tarihoran, Togatorop, Tumanggor, Ujung, etc.**

## FAMILY TREE (*TAROMBO*)

**GARIS KETURUNAN SI RAJA BATAK PADA MARGA SIMANJUNTAK SAMPAI KE GENERASI 16 PARSURATAN**



**Keterangan: Keturunan yang dicantumkan hanya anak laki-laki saja sebagai penerus keturunan .**

**Ditulis ulang oleh: Dani Royman Simanjuntak**  
**Parsuratan Nomor 16**

# KINSHIP AND TITLES (*PARTUTURAN*)

## 30 titles (*panggilan*)

Amang, Inang, Amangtua, Inangtua, Amanguda,  
Inanguda, Angkang, Anggi, Angkangdoli,  
Anggidoli, Ompungdoli, Ompungboru,  
Tunggane, Lae, Tulang, Nantulang,  
Amangnaposo, Inangnaposo, Maen, Amanghela,  
Amangbao, Inangbao, Ito, Amangboru,  
Namboru, Inangbaju, Bere, Pariban, Eda,  
Ampara



# THE TRIPOD (*DALIHAN NA TOLU*) CUSTOMARY PRINCIPLE

DALIHAN NA TOLU



# THE THREE PILLARS OF THE TRIPODS (*DALIHAN NA TOLU*)

- **HULA-HULA** : Father in-law and his brothers + his male ancestors + his male descendants (and their families), as well as their in-laws.
- **DONGAN TUBU** : Fellow male clan (*marga*) members and their families.
- **BORU** : Female descendants of a clan who also bear the clan name (*marga*) together with their husbands + the husbands' immediate clan (*marga*) members + their descendants, and their families.

# THE TRIPOD (*DALIHAN NA TOLU*) PRINCIPLE

- Be respectful to *Hula-hula* (*Somba Marhula-hula*).
- Be considerate to Fellow Clan (*Marga*) Members (*Manat Mardongan Tubu*).
- Be persuasive to *Boru* (*Elek Marboru*).

# ***ULOS***

In the Batak philosophy, one of the elements which support human existence, health and comfort is **warmth (*kehangatan*)**. The three sources of warmth are :

The Sun (only available during daytime)

Fire (not convenient and practical, must be attended to)

***Ulos*** (convenient and practical to use anytime and anywhere)



There are **many kinds** of *ulos* to be presented or worn according to the particular Batak ceremonial occasion, and one's relationship/kinship (*partuturan*) to the recipient.



Ulos Sadum



Ulos Ragi Hotang



Ulos Suri Suri



Ulos Ragi Hidup

# ***ULOS* PRESENTED TO A NEWLYWED COUPLE**



# **BATAK TRADITIONAL POETRY (*UMPASA*) IN THE BATAK LANGUAGE**

*Ompu raja di jolo*

*Martungkot sialagundi*

*Pinungka ni ompunta parjolo*

*Sipadimun-dimunon ni na di pudi*

**Message in the poetry :**

**The rules and tradition set by our ancestors  
Need to be perfected by their descendants.**



# BATAK SCRIPT

Ina ni surat			Anak ni surat			
Baca	Aksara	K'board	Nama	Baca	Aksara	K'board
a	5	a	Hatadingan	e	-	e
ha	7	h	Singkora	i	o	i
ma	8	m	Haluaon	o	x	o
na	9	n	Saringar	ng	-	Shift + ^
ra	6	r	Haborotan	u	>	Shift+aksara bersangkutan
ta	1	t	<p>"\" = Pangolat: Berfungsi untuk menghilangkan bunyi " a " pada setiap ina ni surat</p> <p>Contoh:</p> <p>mangan = 1&lt;7\</p> <p>modom = 1*^1*^1</p> <p>marsak = 15\27\</p>			
sa	2	s				
pa	3	p	<p>Hatadingan " e " : garis pendek terletak disebelah kanan atas aksara</p> <p>Contoh:</p> <p>meme= 1&lt;1&lt;</p> <p>tape = 1&lt;1</p> <p>bere = 1&lt;1</p>			
la	4	l				
ga	5	g				
ja	6	j				
ba	7	b				
wa	8	w				
da	9	d				
ya	0	y				
nga	1	u				
u	2	Shift+i				
i	3					

