

 ARCHIPEL

**Archipel**

Études interdisciplinaires sur le monde insulindien

91 | 2016

Varia

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## The Loincloth, Trousers, and Horse-riders in Pre-Islamic Java: Notes on the Old Javanese Term *Lañciñan*

*Pagne, pantalon et cavaliers dans la Java pré-islamique : notes sur le terme javanais lañciñan*

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### Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/archipel/312>

DOI: 10.4000/archipel.312

ISSN: 2104-3655

### Publisher

Association Archipel

### Printed version

Date of publication: 15 May 2016

Number of pages: 185-202

ISBN: 978-2-910513-74-0

ISSN: 0044-8613

### Electronic reference

Jiří Jákl, « The Loincloth, Trousers, and Horse-riders in Pre-Islamic Java: Notes on the Old Javanese Term *Lañciñan* », *Archipel* [Online], 91 | 2016, Online since 01 May 2017, connection on 30 April 2019.  
URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/archipel/312> ; DOI : 10.4000/archipel.312

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## The Loincloth, Trousers, and Horse-riders in Pre-Islamic Java: Notes on the Old Javanese Term *Lañciñan*

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The main purpose of this contribution<sup>2</sup> is to take a fresh look at the Old Javanese term *lañciñan* and to discuss literary evidence on trousers as an item of dress in pre-Islamic Java. I explore the possibility that the Old Javanese term *lañciñan*,<sup>3</sup> commonly rendered “trousers,” may have originally denoted a type of loincloth used in the context of warfare. Furthermore, I propose to dissociate the introduction of trousers to Java from the cultural and religious influences of Islam, arguing that a bifurcated lower garment was first adopted in the military context, at the latest by the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE. This contribution also aims to reopen discussion on the relevance of Old Javanese court poetry (*kakavin*) as a source of cultural history of premodern Java. Representing literary fiction, the relationship of Old Javanese *kakavins* to the realities of Javanese life has always been contentious.<sup>4</sup> On the one hand, *kakavins* have been used as a rich

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1. Palacky University, Olomouc, Czech Republik.

2. I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Arlo Griffiths (Lyon), Tom Hoogervorst (Leiden), Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer (Leiden), and Jaroslav Strnad (Prague) during the process of writing this study. Among the *Archipel* reviewers, I would like to thank especially Dana Rappoport and Arlo Griffiths for their constructive comments that helped to improve the arguments advanced here.

3. I transcribe Old Javanese and Middle Javanese according to the system proposed by Acri and Griffiths (2014). In order to avoid any confusion, I have also standardized the spelling of quoted primary sources according to these conventions. Modern Javanese words are transcribed in accordance with the standard modern convention.

4. Recently, Worsley (2012: 167) has suggested that rather than fiction, *kakavins* represented for ancient audiences a world of “hyper-reality,” in which “reality” and “fantasy” elements join

source – at times, the only source – for a number of aspects of life in pre-Islamic Java (Ras 1976; Wisseman Christie 1993). On the other hand, some scholars have been inclined to dismiss this poetry as a viable source for history (Berg 1951, 1969). In what seems to be a current trend, scholars are admitting the value of *kakavins* as a rich source for the cultural history of premodern Java, though methodological problems are widely acknowledged (Supomo 2001; Creese 2004; Acri 2010; Worsley 2012). To extract historical evidence from *kakavins*, we need, as suggested recently by Worsley (2012: 148), to ascertain “what is Indian in epic *kakawin* and what authentically Javanese and then query what is ‘fictional’ about them.” In my view, the use of Old Javanese literary representations of dress to draw conclusions about the pre-Islamic dress culture should follow, wherever possible, this research strategy. In what follows, I demonstrate that by investing high-status literary figures (in all cases represented in the context of warfare) with the *lañciñan*, Javanese poets give us an important hint about the character of this premodern element of dress.

To make my arguments easy to follow and check, I list here the Javanese textile terms discussed in this article: *cavət* (OJ: a type of lower garment; MJ, MdJ: loincloth); *calana* (OJ: a type of lower garment); *clana* (MdJ: long trousers); *gaḍag* (OJ, MJ: trousers); *grīnsiñ* (OJ, MJ, MdJ: double-ikat textile); *kaṭok* (MdJ: knee-length trousers; archaism for modesty plaque); *kirivili* (OJ: sash, or apron of loincloth); *kupina* (OJ, MJ: ascetic’s loincloth); *lañciñan* (OJ, MJ: loincloth; trousers); *lancingan* (MdJ: knee-length trousers; archaism for loincloth, especially as a form of underwear); *sruwal* (MdJ: knee-length trousers). The abbreviations refer to: OJ (Old Javanese), MJ (Middle Javanese), MdJ (Modern Javanese).

### Old Javanese *Lañciñan*: Loincloth or Trousers?

Old Javanese *lañciñan* is commonly translated “trousers;” judging from lack of any comments on this term, it is considered unproblematic (Zoetmulder 1982; Teeuw and Robson 2005:161; Worsley et al. 2013: 151, 373). This attribution is apparently derived from the meaning of the word *lancingan* in Modern Javanese, where it indeed denotes (men’s) trousers (Robson and Singgih Wibisono 2002).<sup>5</sup> The word is attested in the *Bhomāntaka*, a *kakavin* composed by an anonymous poet in the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE (Teeuw and Robson 2005), and in the *Sumanasāntaka*, a *kakavin* composed around 1200 CE by Mpu Monaguna (Worsley et al. 2013). Apart from these two Old Javanese texts, the term *lañciñan* is also known from a number of texts composed in Middle Javanese, such as the *Raṅga Lave* and *Kiduñ Sunda*.

