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ANCIENT CHAMORRO SOCIETY

by
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strand of string was used to measure the length of a dugout canoe. That length and fractions of that length were used for the booms, outriggers and all other parts of the canoe. In a similar fashion, the width of a house was commonly one-fourth the length.

Counting System of the Chamorros

Today, Chamorros use the Spanish names for numbers when counting. Nevertheless, the ancient Chamorros had their own words for their decimal system of counting. It is interesting to note that slingstones were used for counting systems in the ancient Middle East. Slingstones of different sizes and materials stood for certain numbers. Slingstones in the Mariana Islands are made of many materials like clay, limestone, and marble. Local slingstones have been found from the size of bird eggs to the size of miniature (six-inch) footballs. There is no record of their being used for counting purposes, however. H. Costenoble found that the ancient Chamorro

numbers are similar to those of other Pacific Island peoples, especially those in the southern Philippines.

Measuring System

Measurement of dry volume

chupa = 1 cup

ganta = 8 cups = one-half gallon (also recorded as one gallon or even a liter)

Measurement of length

dedo = the length of the second joint of the index finger

hemi = the length from the tip of the index finger to the spread thumb

kodu = the length from the elbow to the end of a clenched fist

kuatta = the length from the end of the thumb to the end of the little finger when the hand is spread

bara = arm length from the shoulder to the end of the fingers

brasa = length from finger tip to finger tip, with both arms outstretched

Number Similarities in Pacific Island Languages

No.	Mariana Is.	Philippines		Indonesia		Melanesia	Polynesia
	Chamorro	Iloko	Pampango	Napu	Batak	Fiji	Samoa
1	maisa	maisa	isa	isa	sada	dua	sa
2	hugua	dua	adua	dua	dua	rua	lua
3	tulo	tallo	atlu	tal	telu	tolu	tolu
4	fatfat	uppat	apat	iba	empat	va	fa
5	lima	lima	lima	lima	lima	lima	lima
6	gunum	innem	anam	ini	enem	ono	ono
7	fito	pito	pitu	pitu	pitu	vitu	fitu
8	gualo	walo	walu	walu	waluh	walu	walu
9	sigua	siam	siam	hio	siwah	thiwa	iwa
10	fulu	pulo	pulu	pulo	puluh	vulu	fulu
100	gatos	gasot	dinalan	atu	ratus	drau	lau

H. Costenoble's "The Family Tree of Chamorro." *Guam Recorder*, 4(2), 25. Used by permission of the Micronesia Area Research Center.

In English there is one form of numbers for counting everything. Other people, like the Japanese, have different forms for counting various things. They even have a separate form for counting books. In ancient Chamorro times there

were four forms for numbers. There was a form for counting the days, months, and years, a form for measurement, a form for counting living things and a form for nonliving objects.

Counting System for Nonliving Objects

No.	Ancient Chamorro	Modern Chamorro Numbers (Similar to Spanish)
1	hachiyai	unu
2	huguiyai	dos
3	tolgiyai	tres
4	farfatai	kuatro
5	limiyai	sinko
6	gonmiyai	sais
7	fetguiyai	siete
8	gualguiyai	ocho
9	siguiyai	nuebi
10	manutai	dies
11	manutai nagai hachiyai	onse
12	manutai nagai huguiyai	dosse
20	huguiyai na fulu	bente
21	huguiyai na fulu nagai hachiyai	bente i unu
30	totquiyai na fulu	trenta
40	farfatai na fulu	kuarenta
100	gatus	siento
200	huguiyai na gatos	dos siento
1000	chalan	mit
2000	huguiyai na chalan	dos mit
10,000	manutai na chalan	dies mit

Adapted from Janice J. Beaty's *Guam Today and Yesterday*. Agaña, Guam: Department of Education, 1968. Used by permission of the Guam Department of Education.

Calendar of Chamorros

The ancient Chamorros measured the year from harvest to harvest. *Sakkan* (year) means "harvest." The year was divided into thirteen moons. Each moon seems to have been associated with something that was happening at that time of year. For example, Umatalaf was the time to catch red snappers (*gatafe*).

Ancient Chamorro Calendar

January: *Tumaiguini* - "thus," or "in this way," or "like this."

February: *Maimo*

March: *Umatalaf* - "to go catch *gatafe* (red snapper)."

April: *Lumuhu* - "to go back, to return to the attack" - this may refer to the return of the year.

May: *Makmamao*

June: *Mananaf* or *Fananaf* - "the crawling time," "to go on all fours," or "to drag the body" - perhaps this refers to crabs, which go to the sea to breed.

July: *Semo*

August: *Tenhos* - "angry" - perhaps because of the unsettled weather associated with August. Some say it means "jealous."

September: *Lumamlam* or *Lamlam* - "lightning"

October: *Fanggualo'* or *Fa'gualo* - "planting time," or "time to hoe the field."

November: *Sumongsong* - "to put in the stopper" - perhaps because the heavy rains have stopped or "stop in a village" or "the time to mend nets."

December: *Umayanggan* - "troubled," "melancholy," - the season of slight but frequent showers.

Umagahaf or *Omagahaf* - "to get crayfish" - the moon to go catch freshwater shrimp or, some say, a kind of "sea crab."