The Language of Things: Agricultural, Culinary, and Musical Terms in Ugo Ferrandi's (1851–1933) Somali Notebooks

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ABSTRACT

This article offers a linguistic and ethnographic analysis of a set of indigenous terms recorded by the Italian explorer Ugo Ferrandi (1851-1933) during his two-year stay in the town of Lugh (Luuq), southern Somalia, where he served as commander of an Italian outpost during the second Bottego expedition (1895–1897). The study specifically focuses on terms related to agriculture, cooking, and music—three core domains of material culture. Despite limitations posed by the absence of a standardised orthography and Ferrandi's lack of formal training in local languages, his notebooks provide rare lexical insights into pre-standard Somali and the multilingual environment of the Jubba region, where Somali (including the Maay variety), Oromo, Swahili, and other languages coexisted. Drawing on philological analysis, early bilingual dictionaries, contemporaneous travel accounts, and oral testimonies collected in Somalia during the 1980s, the study addresses issues of dialectal variation, orthographic practices, and semantic shifts. These findings contribute to a broader project aimed at developing a glossary of pre-standard Somali terminology, intended as a resource for linguists, anthropologists, and scholars of African material culture, and to facilitate the recovery and dissemination of this important yet understudied primary source.

Keywords: *Ugo Ferrandi; Somali Language; Italian colonialism; Agricultural terminology; Culinary terminology; Musical terminology*

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1. Introduction[1]

This article offers a preliminary contribution to the documentation and linguistic analysis of a small but significant set of terms found in the travel notebooks of Ugo Ferrandi (1851–1933), an Italian geographer and explorer active in East Africa between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While Ferrandi has drawn scholarly interest primarily as a historical figure (*inter al.* Surdich, 1984; Gribaudi, 1928; Cesari 1929; Gavello, 1975; Marini, 1991; Peretti Cucchi, 2018), his writings remain largely unexplored, particularly in terms of their linguistic dimension. Yet these notebooks

[1] While the article is the result of a collective effort, the individual contributions to specific sections are as follows: Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, and 10 were written by Silvia Piccini; Sections 5 and 6 by Michela Bandini; Section 7 by Jama Musse Jama; and Section 8 by Giuliana Elizabeth Vilela Ruiz. The overall conception and revision of the article were carried out by Silvia Piccini. According to the CRediT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy), the authors contributed as follows: Silvia Piccini: Conceptualization, Investigation, Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Validation, Writing – review & editing; Michela Bandini: Data curation, Investigation, Methodology, Resources, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; Giuliana Elizabeth Vilela Ruiz: Data curation, Investigation, Methodology, Resources, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; Jama Musse Jama: Investigation, Resources, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

provide a valuable record not only of the material and cultural practices of the communities he encountered but also of indigenous terminology, sometimes absent from contemporary dictionaries or reflecting meanings that have since fallen out of use.

The present study was conducted as a part of a broader research project[2] dedicated to the systematic collection and analysis of lexical material extracted from Ferrandi's notebooks. The long-term goal is the compilation of a glossary of terms related to local material culture, with each entry accompanied by a definition, linguistic notes, and comparative attestations drawn from both coeval historical accounts by explorers and more recent linguistic documentation (dictionaries and oral records). This glossary is intended as a resource for linguists, anthropologists, and scholars of African material culture, and aims to support the recovery and dissemination of a primary source that has not yet been studied systematically.

In this article, particular attention is devoted to the terms used to describe artefacts that pertain to three fundamental domains of Somali material culture: agricultural tools, musical instruments, and cooking utensils. In doing so, the article seeks to foreground the complex relationship between language, ethnographic observation, and material practices as reflected in early colonial documentation.

The structure of the article is as follows: Section 2 contextualises Ferrandi's activities within the broader framework of Italian colonial ambitions, with particular attention to the country's belated entry into the scramble for Africa. Section 3 explores the linguistic value of Ferrandi's notebooks, focusing on his transcription practices and the dialectal diversity of the terms recorded. A methodological section (§ 4) then outlines the approach adopted for the analysis of the lexical items discussed in the article. The subsequent four sections address three thematic categories of artefacts—agricultural tools (§§5–6), cooking utensils (§7), and musical instruments (§8)—analysed from both linguistic and ethnographic perspectives. The article concludes by considering the broader implications of these findings (§ 9) and by suggesting directions for further research (§ 10).

2. Italian Colonial Policy and the Scramble for Africa

Italy entered the colonial race belatedly, following the unification of the country in 1861. By the time the Italian state was consolidated, much of the African continent had already been claimed by major European powers such as Britain, France, Portugal, and Spain. Italy, alongside Germany and Belgium, attempted to expand its territorial ambitions in the limited geopolitical spaces left open by these earlier actors. Italy was, in effect, a "newcomer in the colonial rush" (Scovazzi, 2020:4), hindered by a severe domestic economic crisis that made it difficult to allocate resources to overseas expansion. In addition, such an enterprise was viewed by some as incompatible with the national ideals of the newly unified Italian state[3].

[2] This research is conducted within the framework of a larger project supported by the RUT Foundation and carried out in partnership with the Istituto di Linguistica Computazionale "A. Zampolli" (ILC-CNR) and the Società Geografica Italiana (SGI).

[3] This tension was clearly articulated by Cesare Parenzo, a member of parliament who openly opposed the colonial ambitions of Foreign Minister Mancini. In a parliamentary session, Parenzo stated: "Io in verità non riesco a intendere come si concilii il progetto che ci sta dinnanzi con le dottrine sempre sostenute, coi principi che sono il fondamento del nostro diritto nazionale. […] Io non avrei mai voluto che la bandiera nazionale sventolasse sopra un territorio straniero senza la volontà delle popolazioni che vi abitano." (Scovazzi 2020:6). English translation: "I truly fail to see how the project before us aligns with the principles that constitute the foundation of our national identity… I would never have wanted to see our national flag flown over a foreign land without the consent of the people who live there."). For a clear and in-depth overview of Italian colonial policy in the years immediately following unification, see Scovazzi 2020.

To legitimise the colonial enterprise, Italy—like other powers—deployed a rhetoric of "civilisation". The conquest of African territories was reframed as a "high mission of education", a peaceful crusade to bring progress and enlightenment to the supposedly backward and uncivilised tribes of the continent. This narrative not only helped to pacify public opinion at home but also provided a functional justification for military engagement abroad, especially in a post-unification context in which the Italian army lacked an active role.

From the outset, Italy directed its imperial ambitions toward the Horn of Africa. By the late nineteenth century, attention turned to Somalia, a region nominally ruled by the Sultan of Zanzibar but effectively administered by local leaders such as *qāḍīs* and *wālīs*[4], who held authority in the coastal and inland areas. Among the zones that soon attracted Italian interest was the mouth of the Jubba River, identified for its strategic and commercial potential. On the advice of Cristoforo Negri[5], Mancini[6] sent explorer Antonio Cecchi to assess the feasibility of establishing a protectorate or a direct occupation in the region. Between 1892 and 1893, the Italian Geographic Society sponsored the first expedition led by Vittorio Bottego, followed by a second in 1895, both conducted in the same area along the Jubba River. During the latter, on 21 November 1895, the Italian commander signed a treaty with Sultan Ali Hassan Nur in the town of Luuq. The agreement authorised the creation of an Italian station for scientific and commercial purposes and permitted the hoisting of the Italian flag throughout the region.

The outpost soon evolved into a fortified military base under the command of Captain Ugo Ferrandi, who led a detachment of askari troops. During his two-year stay, Ferrandi transformed the small village of Luuq into a thriving commercial emporium. Located on a prominent bend of the Jubba River, roughly 340 km from the coast, the town became a key trading hub connecting interior regions with the coastal markets of Benadir. Its strategic position facilitated the redistribution of goods such as ivory, livestock, and agricultural products from the Borana, Arussi, Gherra, and Sidama communities toward Italian-controlled ports.

3. Ferrandi's Notebooks: A Window into Somali Culture and Language

During his tenure in Luuq, Ferrandi began compiling the notebooks later published in 1903 by the Italian Geographical Society under the title *Lugh. Emporio commerciale sul Giuba* (Ferrandi, 1903). As he states in the introduction, his goal was to "gather as much information and as many observations as possible concerning the station itself, the country in general, its inhabitants, the climate, etc."[7]. Initially, Ferrandi's contributions were intended to appear alongside those of Bottego in a collective account of the second expedition. However, following Bottego's untimely death[8], the editorial project was

[4] *Qāḍī* (Arabic قاضي; Somali *qaaddi*) and w*ālī* or v*ali* (Arabic والي) are Arabic-origin titles. The *qāḍī* refers to a judge who interprets and administers Islamic law, while the *wālī* designates a governor or administrator of a province, often holding authority over the *qāḍīs* within his jurisdiction. *Qāḍī* (*qaaddi*) has retained its meaning in Somali and entered the language as a loanword.

[5] Cristoforo Negri (Milan, 13 June 1809 – Turin, 1896) was an Italian politician and writer. Founder and president of the Italian Geographic Society from 1867 to 1872, he played a prominent role in shaping Italy's early colonial policy. He represented Italy at the geographical conferences convened in Brussels by King Leopold II for the establishment of the International African Association (1876–77), at the Paris Conference on the Panama Canal, and at the Berlin Conference on West Africa (1884). In 1890 he was appointed Senator of the Kingdom of Italy.

[6] Pasquale Stanislao Mancini (Castel Baronia, Ariano, 1817 – Rome, 1888) was an Italian politician and jurist. Minister of Foreign Affairs from 29 May 1881 to 29 June 1885, he was one of the main promoters of Italy's early colonial policy.

[7] Cf. Ferrandi, 1903:XV: "raccogliere il maggior numero possibile di notizie e di osservazioni riguardanti la Stazione stessa, il paese in generale e i suoi abitanti, il clima ecc."

[8] Bottego was killed during the return phase of his second expedition in 1897.

reorganised: the surviving expedition members, Vannutelli and Citerni, published their own narrative in *L'Omo: Viaggio d'esplorazione nell'Africa Orientale* (1899), while Ferrandi's notes were edited and released as a separate volume.

Unlike conventional travelogues, which often follow a linear chronological structure, Ferrandi's work is organised thematically into four chapters. It offers detailed, often meticulous, descriptions of cultural, social, and material life among the Somali communities of the region. In this respect, Ferrandi's notebooks constitute an invaluable source for ethnographic, anthropological, and linguistic research. However, the data must be approached with caution, as the work is deeply embedded in the ideological framework of its colonial context. Ferrandi's language is not exempt from Eurocentric assumptions, and several passages reproduce stereotypes typical of the process of *othering*[9] that characterised the epistemology of imperial expansion.

Somalia is, for example, described as a harsh and inhospitable environment: "Arcadia in Africa does not exist" (p. 21). The dwellings in the Luuq village are depicted as "miserable huts", devoid of order, comfort, and hygiene, the result of "a primitive intelligence of the rules of construction" (p. 46). The inhabitants are portrayed as indolent— "for whom idleness is the most pleasant thing" (p. 97)—, as "a people of talkers" (p. 98), "superstitious" (p. 89), or "poor Bedouins" (p. 105), "dark-skinned Hippocratics" with doubtful therapeutics (p. 77). They are shown to lack scientific understanding, unable, for instance, to recognise that animals of the same species may vary in colour according to their environment. Ferrandi contrasts the supposed industriousness and moral strength of Europeans with what he sees as the laziness and moral weakness of Somali and Arab populations. The Arabs of the Benadir coast are said to avoid manual labour, while the Rahanuin (Raxanweyn)—said to have "slave blood" in their veins—are relegated to agricultural work, which the so-called "pure races" disdain. One particularly revealing passage reads:

> "The Somali Rahanuin, a mixture of disparate races, are more distrustful, darker and more sanguinary than the pure Somalis; yet they may perhaps best govern themselves in the future, for they are a people of farmers and not nomads or herdsmen. Attached to their fields of dura, owners of the lands they have tilled, once they are persuaded that the Europeans will not infringe upon their property but will rather open and secure outlets for their products, they may, in a not-too-distant future, become valuable allies in a rational colonisation."[10] (Ferrandi 1903:109)

Nonetheless, one of the most original and valuable aspects of Ferrandi's notebooks is in their attention to linguistic documentation. Beyond cultural description, the notebooks contain a substantial corpus of over 600 indigenous terms, covering domains such as flora, fauna, domestic life, material culture, social organisation, and ritual practice. Compiled at a time when Somali lacked a standardised orthography (not formally adopted until 1972), these entries provide a rare record of an oral linguistic tradition as spoken by nomadic pastoralists and agricultural communities in the precolonial era. This lexical sensitivity is evident throughout the notebooks, where Ferrandi, rather than presenting isolated word lists, integrates indigenous terms organically into his

[9] On the notion of *othering*, see Spivak (1985) and Mudimbe (1988).

[10] Cf. Ferrandi, 1903: 109: "I Somali Rahanuin, miscuglio di razze disparate, sono più diffidenti, più cupi e più sanguinari che i Somali puri; ma sarà forse la gente che si dominerà meglio in avvenire, perchè popolo di agricoltori e non nomadi e pastori. Attaccati ai loro campi di dura, proprietari delle terre che dissodarono, quando saranno persuasi che gli Europei non manomettono le loro proprietà, e che anzi cercheranno di aprire e assicurare sbocchi, rendendo facile l'esito dei prodotti, potranno, in un avvenire forse non lontano, essere dei validi aiuti ad una razionale colonizzazione.

observations and descriptions of agricultural, domestic, and environmental practices.The following excerpts offer a representative sample of this method:

> "The cultivation of dura (*Sorghum vulgare*), which the Rahanuin and the people of Lugh call, like the Galla, *missingo*, is among the simplest."[11] (Ferrandi 1903:26)

> "The Rahanuin refer to these pits as *bacar*, while the inhabitants of the Uebi region between Merca and Brava, such as the Bimaal, call them *got*."[12] (Ferrandi 1903:28)

> "The field—which is termed *ber* in Rahanuin, and *shamba* in the coastal Swahili vernacular—is left fallow until the approach of the new rainy season."[13] (Ferrandi 1903:29)

These examples highlight not only Ferrandi's close attention to indigenous terminology but also his effort to register intra-regional linguistic diversity. By juxtaposing lexical variants from different Somali-speaking communities and situating them within concrete cultural practices, Ferrandi's work provides valuable material for both historical linguistics and ethnographic inquiry.

3.1. Which Somali? Orthographic and Dialectal Challenges

The linguistic landscape of the Somali-speaking regions of the Horn of Africa has long posed challenges for scholars and remains the subject of ongoing debate (*inter al.* Lamberti, 1986; Abdullahi, 2000; Mukhtar & Omar, 2007; Ismail, 2011). At the heart of this discussion lies the question of how to classify the various linguistic varieties within the Somali cluster: are they dialects of a single language, or should some be recognised as distinct languages in their own right? The lack of consensus reflects the region's complex sociolinguistic ecology and underscores the value of early linguistic documentation. In this regard, Ferrandi's lexical records are especially noteworthy. His writings reveal not only an acute awareness of the area's polylectal dynamics but also a systematic effort to register its linguistic variation, thus offering an invaluable glimpse into the region's precolonial linguistic ecology.

This attentiveness is not confined to incidental remarks scattered throughout the text as previously exemplified but finds its fullest expression in the glossary appended to the final pages of *Lugh. Emporio commerciale sul Giuba*. There, Ferrandi catalogues approximately 300 entries, sometimes annotated with a language label: Somali (s), Rahanuìn (r), or Lughian (l).