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to represent Java’s past. This approach may explain a number of archaisms used in the *kakavin* poetry, including several terms pertaining to the literary representations of dress.

5. The same meaning of this word is attested also in Modern Sundanese. Eringa (1984: 444) renders Modern Sundanese *lancingan* simply “trousers” (Dutch: “broek”).

The form of the word, interestingly, has remained unchanged for more than eight hundred years, a rare fact in the Javanese dress and textile lexicon. The attestation of the Javanese term for trousers in the literary texts composed at the Hindu-Buddhist courts of pre-Islamic Java has, to date, attracted no attention of textile historians, who generally associate the introduction of trousers to Indonesia with the process of Islamisation and its novel perception of the human body. Maxwell (2003: 313), for one, claims that wherever Islam spread, men have adopted short pants, while women have accepted trousers as part of their daily dress only in Aceh and in some parts of Sumbawa. In the non-Islamic areas where trousers became part of dress, such as in the Toraja highlands, their introduction is ascribed to the cultural influence of Islamic clothing practices (Maxwell 2003: 314).

Beside *lañciñan*, there is another Old Javanese term, *calana*, an early form of Modern Javanese *clana*, that is commonly interpreted as denoting “trousers.”<sup>6</sup> Unlike *lañciñan*, Old Javanese *calana* is a loanword. The term *calana* is a rare lexical item in Old Javanese, found only in two places in the *Kakavin Rāmāyaṇa*, an Old Javanese version of the Indian epic, and the earliest known specimen of the *kakavin* genre, datable according to current scholarly opinion to the 9<sup>th</sup> century CE (Acri 2011: xv).<sup>7</sup> Gonda (1973: 39), for one, derives *calana*, as well as related forms, such as Old Buginese *cəlanā*, from Hindī *carṇā* (“trousers reaching to the knees”).<sup>8</sup> This author, however, nowhere mentions his source for the word *carṇā*, and in view of the fact that the earliest textual attestation of Old Hindī postdates by several centuries the composition of the *Kakavin Rāmāyaṇa*, Gonda’s attribution must remain speculative.<sup>9</sup> To reassess the meaning of Old Javanese *calana* in the *Kakavin Rāmāyaṇa*, it is necessary to analyse the literary context of the pertinent passages. In the first occurrence of this term, found in stanza 21.201, *calana* denotes an element of battle dress worn by the soldiers of Rāvaṇa’s

6. For a discussion of yet another Javanese term for trousers, *gaḍag*, attested in the *Śivarātrikalpa* and a number of Middle Javanese texts, see the second part of this article.

7. Apart from the *Kakavin Rāmāyaṇa*, Old Javanese *calana* is found in a small number of *kakavin* composed in Bali (Zoetmulder 1982). Interestingly, in most cases the term *calana* is used in these texts in the context of warfare. According to the current scholarly opinion, none of the Old Javanese *kakavins* authored in Bali predates the 16<sup>th</sup> century CE (Creese 1999, 2004) so that these occurrences have no relevance for my analysis.

8. Russell Jones (2007: 48) has also proposed to derive the Old Javanese term *calana* from Old Hindī, but lists *colnā* as an original Old Hindī form. According to Jaroslav Strnad, an archaic word form *colnā* is found in some Old Hindī texts composed by Kabīr, where the term, however, denotes an element of women’s dress, most probably some form of jacket (email communication 23/10/2014).

9. Interestingly, in *Hindī Śabdsāgar* (III: 1489), a lexicon of Old and archaic Hindī word forms, we find a word *calanaka*, used here for a “short women’s skirt.” Jaroslav Strnad has suggested that a more plausible source of Old Javanese term may be found among the Prakrit languages (email communication 23/10/2014).

general Prahasta.<sup>10</sup> It is mentioned alongside *kirivili*, an enigmatic element of dress, usually rendered as “sash, belt.”<sup>11</sup> The identification of *calana* in this passage, however, remains tentative; the term may denote either a variety of trousers, or some form of unstitched lower garment. The rendering of *calana* as “trousers” is further complicated by the second occurrence of this term, found in stanza 25.78, where it refers to an element of dress worn by young women. Hooykaas, for one, renders *calana* in stanza 25.78 as “pantaloons” (1958: 375). Yet, the context of the passage in which *calana* is found clearly suggests that the garment depicted here represents in fact an element of women’s underwear. First, let me quote Hooykaas’s translation of the stanza that depicts young girls amusing themselves at the bank of the river Sarayū:

Yonder there is one who climbs in the *campaka* and shakes down the flowers;  
 others carry them in their sling at their backs;  
 some enlist the aid of their kains to take them all,  
 whispering because they are not wearing their pantaloons.

We may imagine that the girls, wishing to carry away as many blossoms as they could handle, tucked up their skirt-like dresses (*kain*) to accommodate the *campaka* blossoms. Apparently, the *kain* was short, so that the lower part of the body, typically covered by some kind of underwear as the text seems to suggest, became visible.<sup>12</sup> This sight of the girls, naked waist down, made an impression on the young men, who were peeping from behind the trees at the bank of the river, as we gather from a couple of following stanzas.<sup>13</sup> I suggest, contrary to Hooykaas (1958), that the evidence we have is not detailed enough to claim that in the 9<sup>th</sup> century CE the Old Javanese term *calana* denoted trousers, a form of stitched bifurcated lower garment. Furthermore, the fact that apart from the *Kakavin Rāmāyaṇa* the term *calana* is unattested in other *kakavins* authored on Java further emphasizes the specificity of the language environment in which the *Kakavin Rāmāyaṇa*, the single *kakavin* known from the Central Javanese period (732-928 CE), was composed. Old Javanese *calana* may thus represent a loanword from Old Malay, or another Nusantaran language. It may be of etymological relevance that among the four words used to denote one or other form of trousers in Modern Javanese (*clana*, *kaṭok*, *lancingan*, *sruwal*), it is only *clana* that refers specifically to long, ankle-length trousers rather than to short, knee-length trousers as do the other three

10. We may presume that *calanas* were among the items rewarded to warriors by Prahasta before the battle, as we gather from stanza 21.199, where we learn that Prahasta distributed to his soldiers numerous “gifts,” among others “*luṅsir* silk textiles [and other] cloth” (*luṅsir devāṅga dodot*).

