

Peter ten Hoopen, *Ikat from Timor and its Outer Islands: Insular and Interwoven*.

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*Ikat of East Indonesia, Timor Island and Surrounds* is an elaboration of the author's Ph.D. dissertation defended at Leiden University in 2021. Peter ten Hoopen created several reference sets of textiles decorated with warp ikat or warp resist-dye technique from a region once called the Residence of Timor and Subordinate Territories or present-day Nusa Tenggara Timur. The textiles under study originated from the Bird's Head Peninsula of East Flores Island, Solor and Alor Archipelagos, Leti Islands, Babar Islands, Sermata Islands, and the islands of Wetar, Kisar, Romang, Savu, Rai Jua, Rote, and Ndao, Timor, and Sumba. The author examined the development of different types of threads, different types of weaves, the distribution of specific motifs, the presence of pattern asymmetry, and the impact of making ikat-decorated textiles on the weaver. The concept of virtuosity or the display of a noblewoman's prowess and dexterity as a weaver was introduced and justified with examples.

This publication is the result of the first in-depth study of the technical aspects of handwoven textiles decorated with warp ikat from East Indonesia. The author set forth to record the weight of the textiles composing the reference sets he compiled and the weave types that he describes as warp: weft ratios, asymmetry in design format, and virtuosity. This focus sets this publication apart from previous books and articles by concentrating on the technical nuances of handwoven textile production and the creation of warp ikat designs. The author also questioned why similarities exist for warp ikat patterns decorating textiles from across the region under study, and offered some explanations, but also stated that further research was required. Virtuosity in creating complex warp ikat designs, especially of East Sumbanese women, was discussed in detail, which previous publications have not covered. Thus, the book serves as a foundation for the continuation of this research in the same areas and other production locales.

Ten Hoopen created reference sets of textiles with eras of production ranging from 1850–1950. The Group A physical database consisted of 252 textiles from the author's personal collection. Reference Set Group B included 200 examples from museum collections. Group C was derived from the private collection of Mr. Kinga Lauren, Bali, Indonesia. The author also compiled two virtual databases. Virtual Group A consists of 500 textiles from museum collections, and Virtual Group B is derived from various sources. The author recorded the physical qualities of Reference Set A such as weight, dimensions, and the number of panels composing a textile. He assessed weight (grams) per square

meter. Micro- and macro-photography allowed for the analysis of the types of threads and weaves used to produce one textile. Photography also enabled the comparison of motifs and whether asymmetry in patterns and design layout were present.

In Chapter 2, ten Hoopen states that a fundamental skill in producing high-quality, warp ikat textiles concerned hand-spinning cotton. The author amassed over 5000 photographs to examine: the regularity versus irregularity of the thread gauge, weave type, and yarn degradation over time. Via microscopic photography, he found 41 distinct warp ikat regions in 29 islands. Only 219 textiles in Reference Set A were composed of handspun threads. Handspun threads produced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were finer than later production. The older textiles had higher irregularity of yarn since they were primarily made from handspun threads. Regularity replaced irregularity with the widespread use of machine-spun yarns after 1925. Ten Hoopen asserted that some weavers preferred machine-spun threads over handspun since the former allowed for the creation of clearer ikat designs. The author discovered 21 distinct types of warp: weft ratios. Since interviews with weavers were not conducted as part of this study, it is unknown why there is a wide range of weave types.

Chapter 3 examines similar warp ikat textile designs found in the region of study and offers origins and reasons for shared motifs. The author found eight types of designs on 128 textiles from 22 islands and argued that textiles from Sulawesi Island were the source of inspiration for weavers in the islands of the Residence of Timor and Subordinate Territories, assuming that the textiles from Sulawesi were considered prestigious in this region. However, production of these textiles in Sulawesi has ceased and extant examples are no longer present in the region of study. Other foreign sources of motifs were Indian trade textiles such as *patola*, or double-ikat silk textiles from Gujarat, and perhaps carpets from Central Asia. One example is the design of a female dancer from the *phan baht patolu* consisting of a triangle-shaped head and body. The author did not interview weavers about the symbolism or sources of the motifs under study and stated that the weavers with this knowledge have passed away. Ten Hoopen stated that further research is needed on the shared motifs, including their origin and meanings.

Chapter 4 explores a previously undiscussed concept, the asymmetry of warp ikat patterns decorating a single textile, and focuses on asymmetric patterns and design formats among East Sumbanese textiles. The creation of asymmetry is more difficult than symmetry, and the author contends that it is a matter of the weaver's choice to produce. He also found the presence of asymmetry on textiles, mainly men's garments, from Timor and neighboring islands includ-

ing Ndao, Rote, Savu, and Kisar Island. Asymmetry was also present on women's garments from the Ile Api region of Lembata Islands. The author describes longitudinal and axial asymmetry in great detail. Ten Hoopen devotes part of Chapter 4 to asymmetry on East Sumbanese textiles. These weavings were only produced by noble and royal women, and due to their skill, he calls them virtuosos. He states that the high-class East Sumbanese weavers developed ways to transcend biaxial symmetry discreetly, and intentionally concealed their artistry by producing ikat patterns that appeared to be simple. The author outlines seven types of asymmetries from a database of 600 East Sumbanese men's textiles (*hinggi*).

Ten Hoopen enumerates the social context of warp ikat textiles in Chapter 5, observing how ikat textiles are deeply embedded in society, the lives of their creators and users, and thus deeply reflect the human touch. The production of these textiles empowered women, the primary producers of handwoven textiles in East Indonesia. The author asserts that the creation of the warp ikat designs placed women on equal footing with men who were headhunters, and warp ikat technique occupies a similar social status to headhunting. He details the masterful craftsmanship and creative ingenuity of the weaver or textile artist in the intricacy of design, dye saturation, the elegance of figuration, enhanced tactile experience, secondary ornamentation, surprise, and other complex techniques such as stippling or asymmetry.

In the Conclusion, the author summarizes a wide variety of textiles that the study compiled, categorizing them in terms of thread uniformity, weave types, and weight. Textiles became heavier and coarser after World War II. Changes have occurred in handwoven textile production such as commercialization and men becoming weavers, and overall, in recent years there has been a decline in quality.

*Ikat of East Indonesia, Timor Island and Surrounds* presents a thorough examination of the technical aspects of warp ikat textiles handwoven in East Indonesia, which until now had not been explored with such depth and detail. The author also introduces the concepts of asymmetry and virtuosity in regard to these textiles. Since this study focused on the technical aspects of warp ikat textiles produced in NTT, field research was not conducted. Personally, I would like to have heard the voices of some weavers in order to know, for instance, their perspectives on what makes good ikat. The author justifies not interviewing weavers by stating that the ones with the richness of knowledge pertinent to this study are unfortunately no longer alive.

Ten Hoopen has clearly described the subjects covered in this publication. The book is well written and is illustrated with details and overall images of textiles. Maps and drawings further enhance the text. It also includes an

abstract, acknowledgments, the author's cv, a pronunciation guide, a colophon, an appendix of weave types via the analysis of microphotographs, a bibliography, and an index. This book is suitable for university students, academics, and other researchers in the studies of handwoven textiles. It presents new topics to study, mainly technical aspects of the textiles under study, asymmetry of warp ikat designs, and virtuosity. Although previous researchers addressed similarities in designs and the roles of textiles, especially in the lives of their producers or women, the author offers some explanations for the distribution of motifs. However, he does not pretend to have the final word and urges further study, giving future researchers the opportunity to continue where he left off.

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