Though these classifications do not correspond to contemporary linguistic taxonomies, they reveal an effort to differentiate between local speech varieties. It is plausible, for example, that the term "Rahanuìn" refers to what is now classified as Maay[14], a variety spoken by agro-pastoralist communities in the interfluvial region between the Shabelle and Jubba rivers—what linguist Saeed (1982) terms Central Somali[15].

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[11] Cf. Ferrandi, 1903:26: "La coltivazione della dura (Sorghum vulgare) che i Rahanuin e quei di Lugh chiamano, come i Galla, missingo, è delle più semplici."

[12] Cf. Ferrandi, 1903:28: "I Rahanuin chiamano queste buche bacar, e gli indigeni dell'Uebi fra Merca e Brava, come i Bimal, le chiamano got."

[13] Cf. Ferrandi, 1903:29: "Il campo — che vien detto in rahanuin ber, ed alla costa con voce suaheli sciamba — si lascia in riposo fino all' avvicinarsi della nuova stagione delle pioggie."

[14] ISO 639-3 code: ymm.

[15] Recent scholarship has increasingly treated Maay (also known as *Af-Reewing*) as a separate language rather than a dialect of Somali. Spoken throughout southern Somalia, particularly in the Middle and Lower Shabelle regions, as well as in Banadir, parts of southwestern Ethiopia, and northern Kenya, Maay differs significantly from Standard Somali (Af-Maxaa-tidhi). Phonologically, it includes six phonemes—P, JH, TH, GH, NG, and GN—not found in Standard Somali and lacks pharyngeal consonants altogether. Linguistic intelligibility tests have confirmed that speakers of Af-

By contrast, Ferrandi's use of the label "Somali" most likely referred to what is now designated as Standard Somali or *Af-Maxaa-tidhi*[16]. This northern variety—spoken predominantly in northern regions such as Hargeysa, Burco, and Berbera cities—eventually became the basis for the official language of the Somali Republic due to its perceived prestige and widespread mutual intelligibility. As Andrzejewski (1983) notes, *Af-Maxaa-tidhi* had already begun to function as a *lingua franca* across clan and regional boundaries even before formal colonial rule.

The term "Lughian", however, remains elusive. Ferrandi does not provide sufficient detail to determine which linguistic variety this label corresponds to. It is unclear whether it denotes a localised Somali dialect, a variant of Maay, or a contact variety influenced by Swahili[17]or Oromo[18]. Further linguistic and historical investigation is needed to clarify this category. In addition to Somali varieties, Ferrandi records a number of terms of Swahili and Galla (i.e., Oromo) origin, reflecting the region's multilingual dynamics and long-standing patterns of contact and exchange.

In addition to dialectal complexity, orthographic variability posed a further interpretative challenge. At the time of Ferrandi's writing, Somali lacked a standardised orthography, compelling the Italian explorer to transcribe what he heard as faithfully as possible, based on Italian spelling conventions. Although his *ad hoc* system exhibits irregularities and inconsistencies, discernible patterns emerge.

For example, both voiced and voiceless pharyngeal fricatives—/ʕ/ and /ħ/—are frequently approximated by ‹h› or omitted. As a result, *ceel* appears as *hell*, and *xayaad* as *aiat*. Similarly, the voiceless uvular plosive /q/ is commonly rendered as ‹g› or ‹c›, as seen in *gori* for *qori* and *macar* for *maqaar*. Other consonantal substitutions follow comparable patterns. The voiceless glottal fricative /h/ is represented inconsistently or dropped, yielding forms such as *arar* or *harar* for *harar*. The voiceless postalveolar fricative /ʃ/ is systematically transcribed using the Italian trigraph ‹sci› (*scias* for *shaash*), while /k/ often appears as ‹c› or ‹ch› (*cori* for *koor*, *barchi* for *barkin*). Voiced velar plosives /g/ are occasionally approximated with ‹gh› (*ghes* for *gees*). Implosive and pharyngealised consonants—such as /ɖ/, rendered in Somali as ‹dh›—are generally reduced to plain alveolar stops, resulting in forms like *daddar* for *dhardhaar* and *fandal* for *fandhaal*. Phonemic distinctions in vowel length, which play a crucial role in Somali, are also largely ignored. Long vowels tend to be rendered as short, with examples such as *bacar* for *bakaar* and *macar* for *maqaar*. A schematic overview of Ferrandi's phonographic correspondences, derived from the subset of terms referring specifically to material artefacts, is provided in Table 1.

Mahaa and Maay are not mutually intelligible, reinforcing the view that they are distinct linguistic systems within the Cushitic branch of the Afroasiatic family (Abdullahi, 2000; Paster, 2006; Saeed, 2006; Mukhtar & Omar, 2007). The long-standing debate about Maay's autonomy predates the 1972 standardisation of Somali, a political decision that marginalised Maay by excluding it from national language policy. Nonetheless, indigenous efforts to promote Maay's literary development—including the writings of Sheikh Uways Ibn Muhammad al-Barawi (1846–1907), the Latin-based orthography adopted by the Inter-Riverine Studies Association in 1994, and the formation of advocacy groups such as Af-Yaal in 1976—attest to the language's cultural resilience. In more recent years, digital platforms and diaspora-led initiatives have contributed to renewed calls for official recognition. It is worth underlying that article 5 of the 2012 Provisional Constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia recognises Maay as part of the Somali, an equal footing with Maxaa-tiri: "Afka rasmiga ah ee Jamhuuriyadda Federaalka Soomaaliya waa Af-soomaaliga (Maay iyo Maxaa tiri), af Carabigana waa luqadda labaad" ("The official language of the Federal Republic of Somalia is the Somali language (Maay and Maxaa-tiri), while Arabic is the second language.").

[16] ISO 639-3 code: som.

[17] ISO 639-3 code: swa.

[18] ISO 639-3 code: orm.

Perceived and mediated through the phonological lens of a non-native speaker, Ferrandi's lexical data require validation through modern linguistic research. Terms should be cross-referenced with contemporary comparative dictionaries, oral histories, and fieldwork conducted after the formal adoption of the Somali orthography in 1972. Only through such triangulation can Ferrandi's contributions be fully appreciated and critically contextualised within the broader field of Somali linguistics.

Somali consonant phonemes		**Somali graphemes**	**Ferrandi's graphemes**	**Exemples**
ʕ	Fricative voiced pharyngeal	‹c›	‹h› or Ø	*hell* for *ceel* *addi* for *caday*
w	Approximant velar	‹w›	‹u›	*uar* for *war* *uaran* for *waran*
ħ	Fricative voiceless pharyngeal	‹x›	‹h› or Ø	*aiat* for *xayaad* *hero* for *xeero*
ɖ	Plosive voiced post-alveolar	‹dh›	‹d›	*daddar* for *dhardhaar* *fandal* for *fandhaal*
q	Plosive voiceless uvular	‹q›	‹c› or ‹g›	*macar* for *maqaar* ganso per qaanso
h	Fricative voiceless glottal	‹h›	Ø or ‹h›	*arar* or *harar* for *harar*
k	Plosive voiceless velar	‹k›	‹c› or ‹ch›	*cori for koor* *barchi* for *barkin*
g	Plosive voiced velar	‹g›	‹gh›	*ghes* for *gees*
ʃ	Fricative voiceless postalveolar	‹sh›	‹sci›	*ganscian* for *gaashaan*

Table 1. Ferrandi's orthographic renderings of selected Somali consonants in terms denoting material artefacts

4. Methodological approach

In light of the considerations outlined above, this section briefly presents the methodological approach adopted for the analysis of the lexical entries discussed in Sections 5, 6, 7, and 8. Each term is examined starting from Ferrandi's original definition and contextual usage and is then cross-verified using a wide array of historical and contemporary Somali linguistic sources. These include major mono- and bilingual dictionaries, as well as 19th- and early 20th-century lexical repertoires compiled by Italian explorers and colonial officials active in the Horn of Africa.

Specifically, historical attestations and ethnographic context have been retrieved from a range of colonial travelogues and catalogues, including G. Révoil's *La vallée du Darror* (1882), Vannutelli and Citerni's *L'Omo. Viaggio d'esplorazione nell'Africa Orientale* (1899) and Di Vesme and Candeo's *Un'escursione nel paradiso dei somali* (1893). Additional documentation is provided by the official catalogue *Le Mostre coloniali all'Esposizione internazionale di Torino del 1911* (Ministry of Colonies, 1913), which inventories Somali artefacts exhibited in Turin, classified by thematic category and labelled with their local denominations.

Given the considerable linguistic and dialectal variation attested in Ferrandi's records, additional resources have been consulted, including dictionaries of Maay, Oromo, and Swahili. Further evidence is drawn from spontaneous oral narratives recorded in the mid-1980s among elder members of the Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Literature in

Mogadishu—particularly during discussions on traditional Somali material culture—subsequently transcribed and translated by the Centro Studi Somali at Università Roma Tre.[19]

Complementary insights into contemporary usage and lexical variation are provided by the *Somali Corpus* (*Kaydka Afsoomaaliga*, Jama Musse, 2016), which offers a searchable database of modern Somali language.

5. Agricultural tools in Ferrandi's reality

Ferrandi's reflections on agricultural life and seasonal rhythms find their fullest expression in Chapter I of his work, *"Agriculture and the Seasons, etc."* (*L'Agricoltura e le Stagioni, ecc.*, Ferrandi 1903:23–31), where he outlines the close relationship between farming practices and cyclical environmental changes. However, references to agricultural implements are not limited to this section alone. Mentions of tools used in cultivation are scattered throughout the text, often appearing in discussions of other artefacts or broader ethnographic contexts.

A close reading of the entire work—including its appendices and final glossary—reveals only three terms that explicitly denote agricultural tools: *acaf* ("small hoe", "piccola zappa", Ferrandi 1903:26), *jembe* ("hoe (small)", "zappa (piccola)", Ferrandi 1903:415), and *melindi gorgus* ("harvesting knife", "coltello per la mietitura", Ferrandi 1903:407). Each term reflects a distinct agricultural function, with the first two referring to digging implements and the third to a cutting tool used during harvest.

5.1. *Jembe*

According to Ferrandi's account, the *jembe* is a traditional agricultural tool primarily used by the Raxanweyn community, especially by enslaved labourers. It is characterised by an iron blade shaped like an isosceles triangle, with a long, pointed tip resembling a broken nail. This blade is affixed to the end of a wooden handle approximately one metre in length, which terminates in a heavy head. An illustration of this tool, taken from Ferrandi's notebooks (Ferrandi, 1903:26), is provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Illustration of the *jembe* from Ferrandi's notebooks[20]

[19] Cf. the General Archive of the Centro Studi Somali of the Roma Tre University's project (The Project – Centro Studi Somali), dedicated to the preservation and study of the Somali cultural heritage, which collects documentary materials, audio and historical texts useful for learning more about the language, traditions and history of Somalia (see General Archive – Centro Studi Somali). The collection "Audio - Maqal - Audios" is available here: Audio - Maqal - Audios | ArcAdiA Archivio Aperto di Ateneo.

[20] The original caption in Italian reads: "Zappa dei Rahanuin (Jembe)", i.e. "Rahanuin's Hoe (Jembe)" (Ferrandi, 1903:26).

The specific design of the *jembe* shifts the tool's weight toward the lower end, thereby facilitating its penetration into the soil. The iron blade measures roughly 20 cm in length and 12 cm at its widest point and, according to Ferrandi, was often imported from coastal areas such as Marka. The *jembe* was primarily used to create shallow furrows in the soil, known as *lun*, spaced approximately 60 cm apart. These furrows served as planting beds for *dura* (sorghum), typically sown after the first seasonal rains.

The *jembe* emerges as a key agricultural implement in local systems based on manual cultivation techniques across the Horn of Africa during Ferrandi's time. A similar tool, although not explicitly named, seems to be mentioned by Vannutelli and Citerni (1899). In their account of agricultural practices in the region, they describe the use of "tiny hoes" to dig small holes at regular intervals, a method that closely resembles the preparation of *lun* as documented by Ferrandi:

> "In each of the numerous villages scattered among the fields, large cisterns were dug to collect rainwater, more than sufficient for the needs of the people and their livestock. The method of cultivation is still primitive; the soil is never disturbed before planting: not having plows, they plant the seed in small holes dug with tiny hoes, a short distance apart; then, having covered the seed deposited in the holes with soil, the field is abandoned until harvest day."[21] (Vannutelli & Citerni, 1899:67)

The term *jembe*, explicitly identified by Ferrandi as of Swahili origin, is attested in several roughly contemporary sources, though with varying vocalic forms. Di Vesme and Candeo (1893) refer to a small hoe ("zappetta") approximately the length of an axe, called *jombo* in Somali:

> "The eye rests on the beautiful green of the fields cultivated with dura (Sorghum cernuum), which grows there flourishing and without much care. They work the fields with a primitive plough, the property of the chief, who lends it to his administrators in return, or with a hoe the length of an axe, called a jombo."[22] (Di Vesme & Candeo, 1893:27)

Further attestations appear in *Le Mostre coloniali all'Esposizione internazionale di Torino del 1911* (Ministero delle Colonie, 1913), where two distinct lexical variants are recorded: *jambi* in the section devoted to the Bimaal (Biyamaal) ethnographic collection[23], and *jembe* in the section devoted to the ethnographic collection of Brava (Barawa)[24]. Notably, the Bravanese[25] form *jembe* corresponds exactly to the term used by

[21] Cf. Vannutelli & Citerni, 1899:67: "In ognuno dei numerosi villaggi sparsi fra i cólti furono scavate ampie cisterne, serbatoi d'acqua piovana, più che sufficienti ai bisogni della gente e del bestiame. Il metodo di coltura è ancora primitivo; il terreno non è mai smosso prima della semina: non avendo aratri, gettano il seme entro piccole buche scavate con minuscole zappe, a poca distanza l'una dall'altra; poi ricoperta con terra la semenza depositata nelle buche stesse, il campo è abbandonato sino al giorno del raccolto."

[22] Cf. Di Vesme & Candeo, 1893:27: "L'occhio si riposa sul bel verde dei campi coltivati a dura (Sorghum cernuum), che vi cresce rigogliosa e senza bisogno di molte cure. Lavorano i campi con un aratro primitivo, proprietà del capo, che lo presta dietro compenso ai suoi amministrati, o con una zappetta della lunghezza d'una scure, detta jombo".

[23] Cf. IV - 2° Collezione etnologica delle genti Bimal (Cap. Gustavo Pesenti), subsection: 4. a) Agricoltura, item no. 83: zappa con suo manico, denoted by the term *jambi*. (Ministero delle Colonie, 1913:84)

[24] Cf. V. - Catalogo della collezione etnografica delle genti di Brava (Cap. Gustavo Pesenti), subsection: 4° – Agricoltura, item no. 65: zappetta, denoted by the term *jembe*. (Ministero delle Colonie, 1913:91)

[25] ISO 639-3 code: *swh* (Swahili), Glottolog code: *chim1312*. Bravanese (or Chimwiini) is a northern Swahili dialect primarily spoken in the coastal town of Brava (Barawa) in southern Somalia. Although it belongs to the Swahili subgroup of Bantu languages, its geographic isolation distinguishes it from most other Bantu varieties, which are predominantly spoken further south in eastern and southern Africa. Bravanese retains a core Bantu grammatical structure but exhibits significant influence from Arabic and, to a lesser extent, Somali, reflecting the region's long-standing historical and cultural exchanges. As the principal language of Barawa, a historically important centre within the Swahili coastal network, Bravanese likely functioned at times as a *lingua franca,* facilitating communication across diverse communities along the Horn of Africa coast.