11. For a discussion of *kirivili*, see note 22.

12. Interestingly, Soewito Santoso (1975: 274) has rendered Old Javanese word *patālāsan*, a single piece of garment worn by a celestial nymph sporting in water, depicted in vivid detail in *Sutasoma* 48.7, as “loincloth.”

13. See *Kakavin Rāmāyaṇa* 25.80-82.

terms. Aichele (1943) has pointed to a number of Malay loanwords found in the *Kakavin Rāmāyaṇa*, but since Aichele's pioneering study the subject of Old Javanese-Old Malay lexical exchange has remained little studied.<sup>14</sup>

The finding that Old Javanese *calana* in *Kakavin Rāmāyaṇa* 25.78 probably does not denote trousers but rather a simple, most likely unstitched, element of women's underwear, should make us suspicious about the exact meaning of Old Javanese *lañciṇan*. Although in contemporary Javanese *lancingan* denotes men's knee-length trousers, as recently as in 1938 Pigeaud still knew about two other meanings of this word: "loincloth" (Dutch: *lendendoek*), and "underpants" (Dutch: *onderbroek*).<sup>15</sup> Apparently, in the 1930s the word *lancingan* still carried three different meanings, used for three distinct kinds of lower garment, even though other dictionaries of Modern Javanese, such as Jansz (1913), list under *lancingan* only the meaning "trousers."<sup>16</sup> In view of this fact, it is not unreasonable to presume that the same semantic flexibility pertained as well to the use of the Old Javanese form *lañciṇan*. Even though Teeuw and Robson (2005: 160) render *lañciṇan* as "soldier's trousers," all we can say with certainty is that in Old Javanese *kakavins* the word denotes a form of warrior's lower garment, an element of battle dress.<sup>17</sup>

Before I discuss in detail the attestations of *lañciṇan* in *kakavins*, let me briefly summarize current knowledge of what soldiers wore on the lower torso of the body. In spite of extensive descriptions of warfare in the Old Javanese literature, we have only a very rudimentary knowledge of the dress of Javanese soldiers and their military leaders. From a number of *kakavins* we infer that various protective elements of battle dress, such as scaled jackets (*sipiṇ-sipiṇ*) and helmets (*rukuh*), were used.<sup>18</sup> We hear, however, almost nothing about the elements of the dress soldiers wore to cover and protect the lower torso of the body; the Old Javanese literary record is surprisingly silent on this issue. On the other hand, there are a number of visual representations of battle dress on

14. For a recent study in which Old Javanese literary and inscriptional material is discussed alongside Old Malay epigraphical texts, see Griffiths (2014), especially p. 215-217.

15. Pigeaud (1989: 231).

16. Jansz (1913: 352), for one, defines the word *lancingan* as a Krama Inggil version of *kaṭok* and *sruwal*. *Kaṭok* and *sruwal*, according to Jansz (1913: 276, 875), denote trousers in both the Ngoko and Kromo speech registers, where *kaṭok* designates more specifically knee-length trousers secured by button(s).

17. To the best of my knowledge, the term *lañciṇan* is not attested in (published) Old Javanese inscriptions, another important source of knowledge about the Javanese pre-Islamic dress culture.

18. In his *Old Javanese-English dictionary*, Zoetmulder (1982: 1784) reconstructs the appearance of a *sipiṇ-sipiṇ* jacket in a lengthy entry: "part. of warrior's attire, prob. a kind of short jacket without sleeves, covering the upper part of the chest (see KBW s.v. *simping*); apparently of scaled metal plates and worn by those who have distinguished themselves." In my view, Old Javanese *sipiṇ-sipiṇ*, as well as Middle Javanese *sisimpiṇ*, designate a protective jacket worn by the infantry. Fashioned from the buffalo hide rather than from metal, the jacket was reinforced and embellished by numerous small discs cut from *sipiṇ-sipiṇ* shells.

the reliefs of Javanese religious monuments. While most of the reliefs depict warriors wearing a short, skirt-like lower garment, some depictions show them dressed in a loincloth.<sup>19</sup>

Consisting in its simplest variety of a long and narrow strip of cloth which is passed between the legs and then around the waist, the main purpose of the loincloth is to cover the male genitals.<sup>20</sup> Although the loincloth was culturally important in many parts of premodern Indonesia, relatively little attention has been paid to its history. Apart from its humble variety, there was also an elaborate one, used mostly at festive occasions, with patterned ends that hang down front and back (Nooy-Palm 1969: 169; Steinmayer 1991). The loincloth represents an ancient form of clothing; Maxwell (2003: 40) observes that the patterns on the end sections of loincloths produced during the last century often resemble those on some of the earliest stone statues found in the region. During the last one hundred years the loincloth has disappeared not only from Java, but also from many other parts of Southeast Asia (Steinmayer 1991). Interestingly, in some modern societies the use of the loincloth has survived but its function has been changed. Maxwell (2003: 40), for one, reports that heirloom Toraja loincloths (*pio*) are nowadays used mainly as ceremonial banners, and in Bali loincloths may be used as shawls around the necks of male participants in the context of ritual.