# PLACE OF ORIGIN/HOMELAND (*BONA PASOGIT*)

***Bona ni Pasogit (Bona ni Pinasa)*** : Land and village of origin, ; Land and village of settlement originally established by ancestors of the clan (*marga*). A place or village they first established as a permanent home village which was subsequently and commonly accepted as the clan's home village according to customary law (*hukum adat*). Examples : ***Bona Pasogit*** Batak people is **Sianjur Mulana (Sianjur Mula-Mula) village**, a.k.a. Sianjur Mula Tompa, Sianjur Mula Yang. ***Bona Pasogit*** Marbun clan is **Parmonangan village (*Huta Parmonangan*)**, Bakkara. ***Bona Pasogit*** Siregar clan is **Muara village (*Huta Muara*)**. ***Bona Pasogit*** Hutagalung clan is **Huta Galung, Tarutung**. The term ***Bona Pasogit (Bona ni Pinasa)*** in a wider sense also embraces other items passed down by (inherited from) the ancestors such as: **clan name, custom (tradition), culture, history, inherited articles, burial place, etc.** ***Bona Pasogit*** originated from the words *Bale Pandang-Bale Pasogit*. ***Pasogit*** (*Parsantian* house, house for giving birth) :birthplace; origin; small house specially set aside for giving birth and is therefore regarded as a sacred place. ***Pasogit*** as house for giving birth is found for example in Bakkara, Hutatinggi, Tomok, Pearaja. ***Bona*** = origin; stem base. ***Pinasa*** = Jackfruit tree.

(Source :*Kamus Budaya Batak Toba* (Dictionary of Toba Batak Culture) by M.A. Marbun and I.M.I. Hutapea)

## **Homeland Visit (*Pulang Kampung*)**

**Homeland visiting** has become a tradition for Batak people. Wherever they migrate to, they always feel the urge to go back to their home villages as frequently as possible to visit their relatives. **Young Bataks will be taken along by their parents to visit their relatives** in Tarutung, Balige, Porsea, Muara, Saribudolok, Pahae, Berastagi, Sidikalang, Pangaribuan, Bakara, Sipirok, etc. As they just arrive in Medan, the provincial capital, and listen to the song ***O Tano Batak* (Oh, My Batakland)**, they will **feel the touching emotion** that they can finally return to their homeland.

# BATAK MUSIC

A number of musical instruments also play part in the ritual and customary (***adat***) ceremonies of the Toba Batak people. There are two types of musical ensembles, ***gondang sabangunan*** and ***gondang hasapi***, consisting of traditional musical instruments most frequently played. **In the distant past (prior to the embracing of Abrahamic religions – predominantly Christianity)**, according to the mythology of the Toba Batak people, the two ensembles belonged to the ***Mulajadi Nabolon (Great Creator)*** and, therefore, must be played to submit their requests to the deity.

# Gondang Ensemble



# BATAK DANCE

***Tortor* Dance** has become one of the most prominent arts in the culture of Batak people. ***Manortor* (to dance)**, in the distant past, constituted a symbol of thankfulness to ***Mulajadi Nabolon*** as the creator of the universe (**Note: in the present day context for the Batak people who have embraced modern religions, to God as the Creator**). This dance is also performed to pay respects to ***hula-hula*** in accordance with the ***Dalihan Na Tolu*** customary principle. Therefore, the ***tortor*** is commonly performed in ritual ceremonies, and in ***adat* ceremonies, such as wedding and other festivities**.



# Batak Dance (*Tortor*)





# BATAK HANDICRAFT

***Martonun*** (cloth weaving) or the skill in the making of *ulos* cloth using traditional weaving equipment, constitutes one of the arts of handicrafting in the tradition of the Batak people, which to this day could still be found in the interior villages of Samosir Island and in other places around Lake Toba. In the past, the Batak community performed various handicrafting according to their roles and functions in the ***adat*** structure, and the religion they embraced.

