

A BATAK (?) MANUSCRIPT IN THE POZNAN UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

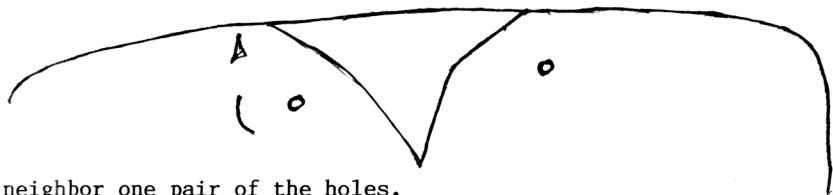
(Communique and Query)

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The existence of a "mysterious" manuscript on wooden pages made most probably of a strip of bark folded 14 times bound in two wooden covers and written in some "strange" characters has been revealed in the manuscript section of the main University Library at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań.

The text is written on both sides of 26 pages and two similar pages each with a short two-line inscription on one side only (in one case one vertical and one horizontal line) are stuck to the covers.

The covers are dark brown and relatively thick, 13,4 cm wide and 19.5 cm long, the pages being slightly smaller. One of the covers has four holes near its upper as well as lower edge and three engravings (cuts) in the following shape:



neighbor one pair of the holes.

The number of pages is 28; the text is written in black pigment. A preliminary inspection of both the form of the book as well as the characters used to write the text suggest that it may be a Batak sacred (?) book from Sumatra, similar to the one preserved in the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in Leningrad (from the collection of A. Grubauer, inv. number 2318-13; the Museum is in possession of a collection of 16 such books), but smaller (the Leningrad book presented in Ganiushkina et al. 1973 has 60 pages 28 cm long and 21 cm wide) and without elaborated illustrations (the Leningrad book has illustrations in red and black showing different constellations, the sacrifice cock, etc; the Poznań manuscript has but a few very small drawings in black in the text). The characters used are Batak (Batta).

As no specialists can be found in Poland to properly identify the manuscript and be in position to evaluate it and, if found interesting, to use it for scholarly purposes (transcription,

translation, publication, source utilization), the opportunity to participate in this very symposium has been chosen as the most appropriate to present it for the first time ever to some wider audience with the hope that at least it is important for specialists to know about the existence of the manuscript in question. The call number of the manuscript in question is 1670.

What follows is some illustrative material to give an idea about the contents and character of the manuscript.

Reference

Ganiushkina, T. et al. 1973. **Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography**. Leningrad: Aurora Art Publishers (esp. photos 81-3).