The history of the loincloth in Java, one of the islands most intensely exposed to cultural and religious influences of India, remains only poorly documented. Yet, literary and visual evidence suggest that the loincloth represented a common element of Javanese premodern dress. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century CE, however, the loincloth had disappeared from all but the most isolated parts of Java; according to Carey (2008: 46), it continued to be used only by impoverished mountain dwellers in remote districts of hill regions. Even though the study of the history of Javanese dress is still in its infancy, and we have only a very limited knowledge of the dress culture in Hindu-Buddhist Java (Barnes et al. 2010), we may presume that the loincloth represented an important article of men's, and probably children's, dress.<sup>21</sup> Visual representations from pre-Islamic Java suggest that the loincloth was the main element of daily dress of farmers, porters, craftsmen, and ambulant traders.<sup>22</sup> In fact, there is no other type of premodern garment more suitable for

19. Some of the earliest of these representations are found at Borobudur and Prambanan (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries CE), Central Java. See, for example, Degroot (2013: 46).

20. The loincloth, however, did not always prevent the genitals from being exposed: in a vigorous combat scene, depicted at one of the reliefs in Prambanan, we see a wrestler with his loincloth already loosened, and with his penis dangling down (Degroot 2013: 36).

21. Teeuw and Robson (2005: 606) suggest tentatively that the obscure term *kañcur*, attested only in *Bhomañtaka* 4.3 where it denotes wet clothes of young boys who work as cattle-herders, could denote a variety of loincloth.

22. For a man ploughing with a team of oxen, see Nou & Frédéric (1996: 69). For porters, see

vigorous physical activities, such as hunting, fishing, hand-to-hand combat, and wrestling, than the loincloth. The Indian *kaupīna* (Alter 1992), and the Japanese *mawashi* worn by the sumo wrestlers, are probably the best known examples of the continued popularity of the loincloth in the martial context. In the past, it is in the context of warfare that we encounter the most elaborate variety of loincloth in Java. In the reliefs depicting the *Kṛṣṇāyana* on the main temple of Panataran (14<sup>th</sup> century CE), some warriors use a very elaborate variety of the loincloth (Klokke 2000: 26-28). The clearly visible front end hangs down, forming an apron. The fashion of wearing a long and billowing apron (and tail) to one's loincloth is attested from ethnographic evidence and may have been rooted in apotropaic qualities ascribed to the front and tail of the loincloth (Steinmayer 1991).<sup>23</sup> Bhīma, a literary character representing a model of powerful but unrefined warrior, is depicted in a number of statues dated to the 14-15<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, wearing an elaborate loincloth (Duijker 2010: 43-44). The loincloth used in the martial context is known also from other parts of ancient Southeast Asia: some soldiers depicted on Angkor temple reliefs wear what Green calls "hipcloth," a loincloth with prominent ends hanging down loosely (2000: 283).

We must admit that Javanese premodern evidence on trousers and the loincloth represents a paradox: though the loincloth is depicted on a number of reliefs and statues spanning the period between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, there is, to the best of my knowledge, no explicit visual representation of trousers in Hindu-Javanese art. Furthermore, while it is presumed that Old Javanese term *lañciñan* denotes trousers, the actual Old Javanese name of the loincloth remains unclear. The term *kupina*, which represents a loanword from Sanskrit, is attested specifically in the religious context where it refers to a type of loincloth used by ascetics as part of their garb.<sup>24</sup> Made typically,

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Miksic et al. (2011: 165). For musicians wearing a form of loincloth, with their uncovered buttocks clearly visible, see Miksic et al. (2011: 172). Small boys may have used the loincloth as a predominant form of garment in ancient Java; I gather this from the visual representation of Lava, one of the sons of Rāma, at Prambanan (Levin 2011: 173). I am grateful for the reference to the depiction of a ploughing man to Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer (email communication January 2015).

23. It is tempting to speculate that the enigmatic Old Javanese word *kirivili* denotes the (decorated) front part of the loincloth ("apron"). Zoetmulder (1982: 878) renders *kirivili* as "a part. article of dress, prob. a sash hanging down from the waist." Representing an element of the battle dress of the *vil* demons depicted in the *Bhomāntaka*, *kirivili* is translated by Teeuw and Robson (2005: 141) as "sash." Rubinstein (2000: 163) renders *kirivili* as "sash that hangs from the waist", and gives the word as listed among the examples of the category of *dīrgha* ("long") characteristics in Old Javanese prosody as explained in the *Canda*, an Old Javanese treatise on prosody. In my view, this means that the *kirivili* was still a clear and probably well-known term by the time the *Canda* was composed. Tom Hoogervorst has suggested that the first segment of the Old Javanese term *kirivili* may be related in one or other way to Tamil *kīli*, a strip of cloth tied round the waist of a mendicant, a variety of mendicant's loincloth (email communication 15/1/2015).

24. Zoetmulder (1982: 929), for one, renders Old Javanese *kupina*: "the pudenda; a small piece



if not exclusively, from bark-cloth, the *kupina* became one of the symbols of hermits and ascetics in Old Javanese literature, along with a vessel made of a gourd.<sup>25</sup> The ascetic's loincloth is also represented on a number of narrative reliefs and statuary from the Hindu-Buddhist period.<sup>26</sup> It is possible, however, that *cavət*, a term known from at least two Old Javanese inscriptions and from a number of texts composed in Middle Javanese, has denoted specifically the loincloth.<sup>27</sup> The same word is still used to denote the loincloth in Modern Javanese (Pigeaud 1989: 576). The single Old Javanese attestation of the word *cavət* known to me is found in *Bhomāntaka* 81.41, in a difficult passage full of erotic overtones, where, however, it seems to refer to some kind of (talking?) bird, rather than to a type of garment.<sup>28</sup> Teeuw and Robson (2005: 445), editors of the *Bhomāntaka*, leave *cavət* in stanza 81.41 untranslated.<sup>29</sup>

I offer the hypothesis that along with the *kupina* (ascetic's loincloth), and *cavət* (known with certainty only from Middle Javanese texts), Old Javanese *lañciñan* may have originally denoted the loincloth. By the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE, at the latest, the term was applied also on the trousers, while *cavət* denoted exclusively the loincloth. This proposal is supported by the finding that the terms *cavət* and *lañciñan* occur side by side in the military context of a few Middle Javanese texts that may be plausibly dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE (*Raṅga Lave* and *Kiduñ Sunda*).<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the term *palalañciñan*, attested in the Middle Javanese *Koravāśrama*, explicitly denotes the “waist”, and points thus

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of cloth worn over the privities.”