Ferrandi. This alignment is reinforced by other linguistic sources: *jembee* is listed as a Swahili borrowing in *Aadaa Boraanaa: A Dictionary of Borana Culture* (Leus & Salvadori, 2006), and *yeemby*, meaning "hoe", appears in the *English–Maay Dictionary* (Mukhtar & Omar, 2007). The recurring vowel patterns in Borana, Maay, and Bravanese indicate long-standing lexical exchange between Swahili-speaking coastal areas and interior Cushitic-speaking communities. It is therefore plausible that Ferrandi documented a Maay variant of the term—rather than standard Somali—as may also be the case with *acaf*, discussed below.

From an etymological perspective, an intriguing hypothesis put forward by Stern and reported by Stuhlmann (1910) suggests that the name of the hoe may derive from the name of the tree traditionally used to craft the tool, or possibly vice versa:

> "The Nyamwezi people report, according to R. Stern, that long ago, and still today, people in Tum worked the soil with wooden hoes (Fig. 30) made from the *mugembe* tree. […] In Nyamwezi, the Dalbergia tree is called *mugembe* or *mugembija*, while the hoe is called *igembe*. It therefore seems that the name of the hoe is derived from that of the tree (or vice versa), according to R. Stern."[26] (Stuhlmann, 1910:57)

Among the Nyamwezi[27], this wooden hoe is known as *igembe*, a term likely derived from the *mugembe* or *mugembija* tree—now identified as belonging to the genus *Dalbergia*[28]—traditionally used in the tool's manufacture. The term is also attested in other Bantu languages. More specifically, some dialects use forms such as *lembt* or *yembe*, while in Swahili the equivalent word is *jembee*, precisely matching the form recorded by Ferrandi:

> "However, it is important to note that, according to Meinhof (in iMitt. Orient. Seminar VIII), the hoe is called *lembt* (or *yembe*) in the Urbantu languages, while in Swahili the hoe is *jembe* and the razor *wembe*."[29] (Stuhlmann, 1910:57)

In contemporary Somali, the term appears in a slightly different vowel pattern—*yaambo*—as recorded in various dictionaries (see, *inter alia*, Maxamed, 1985[30]). This form is also consistently documented in spontaneous conversations from the 1980s with elder members of the Academy of Science, Arts and Literature in Mogadishu. These dialogues, centred on themes such as agricultural practice, ironwork, woodworking, and plant cultivation[31], regularly feature *yaambo* to denote a specific type of traditional hoe used prior to the advent of mechanised farming. Typically employed by men, this tool

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[26] Cf. Stuhlmann, 1863:57: "Die Nyamwezi erzählen nach R. Stern, daß sie vor langen Zeiten und noch heute die Leute in Tum mit Holzhacken (Abb. 30) aus dem mugembe-Baum den Hoden bearbeitet hätten.' […] In ünyamwezi heißt der Ebenholzbaum (Dalbergia) mugembe, mugembija, die Hackeigembe."

[27] One of the various Bantu-speaking groups of Tanzania, the Nyamwezi have historically inhabited the Unyamwezi region through complex and long-standing settlement dynamics. Their primary language is Kinyamwezi, the most widely spoken Bantu language in central Tanzania. In addition to their mother tongue, many Nyamwezi also speak Swahili or English.

[28] For further information about this specific plant, see: https://powo.science.kew.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:331542-2

[29] Cf. Stuhlmann, 1863:57: "Es scheint demnach, dal! der Name für die Hacke von dem des Baumes (oder umgekehrt) abgeleitet ist (nach R. Stern). Demgegenüber ist aber zu betonen, daß nach Meinhof, iMitt. Orient. Seminar VIII) dir Hacke auf Urbantu lembt, (yembe) heißt, suaheli djembe Hacke, wembe Rasiermesser."

[30] The term *yaambo* is also attested as part of the "Nomadic Artifacts – Caring for Camels" collection at the Somali Museum of Minnesota, established in 2011 and opened to the public in 2013 in Minneapolis. This institution is dedicated to preserving and promoting Somali cultural heritage, housing over 700 traditional items ranging from tools and garments to artworks. For general information see: www.somalimuserum.org.

[31] Cf. Centro di Studi Somali, *Aqalka VI - Capanna VI*; *Biraha la tumo II - Lavorazione del ferro II*; *Dhirta VII - Piante VII*; *Geed qorid - La lavorazione del legno*; *Ka shaqeynta birta I - Lavorazione del ferro I*.

serves for scraping the soil, removing weeds, and carving furrows in preparation for sowing before the rainy season.[32]

Notably, informants often distinguish between two types of *yaambo*: a smaller hoe, used on previously tilled soil, and a larger one, suited for breaking new ground (*qool*). The manufacturing process also emerges with clarity from these accounts: while the iron blade is forged by an experienced blacksmith, the handle—measured from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger—is crafted separately, often by a different artisan:

> "*Yaambo* is the hoe, Dahir told us how it is made, I will only talk about how it is used. To work farmland, two types of hoe are used: a small one and a big one […]. The iron part and the handle are made: only an experienced blacksmith knows that the handle part must measure in length as the distance from the elbow to the fingertip. The iron part and the handle part are made by two different people."[33] (Biraha la tumo II - Lavorazione del ferro II, p. 3)

Elsewhere, however, descriptions of *yaambo* diverge from the hoe type documented by Ferrandi. In *Geed qorid – La lavorazione del legno* (p. 7), the term refers to a tool made entirely of steel, without a wooden handle. Even more significantly, in *Ka shaqeynta birta I – Lavorazione del ferro I* (p. 2), *yaambo* no longer designates a hoe at all, but instead specific components of a plough:

> "The largest metal tool or agricultural machinery of blacksmithing that I know of is the plough (*marashi*). The plough is an agricultural machine used for ploughing the land. It consists in the coulter (*yaambo qarbad dheer leh*) and the ploughshare (*yaambo qarbad dheer leh*), which are the blades that cut the earth, and the *mouldboard* (carrageddiso), which turns over the earth, and the bure, to which the driving force is applied."[34] (Ka shaqeynta birta I - Lavorazione del ferro I, p. 2)

In this context, *yaambo* designates the metal blades of the plough—either the coulter or the ploughshare—indicating a semantic shift from the handheld hoe of Ferrandi's time to more complex, mechanised implements. This evolution illustrates how tool-related vocabulary in traditional societies can broaden or specialise in meaning as material

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[32] Cf. *Dhirta VII - Piante VII, p. 19:* "Abbiamo parlato di come vengono coltivati, come crescono e come vengono consumati i cereali, ora passiamo agli strumenti per la coltivazione. Prima degli attuali macchinari in uso nell'agricoltura (non molto diffusi in realtà), si utilizzavano attrezzi come la yaambo (zappetta per raschiare il terreno e togliere le erbacce), usato sia per la raschiatura del terreno sia per la semina prima della pioggia." (English translation: "We have talked about how cereals are cultivated, how they grow and how they are consumed, now let us turn to cultivation tools. Before the current machinery in use in agriculture (not very common in reality), tools such as the yaambo (hoe for scraping the soil and removing weeds) were used, used both for scraping the soil and for planting before the rain."); or *Geed qorid - La lavorazione del legno*, p. 7: "Poi si passa al lavoro di semina svolto da una coppia di persone solitamente un uomo e una donna. L'uomo scava i solchi con una zappa, mentre la donna ripone, supponiamo, i semi del granoturco e li copre con il terreno accanto. Completato il lavoro della semina, bisogna aspettare le piogge oppure irrigare il terreno." (English translation: "Then comes the planting work carried out by a pair of people usually a man and a woman. The man digs the furrows with a hoe, while the woman places, let us suppose, the maise seeds and covers them with the soil next to it. Once the planting work is completed, one has to wait for the rains or irrigate the soil.").

[33] Cf. *Biraha la tumo II - Lavorazione del ferro II*, p. 3: "*Yaambo* è la zappa, Dahir ci ha parlato di come viene fabbricata, io parlerò soltanto di come si usa. Per lavorare i terreni agricoli, si usano due tipi di zappa: una piccola e una grande. […]. Si fabbrica la parte in ferro e il manico: solo un fabbro esperto sa che quella parte del manico deve misurare in lunghezza come la distanza dal gomito alla punta delle dita. La parte in ferro e quella del manico sono lavori eseguiti da due persone diverse."

[34] Cf. *Ka shaqeynta birta I - Lavorazione del ferro I*, p. 2: "Il più grande strumento metallico o macchinario agricolo di fabbricazione del fabbro che io conosco è l'aratro (*marashi*). L'aratro è una macchina agricola usata per arare la terra, è costituito dal coltro (*yaambo qarbad dheer leh*) e dal vomere (*yaambo qarbad dheer leh*), che sono le lame che tagliano la terra, e dal versoio (*carrageddiso*) che rovescia la terra, e dalla bure, a cui si applica la forza trainante."

practices evolve. A comparable development seems to apply to the term *acaf*, discussed in the following section.

5.2. *Acaf*

According to Ferrandi's account, the technical term *acaf* was employed by the people of Luuq to denote a small, heavy wooden hoe, with a short handle, used by the Galla people as far east as Ethiopia (Harar) to till the soil before planting sorghum (*dura*) (Ferrandi, 1903:27). The Oromo people traditionally employed it to dig furrows approximately 12 cm deep, which were ideal for planting. Unlike *jembe*, however, the term *acaf* is not attested with this meaning in contemporary Somali. Interestingly, cognate terms—both formally and semantically—are widely documented in Semitic and Cushitic languages spoken in the surrounding regions. Comparable forms appear in Oromo, such as *akaafaa* in Western Oromo ("shovel, dustpan", Gragg, 1982) and *akaafa* in Eastern Oromo ("spade, mattock, hoe"), as well as in Amharic (*akafa*) and Harari (*ḥakāfa*, "hoe, shovel", Leslau (1963)[35], itself derived from the verb *ḥēkäfa* meaning "to dig with a hoe, to turn the soil"). A similar form appears in the *Dizionario della Lingua Galla con Brevi Nozioni Grammaticali* (da Thiene, 1939), where *acāf-a* is glossed as "vanga", "marra" or "zappa di legno" (i.e., "spade," "mattock", or "wooden hoe"). The form recorded by Ferrandi and attributed to the Oromo people was most likely from Eastern Oromo, as its spelling reflects phonetic patterns typical of that variety. In this dialect, short final vowels such as *-a* are often unpronounced or elided, which explains Ferrandi's transcription as *acaf*.

Contemporary Somali, however, does attest a phonetically similar term, *cagaf* or *cagafcagaf* meaning "bulldozer" or "tractor" (Zorc & Osman, 1993)[36]. From this perspective, *cagaf* may represent a reactivation of an archaic agricultural term that had fallen out of use in traditional contexts and was later repurposed during the mechanisation of Somali agriculture between the 1950s and 1970s. The choice to apply an existing term to new technological tools was likely motivated by functional continuity, as both the traditional and modern implements serve the purpose of tilling the soil—a semantic shift similarly observed in the evolution of the term *jembe*.

Beyond its agricultural usage, *cagaf* has acquired broader cultural resonance in Somali society. This is notably illustrated by a famous poem composed in the 1960s by the esteemed poet Ismail Sheikh Ahmed (1935–2007). The poem recounts the poet's urgent plea to the *cagaf*—the tractor—to hasten as he attempted to reach his beloved before her departure from the airport. Through this literary example, *cagaf* transcends its material referent to assume symbolic and emotional significance. The poem reads:

> "Abidkeey Cagafeey, caawaan ku bartee, Cagtaadan ballaadhan ee cuguf liyo,
> Codkaagu maxay daweeyaan? Billaahi-Cagafeey, caawa uun mar ila carar"[37]

Since then, the poet has been affectionately known as *Cagaf*, and the term has become so ingrained in popular culture that it is now widely used as a playful nickname to describe individuals perceived as particularly slow. This linguistic and cultural trajectory exemplifies how agricultural terminology may not only evolve in phonological form and

[35] Cf. the dictionary entry **ḥēkäfa** 'dig with a hoe and turn the earth upside down'; *ḥakāfa* 'hoe, shovel'; Amh. *akafa* 'spade', Ö. *ankafa*; from Cushitic: Ga. *hakāfe* 'dig', Som. Af. *akāfa*; perhaps also Tna. *ḥakäf bälä* 'make the noise of scratching'. Cerulli 255 has *haqafa*.

[36] Cf. the dictionary entry **cagafcagaf:** tractor, bulldozer.

[37] Cf. Literal English translation: "Oh my tractor! I got to know you better only tonight. On your big foot, how slowly you move. And useless rumors your machines make. What are they used for? (if you can't help me to reach her before she flies). By the sake of Allah, please run as fast as you can only tonight.)"

semantic range but also acquire metaphorical and affective dimensions, becoming integral elements of collective memory and identity.

5.3. *Melindi gorgus*

According to Ferrandi's testimony, the term *melindi gorgus* ("coltello per la mietitura", literally "harvesting knife" in Ferrandi, 1903:407) referred to a knife used in certain regions during the harvest of *dura*. This tool was specifically employed to sever the grain ear, referred to as *lan* or *saval*, from the plant. Classified by Ferrandi as a "Rahanuin" term, *melindi gorgus* is the most complex and least attested among the three entries under examination. Unlike the others, it is absent from early exploration accounts as well as from more recent sources, including oral testimonies gathered from Somali experts during the 1980s.

The orthography recorded by Ferrandi suggests a compound structure, likely composed of two elements: *melindi* and *gorgus*. While the second component remains obscure, Ferrandi himself proposed that *melindi* may be a variant of *mende* ("coltello piccolo", i.e. "small knife", Ferrandi, 1903:407), both attested as Lughian terms. The latter is, in turn, plausibly related to the more widely attested Somali term *mindi*, meaning "knife" (Zorc & Osman, 1993)[38]. This term appears consistently in Somali lexicographic sources spanning over a century, from the late 1800s to the 1980s (de Larajasse, 1897; Agostini et al., 1985; Maxamed, 1985), as well as in earlier ethnographic records.

For instance, *mindi* is mentioned in Révoil's account (1882) in reference to a military object and again in *Le Mostre coloniali all'Esposizione internazionale di Torino del 1911* (Ministero delle Colonie, 1913)[39], where it is associated with domestic tasks such as food preparation and butchery.

The term also appears frequently in the conversations recorded by the Somali Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Literature in Mogadishu, where it designates a general-purpose knife used by both men and women. These knives typically consist of a sharp blade (*bir*) and a wooden handle (*daab*) (Zorc & Osman, 1993)[40] as illustrated in the following passage:

> "Metal objects made by blacksmiths are divided into: objects for general or popular use and objects for the exclusive use of adult males. The former include: *mandiil* (a very sharp knife used for shaving hair or performing surgery); *muus* (razor) and *mindi* (common knife). Mindi is the type of knife used indiscriminately by women and men. *Mindi* consists of a sharp blade (*bir*) and handle (*daab*)."[41] (Ka shaqeynta birta I - Lavorazione del ferro I, p. 4)

[38] Cf. the dictionary entry **knife**: baangad, dhilqo, jirjir, kirkir, kirkir, kirkiran, kirkirnaan, maddiil, maliiddo, mandiil, middi, middiil, mindi, mindiil, saawir, sikhile, soofe

[39] Cf. *IV. - 2° Collezione etnologica delle genti Bimal.* (Cap. Gustavo Pesenti), subsection: *3. La cucina*, item no. 80: *coltelli per le carni*, denoted by the term *mindi*. (Ministero delle Colonie, 1913:84).

[40] Cf. the dictionary entry **handle**: aargalaan, daab, daab, daaban, daabnaan, daabo, daddaab, dhaqan {kula dhaqan}, dheg, fajee, fijaan, gadaan, gungaar {ka gungaar}, lifaaq, lifaaq u yeel, liglig, mayal, murbay, snaqo {shaqo ka bax}, siddo, tabee.