# *Ulos*





# Blazer & Shirts



# Handbags

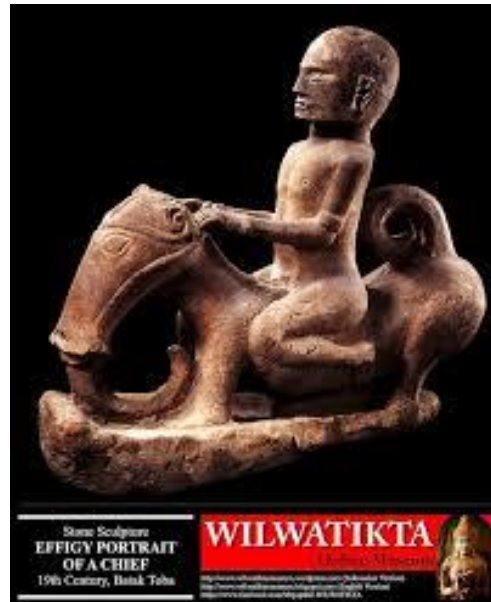
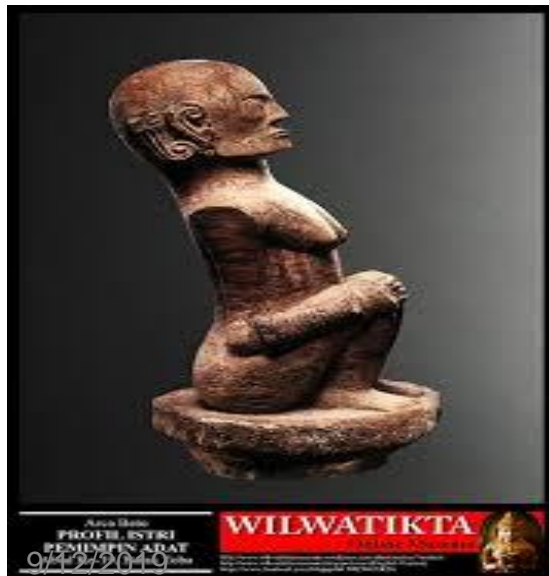
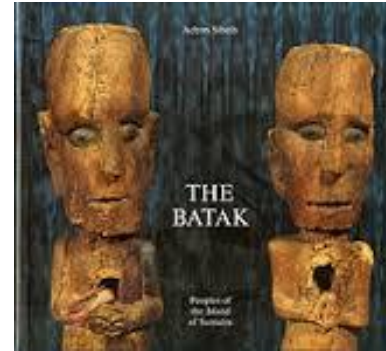
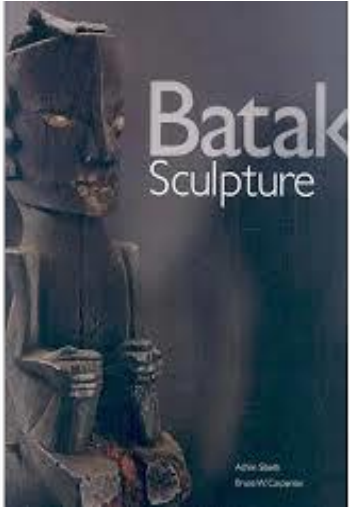


9/12/2019

# BATAK SCULPTURE

The art of carving and sculpturing also constitute the main skills in the traditional arts of the Batak people. Carving known as *gorga* style which has traditionally been used as ornaments for their *adat* houses, is a proof of the beauty of the carving skills of the Batak people. On the other hand , the art of sculpturing could be seen from the abundance of traditional items such as *sior* (bow/arrow) and *hujur* (spear), *losung gaja*, *tagan parpagaran* and *sigale-gale* (Batak puppet).