25. It is attested in Old Javanese, as well as Middle Javanese texts. See, for example, *Pārthayajña* 12.16; *Koravāśrama* 188.18; *Tantu Paṅgəlaran* 58.9 and 60.24.

26. From several detailed representations of ascetic's loincloth in Javanese statuary we may presume that, at least during the Majapahit period, the loincloth was further secured by way of a string or belt. For a very detailed, though rather late (16<sup>th</sup> century CE), visual representation of ascetic's loincloth, see the statue of the so-called “Berlin hermit”, discussed and depicted in Lunsingh Scheurleer (2011: 11, figures 1a and 1b). For other, less detailed visual representations of ascetic's loincloth, see Stutterheim (1925), and Stutterheim (1937).

27. The term is attested in at least two inscriptions: in the Tuhanaru inscription (VIIIb, II.4), dated to 1323 CE, and in the Sanga inscription dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE. I am grateful for the reference to these epigraphic attestations to Arlo Griffiths, email communication September 2015. For the attestations in the Middle Javanese texts, see, for example, *Raṅga Lave* 1.57 and 8.29; *Kiduñ Sunda* 2.172 and 2.85.

28. Compare, however, an interesting possible parallel in a passage in *Smaradahana* 26.9, where the term *kupina* (“ascetic's loincloth”) seems likewise to have erotic connotations. Griffiths and Lunsingh Scheurleer (2014: 141, note 106) render the pertinent passage *kupinanirātahən juga maśabda lanāñukulan*: “His stout member just (?) stood up strongly, continuously making the sound of a slit gong (*kukulan*).”

29. Zoetmulder (1982: 317) renders *cavət* “short loin-cloth.”

30. See Damais (1958: 55-57); Robson (1979).

to the identity of the *lañciñan* as a piece of cloth wrapped around the waist, hence not a form of trousers.<sup>31</sup>

The three passages in which Old Javanese *lañciñan* occurs suggest that *lañciñan* represented a distinct symbol of military leadership, at least in the epic world of *kakavin*. The earliest attestation of *lañciñan* is found in the mocking scene in *Bhomāntaka* 12.10, in which an aging head of a hermitage (*devaguru*), a venerable religious figure, behaves rather like a warlord. Full of the fighting spirit, he sends his disciples to combat willful demons:

*sañ devagurv añadu śiṣya marək manonton  
ambək malañciñan aniñsəti baddha ruñcud*<sup>32</sup>

The *devaguru* urged on his disciples who had drawn near to watch. He was in the mood to put on a *lañciñan*, tightening his loosened headband.<sup>33</sup>

The passage suggests, albeit in the form of a literary hyperbole, that in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century CE *lañciñan* denoted an element of battle dress, apparently associated with the military leadership. In *Sumanasāntaka* 29.5, Mpu Moṅaguna singles out prince Aja, who acts in this scene as a military leader, as a man who wears a *lañciñan*:

*nhiñ mañkat sañ ajəkəmul-kəmul alañciñan añarahakən sakeñ ratha*<sup>34</sup>

Only [Prince] Aja set forth, clad in a cloak, wearing a *lañciñan*, giving orders from his chariot.<sup>35</sup>

The passage illustrates how items of dress mark military leaders in Old Javanese literature: like the *lañciñan*, the *kəmul* cloak is nowhere represented as an element of battle dress worn by rank and file soldiers. But contrary to the *lañciñan*, the *kəmul* is described in Old Javanese literature in remarkable detail. By no means limited to the military context, the *kəmul* is depicted as an item of dress that is imbued with particularly strong apotropaic powers. In fact, in a number of passages the *kəmul* is represented as a “cloak of invisibility,” protecting those who wish to remain unrecognized.<sup>36</sup> We may presume that the

31. See *Koravāsrama* 132.8.

32. *Bhomāntaka* 12.10. Old Javanese text taken from Teeuw and Robson (2005: 160).

33. Teeuw and Robson (2005: 161) render this passage: “The *devaguru* urged on his pupils who had drawn near to watch, He was in the mood to put on soldier’s trousers and tightened his loosened headband.”

34. *Sumanasāntaka* 29.5. Old Javanese text taken from Worsley et al. (2013: 150).

35. Worsley et al. (2013:151) translate this passage: “Only Prince Aja set forth, wearing trousers and a cloak round his shoulders, giving orders from his chariot.”

36. To demonstrate this claim, let me give three examples from the *Arjunavivāha*, a *kakavin* composed by Mpu Kanva in the first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century CE (Robson 2008). Stanza 15.4 depicts a celestial nymph, Suprabhā, who accompanies Arjuna during his airborne spying mission to Nivātakavaca’s residence, wearing a *kəmul* cloak that covers her *tapih* skirt. Arjuna, using a “flying jacket” and magical sandals, follows behind, protected by Suprabhā’s cloak.

