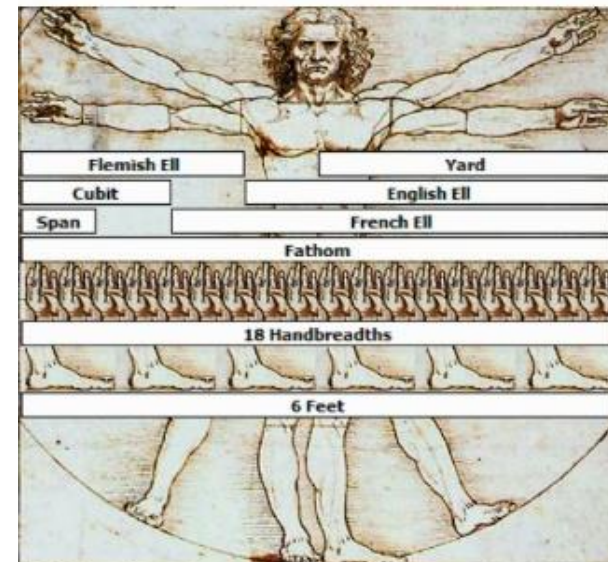
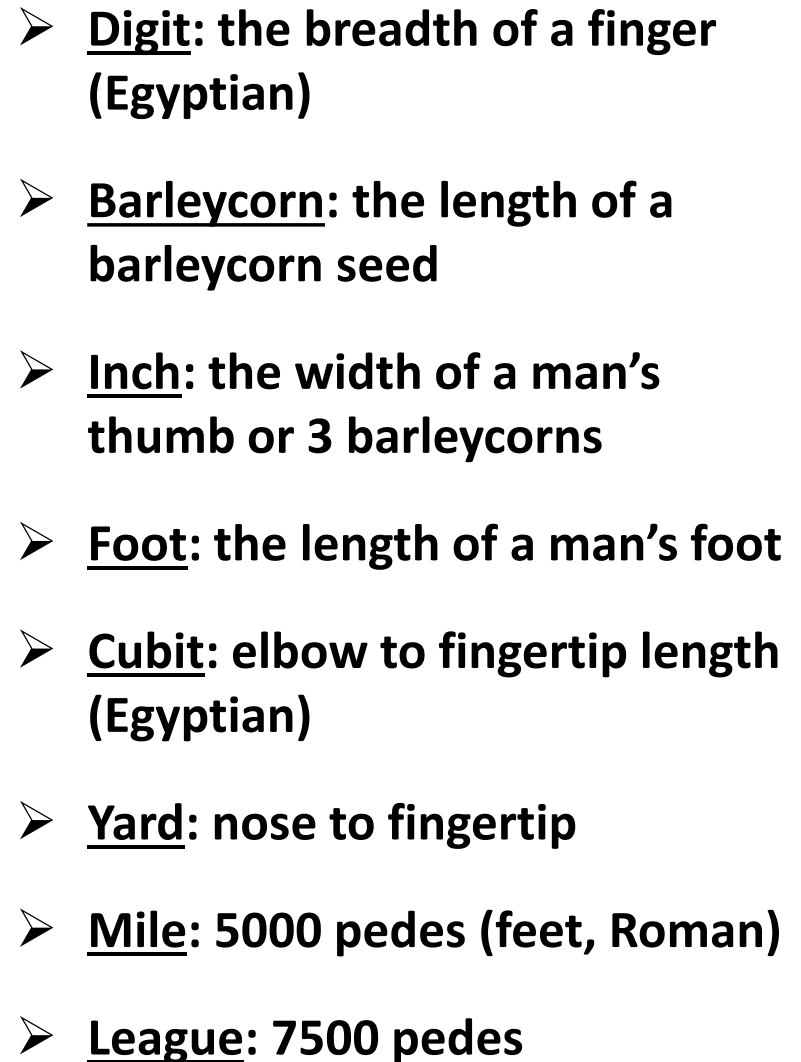