# Wood Sculptures





# Gorga Wood Carving



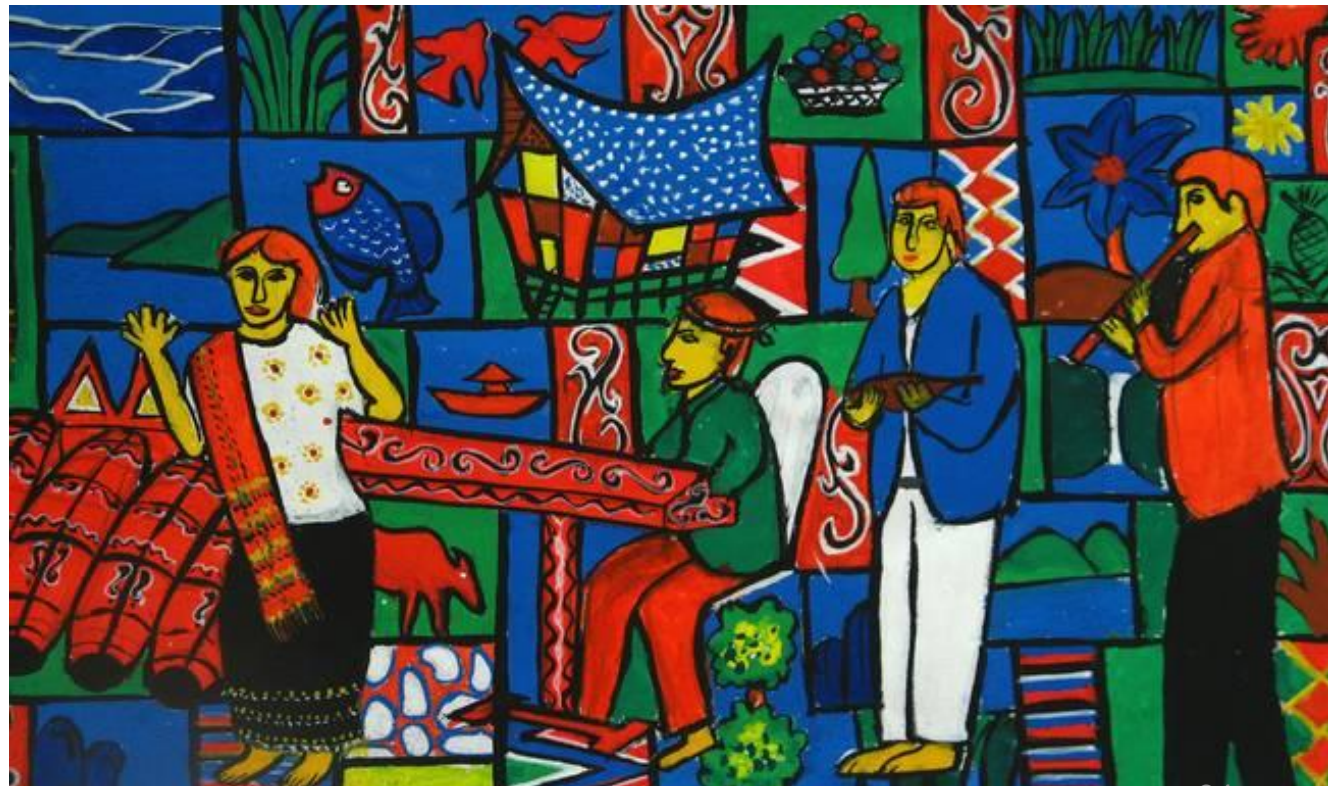
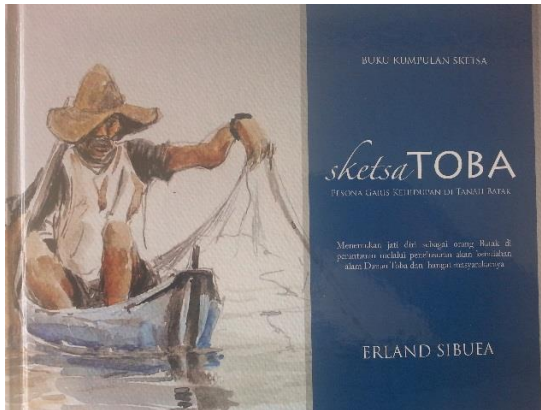
www.shutterstock.com · 103953635