*lañciñan* and the *kəmul* worn by Aja in the *Sumanasāntaka* represent a literary reflection of a premodern belief that dress used in the context of warfare should be imbued with particularly strong apotropaic properties.

This finding is further supported by the fact that in a number of Middle Javanese texts the *lañciñan*, as well as the *cavət*, are represented as made from *grĩnsiñ*, a textile that has been viewed in Java and Bali as magically potent.<sup>37</sup> The term is plausibly first mentioned in the *Deśavarñana*, an Old Javanese *kakavin* composed by Mpu Prapañca in 1365 CE, where it denotes a fabric from which the curtains of a box of the royal carriage of Hayam Wuruk were fashioned (Robson 1995: 38). Even though textile scholars differ in their opinion on the character of Old Javanese (and Middle Javanese) *grĩnsiñ*, it is widely accepted that *grĩnsiñ* cloth was valued for its apotropaic qualities (Nabholz-Kartaschoff 1999).<sup>38</sup> Made now only in Tenganan in Bali, Modern Balinese *grĩnsiñ* denotes textiles produced by the complex double ikat technique. All stages of the production are constrained by a number of rules to ensure the ritual purity and magical potency of the finished product (Hauser-Schäublin et al. 1991). While the antiquity of the Balinese production of *grĩnsiñ* remains unknown, the specimens known from ethnographic collections display influence of Indian *patola* double ikat silks produced in Gujarat (Bühler 1959; Bühler and Fisher 1979; Guy 2009: 13). Wisseman Christie (1993: 194), for one, claims that Old Javanese *grĩnsiñ* therefore denotes also cloth made by the double ikat technique, and that the numerous named *grĩnsiñ* patterns, known mostly from Middle Javanese literature, refer to the “wayang scenes” depicted on the textiles.<sup>39</sup> Based on his reading of *Deśavarñana* 17.4, Hall (2000: 74) has suggested that due to the belief in magical properties of *grĩnsiñ*, the Majapahit court adopted this textile (Hall uses the term “pattern”) as the royal symbol.

A number of Middle Javanese texts support the view that there was a close association between the king, his personal military retinue, and the *grĩnsiñ* cloth that was vested (in the form of *lañciñan* and *cavət*) to the men who proved themselves in battle. The *Pararaton*, a Middle Javanese historical text composed sometime in the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century CE, informs us that

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In stanza 31.7, Arjuna, trying to woo Tilottamā, another celestial nymph, by his sweet words, desires to be reborn as her *kəmul*, to be worn “as a blanket when she slips out secretly by the light of the moon.” Intimacy provided by the *kəmul* cloak is alluded to also in stanza 31.2, in which two handmaidens (*varaceṭika*), enamoured of Arjuna, engage in love-play, fancying that their bedcover serves as a *kəmul* (*akəmul-kəmul huləs*).

37. For the *cavət* loincloth made from *grĩnsiñ*, see *Raṅga Lave* 1.57 (*vineh cavət grĩnsiñ*).

38. For a different opinion, see Hooykaas (1978: 357), who suggests that the *gringsing* textile patterns convey offensive, aggressive elements rather than protective elements. To support his views, Hooykaas introduces a poisonous species of crab called *yuyu gringsing*, and the mantra called “Gringsing Wayang,” an offensive device employed to kill an opponent.

39. See, for example, *Kiduñ Sunda* 5.81b *alañciñan grĩnsiñ ramayana*; *Kiduñ Sunda* 5.85a *alañciñan grĩnsiñ viraṭa*; *Kiduñ Harṣa Vijaya* 1.45a *asabuk grĩnsiñ kṛṣṇayana*; *Kiduñ Harṣa Vijaya* 4.88b *sabuk grĩnsiñ smarantaka*.

after the defeat of Singasari by Kediri in 1293 CE, Raden Vijaya rewarded his soldiers with *lañciñan* made from *grīnsiñ* cloth (Brandes 1920). The *Raṅga Lave*, a Middle Javanese text composed probably in the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE (Robson 1979), refers to the *lañciñan* made from *grīnsiñ* cloth, awarded by the king to the soldiers fighting for him.<sup>40</sup> In this context, the claim by Maxwell (2003: 314) that in the court circles in Central Java ceremonial trousers were until recently made from imported Indian double ikat *patola* textiles, gains particular interest.

In the second passage from the *Sumanasāntaka* where the *lañciñan* is mentioned, the word denotes a piece of lower garment worn by the king of Avaṅga, a formidable epic warrior and military chief. Similar to the passage quoted above, the *lañciñan* here represents an attribute of the military leadership. Another attribute, marking the king of Avaṅga in the world of Old Javanese poetry as a military leader of the highest order, is the chariot on which he rides into battle:

*muntab krodha sañ aṅganātha kadi bahni mañaraman i puñcak in vukir  
ñkāne kūvara niñ rathāmahayu lañciñan ira pinisit siniñsatan  
hrū lāvan laras advitīya sinamādhy amijilakəna sarvasañjata*<sup>41</sup>

The King of Aṅga's wrath flared like a fire burning fiercely on the top of the mountain. There on the chariot-pole he put his *lañciñan* to right, holding it up and tightening it. He concentrated his mind on his unique bow and arrows in order to fire off every manner of missile.<sup>42</sup>

To summarize our findings so far, the passages in the *Sumanasāntaka* and *Bhomāntaka* represent the *lañciñan* as part of a warrior's dress, and a symbol of military leadership. At the same time, the *lañciñan* is associated with apotropaic power. There is, however, no evidence that the Old Javanese *lañciñan* in these passages denotes specifically a form of trousers, rather than an elaborate variety of loincloth. This remarkable ambiguity of the *lañciñan* pertains also to other word forms used in Javanese to denote a bifurcated lower garment, such as Old Javanese *calana* and Modern Javanese *kaṭok*.<sup>43</sup> The semantic shift in Modern Javanese words *clana*, *kaṭok*, and *lancingan*,

40. *Raṅga Lave* 10.22.