[41] Cf. *Ka shaqeynta birta I - Lavorazione del ferro I*, p. 4: "Gli oggetti di metallo di fabbricazione del fabbro si suddividono in: oggetti per uso generale o popolare e oggetti ad uso esclusivo dei maschi adulti. Fra i primi si possono annoverare: *mandiil* (coltello molto affilato usato per radere i capelli o per fare operazioni chirurgiche); *muus* (rasoio) e *mindi* (coltello comune). *Mindi* è il tipo di coltello usato, indistintamente, da donne e uomini. *Mindi* si compone di una lama affilata (*bir*) e manico (*daab*)."

Given its generic meaning, *mindi* is often the base for compound expressions indicating specialised knives intended for specific uses. Examples include *mindi-guddooy*, a slightly curved knife used in female circumcision, and *mindi-reer*[42], a domestic utility knife.

As previously noted, Ferrandi records multiple terms referring to this object—a lexical variability that persists to this day. Alongside *mindi*, forms such as *middi*[43], *mandiil, middiil, mindiil* ("knife," Maxamed, 1985; Agostini et al., 1985; Zorc & Osman, 1993), *mandil, madil, or mandiil* ("penknife or razor," de Larajasse, 1897, Zorc & Osman, 1993[44]), and *maddiil*, *middiil*, or *mindiil* (Agostini et al., 1985) are also documented. This variation seems to correspond to semantic differentiation: while *mindi* indicates a general-purpose knife, *mandiil* and its variants appear to denote more precise tools associated with sharpness and delicate tasks.

A further variant, *mundu*, is attested by Stuhlmann (1910), who translates it as *Haumesser* ("chopping knife" or "machete"), suggesting a potential agricultural function—an aspect absent from the other sources examined, where the tool's uses remain confined to domestic and medical contexts. The German term *Haumesser* typically denotes large knives employed either as weapons or agricultural implements, akin to a machete or cleaver. Stuhlmann's reference is therefore particularly significant, as it constitutes the only indirect support for Ferrandi's hypothesis that *melindi gorgus* may denote a knife used in agricultural activities:

> "We cannot go into the details of individual wood products, we just want to briefly list the main groups of them. In general, all woodwork is carried out by men. The handles of tools such as hoes, axes and machetes (*mundu*) are certainly made in every family, carved from a thicker branch. The necessary perforation is usually made with a hot iron."[45] (Stuhlmann, 1910, p. 28)

However, it is also possible that the second, still obscure component *gorgus* specifies the agricultural application of this knife, following the Somali pattern in which compounds built on *mindi* denote specialised tools for distinct purposes. Thus, *melindi gorgus*, though not directly attested, may conform to an established and productive pattern of knife nomenclature in Somali.

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[42] Cf. *Ka shaqeynta birta I - Lavorazione del ferro I*, p. 6; "Fra le altre cose, il fabbro produce oggetti di metallo di uso domestico come *maxaadh*, *mudac* e *mindi*. *Ari-fag* è un tipo di coltellino usato per estrarre le spine dalle zampe delle capre. Un altro tipo di coltello è quello che prende il nome *mindi-reer* (coltello casalingo) ed è il coltello comune in uso presso tutte le case, con un manico di legno." (English translation of the conversation's transcription passage: "Among other things, the blacksmith makes metal objects for domestic use such as maxaar, mudac and mindi. Ari-fag is a type of small knife used to extract thorns from the legs of goats. Another type of knife is the one called mindi-reer (household knife) and is the common knife used by all households, with a wooden handle.")

[43] According to Ali (1983), a regional variation exists in Northern Somali dialects, where *mindi* appears as *middi*. Cf. also *Aqalka - Capanna*, p. 7: "Mi hai chiesto di parlare di *agaad e muleen*, che sono la stessa cosa: *muleen* indica oggetti di uso quotidiano: *kirli* (teiera), *xeero sibidi* (piatto di legno), *dhulo, fandhaal* (cucchiaio di legno), *bixiye* (grande cucchiaio), *dhiil* (recipiente per il latte), *haruub gaal* (coperchio del recipiente), *qarog, bire* (piccolo recipiente di legno per il latte), *doogi, mudac* (strumento appuntito provvisto di manico) e *middi* (coltello)." (English translation of the conversation's transcription passage: "You asked me to talk about *agaad* and *muleen*, which are the same thing: *muleen* means objects of everyday use: *kirli* (teapot), *xeero sibidi* (wooden plate), *dhulo, fandhaal* (wooden spoon), *bixiye* (large spoon), *dhiil* (milk vessel), *haruub gaal* (vessel lid), *qarog, bire* (small wooden milk vessel), *doogi, mudac* (pointed instrument fitted with a handle) and middi (knife).")

[44] Cf. the dictionary entry **razor**: garxiir, mandiil, middiil, mindiil, muus, qoordiid, qoordiido, sakiin.

[45] Cf. Stuhlmann, 1910:28: "Wir können hier nicht speziell auf die einzelnen Holzerzeugnisse eingehen, wollen nur ganz kurz die hauptsächlichsten Gruppen derselben aufführen. Grundsätzlich wird alle Holztechnik vonden Männern ausgeübt. Die einfachen Stiele für Hacken. Beile und Haumesser (*mundu*) werden sicher in jedem Haushalte angefertigt, aus einem oben verdickten Aststück herausgeschnitzt. Die notwendige Durchbohrung wird meist durch ein glühendes Eisen bewirkt."

6. Agricultural infrastructure in Ferrandi's reality

In addition to tangible implements such as the *acaf*, *jembe*, and *melindi gorgus*, Ferrandi also recorded a number of elements that, while not conventional tools, played a vital role in agricultural production and the management of water resources for both livestock and human communities. For this reason, we have chosen to include in this section, primarily devoted to agricultural implements, a dedicated subsection focusing on structural features embedded in local systems of land and resource use. Specifically, we consider five terms documented by Ferrandi: *hell*, *uar*, *bacar*, *silò*, and *got*, which reflect the infrastructural dimension of traditional Somali agro-pastoral practices.

6.1. *Hell*

With the term *hell* (modern Somali *ceel*), Ferrandi referred to a water well, either naturally occurring or manually excavated, typically six to seven metres deep and located along caravan routes or near inhabited settlements. These wells were primarily used for irrigation and human consumption (Ferrandi, 1903:252-275).

The term is consistently attested across multiple Somali language dictionaries, appearing in various graphic forms such as *el'* ("well" de Larajasse, 1897[46]) and *el-ca* ("pozzo" da Palermo, 1915[47]). Castagno (1975), in his comprehensive survey of water infrastructure in Somalia during the late 1970s, lists *el* among the diverse lexical items referring to watering places—an indication of the ecological and cultural centrality of water access in Somali society:

> "***WELLS.*** The large number of Somali words for well is some indication of the preoccupation with water in this semi-arid land. Drinking water is almost always available only along the Juba and Shebelle Rivers. In costa areas, as in the capital city of Mogadishu, wells often contain only salty or brackish water and drinking water must be brought into the cities from some distance. Regulation of the use of wells is an important part of the traditional legal system. The various kinds of wells and watering places are called *ag, bali, berked, el, las, sur, tur, uar*." (Castagno, 1975:159)

Castagno defines *el* as a well excavated into rock or soil, in line with Ferrandi's earlier descriptions, and differentiates it from other water sources such as *uar* (*war*) and *bali* (*balli*). He also draws attention to the diverse systems of ownership and access associated with these wells. Among the Raxanweyn, for instance, they are typically communal, shared among *rers* (clan subgroups), though privately dug wells also exist with local authorisation. In such cases, usage rights may extend to other clan members in exchange for payments in kind:

> "***EL.*** A well, excavated in the rocks or earth, as distinguished from other kinds of watering places, such as *uars* and *ballis* (q.v.). Wells are normally the property of the clan group occupying the territory where they are located. If there are many wells in one area, they are divided among the clan subgroups. Some wells are privately owned. Traditionally, the right to use wells varies from group to group. […] Among the Rahanweyn, wells are communal property and are usually divided among the *rers*, or subgroups. With the chief's permission, a person may excavate a private well where communal wells already exist; his fellow clansmen may use the well, but they must pay him—in money, milk, butter, or grain." (Castagno, 1975:41)

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[46] Cf. the dictionary entries **'el**, *m.n.*, well. –ki; **well**, n.., *'el*,—ki, gof,—ki; a., ladan, bed haba, wahsan.
[47] Cf. the dictionary entry **el-ca** *s. f.* Pozzo, sorgente, fonte.

The term *el* (and its variants) is not exclusive to Somali, but is also attested in other languages of the Horn of Africa. In Maay, it appears as *eel* (Mukhtar & Omar, 2007)[48], in Harari as *'ela* (Leslau, 1963)[49], and in the Borana as *eela-i* (Leus & Salvadori, 2006). The Borana entry is particularly noteworthy for its detailed ethnographic account, aligning with Castagno's emphasis on clan-based ownership and regulated but inclusive access:

> "***eela -i***: well, wells are the main source of water for the Borana and their herds, all wells belong to some certain clan or subclan and each well has its owner (*abbaa eelaa*). But Borana never refuse water to others who do not belong to their clan, they have also given the Gabra Miigo watering rights so they can ask for water anywhere, when a person is shifting house and livestock (*godaana*) he can go to any well and ask to water his cattle, the well manager will arrange it. There are nine clusters of deep permanent wells (*tulaa*), though it is not completely clear as to how the Borana count them as some are combined and considered one; see under tulaa. Each clan has access to some well in each *tula* cluster." (Leus & Salvadori, 2006: 192)

In modern standard Somali, *ceel* is the standard term for "well," as documented in several modern lexicographic sources, including the *Somalo-Italiano* dictionary by Agostini et al. (1985), the Somali-English by Zorc & Osman (1993)[50], and the *Dictionnaire Français-Somali* (Maxamed, 1985)[51]. Interestingly, the latter also records *cel*, translated as *fosse* ("pit") rather than *puits* ("well")[52], hinting at a broader semantic field that includes excavated depressions. This overlap is confirmed in de Larajasse (1897), where *'el* appears under the English entry *pit*[53].

The term *ceel* is notably productive in Somali, reflecting the fundamental importance of water within Somali nomadic culture. Multiword expressions such as *elal-ca gjog*, *elal gjog*, *'elal gjog*, *'elal jog*, *'elal jogjog*, or *ceelaljoog* (da Palermo, 1915[54]; de Larajasse, 1897[55]; Agostini et al., 1985) combine *ceelal* "well" with *jog* "to dwell", most likely referring to the bustard (*Otididae*), a terrestrial bird found in arid or semi-arid regions near water sources[56]. The productivity of *ceel* extends into verbal and nominal derivations as well. The transitive verb *ceelgee* (Agostini et al., 1985)[57] means "to bring something to the well", while the feminine collective noun *ceelalyo* refers to "those who go ahead of the livestock to prepare watering".

Toponymy also reflects the cultural centrality of *ceel*, as seen in place names like *El Bur* described by Castagno (1975:50) as "a town in the Galguduud Region, the centre of meerschaum production and craftsmanship", corresponding to today's *Ceelbuur* ("Well of the Hill" or "Mountain Well"). Other examples include *Ceelaayo* and *Ceel Af Weyn* (or

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[48] Cf. the dictionary entry **well** (n) 1. *eel*.

[49] Cf. the dictionary entry **ëla** 'stagnant water'; Te. Tna. **'***ela* 'well'; probably from Cushitic: Sa. Af. Bil. *'ela*, Som. *'el*, Ga. ela, Kam. Qab. elô', related to Sem. 'ayn (Cohen, Essai no. 64).

[50] Cf. the dictionary entry **well** (source of water, etc): af*, ceel, laas, Laas-Caano.

[51] Cf. the dictionary entry puits, n.m. ceel; god; puits de petrole ceelka saliida caydhiin laga good.

[52] Cf. the dictionary entry fosse, n.f. cel; god dheer; furuq dhoon.

[53] Cf. the dictionary entry **pit**, *n.*, gun, –ti; **'el**, –ki, gof, –ki, god, –ki.

[54] Cf. the dictionary entry **elal-ca gjog** *s. f.* Ottarda (trampoliere) — anche **elal gjog** (così chiamato perché si ferma sempre vicino ai pozzi.) and **Salalmodleh-ha** *s. m*. Gallo d'India selvatico — **èlal gjog**, acquatico, che sta sempre vicino ai pozzi.

[55] Cf. the dictionary entry **'elal jog**, or **'elal jogjog**, *f.n.*, bustard, dweller at wells (see *salalmodleh*).

[56] Some sources associate this term with *salalmodle*h, translated into Italian as Gallo d'India (wild turkey), and referring erroneously to *Meleagris gallopavo*, possibly due to similar ecological behaviors. Comparable misinterpretations are reflected in translations such as *trampoliere* or *tortora*, likely stem from shared habitat associations.

[57] Cf. the dictionary entries **ceelgee** v. tf. 2 - Portare qs. al pozzo (og. bestiame) and **ceelalyo** n.f. - co. - Persone che precedono il bestiame per preparare l'abbeverata.

Ceel-af-weyn, "Wide Mouth Well"). Wells themselves often carry individual names, such as *Ceelgaal*, *Ceelal*, and *Ceel-laba-Afle*, as seen in the passage below:

> "As for the water wells, there are many to which camels are brought. There is the well *Ceelgaal*, *Caynabo*, and another one named *Ceelal*: if one drinks from any of these wells, they will not be thirsty for fifteen days, or even a month, depending on the amount of water in each well. The best well is the one that still has water during the dry season."[58] (Dhirta VIII - Piante VIII, pp. 6-7)

What emerges consistently across the different sources consulted is the association of *ceel* (and its variants) with camel watering and pastoral needs. This stands in contrast to Ferrandi's use of the term *hell*, which he characterises more broadly in terms of irrigation and general potable use, with no exclusive reference to livestock. His emphasis lies instead on seasonal rhythms, particularly the *jiilaal* (dry season), and the suitability of the water for survival during such periods. Ethnographic sources further underscore how water quality in each well critically affects pastoral strategies and animal health:

> "We arrive at the well. No well has exactly the same quality of water as another. Each well has its own water, different from that of the others. And each well has a name. For example, there is *Ceel-gaal, Caynaba*. After drinking from some wells, it can take eight days before the camels are led back to drink again. For others, it's less, about six days; for some, it's more, ten or fifteen. There are cases of wells whose water allows camels to go a whole month without drinking. This is due to the different water qualities of the various wells. This happens during the *jiilaal* season."[59] (Dhirta II, Dhirta geelu daaqo - Piante II, p. 10)

Water quality is not only a matter of endurance but also affects fertility and mating behaviour:

> "The same phenomenon occurs with the heavy water of certain wells. During the rainy season, if camels are watered at the wells of *Ceel-laba-Afle* and *Caga-ciid*, which are wells of heavy water, when the chosen male camel mates with one of the females, she will become agitated and jump due to the strength of the male. On the other hand, there are wells whose water causes a certain impotence in the males. Therefore, if they are watered at these wells, the female camels will not conceive."[60] (Dhirta II, Dhirta geelu daaqo - Piante II, p. 10)

Such observations highlight the central role of *ceel* in Somali pastoralism—not merely as a water source, but as a key factor in herd management, seasonal mobility, and reproductive strategies.

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[58] Cf. *Dhirta VIII - Piante VIII*, pp. 6-7: "Quanto ai pozzi d'acqua, ce ne sono tanti a cui si portano i cammelli, c'è il pozzo *Ceelgaal*, *Caynabo*, un altro di nome *Ceelal*: se beve da uno di questi pozzi, non avrà sete per quindici giorni, o anche un mese, a seconda della quantità di acqua contenuto in ogni pozzo, il pozzo migliore è quello che ha acqua anche durante la stagione secca."

