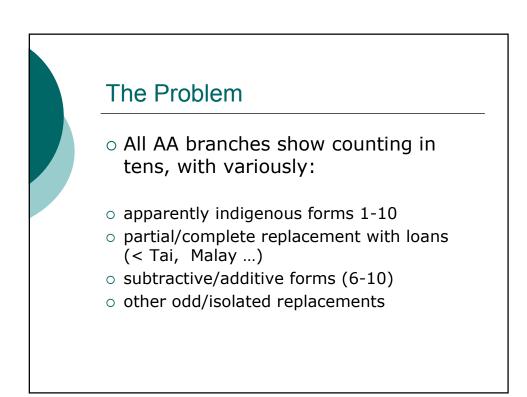
# Should we reconstruct decimal or non-decimal counting for proto-Austroasiatic?

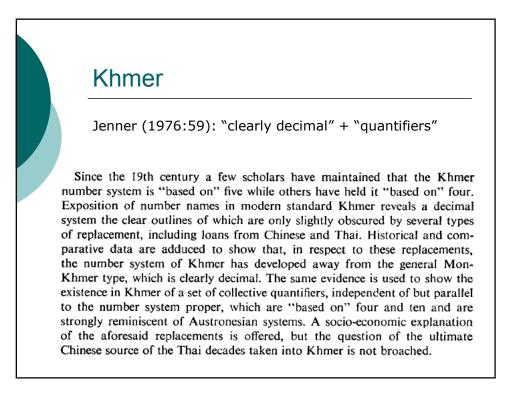
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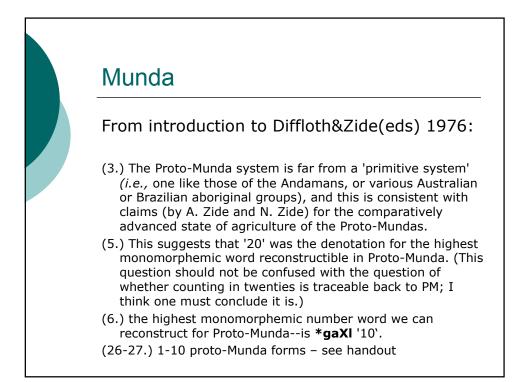
May31-June2 2012



#### Previous work

- Significant discussion in the 1970s
- o 1973 ICAAL meeting
- o 1976 Zide monograph on Munda numerals
- 1976 Diffloth & Zide edited volume
- Variously remarked that there are traces of counting in 4s, 12s, 20s....
- Such systems may exist alongside decimal counting; can we reconstruct a regular set of base 10 lower numerals?
- Time to revisit the issue now that better branch level reconstructions are accessible





#### Thomas 1976:72

This, then, would suggest that Proto-Mon-Khmer used a counting system based on 4, or more probably on 5, with two alternate words for 5. But under the influence of Indian, Chinese, and Thai merchants and rulers, after Proto-Mon-Khmer had already split into its several branches, they converted to decimal systems, each branch devising its own means of filling in the needed extra forms. The only widespread set of terms for 6-9 is that shared by Bahnaric, Viet-Mu'o'ng, Monic, Semelaic, and Mang, groups widely separated from each other, which suggests that it may gained some degree of currency as the groups were separating, but not firm enough to become established in the other groups. Khmer formed its terms by derivation from the terms for 1-5.

### More recent work

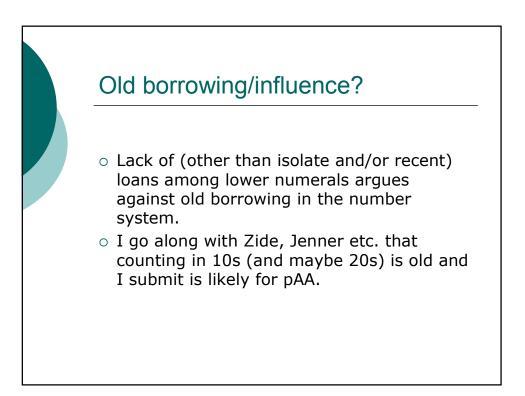
 Sidwell 1999: Proposed that pAA numerals 1-10 can be reconstructed,

although proto-forms were not proposed because of phonological complications.