41. *Sumanasāntaka* 151.1. Old Javanese text taken from Worsley et al. (2013: 372).

42. Worsley et al. (2013: 373) translate this passage: "The king of Awaṅga's anger flared like a fire burning fiercely on the top of the mountain. There on the chariot's shaft he put his trousers to right, holding them up and tightening them. He concentrated his mind on his unique bow and arrows in order to fire off every manner of weapon."

43. For the ambiguity of Modern Javanese *kaṭok*, see Pigeaud (1989: 172), who lists it, apart from being the Ngoko and Kromo forms for knee-length trousers, also as an archaism for "(metal) modesty plaque" (Dutch: *metalen plaatje*, *schaamplaat*).

from the non-stitched forms of lower garment to stitched trousers, has been, most probably, very slow and gradual.

Yet, Middle Javanese *kiduñ* literature suggests that by the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE, a distinction was made, at least in the military context, between the loincloth (*cavət*) and trousers (*lañciñan*). We may thus presume that by this time the Old Javanese *lañciñan* had ceased to denote exclusively an elaborate form of loincloth and started to refer, plausibly in a specific social context, to soldier's trousers. Looking for a possible source of this innovation, we should realize that during the late Kediri period Java witnessed an increased use of horses for war, and, in my view, the establishment of cavalry may well have been accompanied by the introduction of trousers as part of a riding dress. In fact, this development has its historical parallels in Campā and Cambodia, where, during the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE, the first true units of cavalry were established (Wade 2009: 168-174). It is also in this period that we have the first visual evidence of trousers being used by Cam soldiers.

### **Horse-riding, Trousers, and Mounted Warfare in Pre-Islamic Java**

Horses were never common in premodern Java. Introduced probably from mainland Southeast Asia at an unknown date, the Javanese breed was traditionally represented by stout, small, and short-legged, dun-coloured horses (Wade 2009: 165). Used mainly in hunt and in the context of royal pomp, the military use of horses before the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE is a shadowy issue. Boomgaard (2007: 40) observes that in premodern Java only men of noble origin could have afforded to keep, train and use horses. As a result of these social and cultural constraints, early Javanese cavalry was almost certainly composed exclusively of members of gentry. The available evidence, difficult to interpret, suggest that until the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE horses were employed as mounts on which noble warriors rode to battle where they dismounted to fight as infantry (Charney 2004). Far from being rare, the phenomenon of “mounted infantry” is attested from many parts of the premodern world (Sidnell 2006: 90). Since the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE, however, we have increasing evidence suggesting that horses became more common as riding animals.<sup>44</sup> The first true cavalry, an organized unit of cooperative horse-riders, may have appeared in Java during the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE, similar to the historical trends documented for this period from Campā and Cambodia (Wade 2009). In several *kakavins* composed

44. Improved knowledge of horses is attested by a number of passages in the *Bhāratayuddha*, a *kakavin* completed in 1157 CE (Supomo 1993). Horses are designated in the text by the word *ajaran* (literally: “trained animal”), a term used previously to denote a pet bird trained to talk (Zoetmulder 1982). This Old Javanese term gave rise to *jaran*, a standard Modern Javanese word for the horse. The *Bhāratayuddha* is also the earliest Old Javanese text in which the term for the horse saddle, *palana*, is attested. Unlike the word *rəṅga* that designates any kind of “seat”, such as an elephant howdah and a low seat in a chariot, *palana* is used specifically to denote the horse saddle.

during the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE we encounter descriptions, presented mostly in the form of literary metaphors, in which horse-riders operate as cavalry rather than as uncoordinated individuals. Recently, Teeuw and Robson (2005: 436) have called attention to the special value of the *Bhomāntaka* for the study of early Javanese horse lore and horsemanship. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE, Java became an important breeder of horses and the island is even listed among suppliers of horses to China (Ptak 1999: 208). During the Majapahit period (1293-1520s CE), horse numbers and quality of Javanese breeds steadily grew so that in 1515 CE Tomé Pires, usually a reliable witness, praised the richly caparisoned horses of the Javanese gentry, equipped with stirrups inlaid with gold and lavishly decorated saddles, such as were “not found anywhere else in the world” (Cortese 1944: 175).

It is in this historical context that we should try to understand the introduction of trousers in the Javanese dress. Neither the loincloth, nor any skirt-like garment, would have been suitable for horse-riding. Trousers, on the other hand, cover the underbody and the legs against bruising by two connected trouser-legs. While we lack direct evidence, trousers, related to mounted warfare and greater mobility, may have been introduced as an element of Javanese battle dress sometime during the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE, as part of a complex process of the elaboration of horse-riding techniques and specialized equipment, such as improved horse saddles. As we have seen, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE, Javanese authors already distinguished between *cavət*, the loincloth, and *lañcinan*, trousers. Further evidence that trousers were first introduced, and used, in the context of warfare, is the attestation of the word *gaḍag*, an early form of Modern Javanese *kaṭok*, in the *Śivarātrikalpa*, a *kakavin* composed in or around the third quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE (Teeuw *et al.* 1969: 65; Zoetmulder 1974: 365).<sup>45</sup> In a humorous scene, Mpu Tanakuñ, the author of the text, explores the distinction between soldier’s (male) trousers and woman’s lower garment when he describes slain soldiers of Yama, revived by Śiva:

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45. The precise dating of the *Śivarātrikalpa* remains, however, contested. Teeuw *et al.* (1969: 65) have identified Mpu Tanakuñ’s literary patron, Śrī Ādisuraprabhāva, who is mentioned in *Śivarātrikalpa* 1.2, with the king Suraprabhāva, known to the editors of the *Śivarātrikalpa* from the Pamintihan inscription (1473 CE), and have suggested that “the time in which the poem was written was the third quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.” In his detailed analysis of the Waringin Pitu inscription (1447 CE), Noorduyn (1978: 225-226) has demonstrated that Suraprabhāva is the same man as Bhre Pañḍan Salas of the *Pararaton*, and Prince Sinhavikramavardhana of the Waringin Pitu charter. Based on these identifications, Noorduyn (1972: 264, n. 13) has concluded that “it remains uncertain until further evidence is forthcoming whether the earliest date of the *Śivarātrikalpa* is 1466 as Teeuw *et al.* (1969: 18) assert, and ought not to be put back to at least 1447.”