Some Historical Units of Measurement

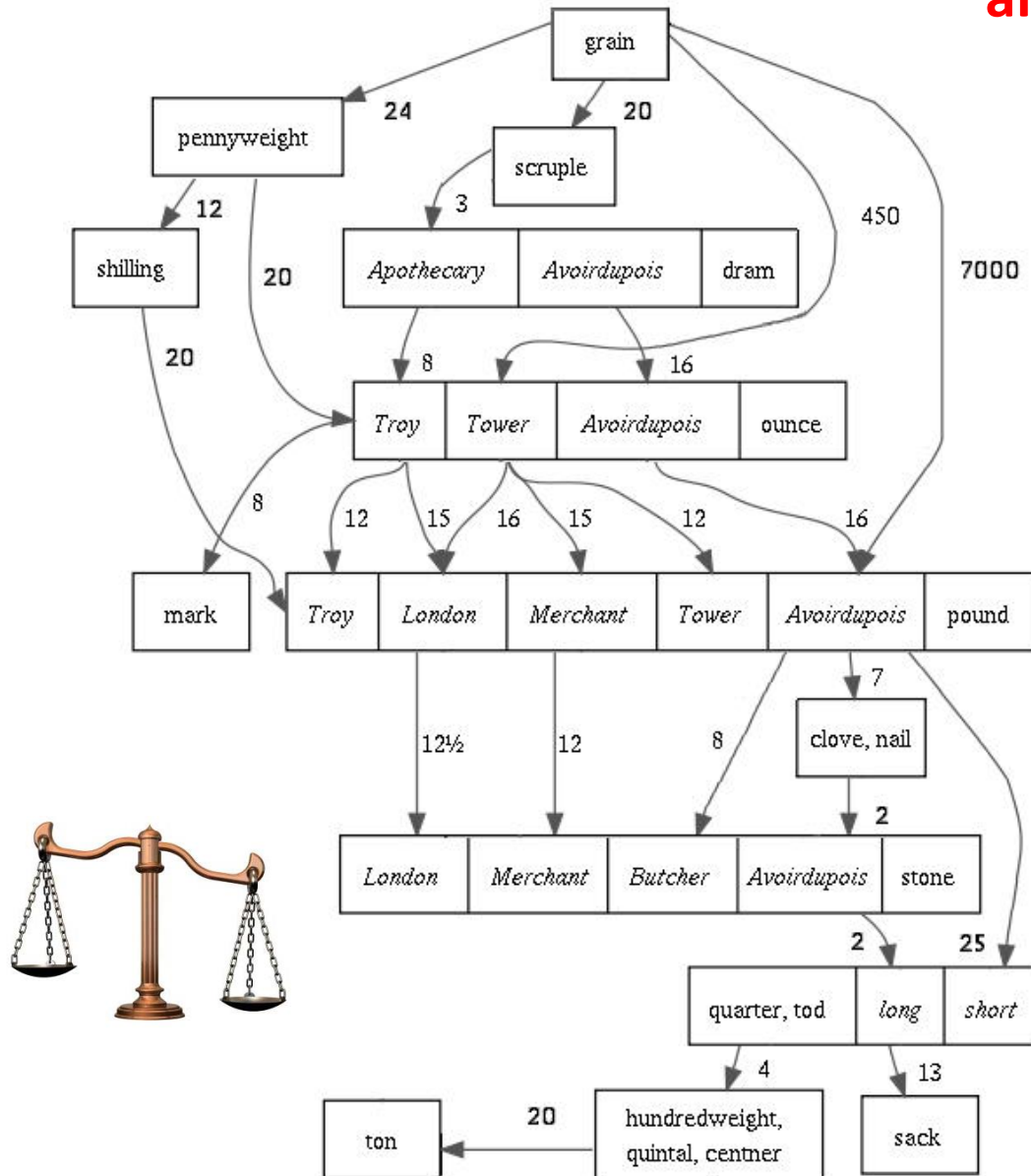


A hand-drawn illustration of a ruler with a curved shape, showing markings from 0 to 12. The ruler is tilted diagonally across the page. It has a series of tick marks along its length, with larger numbers 1 through 12 placed at regular intervals. The right end of the ruler is marked with a '0'. The drawing is simple, with a single line for the top edge and a slightly wavy line for the bottom edge.



Historical Units of Mass/Volume

and their equivalence chart



- **Grain:** the weight of a grain of wheat or barleycorn
- **Pound (*libra*):** ~5000 grains (Roman) or ~7000 grains (English)
- **Talent:** 100 libra
- **Stone:** 14 pounds (English/British)
- **Troy Ounce:** 1/12 of a pound
- **Carat:** weight of a carob seed

The Cubit



The cubit is the measure from your elbow to the tip of your middle finger when your arm is extended.

The cubit was the measurement used by the Egyptians to build the pyramids.