[59] Cf. *Dhirta II, Dhirta geelu daaqo - Piante II*, p. 10: "Arriviamo al pozzo. Nessun pozzo ha la stessa identica qualità d'acqua di un altro. Ogni pozzo ha la sua acqua, diversa da quella dell'altro. Ed ogni pozzo porta un nome. C'è, ad esempio, *Ceel-gaal, Caynaba*. Dopoaver bevuto l'acqua di alcuni pozzi, possono passare otto giorni prima che i cammelli vengano ricondotti a bere nuovamente. Per altri di meno, circa sei giorni, per altri di più, dieci o quindici. Ci sono casi di pozzi grazie alla cui acqua, i cammelli possono anche rimanere un mese senza bere. Ciò è dovuto alla differente qualità d'acqua dei vari pozzi. Questo accade nella stagione del *jiilaal*".

[60] Cf. *Dhirta II, Dhirta geelu daaqo - Piante II*, p. 10: "Lo stesso fenomeno accade con l'acqua pesante di certi pozzi. Nel periodo della pioggia, se i cammelli vengono abbeverati ai pozzi di Ceel-laba-Afle e di Caga-ciid, pozzi d'acqua pesante, quando il cammello scelto per la monta si congiunge con una delle cammelle, questa si agiterà e salterà per il vigore dello stesso. Ci sono invece pozzi la cui acqua provoca nei maschi una certa impotenza. Per cui, se si abbeverano presso questi pozzi, le cammelle non figliano."

Contemporary lexicographic sources, such as Maxamed (1985) and de Larajasse (1897), generally treat *ceel* (or *'el*) and *god* as synonymous. This apparent equivalence is noteworthy, as it suggests a semantic convergence that does not appear to be reflected in Ferrandi's account. In his writings, *got* (modern Somali *god*) consistently refers not to water sources, but to subterranean storage pits for cereals. In this sense, *got* is functionally closer to *bacar* or *silo*, indicating that, despite their alignment in modern lexicons, these terms referred to distinct elements of material culture in Ferrandi's ethnographic context.

6.2. *Uar*

With the term *uar* (modern Somali *war*), Ferrandi denotes an artificial catchment basin or reservoir designed for the collection of rainwater. Unlike the relatively narrow and deep structure of the *hell*, the *uar* typically holds stagnant water and is characterised by an elongated, oval shape, usually measuring around 50–60 metres in length and up to 20 metres in width.

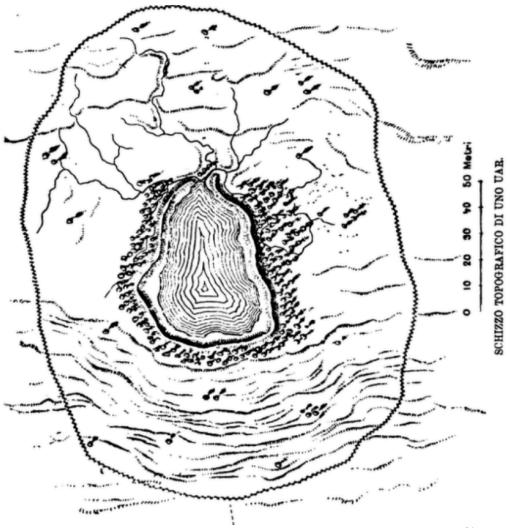

Figure 2. Illustration of the *uar* in Ferrandi's notebooks[61]

The construction of the *uar* takes advantage of natural land depressions, which are reinforced by earth embankments approximately four to five metres high, following the natural contours of the terrain. A small channel is typically carved into the embankment to direct rainwater into the reservoir, and additional water can be collected by diverting a small ditch to the entrance of the reservoir. Although usually situated near cultivated areas and rivers, the *uar* is not employed for irrigation or for watering livestock, but rather serves domestic needs, with the capacity to supply water to several villages. An illustration of a *uar* can be found in Ferrandi's notebooks (Figure 2, Ferrandi, 1903:41).

Like *hell*, the term *uar*, recorded in various orthographic forms, is attested in several other sources and linguistic records. Most of these attestations derive from early or colonial-era sources (or even historical dictionaries), while only one corresponding form appears in contemporary written Somali, namely in the Somali-Italian Dictionary by Agostini, Puglielli et al. (1985), better explained later in this chapter.

[61] The original caption in Italian reads: "Schizzo topografico di uno uar" (Ferrandi, 1903:41), which translates as "Topographic sketch of an uar".

As previously mentioned, Castagno (1975) includes it among the terms referring to watering places, where *uar* is defined as a *pool* or *catchment area* intended for the collection of rainwater. The physical description he provides closely mirrors that of Ferrandi: both accounts refer to a man-made depression surrounded by embankments, typically constructed in Raxanweyn villages, and both emphasise its function as a seasonal rainwater reservoir.

However, a notable divergence emerges regarding its primary usage. Castagno states that the *uar* is used chiefly for irrigation, whereas Ferrandi explicitly denies this, affirming instead that it is designed primarily to provide drinking water for both humans and livestock. Castagno writes:

> "***UAR***. A man-made pool or catchment area for the collection of rain water, constructed largely by the Rahanweyn who live far from wells or rivers. It is used mainly for irrigation, but also for drinking water for people and animals. The uar is kept in condition by the villagers; it is owned by the group or individual that built it; and strict rules govern its use. The uar is surrounded by a dike or cactus hedge. the clayey nature of the soil holds the water for a long time. A uar may contain sufficient water for ten to 20 families. Some of the existing uars were dug centuries ago." (Castagno, 1975, p. 154)

Comparable descriptions appear in other early sources on the Horn of Africa, such as Puccioni (1937: 111) and Vannutelli and Citerni (1899:67), who also describe artificial rainwater reservoirs ("serbatoi d'acqua") consistent with Ferrandi's notion of the *uar*. The term is still attested in contemporary Somali in the form *war*, referring to a natural or artificial water reservoir or cistern (see, among others, Agostini et al., 1985[62]; Zorc & Osman, 1993[63]). In Maay, *war* is translated as pool and glossed as "a place where water is drawn", as well as "water reservoir" or "cistern," emphasising its function in water collection and storage (Mukhtar & Omar, 2007)[64].

Interestingly, Castagno (1975) also records *war* as a separate entry, distinct from the water-related *uar* (same spelling as Ferrandi). In this case, *war* is glossed as "news" and described as a term used to denote the oral transmission of information, particularly among nomadic groups:

> "***WAR***. 1) A Somali word meaning "news." In spite of an inadequate system of mass communication, news is rapidly communicated by word of mouth. Among the nomads, who might appear to be isolated, news passes quickly from gatherings at watering places. 2) see INTERGROUP WARFARE." (Castagno, 1975, p. 159)

Although this meaning appears unrelated at first glance, Castagno's explanation explicitly links the spread of news to communal gatherings at wells and other water sources. This connection raises the possibility of a semantic shift, whereby *war* came to mean "news" through its association with communal gathering sites, places where people regularly convened and oral transmission of information was both frequent and essential.[65]

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[62] Cf. the dictionary entry **war**: n. f.; Stagno; Pantano; Riserva naturale o artificiale di acqua piovana.

[63] Cf. the dictionary entry **reservoir**: balli, berked, biyoqabsi, doh, galshaysi, galsho, godob, jaabbiyad, keli, war, waree.

[64] Cf. the dictionary entry **pool/puul/** (n) 1. war (meel biyi ky jeraang). 2. war-dabaaleed. 3. bilyaardi. 4. bakty-nassiib.

[65] This passage in Castagno implicitly suggests a possible etymological link between *war* ("news") and *war/uar* ("water reservoir"). It is possible that this is a single polysemous term, where the polysemy arose from a semantic shift—from a physical communal gathering place associated with water to the communicative activity that takes place there. This shift may involve mechanisms such as conceptual metaphor (where a concrete place comes to represent information exchange) and metonymy (where the place stands for the activity). While this hypothesis is plausible and supported by contextual evidence, it still requires further verification through data from Somali and related Cushitic

6.3. *Bacar* and *silò*

While both *hell* (*ceel*) and *uar* (*war*) relate to water management, *bacar* (modern Somai *bakaar*) serves a different function, being associated with the storage of agricultural products. According to Ferrandi, the *bacar* is a barrel-shaped grain storage pit with a narrow opening and unlined walls, used specifically for storing unshelled corn cobs. These pits typically measure between two and two and a half metres in depth and up to two metres in width. Before filling, it was common to light a fire inside to dry the interior, purify the space, or eliminate insects. The *bacar* was usually located at field edges, within courtyards, or inside huts, where it often stored shelled grain. The pit was sealed using wood, stones, and mud, then covered with earth to prevent rainwater infiltration.

Ferrandi's glossary shows that *bacar* is not the sole term for this kind of grain storage. The Italian *fossa da grano* ("grain pit") is translated as *silò*, *bacar*, or *got*, indicating the presence of synonymous or near-synonymous terms. All three are attributed by Ferrandi to the Rahanuìn dialect; however, he himself notes subtle geographic and linguistic distinctions. Specifically, *bacar* is preferred by Raxanweyn speakers, while other indigenous groups around the Webi region between Marka and Barawa, such as the Bimal (Biyamaal), favor *got* for the same structure. No further information is offered on the usage or origins of *silò*, which may have entered local vocabulary as a loanword, possibly through colonial contact, given its phonetic similarity to the Italian *silo* and its English counterpart.

The term *bacar* remains well attested in contemporary Somali, appearing in lexicons under the variant *bakaar* and frequently mentioned in explorers' writings and expert discourse. Consistent with Ferrandi's descriptions, it denotes a cereal storage facility, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

> "This concludes the work of the season, with the harvest ready to be placed in sacks or *bakaar*, or grain stores."[66](Dhirta VII - Piante VII, p. 6)

Both historical and modern accounts treat *bakaar* as near synonymous with *silo*[67]:

> "When the maize has reached maturity, the cobs are collected in a heap, husked, the dried maize is deposited in *bakaar* or silos and can remain there for up to thirty years if it is not subjected to water infiltration. In the silos, before introducing or pouring in the grain, a fire is lit to smoke the environment so that all underground insects disappear. It must be protected from humidity and water."[68] (Dhirta VII - Piante VII, p. 14)

The parallels between Ferrandi's observations and current practices extend beyond terminology. Structurally and functionally, both emphasise lighting a fire inside the storage chamber to purify the space and deter insect infestations. Similar subterranean grain storage methods were documented by explorers like Puccioni (1937), who described large pits dug into the ground, lined with dry grass and ashes to repel ants, then

languages, as well as typological comparisons with other linguistic contexts.

[66] Cf. *Dhirta VII - Piante VII*, p. 6: "Così si conclude il lavoro della stagione, con il raccolto pronto per essere messo nei sacchi o nei bakaar, ovvero nei depositi per i cereali."

[67] To further prove this idea, also Agostini et al. (1985) list the entry *bakaar* as an "underground silo". Cf. the dictionary entry **bakaar** n. f. (-ro, m.) - Silo sotterraneo.

[68] Cf. *Dhirta VII - Piante VII*, p. 14: "Quando il mais è giunto a maturazione, le pannocchie vanno raccolte in un cumulo, sgranate, si deposita il mais essiccato nei *bakaar* ovvero nei *silos* e vi può rimanere anche fino a trent'anni se non subisce infiltrazioni di acqua. Nei silos, prima di introdurvi o versarvi dentro il cereale, si accende un fuoco per affumicare l'ambiente affinché tutti gli insetti sotterranei scompaiano. Va salvaguardato dall'umidità e dall'acqua."

sealed with wooden planks and moistened earth to preserve the grain long-term. Castagno (1975) also confirms this system in his definition of *silo*:

> "**SILO**. Underground storage pits (diyehiin) for grain hold up to 20,000 pounds. The rectangular pits are lined with corn stalks or other fibers; then the grain is put in and covered with fiber mats and several feet of soil. Grain can be stored in the silos for years, but there is spoilage and damage by insects and rodents once the pits have been opened. Small conical pits (gut) are also used. Some modern grain storage facilities have been constructed by the government, and this program is expected to be expanded." (Castagno, 1975, p. 143)

Closely related to *bacar*, which generally denotes a pit or hollow, is *baccarà*, mentioned only once by Ferrandi. Context suggests it refers more specifically to a grain cistern excavated into the ground. Ferrandi describes these as structures built within the *zeriba* but outside the fort, intended to store sacks of dura and secure provisions for several months.[69]

6.4. *Got* and its other attestations

As previously noted, the term *got* (modern Somali *god*) is identified by Ferrandi as a coreferential synonym of *bacar* or *silò* and is therefore primarily associated with grain storage. More specifically, the Italian explorer presents *got* as a regional lexical variant characteristic of communities in the Webi region between Marka and Barawa, particularly among the Bimal.

The term is also attested in contemporary Somali, in the forms *god* or *god dheer*. However, its referential scope seems to have shifted. In modern usage, *god* is largely synonymous with *ceel* or *ʿel*, most commonly designating a pit or cavity used for the collection or storage of water (de Larajasse, 1897[70]; Maxamed, 1985[71]). This suggests a partial semantic divergence from the earlier usage described by Ferrandi.

This interpretation is supported by data from other languages spoken in the Horn of Africa. In Maay, for instance, the multiword expressions *god dheer* or *god ma'dang*[72] are used for "pit" (Mukhtar and Omar, 2007), while in Harari, the term *gädu*[73] is glossed as "pit" or "hole in the ground" (Leslau, 1963). Notably, Leslau's dictionary also records *migädu*[74], a compound expression combining *gädu* ("pit") and *mi* ("water")[75], used to signify "well." A similar link between *got* and water-related structures is attested by other sources: da Palermo (1915) lists *gof-ca* and *gol*[76] as terms for dry wells, and Maxamed

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[69] Cf. Ferrandi 1903:118: "Appena fuori del forte, ma entro la zeriba, costruii tre baccarà o cisterne da grano, che, contenendo complessivamente un centinaio di sacchi di dura, m'assicuravano il vettovagliamento per circa due mesi, in caso, come s'avverò parecchie volte, che le comunicazioni col luogo di produzione fossero interrotte". (English translation: "Just outside the fort, but within the zeriba, I constructed three baccarà, or grain cisterns, which, collectively holding around one hundred sacks of dura, ensured my provisions for about two months in case, as happened several times, communications with the production area were interrupted.")

[70] Cf. the dictionary entry **pit**, *n.*, gun, –ti, 'el, –ki, gof, –ki, god, –ki.

[71] Cf. the dictionary entry fosse, n.f. cel; god dheer; furuq dhoon.

[72] Cf. the dictionary entry **pit** (n) 1. *god dheer*. 2. *god ma'dang* luku qothaw.

[73] Cf. the dictionary entry **gädu** 'pit, hole in the ground'; axi gädu 'granary dug in the ground', lit. 'pit (for) cereal' (see axi).

[74] Cf. the dictionary entry **migädu** 'well', lit. 'pit (for) water' (see mi); gädu inti 'log that is used to cover the granary', lit. 'the wood of the granary' (see inci); Te. gwadgwad 'pit', Amh. Tna. gudg^ad, Arg. godo, Gaf. g"ädä, A. g"ädä, C. E. En. Ed. Gt. M. Ms. gwdgä, from the root gdd 'dig, make a hole'; Sem. Heb. gâdad 'cut'.

[75] dictionary entry **mï**, mïy 'water'; mi mâgât 'irrigation canal' (see mägät); mi gädu 'well', lit. 'pit (for) water' (see gädu).

