

S. It's Chamorro. — R. {Oh? Oh.}

TO THE MEMORY OF HANS BARGE, A GERMAN WHO SAILED
WITH MAGELLAN

At the Conference Banquet of the First International Conference on Comparative Austronesian Linguistics (January 2-7, 1974, Honolulu, Hawaii), Donald M. Topping gave a 'keynote note' titled

'S[peaker]. I'm in linguistics.

R[e]ply. { Oh? }
 { Oh. }

where he demanded from today's linguists to design their writings for use by ordinary people, viz. to popularize their linguistic works in such a way as to give non-linguistic persons some insight into their own language. The hope may be expressed that the Banquet participants liked Topping's linguistic 'dish' as much as the seven course Chinese dinner earlier that evening.

(T)His proposal has already been realized (by him) in the new series developed by and for the Pacific and Asian Linguistic Institute (PALI) of the University of Hawaii (Director: Donald M. Topping), NEW PALI LINGUISTIC TEXTS, where he himself has contributed with a title now (Topping 1973). The reader of this Chamorro grammar, i.e. in the first place the native from the Marianas, may wonder however why the word with the highest frequency of occurrence in this book is not explained at all: Why is the/my language called *Chamorro*?

Chamorro —a language belonging to the Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) family of languages— is spoken by approximately 65,000 people living in Guam and the other islands of the Marianas (Micronesia). The native population on these islands has lived in relative isolation until Magellan's landing in 1521 (March 6th). Subsequent contacts with Spaniards and Filipinos, with other Europeans (such as Germans), Japanese, and Americans caused great changes in the Chamorro people and culture.

W. W. SCHUHMACHER

As to the name *Chamorro*, the Encyclopædia Britannica (1972) thinks it is the ancient name for chief. Isidore Dyen (Yale), *the* expert of Austronesian linguistics, remarks in a private letter: 'Unfortunately I have no idea of the etymology of the language name Chamorro and know of no attempt to provide one'.

The suggestion is put forward here that it is of Basque origin: *chamorro* 'gorgojo' = 'throat'. 'Speaking in the throat', then, must refer to the occurrence of glottal stop (the same layman characteristic is often found in connection with Danish because of its *stod*), as this sound is very important in Chamorro (cf. *haga* 'daughter' vs. *haga*, 'blood'). This nickname may have been created by a Spaniard who, when confronted with this language from Micronesia, labeled it by borrowing a characteristic lexical item from a language of his homeland which sounded as 'strange' as the actual one, or by a Basque staying on the Marianas among the Spanish colonists, thus following the example of his famous countryman Juan Sebastian Del Cano who, after the death of Magellan on the Philippines, took over the command of the Spanish expedition succeeding in bringing the ship *Victoria* back to Spain.

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RESUMEN

Donald M. Topping, en una intervención de la I Conferencia Internacional sobre Lingüística Austronesia Comparada que tuvo lugar en Honolulu (Hawai), del 2 al 7 de enero de 1974, presentó una nota sugiriendo la idea de utilizar términos más asequibles en trabajos de investigación lingüística, a fin de conseguir una mayor divulgación de los mismos.

El propio Donald ha publicado, en este sentido, una gramática del Chamorro para el Instituto de Lingüística Pacífico-Asiática (PALI) de la Universidad de Hawai.

El autor del artículo, W.W. Schuhmacher, se plantea el problema etimológico de la palabra Chamorro, y sugiere la posibilidad de su origen vasco: *chamorro* = *gorgojo*, *garganta* y, finalmente, «hablar con sonido gutural», por la importancia de este sonido en el Chamorro. Pudo inspirarlo un español que se fijara en esta característica o cualquier vasco residente en las islas Marianas.

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El Chamorro es un idioma de la familia austronesia (Malayo-Polinésia) hablado por unos 65.000 habitantes de Guam y otras islas del archipiélago.

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