o Daladier 2011:

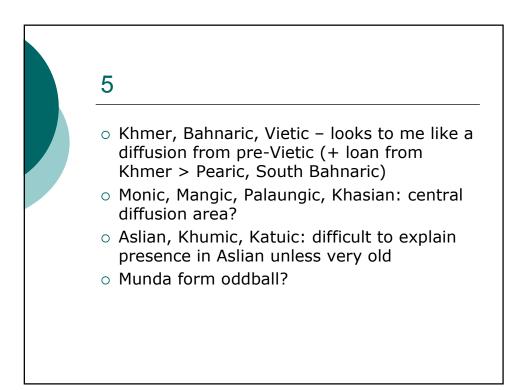
Has a different conception in which there were AA names for amounts or common groups of things, e.g. bunches of leaves or fruits sold/traded. I.e. counting was different based on what was counted.

"AA cardinal number systems are late comers compared to "grouping" number systems and have probably emerged under contacts with Hindu and Chinese trades and more locally in the Assam corridor with Tai and Bodish trades, around the beginning of our era."



## 1 - 4 few problems

- Palaungic, Khasian, Nicobaric show "2" and "3" without initial glottal/lateral instead of bilabial stops.
- It is difficult to see how P,K,N could share and innovation, so maybe there were competing, non-alliterating 2,3 pAA forms
- Other isolated replacements in Nicobaric and Khasian

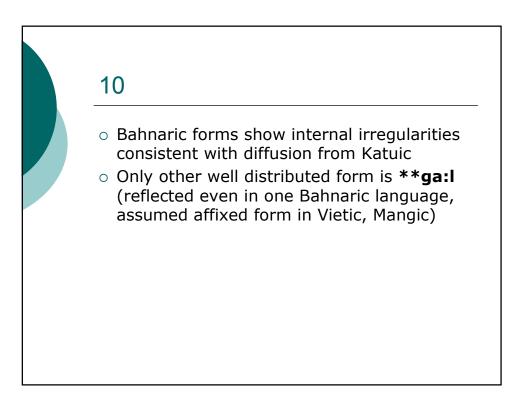


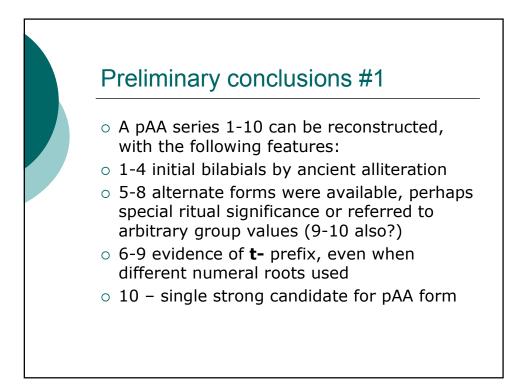


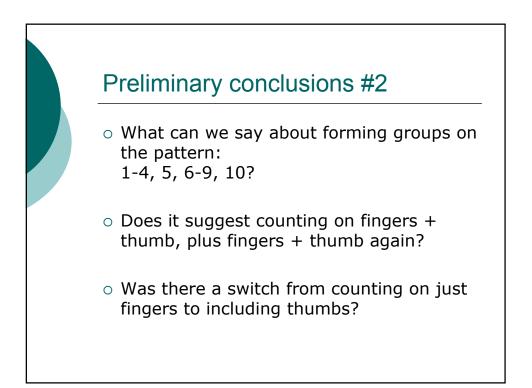
 Khmer, Bahnaric, Vietic, Mangic, Munda, Aslian (plus isolated forms in Khmuic, Palaungic, Khasian) strongly suggest pAA reconstructions, allowing for extensive analogical changes.

However, additional forms:

- Katuic, Palaungic, Nicobaric **\*\*-pu:l** '6' (with displacement in Katuic, Palaungic)
- Munda, Katuic, Khmuic, Pearic **\*\*gu:l** '7' (with displacement in Katuic)
- Khmuic, Palaungic, Pearic, Nicobaric **\*\*ti?** '8' (with displacement in Nicobaric, also)
- Forms for '8' show phonological irregularity that parallels etymon for 'blood/bleed' in AA!! (c.f. Ferlus 2008)







# References

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