*tapvan meñat dahat citta niki n aguliñ in veśma lāvan kasihnya  
lolyāmiñkis gaḍag niñ vahu-vahu matutur kagyat anvan salah lvir*<sup>46</sup>

They were not yet altogether conscious, and imagined that they were lying in bed at home with their loved ones;

Absently they rolled up the trousers of those who had just come to, but were surprised to see they had the wrong one.<sup>47</sup>

Apparently, bewildered soldiers mistook their comrades, dressed in trousers (*gaḍag*), for their own wives or lovers. While this image may be classed as a cliché in Old Javanese battle depictions, the opposition between trousers, represented here as a typical element of soldier's dress, and an unspecified article of woman's lower dress, is innovative.<sup>48</sup> In fact, the image proves beyond any doubt that *gaḍag*, used in the martial context, denoted by the 15<sup>th</sup> century trousers, not the loincloth. Apart from the *Śivarātrikalpa*, the word *gaḍag* is found, again in the military context, in the Middle Javanese *Pararaton*: Tohjaya, one of the rulers of the Singhasari kingdom (1222-1292 CE), wounded in his back by a spear, is carried away (*pinikul*) from the royal residence under siege of enemies by one of his personal guards who wears a *gaḍag*. The *Pararaton*, generally a reliable source, would thus suggest that trousers were known in Java by the early 13<sup>th</sup> century CE. Conspicuously, the earliest depictions of trousers in Khmer art are known from the war scenes found on the reliefs of the Bayon and Banteay Chmar monuments, dating to the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE. Jacq-Hergoualc'h (2007: 106) observes that the men depicted wearing short trousers represent Cham soldiers.

According to the traditional view, the bifurcated lower garment was introduced to Java only during the process of Islamisation. Scholars have long recognized that one of the consequences of the introduction of Islam has been a novel perception of the human body and accompanying changes in the way people dressed (Reid 1988). Ma Huan, writing in 1433 CE, reported that by that time Javanese men living in the port cities on the northern coast of Java, in the area most exposed to Islamic influences, adopted dress covering the upper part of the body, typically left uncovered in Hindu-Buddhist Java (Mills 1970).<sup>49</sup> As part of this re-configuration of dress, according to traditional scholarship, Javanese Muslims, both men and women, slowly adopted elements of tailored clothing, such as jackets and trousers.<sup>50</sup> In fact, trousers are typically seen

46. *Śivarātrikalpa* 35.2. Old Javanese text taken from Teeuw et al. (1969: 138).

47. *Śivarātrikalpa* 35.2. Translation taken from Teeuw et al. (1969: 139).

48. See note 41 above. When we consider that still in 1930s the word *kaḥok* referred, apart from trousers, to the woman's modesty plaque (although this meaning represented an archaism), the passage in the *Śivarātrikalpa* may have been, for premodern audiences, indeed very rich in humorous overtones.

49. For covering and uncovering the chest in premodern Java, see Kees van Dijk (1997: 49).

50. This view is, however, not entirely correct. Most items of female and male dress typically associated with Islamic clothing practices, such as tailored jackets, trousers, and long-sleeved

as one of the signs of the acceptance of new norms (Maxwell 2003: 313). I have tried to demonstrate that the way in which trousers were perceived and incorporated by Javanese may not necessarily have reflected the ideas of a new morality, but may rather have involved the investment of existing indigenous preoccupations into new forms of dress: Old Javanese and Middle Javanese texts suggest that the *lañciñan* retained some of the apotropaic properties associated with battle dress in premodern Java.

## Conclusion

The Old Javanese word *lañciñan*, traditionally rendered “trousers,” has been analysed in detail. It has been argued that available evidence does not preclude the possibility that in Hindu-Buddhist Java *lañciñan* originally denoted an elaborate variety of loincloth used in the context of warfare. It is only in the Middle Javanese sources composed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE that a distinction is made for the first time between the loincloth (*cavət*) and trousers (*lañciñan*). Made oftentimes from *grĩnsĩn*, a prestigious cloth endowed with apotropaic qualities, *lañciñan* was awarded to soldiers who proved themselves in battle, or who demonstrated their bravery in personal service to the king. This specific function of *grĩnsĩn* is not attested from modern Bali, where *gringsing* textiles still enjoy popularity as magically potent objects. Finally, I have argued for the dissociation of the introduction of the bifurcated lower garment to Java from cultural and religious influences of Islam. The hypothesis has been offered that trousers, related to mounted warfare and greater mobility, were accepted as an element of Javanese battle dress between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries CE as part of a complex process of the elaboration of horse-riding techniques and specialized equipment, such as improved horse saddles.

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dress, were known in the elite segments of Javanese society already by the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE. The tailored garment is also known from contemporary Angkorian Cambodia. Since the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE visual representations show soldiers wearing a specific long jacket, partially covering the hips, assembled from front and back panels and stitched sleeves (Green 2000: 283).



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