# BATAK PAINTINGS

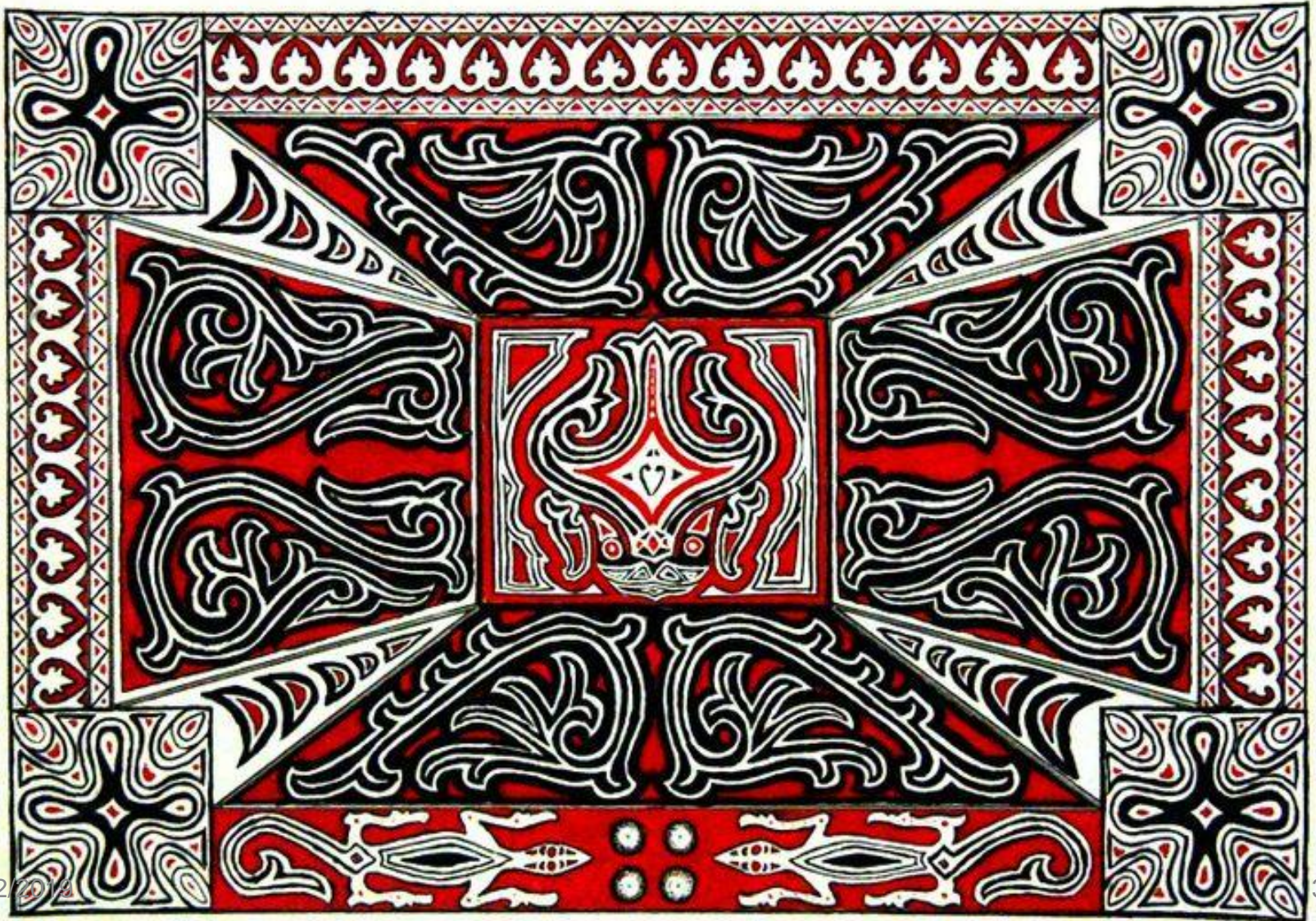
- In the past mostly consist of **Gorga** paintings dominated by three colours (**red, black, white**).
- Modern trends: e.g. the works of **Erland Sibuea**

## Music Ensemble





# ***Gorga Painting***



# BATAK LITERATURE

Various forms of **literary arts** have also evolved in the **life** of the Batak community, both **spoken/oral and written literatures**. Various **folklores**, such as **the origin of Lake Toba and *Batu Gantung* (Hanging Rock)**, have become legends which up to the present day are still believed as truth by some Batak people. Traditional poetries (***umpasa***) are also a unique element of the Batak culture, which portray the local wisdom of the Batak people. All of these literary arts have **philosophical meaning** in their life.