[76] Cf. the dictionary entry **Gof-ca** *s. m.* Pozzo secco – iscja gofchéda. orbita dell'occhio — I somali nei torrenti secchi scavano dei piccoli fossi per trovarvi dell'acqua per dissetare gli armenti. Abbandonati questi fossi si chiamano, anche gol'.

(1985) confirms that *gof* and *god*[77] are frequently translated with the French *puits* ("well"), while Zorc and Osman (1993) use the form *godob*[78]. Interestingly, Maxamed also records the figurative expression *gof caalim ah*, literally "well of knowledge", used to describe a source of wisdom.

Although Ferrandi attests the term *got* solely in reference to grain storage pits, evidence suggests that even in his time, the word may have retained an additional meaning still current today—namely, that of natural caves or caverns. This is indirectly supported by an earlier account from the French explorer Révoil (1882):

> "Our caravan advances with difficulty on the rocky path, making an infinity of detours. From time to time, from god or caves in the ravines, families of Bedouins come out and look at us with curiosity."[79] (Révoil, 1882, p. 181)

In modern Somali dictionaries as well, *got* or *god* is frequently rendered as "cave" or "den" (da Palermo, 1915[80]; Maxamed, 1985; de Larajasse, 1897[81]). Comparable semantic nuances are also attested in neighbouring languages. In Maay, *god*[82] similarly denotes a cavity pit, while in Oromo, *goda-i*[83] covers a broad semantic field, including "cave", "den", "cavity", or "sheltered area", as illustrated by expressions such as *goda garaa* ("mountain cave") and *goda bineensaa* ("wild animal's den") (Leus & Salvadori, 2006:264):

> "***goda -i***: cave, den, cavity, sheltered area near a mountain /in the lee of a mountain, enclosed space in general. - goda garaa: cave in a mountain. - goda bineensaa: den of a wild animal. - nu warra godaa: we are people from the lee of the mountain. - lafa godaa godaa: uneven terrain, (lit. lots and lots of cavities / holes.) - goda barchumaa: the cavity of a stool, (ie, the space between its two broad legs, -jali xarapheezzaa goda: the space under a table." (Leus & Salvadori, 2006, p. 264)

Comparable usages appear in Harari as well, where the term *gab*[84] denotes "cave" or "hole in the ground", reinforcing the idea of a shared lexical field across Cushitic and related languages in the Horn of Africa. From a comparative linguistic and etymological perspective, the Oromo entry *gab* ("cave") in Leus and Salvadori (2006) reveals a potentially significant connection to Ferrandi's *got*. The accompanying etymological note reads:

> **gab** 'cave' ; G. 741 gob 'pit, hole'. Te. gob; probably also Semitic: Heb. geb 'pit, water container', Syriac gubbä 'well'; for the Aramaic origin of Ar. gubb, see Jeffery 98. (Leus & Salvadori, 2006, p. 71)

This entry suggests that *got*, along with its variants (*god*, *gof*, *gab*), may belong to a broader Afroasiatic lexical stratum. It likely belongs to an ancient semantic field spanning

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[77] Cf. the dictionary entry puits, n.m. ceel; god puits de science gof caalim ah.

[78] Cf. the dictionary entry **reservoir**: balli, berked, biyoqabsi, doh, galshaysi, galsho, godob, jaabbiyad, keli, war, waree2.

[79] Cf. Révoil, 1882:181: "Notre caravane avance avec difficulté sur le chemin rocailleux, faisant une infinité de détours. De temps à autre, des god ou grottes des ravins, sortent des familles de bédouins qui nous regardent avec curiosité."

[80] Cf. the dictionary entry **God-ca** *s. m.* Tana, caverna, grotta, buco che si scavano sottoterra i conigli, talpe, ecc.

[81] Cf. the dictionary entry **god** *m.n.*, hole (in the earth), pit, den, cavern, burrow. cave, cavern, n. boran, –ti; **god**, –ki. den, n., (cavern) boran, –ti; god, –ki.

[82] Cf. the dictionary entries **burrow/burrow/** (n) 1. god, haluul; **cave/keyv/** (n) showly, god; **cavern/kevam/** (n) bohol, god; **crater/kreytar**/ (n) bohol, god.

[83] Cf. the dictionary entry **goda -i**: cave, den, cavity, sheltered area near a mountain /in the lee of a mountain, enclosed space in general."

[84] Cf. the dictionary entry **gab** 'cave'.

Cushitic and Semitic (possibly Aramaic[85]) roots, all centred around the conceptual domain of pits, wells, and subterranean cavities.

7. Cooking utensils in Ferrandi's reality

Following the examination of agricultural tools and infrastructure, attention now turns to another fundamental domain of material culture: cooking utensils. These implements play a central role in everyday life, particularly among sedentary populations, offering rich insights into culinary practices, domestic routines, and intergenerational knowledge transmission. In ethnographic research, culinary artefacts reveal not only how food is prepared and consumed, but also the symbolic and practical meanings embedded in local foodways.

Although Somali material culture historically included a wide array of domestic utensils, including pots, containers, and spoons, as documented in various museum collections, Ugo Ferrandi's account records only seven cooking-related terms[86], two of which refer to the same artefact under different regional names. These include *madag* (or *madegg*), *corilaca*, *fandal*, *hero*, *mende* (or *malinde*), *moi* (or *moh)*. This narrow lexical sample likely reflects the predominance of nomadic lifestyles among Somali communities during the period of Ferrandi's fieldwork. The demands of mobility, dictated by pastoral rhythms and constrained by the camel's limited carrying capacity, favoured a reduced and highly functional domestic toolkit. Except for the compound *corilaca*, however, most of the recorded terms have direct or close equivalents in contemporary Somali dictionaries, and the forms and functions of these handmade utensils have remained relatively stable over time.

7.1. *Fandal*

The term *fandal* (modern Somali *fandhaal*) denotes a traditional wooden spoon that remains in limited practical use in certain remote nomadic areas, though it is more commonly preserved today as a cultural artefact—whether in museum collections, art exhibitions, or domestic displays. Unlike the modern spoon, now generally referred to using the Arabic-derived term *mulqaacad* (ةقعلم), *fandhaal* designates a specifically premodern, handcrafted Somali implement. Often carved in wood and occasionally ornamented, it was produced in varying sizes and used in a range of culinary and domestic contexts.

The *fandhaal* was reportedly the only utensil traditionally used by the Somali, and its presence was widespread throughout the territory (Cossa, 1987). According to Ferrandi, it constituted a distinctly "indigenous product, not without a certain artistic sensibility" (Ferrandi, 1903:251). Indeed, both the literature and museum collections confirm the existence of various types, ranging from plain, undecorated examples to highly refined specimens of Somali woodcarving. Notably, Grottanelli observed that the most finely crafted spoons originated from the region between Berbera and the upper Webi, while decorative complexity declined further south: examples from the Baardheere and Luuq areas along the Jubba River exhibited simpler ornamentation, and those from the coastal zones of Marka and Barawa were typically plain or utilitarian in design (Grottanelli, 1976:279). While some authors have classified these items as "luxury objects and works

[85] ISO 639-3 code: *orm*.

[86] Ferrandi's notebooks also contain a considerable number of lexical items denoting containers and receptacles. As these are not strictly or exclusively associated with culinary use, they fall outside the scope of the present discussion and will be examined in a future study.

of art rather than true utensils" (Grottanelli 1976: 278), the testimonies of Ferrandi and other explorers, such as Puccioni, confirm their practical domestic use, particularly for stirring roasted coffee beans in butter.

The term is well attested across historical and contemporary Somali dictionaries, underscoring its widespread usage. Oral archives compiled by the Centro Studi Somali at Università Roma Tre in the 1970s–1980s confirm its centrality in Somali domestic life. In the recorded discussion on the *aqal Soomaali*[87], *fandhaal* is consistently paired with *xeedho*, a carved wooden plate, in the expression *xeedho iyo fandhaal* ("plate and spoon"). Ferrandi himself refers to the *xeedho* in his notes (Ferrandi, 1903).

Oral accounts from informants further classify *fandhaal* into four functional and typological categories: *bixiye* (lit. "provider"), also known as *qarsin* in some regions, the largest variant, typically carved from *Yooca* (*Erythrina melanacantha*); *dhure*, a thinner spoon with a long handle and short tip, used primarily for collecting liquids such as melted butter from *ubbooyin* or *baarrooyin* (gourd containers); *fandhaal-sooreed*, used for eating solid dishes such as porridge or rice; it is often decorated; *qudde*, the smallest type, used to dip melted butter or meat into fat, particularly during communal meals.

Additional regional variants include terms such as *ayime*, *laan*, *malaakha*, and *xubin*, which tend to refer to larger ladle-like utensils. The terms *turunji* and *baasi* describe long-handled wooden ladles employed to stir thick porridge. Production of the *fandhaal* relies on the availability of local wood species, with the material carefully chosen to suit the spoon's intended function. Large spoons such as the *bixiye* are typically carved from *Yooca*, valued for its hardness despite a coarse texture. Smaller, finer spoons are often made from *Himir*, a smoother and more aesthetically refined wood. Other species employed in spoon-making include *Jaw-dheer*, *Ontorro*, *Goosay*, and *Shillan*, selected according to local availability and specific artisanal traditions (*Aqalka III – Capanna*).

Figure 3. Picture of various kind of *fandhaal*, part of the photographic archive of the Italian Geographic Society[88]

[87] Traditional Somali hut. Cf. *Aqalka V - Capanna V*.

[88] The original title of the picture reads: "Fandal, vari tipi di cucchiai in legno" (English translation: "Fandal, different kind of wooden spoons"). Picture retrieved from the Italian Geographic Society's photographic archive, author Ugo Ferrandi: http://www.archiviofotografico.societageografica.it/index.php?it/152/archivio-fotografie/sgi_master_dbase_8563/450. The same picture can be found in Ferrandi, 1903:250: original caption: "Cucchiai" (English translation: "spoons").

7.2. *Hero*

The *hero* (modern Somali *xeedho*, also known as *xeero*[89]) is a hollow wooden vessel traditionally used for serving and storing food. It represents a key example of Somali craftsmanship, combining utilitarian function with refined aesthetic sensibility. While modern plates are often referred to using Arabic or European-derived terms such as *funjaan* or *fijaan*, *sixni*, or *bilaydh* (from English *plate*) (Aadan, 2013), the *xeedho* retains deep cultural resonance, particularly when crafted from specific types of wood. Larger versions are typically made from *Garbi* (*Acacia albida*), valued for its hardness and resistance to breakage, while smaller ones are carved from *Yooca* (*Erythrina melanacantha*), prized for its fine grain and decorative potential.

Ferrandi (1903) highlights the hero's ceremonial role in Somali wedding banquets. In his account, coffee is served to community notables directly in these wooden plates: one *hero* for those Ferrandi calls the "*Gubahin*" and two for the "*Gasar-Guddà*". In contrast, the *Uadad*, a priestly figure who performs the wedding rites, receives his coffee separately in a cup called *manuna*, which he consumes later. This ritual differentiation underscores the symbolic and social prestige associated with the *hero*:

> The day after the bride has withdrawn into the hut, the groom, accompanied by his companions, goes to the village chief—be he a *Gherad* or *Daffalan*—and there, together with the notables known as *Gasar-Guddà* and *Gubahin*, a celebratory feast is held. As per custom, three wooden plates (*hero*) of coffee are served: one for the *Gubahin* and two for the *Gasar-Guddà*[90]. (Ferrandi, 1903:255)

Several variants of the *xeedho* are attested in both oral tradition and ethnographic sources. The *xeedho-ballaadh* denotes a large wooden plate used for communal meals and festive occasions, often left as a permanent fixture within the household. The *qoobad*, also known as *xeedho-dhallaan*, is a smaller form used by children. Some *xeedho* are crafted with short supporting legs (*rukumaalay*), while others, such as the *kurbin*, are specifically employed to serve butter-fried coffee.

The *xeedho*'s material and typological diversity reflect both the ecological environment and the highly developed artisanal practices of Somali communities. As Ferrandi's documentation suggests, the object served not only practical purposes but also fulfilled important social, symbolic, and ritual functions.

7.3. *Corilaca*

Corilaca denotes a traditional wooden ladle used primarily to mix *asida* or *sòr*, a dense porridge made from sorghum, often considered a staple food among Somali communities, particularly among ascari and rural populations. The porridge is typically boiled and seasoned with milk, butter, or fermented dairy products.

The term *corilaca* appears to be a compound of *cori* (modern Somali *qori*, meaning "wood" or "stick") (Aadan, 2013) and *laca* (from *laaqa* "the one who mixes") (Aadan, 2013). While the morphological components are recognisable and consistent with Somali word formation patterns, the compound itself does not appear in contemporary Somali dictionaries or widely circulated lexicons. This suggests that *corilaca*, though

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[89] Cf. the dictionary entry **xeero**[1] *m.dh* **(-ooyin**, *m.l*) Weel godan oo qori ka samaysan oo cuntada lagu rito. (English translation: "A hollow wooden container used for storing food"). (Puglielli & Cabdalla, 2012: 871).

[90] Cf. Ferrandi, 1903:255: "II giorno dopo che la fidanzata si è ritirata nella capanna, il fidanzato, coi compagni suoi, va dal capo del paese, sia esso gherad o daffalan, e quivi, coi notabili Gasar-Guddà e Gubahin, si fa il festino, in cui sono di prammatica tre piatti (hero) di caffè, cioè uno per i Gubahin e due per i Gasar-Guddà"

linguistically transparent, may have been either a regional term or a context-specific expression no longer retained in the standard lexicon.

Figure 4. Picture of ladles (*corilaca*) and Somali wipes (*dufgamà*) part of the photographic archive of the Italian Geographic Society[91]

7.4. *Mende* or *Malinde*

Mende (modern Somali *mindi*), defined by Ugo Ferrandi as a "small knife", is primarily associated with both weaponry and agricultural uses. However, in contemporary Somali, this term also applies to a range of domestic and artisanal tools, including those used by blacksmiths in the manufacture of horseshoes, as well as in culinary contexts, where the knife is employed for cutting meat and fruit. In traditional Somali households, a sharp *mindi* is indispensable for food preparation—especially for portioning cuts such as lamb rib, a favoured dish composed of tender meat and soft fat. During meals, it is similarly used to cut well-cooked meat served on a wooden plate (*xeedho*) into bite-sized pieces.

A wide array of local knife types and names are attested, each reflecting variations in form, size, usage, or sharpness. These include: *toorray*, *billaawe* (also *billaawey* in Maay), *ableey*, *gaalleef*, *jaanleef*, *kirkir*, *xalleefato*, *majo*, *saawir*, *radeeb*, *afla'*, *maliiddo*, among others. These denominations typically describe the knife's size, intended use, or degree of sharpness. Additional dimensions of the term *mindi*, particularly concerning its typological variation and symbolic functions, have been further explored under the related entry *melindi gorgu*s (§ 5.3.).

7.5. *Moi* or *moh*

Moi (or *moh*, "mortar"; modern Somali *moy*, *mooye*) refers to a traditional kitchen implement primarily used for threshing or pounding *dura* into flour. Typically made of wood—though occasionally crafted from metal in more recent times—the vessel is equipped with a handle and features a deep, cylindrical form. According to Ferrandi, *moi* were carved from tree trunks approximately 30 centimetres in diameter and half a metre in height and were used by village women in their daily food preparation[92]. Ferrandi also

[91] The original title of the picture reads: "Dufgamà, salviette somali. Laga, mestoli per la polenta di dura" (English translation: "Dufgamà, Somali wipes. Laga, ladles for dura polenta"). Picture retrieved from the Italian Geographic Society's photographic archive, author Ugo Ferrandi: http://www.archiviofotografico.societageografica.it/index.php?it/152/archivio-fotografie/sgi_master_dbase_8563/445. The same picture can be found in Ferrandi, 1903:247, original caption: "Mestolo per polenta e salviette di fibra vegetale" (English translation:"Polenta ladle and vegetable fiber wipes").