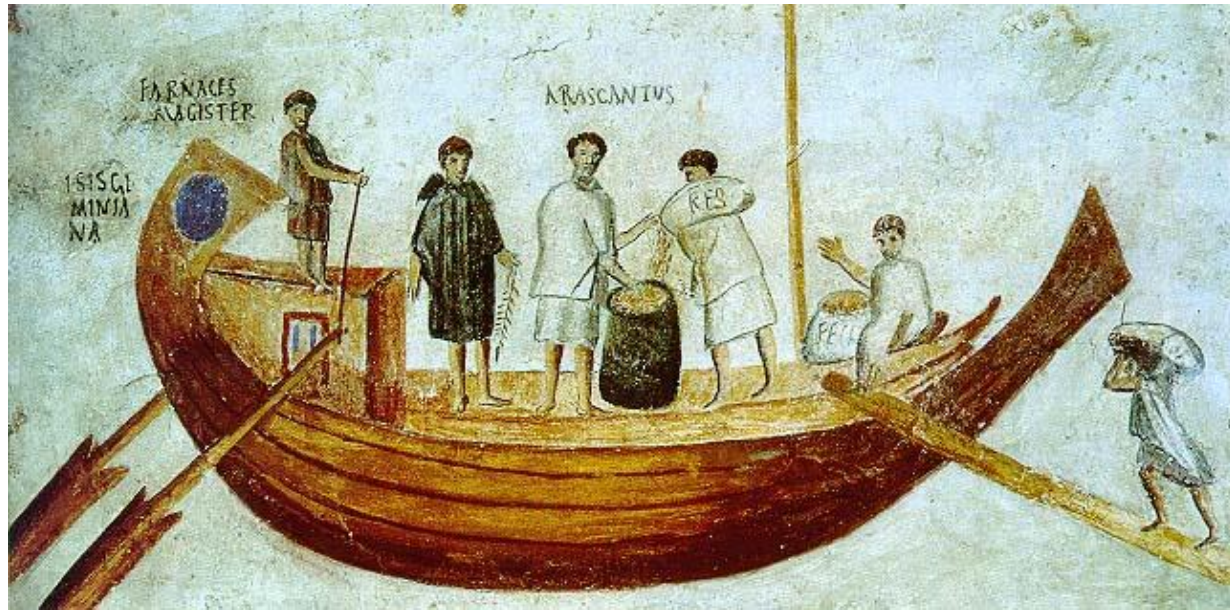
The Palm

The palm is the *width* of your four fingers when they are placed together.

The Fathom



The fathom is the measure from fingertip to fingertip when your arms are stretched sideways as far as they will go.



The fathom was used by sailors to measure the depth of water so that boats would not run aground.

The Hand-span

The hand-span is the measure from the tip of your pinky to the tip of your thumb when your hand is stretched out.



Hand-span was used to measure the height of horses.

People **still describe horses** as being so many hands high.



The Pace

The pace is the measure of distance from one step to another. This unit was used by the Roman army to judge speed.

The **term** is **still used** frequently during various types of **foot races**.



© Ferrell Jenkins 2008.

The Foot

A measurement equal to the length of an individual's foot.



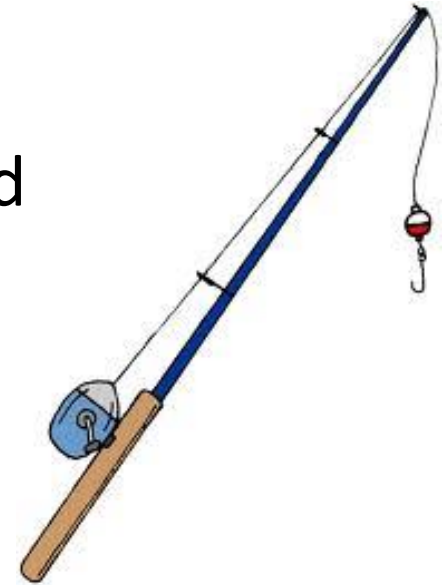
Feet are different...

King **Henry I** of England defined a standard for this measurement:

his foot was **12 inches long**.

The Girth

The girth was the measurement around one's stomach (your *belt measure*).



Girth was used to measure fishing line.

The **term** (not unit) is **still used by US Post Office** and refers to package dimensions.



The Acre

The acre (“field” in Saxon) was a **unit of area** equal to the size of a field that a farmer could plow in a single day.



French word for acre means “day” and the German word means “morning” or “day’s work”.

The Grain

At least since antiquity, grains of wheat or barley were used by Mediterranean traders to define **units of mass**.



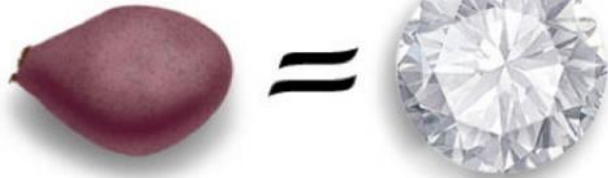
Presently, the grain is commonly used to measure the **mass of bullets** and propellants as well as to **weigh arrows** in archery.

The Stone

The 1772 edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica defines:
“A stone of beef, in London, is the quantity of eight pounds; in Hertfordshire, twelve pounds; in Scotland sixteen pounds”

The Carat

unit of
mass



1 Carob Seed = 1 Carat

45.52 carat **Hope Diamond**, worth a quarter of a billion dollars, is on display at the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C.



Carob bean seeds have been used throughout history to measure jewelry, because it was believed that there was little variance in their mass distribution (which is not true).



1,109-carat **Lesedi La Rona** diamond, largest discovered in 100 years.