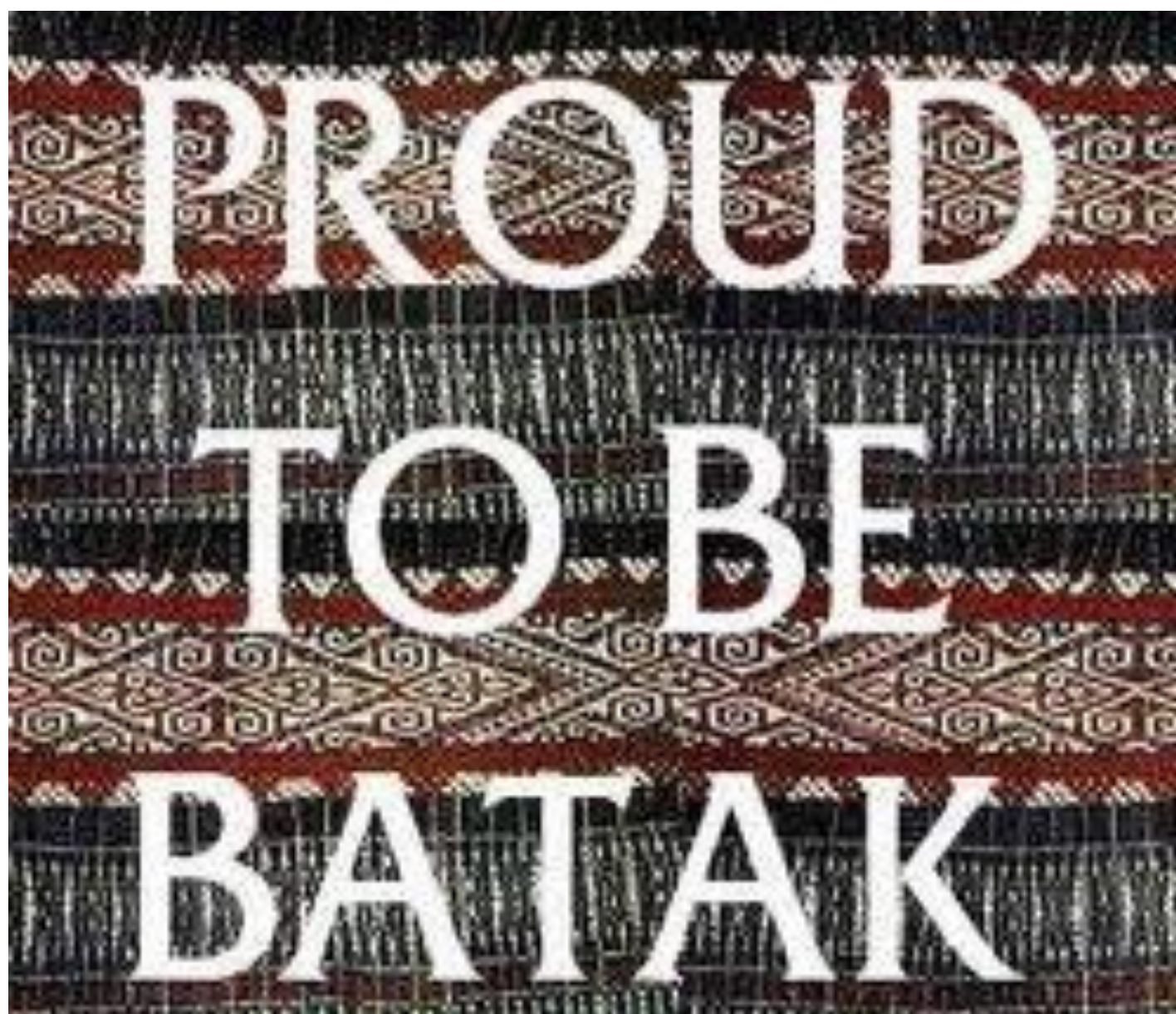
G

**Antologi Puisi Dua Bahasa  
Batak - Indonesia**

**BUDAYA BATAK TAK BOLEH MATE**  
 EN HINGGI BAKESAITAN 2015 541 MH ACCN

# CONCLUDING REMARKS

- Batak as an ethnic group consists of sub-ethnics Toba, Karo, Simalungun, Pakpak, Angkola and Mandailing.
- Batak identity as an essential part of their culture which they strive to preserve, basically consists of Clan Name (*Marga*) and Ancestry (*Tarombo*), unique Kinship and Titles (*Partuturan*), unique customary tradition based on the “Tripod Principle” (*Dalihan Na Tolu*), the Batak Language (*Hata Batak*) as well as Batak Script, and Place of Origin (*Bona Pasogit*).
- Batak Arts are also unique and continue to evolve with time (modernization process).



PROUD  
TO BE  
BATAK