[92] Cf. Ferrandi 1903: 123-124: "Alle nove e mezzo, quando si faceva, come dissi, la distribuzione dei viveri, le donne

documents a noteworthy local custom: *moi* were commonly brought inside huts during thunderstorms, due to a widespread belief that if left outdoors with water inside, they could attract lightning[93]. Among the forms documented by Ferrandi, only *moy* is attested in modern Somali (Puglielli and Mansuur, 2012[94]). However, this variant is relatively uncommon, whereas *mooye* is the prevalent form in Standard Somali (Puglielli and Mansuur, 2012[95]).

Beyond its agricultural function, this tool holds significant importance in Somali ethnomedicine. For example, resins such as *Hadi* and *Cadaad* are pulverised within the mortar to facilitate their dissolution or conversion into powder for therapeutic purposes[96]. The *Hadi* resin may occur either as a gelatinous liquid or as a hard solid requiring dissolution in water after being ground in the mortar.

Figure 5. Picture of slave women pounding *dura* of the *moi*, part of the photographic archive of the Italian Geographic Society[97]

del villaggio accorrevano alla zeriba, che era fuori del forte, portando i loro moi (tronchi d'albero di un diametro di 30 centimetri circa e alti mezzo metro, scavati nell'interno a foggia di lunghi mortai) ove pestavano la dura per renderla farina, non usando quasi mai i miei uomini mangiare la dura bollita ancora in grani." (English translation: "At half past nine, during the food distribution, as I mentioned, the village women would gather at the *zeriba*, located outside the fort, bringing their *moi* (tree trunks approximately 30 centimeters in diameter and half a meter high, hollowed out to resemble long mortars), in which they pounded the *dura* to turn it into flour, as my men would almost never eat the *dura* simply boiled and left in whole grains.").

[93] Cf. Ferrandi 1903:299: "La credenza popolare dice che il fulmine non è che un pezzo di ferro; e devo a questa d'aver rinvenuto ad Ergheo una pietra meteorica di 20 chilogrammi circa, che ora trovasi nelle collezioni della Società d'Esplorazione Geografica e Commerciale di Milano. Secondo i Lughiani ed i Rahanuin, il fulmine sarebbe prodotto dagli angeli (molaica) che muniti d'un'asta di ferro, bastonerebbero la pioggia per farla cessare: molte volte quest'asta rompendosi cade a terra sotto forma di fulmine. È opinione comune, poi, nell'interno e sino fra i Tunni della costa, che se quando piove si lasciassero fuori di casa quei tronchi di legno scavati che si usano per pestare la dura (detti moi o moh) con un po' d'acqua dentro, cadendovi sopra la pioggia, questa attirerebbe il fulmine. Perciò quando vi è temporale si ritirano i moi entro le capanne." (English translation: "Popular belief holds that lightning is nothing more than a piece of iron; and it was thanks to this belief that I discovered, in Ergheo, a meteorite weighing approximately 20 kilograms, which is now part of the collections of the Geographical and Commercial Exploration Society of Milan. According to the Lughiani and the Rahanuin, lightning is produced by angels (*molaica*) who, armed with iron rods, strike the rain to make it stop; these rods often break and fall to the ground in the form of lightning. It is also widely believed—in the interior and even among the Tunni along the coast—that if, during rainfall, those hollowed tree trunks used to pound *dura* (known as *moi* or *moh*) are left outside with a bit of water inside, the rain striking them may attract lightning. For this reason, during thunderstorms, the *moi* are brought inside the huts.").

[94] Cf. the dictionary entry *Moy. ld. Mooye*.

[95] Cf. the dictionary entry *mooye m.l (-yayaal, m.l/dh)* 1. ld moy. Weel qori ama bir ka samaysan oo ay tibi weheliso oo badarka iwm lagu tumo.

[96] Cf. *Aqalka I - Capanna I*.

[97] The original title of the picture reads: "Schiave che pestano la dura del moi" (English translation: "Slave women pounding dura of the moi"). Picture retrieved from the Italian Geographic Society's photographic archive, author Ugo

From both historical and linguistic perspectives, the term *mooye* has served as a key index for reconstructing Proto-Somali socio-economic frameworks. Mohamed Ali (1983) includes *mooye* within a core vocabulary related to early cultivation, alongside terms such as *qot* "to dig", *Masango* "sorghum", and *kibis* "bread". Ethnographic evidence further records that traditional *mooye* are carved from tree trunks, a process demanding considerable woodworking skills, and that mortars and other implements were integral to the broader ironworking domain.

7.6. *Madag* or *madegg*

The term *madag* denotes a traditional fire-making tool consisting of two wooden sticks rubbed together to produce ignition by friction, employed particularly in contexts where lit embers are not available[98]. This implement was commonly used in nomadic Somali contexts. Although once widespread, the use of the *madag* is now largely obsolete, even in remote pastoral areas. Among the available written sources, including official Somali dictionaries, only Ferrandi records the form *madegg*. The term *madag* is consistently attested across both early and contemporary lexicographic materials. De Larajasse (1897) lists *madag* (feminine noun) with a similar definition to Ferrandi's: "the two pieces of wood Somalis rub one against the other for getting fire in the desert." Likewise, da Palermo (1915)[99] corroborates this meaning and adds that the sticks are made of "special wood", implying selective use of particular tree species.

An alternative form, *madko*, appears in Puglielli and Mansuur (2012), while Agostini et al. (1985) interpret *madko* as the plural of *madag*. Notably, in Saalax's dictionary (2004), *madko* is defined as the woods from which the madag is made, rather than as a plural form. The term *madag* is semantically linked to *madkoole* (literally "that which has madko"; Agostini et al., 1985), which denotes the specific tree species from which the madag sticks are traditionally carved. This connection is further corroborated by Guul (n.d.), who identifies *madkoole* (or *madkoole-aha*) as the name of the tree described as "*Geed madagta laga goosto oo dhuumoodka u eg*" ("the tree from which the madag is cut, resembling a stick"). However, *madkoole* is notably absent from the list of trees deemed suitable for madag production by Puglielli and Mansuur (2012). Instead, their ethnobotanical survey enumerates other species such as *docol*, *madheedh*, and *mareer*. Expanding on this, Puglielli and Mansuur (2012) offer a detailed description of the madag's construction: it is typically a short piece of wood, often sourced from *docol* or *madheedh* trees, with a small perforation in the centre designed to hold a flat-edged stick that is rapidly rotated to ignite fire:

Ferrandi: http://www.archiviofotografico.societageografica.it/index.php?it/152/archivio-fotografie/sgi_master_dbase_8563/438. The same picture can be found in Ferrandi, 1903:123: original caption: "Schiave che pestano la dura" (English translation: "Women slaves pounding dura").

[98] Cf. Ferrandi, 1903:55-56 "Quest'ordigno consiste in due bacchette arrotondate, una delle quali viene tenuta fissa orizzontalmente a terra con le piante dei piedi poggiate sulle estremità. La persona, accoccolata, prende tra le palme l'altra bacchetta, dopo averne adattato il capo inferiore entro una piccola buca scavata a coltello nel legno della prima, e le imprime un moto rapido di rotazione, come si usa fare del frullo. La rapida confricazione dei due legni, determina l'accensione." (English translation: "This device consists of two rounded sticks, one of which is held firmly on the ground in a horizontal position, with the soles of the feet pressing down on its ends. The person, squatting, takes the other stick between their palms and fits its lower end into a small notch carved with a knife into the first stick. They then spin it rapidly between their hands, in the same way one would twirl a spindle. The quick friction between the two pieces of wood generates ignition").

[99] Cf. the dictionary entry **Madag-ta** s. f. Due pezzi di legno speciale che i somali fregano l'uno contro l'altro per accendere il fuoco. (da Palermo, 1915) (English translation: "two pieces of special wood Somali rub one against the other for getting fire").

> "A short stick, usually carved from the docol, mareer, or similar tree, with a small hollow made in the middle, into which a thin, flat-ended stick is inserted and then vigorously rubbed until fire is produced."[100] (Puglielli & Mansuur, 2012:561)

The verb *madkee* denotes the successful act of producing fire using a madag. Additional semantic shifts appear in Aadan (2013), where *madkayn* (noun) and *madkee* (verb) refer to a form of traditional healing involving cauterisation, possibly deriving from the same root concept related to burning. This usage suggests a broader semantic field encompassing both technological and therapeutic associations with combustion and heat.

Finally, Mohamed Nuuh's wordlist confirms the use of *madag* in both Benadir and Northern Somali dialects (Ehret et al., 1984), while introducing *mooqod* as the Maay equivalent, an entry absent from Mukhtar's dictionary. Two other dictionaries mention *madag*: Khalid A. Guul identifies it as the name of the tree from which madag is made (*Madkoole/-aha: Geed madagta laga goosto oo dhuumoodka u eg*), and Aadan (2013) records the terms *madkeyn* (noun) and *madkee* (verb).8. Musical instruments in Ferrandi's notebooks.

8. Musical instruments in Ferrandi's reality

The final section of this analysis shifts from the domestic sphere to the expressive and ritual dimensions of material culture, focusing on musical instruments. As recorded by Ferrandi in Chapter III, *Festivals and Games*, music features prominently in ritual and celebratory contexts where collective participation—particularly among the *Gubahin* and enslaved individuals—is marked by singing, dancing, and rhythmic performance. These events, often charged with emotional and symbolic meaning, emerge as moments of temporary social convergence that blur rigid hierarchical divisions. Within this framework, the musical instruments described—*aiat*, *goma*, and *parapanda*—are more than simple implements of sound-making. Though often simple in design and crafted from locally sourced materials, they occupy a central role in cultural expression and ceremonial life. Ferrandi's account is notably attentive to the interplay between music, embodiment, and emotion, especially as experienced in communal rites and intense social gatherings. In several cases, his observations are echoed by those of other explorers and ethnographers, who attest to the broader significance and diffusion of these instruments across Somali-speaking regions.

8.1. *Aiat*

Among the musical instruments documented by Ferrandi is one referred to as *aiat*, a parallelepiped-shaped idiophone consisting of two wooden tablets rhythmically struck together[101]. Ferrandi compares its function to that of metallic clappers in Western orchestras, emphasising its role as a rhythmic backbone that contrasts with the more repetitive melodic lines sung by the performers[102].

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[100] Cf. Puglielli & Mansuur, 2012L:561: "Qori gaaban oo sida badan geedka docolka, mareerka iwm laga qoro oo inta dhexda fantax yar looga yeelo ul yar oo af siman leh lagu fariisiyo, kaddibna xoog loo xurbiyo ilaa uu dab ka dhasho."

[101] Cf. Ferrandi, 1903:414: "Strumento fatto di due tavolette di legno che, battute insieme in cadenza, accompagnano alcuni canti." (English translation: "An instrument made of two wooden boards that, when struck together rhythmically, accompany certain songs".)

[102] Cf. Ferrandi, 1903:287: "Il Gasar-Guddà è poco rumoroso e teatrale nelle feste, al contrario del Gubahin, che con gli schiavi non lascia passare solennità alcuna, senza organizzare balli con annessi canti. Dei tamburi, che molti, con parola suaheli, chiamano goma, alti più d'un metro, fatti d'un tronco d'albero vuotato, e ricoperti d'una pelle ben tesa; delle latte da petrolio vuote; gli uni e le altre battuti con due bacchette; dei pezzi di legno (aiat) di forma parallelepipeda, battuti a modo dei piatti metallici in uso nelle nostre bande musicali, formano l'orchestra, che i suonatori accompagnano

A compelling parallel to this description appears in the 1913 catalogue of ethnological objects from *Le Mostre coloniali all'Esposizione internazionale di Torino del 1911* (Ministero delle Colonie, 1913), which includes a similar instrument—used by the Biyamaal communities of Marka—described as "pieces of wood struck together, serving as accompaniment to castanets"[103] and designated by the term *sciambal*.

Giannattasio (1987) also documents an analogous instrument, likewise named *shambal*, describing it as a pair of valve-shaped wooden clappers—alternatively referred to as *garas*, *gulaan*, or *deegaan*—widespread throughout Somalia (with the exception of some northern regions) and used as more resonant substitutes for *sacab*[104] (handclapping) in the accompaniment of specific dances, such as the *xayaad*:

> "Wooden clappers (shambal). Valve-shaped wooden clappers (garas, gulaan, deegaan) are widespread throughout Somalia (except in some northern areas) as louder substitutes for handclapping (sacab) in the accompaniment of certain dances (for example, the Xayaad dance). The striking surface may be flat, but it generally features a concave shape." (Giannattasio, 1987:79)

The association between the *shambal* and the *xayaad* dance raises terminological questions and invites further reflection on the term *aiat* as reported by Ferrandi. That *xayaad* refers to a particular style of dance or chant is confirmed by the Zorc & Osman dictionary (1993)[105], where it denotes a "special kind of dance", and by the Agostini et al. dictionary (1985), where it denotes the "intonation of a particular song"[106]. Crevatin (1988) further expands on this definition, suggesting that *xayaad* refers to chants used in exorcistic rituals. He situates the term within a broader Cushitic lexical substrate, noting parallels such as *hayyāta* in Sidamo and *hayāta* in Kambata, both of which designate ritual songs or spirit-possession sessions[107]. These cognates suggest the existence of a

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con una cantilena monotona." (English translation: "The Gasar-Guddà is not very loud or theatrical at parties, unlike the Gubahin, who, together with the slaves, does not let any ceremony pass without organising dances accompanied by songs. The drums, which many refer to by the Swahili word goma, are more than a meter high, made from a hollowed-out tree trunk, and covered with a well-stretched skin; empty oil cans; both of these are struck with two sticks; and pieces of wood (aiat) in a parallelepiped shape, struck like the metal plates used in our musical bands, form the orchestra, which the musicians accompany with a monotonous chant").

[103] Cf. IV. - 2° Collezione etnologica delle genti Bimal. (Cap. Gustavo Pesenti), subsection: 5. MESTIERI ED INDUSTRIE. Strumenti musicali., item no. 175: Pezzi di legno che si battono fra loro, come accompagnamenti di nacchere, denoted by the term *sciambal*. (Ministero delle Colonie, 1913:88)

[104] Cf. the dictionary entry **sacab** (-ka) *n2(a)-m* palm of the hand; applause, handclapping; dance with handclapping (Zorc & Osman, 1993).

[105] Cf. the dictionary entries **xayaad1** (-ka) *nO-m* special kind of dance: dance tune, dance-song; **xayaad 2** (xayaaday) *vi*= sing the tune for a dance; [ext.] live it up, be lively; **tune**: hilmaan, xayaad; **dance**: alaakoodi, bardooddan, batar, beerrey, boorane, bootimaale, bootimaaleysi, bullee, bullo, caanallul, caweys, cayaar, cayaarin, cayaaryaxaas, ciyaar, dabafadal, danaano, dhaantee, dhaanto, dheel, dheeli, dheelsii, gaad3, gaalliso, gableyshimbir, golgoley, gowle, hiriimaale, jaandheer, jiib, kabeebey, kugduub2, lugduub2, mingis, ori, raawi2, saar3, sacab, saddexley, salwo, shabashabo, shabshable, shirib, surow, wiglee, wiglo, wilgee, wilgo, xayaad, yoose; **song**: alaakoodi, dhexsocoto, dhextaal, digri2, geeraar, geeraarshe, giis, halaanhal, halkudheg, heello, hees, helleyoy, hoobaale, hooyaale, jawaab3, jiib, liilo, maanyee, maanyo, madiix, miro2, ori, qaaraami, qaraami, salsal2, shirib, tiri {u tiri), xayaad.

[106] Cf. the dictionary entry **xayaad1** *n. m.* - **1**. Importante tipo di danza. **2.** Intonazione di un particolare canto; **xayaad2** *v. it.* **1 (-day, -dday) -** Vivere.

[107] Cf. Crevatin, 1988:19: "Innanzi tutto è bene precisare che, pur avendo quasi tutti le stesse caratteristiche strutturali, i vari riti somali si differenziano per designazioni, per i canti impiegati durante l'esorcismo, per finalità e per area di diffusione. I riti principali sono il mingis (<mingis « nome di uno spirito malefico »), il boorane (<booran << avere la schiena curvata »), xayaad (<xayaad « intonazione di un canto »); noti sono, nella Somalia centro-meridionale, i tipi beeba, túmbura e shtímiri (swahili di Brava; dal nome di uno spirito malefico ar. qiṭmir). La diversa funzionalità è legata alla diversità degli spiriti infestanti, ognuno con caratteri e gusti diversi (in fatto di canti e profumi) e che il capo ritualista deve ben conoscere per poter scacciare, dopo averlo riconosciuto, lo sgradevole ospite: ogni rito, dunque, si presume possa esorcizzare solo certi spiriti." (English translation: "First of all, it is important to clarify that, although they almost all share the same structural characteristics, the various Somali rituals differ in their designations, the chants used during exorcism, their purposes, and their areas of diffusion. The main rituals are *mingis* (<*mingis* "name of an

proto-Cushitic root *hay-at-* associated with trance-inducing or therapeutic chants. Additionally, as noted by Crevatin (1988), the ritual practices denoted by this term are unknown in the traditional religion of the Gabbra of Kenya, suggesting that these usages may have more ancient and independent origins than current religious systems.

If *aiat* is in fact a phonetic approximation of *xayaad*, Ferrandi may have inadvertently recorded the name of the associated performance—either the dance or the chant—rather than the instrument itself. This hypothesis is plausible given the oral nature of Somali at the time and Ferrandi's limited familiarity with the language and its regional dialects. However, as the case of *goma* discussed below suggests, it is also conceivable that the term *aiat* referred both to the instrument and to the performance it accompanied. In this scenario, Ferrandi may have documented a now-obsolete meaning of *xayaad*, that has since fallen out of circulation.

8.2. *Goma*

According to Ferrandi's account, the Swahili term *goma* (modern Swahili *ngoma* or *goma*[108]) refers to a large drum—over one meter tall—carved from a hollowed tree trunk and topped with taut animal skin. Played with two wooden sticks, it emits a deep, penetrating resonance[109].

Ferrandi emphasises the drum's powerful psychological and bodily impact, particularly on women participating in ritual dances. He describes scenes of trance-like behaviour, in which women, overwhelmed by the drum's vibrations, collapse or embrace the instrument in states of ecstatic intensity. These episodes, he notes, were perceived by participants as moments of possession or contact with supernatural forces—at times explicitly identified with the devil—and often had a marked erotic dimension:

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evil spirit"), *boorane* (<*booran* "having a bent back"), and *xayaad* (<*xayaad* "intonation of a chant"); in central-southern Somalia, the types *beeba*, *túmbura*, and *shtímiri* (Swahili of Brava; from the name of an evil spirit, Arabic *qiṭmir*) are well known. The different functions are related to the diversity of the haunting spirits, each with different characteristics and preferences (in terms of chants and fragrances), which the ritual leader must be well acquainted with in order to drive out the unpleasant guest after recognising it; therefore, each ritual is presumed to be able to exorcise only certain spirits.")

[108] Cf. the dictionary entry **Ngoma, n. a** drum. As the usual accompaniment of all merrymaking and ceremonial, *ngoma* is extended to include (1) any kind of dance; (2) music in general. *Piga* (*chapua) ngoma*, beat a drum. *Cheza* (*ingia*) *ngoma*, join in a dance. *Ngoma ya kucheza*, dancing for amusement. *Ngoma ya kupunga* (*pepo*), dance for the exorcizing of a spirit. Prov. *Ngoma ikilia sana, haikawii kupasuka*, when a drum sounds loud, it will soon burst. (Drums are of many sizes and patterns, and these as well as the accompanying dances and modes of beating vary with every tribe, and with the different occasions of their use.) **Goma**, n. maamplić. **Kigoma**, n. *vi-* dim. Some of the drums are called *tari, msapata, dandalo, kiumbizi, msondo, vumi, chapuo, kumbwaya, kitanga, kishina, msoma, mganda*. Some of the musical instruments are: *kinanda, santuri, kinubi, zeze, zumari, toazi, upato, kayamba, panda, baragumu, filimbi, fula*. The following are some of the dances used when spirits are being exorcised: *dungumaro, kigala, kisomali, pungwa, punda, ng'ombe, kisonge, lengwe, kiganda, kinyika, kipemba, kitumbatu, kinyamkera, mali kwa mali, likunda, lewa, kibulushi, mkondo, shehe, kilua, kibisa, kikoikoi, mkodi, kisokota, kaputa, macinyiri, kimwera, kingindo, kibiwengo, umunguli, marombo, kisanga, kirua, kumba, kitimiri.* (Johnson, 1939). The form *goma*, attested by Ferrandi, is recognised in modern Swahili as a secondary variant of *ngoma*, The same occurs in Somali, where *goma* appears to be a reduced or adapted form—likely resulting from phonetic assimilation or the loss of the initial nasal—of *ngoma*, which is regarded as the canonical form.

[109] Cf. Ferrandi, 1903:287: "Il Gasar-Guddà è poco rumoroso e teatrale nelle feste, al contrario del Gubahin, che con gli schiavi non lascia passare solennità alcuna, senza organizzare balli con annessi canti. Dei tamburi, che molti, con parola suaheli, chiamano goma, alti più d'un metro, fatti d'un tronco d'albero vuotato, e ricoperti d'una pelle ben tesa; delle latte da petrolio vuote; gli uni e le altre battuti con due bacchette". (English translation: "The Gasar-Guddà is not very loud or theatrical at parties, unlike the Gubahin, who, together with the slaves, does not let any ceremony pass without organising dances accompanied by songs. The drums, which many refer to by the Swahili word goma, are more than a meter high, made from a hollowed-out tree trunk, and covered with a well-stretched skin; empty oil cans; both of these are struck with two sticks".)

> "Sometimes the women, excited by the dance, succumb to strange fits, and, as if mad, kneel before the drums and embrace them, then fall into a swoon; therefore, it is necessary to remove them from the dance for some time. It is a crisis that almost presents the characteristics of intoxication. When I questioned some of these women, they told me they felt drawn, as if by a superior force, to the sound of the drum, and assured me that the devil must be inside it. From the overall behavior, it was understood to be an erotic sensation."[110] (Ferrandi, 1903:287-288)

In this context, the *goma* transcends its role as a musical instrument, functioning instead as a ritual device that mediates between the physical and the spiritual.

This aligns with the broader Swahili concept of *ngoma*, a polysemic term that encompasses drums, dances, and ritual performances often associated with spirit possession or communal healing. Consistent with the modern entry for *ngoma*, the term has two main meanings. In its concrete sense, it denotes a drum — the percussion instrument typically employed in social, festive, and ritual settings. In its extended sense, *ngoma* refers to any type of dance and music, associated not only with weddings and communal festivities but also with ritual dances intended for spirit exorcism[111] (Johnson, 1939).

This semantic spectrum reveals the deep interrelation between music, dance, and ritual in Swahili-speaking cultures. On the East African coast, *ngoma* does not simply refers to a drum but rather to a total performative event, a "happening" in which music, movement, and belief converge to enact social roles, reinforce identity, and transmit cultural norms (Campbell & Eastman, 1984)[112]. Each type of *ngoma* corresponds to a specific context, such as weddings (*harusi*), religious ceremonies (*maulidi*), or victory celebrations, and is typically associated with a particular social group, differentiated by age or gender (Campbell & Eastman, 1984; Johnson, 1939).

Within this system, some forms of *ngoma* are gender-specific, such as the erotic-educational *chakacha* danced by young women, or the warrior-like *goma* performed by men, often in celebration of military victories or rites of passage into adulthood. As the term itself suggests, the central instrument in these performances is the large *goma* drum, from which the entire event derives its name. This drum is particularly notable for its imposing size and its dominant role within the musical ensemble (Campbell & Eastman, 1984:478-483).

8.3. *Parapanda*

Among the instruments documented by Ferrandi is one referred to by the Swahili term *parapanda*[113], a rudimentary wooden clarinet. Its construction, featuring a straw-covered

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[110] Cf. Ferrandi, 1903:287-288: "Qualche volta le donne, eccitate dal ballo, soggiacciono a crisi strane, e come pazze, s'inginocchiano davanti ai tamburi e li abbracciano, cadendo quindi in deliquio; onde è necessario allontanarle per alcun tempo dal ballo. È una crisi che presenta quasi i caratteri dell'ebbrezza. Interrogata da me qualcuna di queste, mi diceva d'essersi sentita attratta, come da una forza superiore, dal suono del tamburo, e mi assicurava che dentro questo doveva esservi il diavolo. Dall'insieme degli atti si comprendeva trattarsi di sensazione erotica".

[111] Ritual dances for exorcism as reported in Johnson's dictionary: *dungumaro, kigala, kisomali, pungwa, punda, ng'ombe, kisonge, lengwe, kiganda, kinyika, kipemba, kitumbatu, kinyamkera, mali kwa mali, likunda, lewa, kibulushi, mkondo, shehe, kilua, kibisa, kikoikoi, mkodi, kisokota, kaputa, macinyiri, kimwera, kingindo, kibiwengo, umunguli, marombo, kisanga, kirua, kumba, kitimiri.*

[112] Cf. Campbell & Eastman, 1984:467: "Further, it became clear that one of the main foci of northern Kenya's coastal Swahili social life is the ngoma. The word ngoma in the Swahili language commonly refers to 'drum,' but it has an extended meaning that encompasses any event in which music plays a part. An ngoma comes closest to what in recent years has been referred to as a 'happening' in English-a group event in which song, dance, and musical accompaniment commonly take place."

[113] Cf. the dictionary entries **Parapanda,** n. the last trump, the trumpet which shall be sounded on the last day. (Cf. *panda*, n. (4).); **Panda**, n. (— and *ma*-)…(4) a trumpet. *Piga panda*, blow a trumpet. (Johnson, 1939).

mouthpiece and a series of tone holes, suggests a simple yet effective design. A comparable aerophone is mentioned in Grottanelli's account (1976:260), which cites Puccioni's more comprehensive inventory of Somali musical instruments[114]. In his *Etnografia e paletnologia*, Puccioni lists several wind instruments, including a cylindrical wooden trumpet (distinct from the horn trumpet), Triton conch trumpets, and a so-called "clarinet-trumpet". While Puccioni does not assign a specific name to this last instrument, his descriptions closely align with Ferrandi's *parapanda,* suggesting a broader diffusion of this type of aerophone in the Somali region. Ferrandi's account situates the *parapanda* within the festive practices of the Jubba region, where it was performed by the *Gubahin*—a community of former Somali slaves of Bantu descent—as well as by enslaved individuals more broadly. He underscores their prominent role in musical performance, implying that music functioned not merely as entertainment but as a vital means of affirming collective identity and reinforcing social bonds:

> "The Gasar-Guddà is not very noisy and theatrical at parties, while the Gubahin, along with the slaves, does not let any celebration pass without organising dances accompanied by songs."[115] (Ferrandi, 1903: 287)

In this respect, the function of the *parapanda* transcends the purely musical and aligns more closely with the socially integrative role of *ngoma* in Swahili culture. As observed by Campbell and Eastman (1984), *ngoma* performances, linked to age and gender, help reaffirm social cohesion through ritual and symbolic practices. Similarly, the musical expressions of the *Gubahin* functioned not only as entertainment but also as embodied forms of belonging, resistance, and cultural affirmation.

According to Grottanelli, the instrument documented by Ferrandi may correspond to the one described by J. Hornell as a "bell clarinet" (1976:261), and it might also be identified with two similar aerophones housed in the Museo delle Civiltà[116]. These were classified as trumpets (modern Somali *simbar* or *sombar*) and were reportedly collected in the Biyamaal region (Marka). More precisely, Grottanelli contends that the *parapanda* should not be classified as a trumpet or clarinet. Rather, he argues that its morphological and acoustic features align more closely with the family of conical oboes, typically characterised by a double-reed mouthpiece. Based on these structural affinities, Grottanelli posits an Asian origin for the instrument—most plausibly from China, transmitted via the Indonesian archipelago—thus pointing to a wider network of intercultural exchange linking maritime Asia with the East African coast:

> "Despite its coarser construction (where wood is used instead of brass for the bell) and the fewer holes, the Eastern African instrument displays a much more pronounced similarity with its Indonesian counterpart (fig. XI,2), which also appears to have been imported from China."**[117]** (Grottanelli, 1976:262)

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[114] Cf. Grottanelli 1976:260: "Un elenco più completo degli strumenti musicali somali è dato da Puccioni, il quale aggiunge ai precedenti un altro genere di strumenti a fiato (una tromba cilindrica di legno, distinta dalla tromba di corno) e le buccine di Triton, e infine una cosiddetta 'tromba-clarinetto". (English translation: "A more comprehensive list of Somali musical instruments is provided by Puccioni, who adds to the previously mentioned ones another type of wind instrument (a cylindrical wooden trumpet, distinct from the horn trumpet), Triton conch trumpets, and finally a so-called 'clarinet-trumpet'.")

[115] Cf. Ferrandi, 1903:287: "Il Gasar-Guddà è poco rumoroso e teatrale nelle feste, mentre il Gubahin, insieme agli schiavi, non lascia passare alcuna solennità senza organizzare balli accompagnati da canti."

[116] https://www.museodellecivilta.it/collezioni/arti-e-culture-africane/. Originally located in the Museo nazionale preistorico etnografico Luigi Pigorini, a Royal Prehistoric and Ethnographic Museum inaugurated on March 14, 1876, by its founder, Luigi Pigorini (1842-1925), in the centre of Rome, within a wing of the Palazzo del Collegio Romano. Since September 2016, the museum has been amalgamated with four other institutions into the new Museo delle Civiltà.

[117] Cf. Grottanelli, 1976:262: "Nonostante la sua manifattura più rozza (in cui, al posto dell'ottone per la campana, è

While Grottanelli's diffusionist hypothesis warrants serious consideration, it is equally important to foreground the specific cultural context in which Ferrandi encountered the term *parapanda*. The use of Swahili-derived terms—*parapanda* and *goma*—in Ferrandi's account signals the influence of non-Cushitic linguistic and cultural elements in southern Somalia. These lexical borrowings likely reflect longstanding interactions between Bantu-speaking coastal populations and inland communities. As Ferrandi suggests, such instruments and their associated terminologies may have been introduced by enslaved individuals of coastal origin, who transmitted musical practices linked to specific dances such as *modundo* or *mudundu* (Grottanelli 1976:261). Alternatively, these instruments may have circulated inland through coastal trade networks, originating in commercial hubs like Barawa or Marka, where Swahili and Bantu cultural influences were particularly strong.

Further evidence of the instrument's cultural trajectory appears in *Le Mostre coloniali all'Esposizione internazionale di Torino del 1911* (Ministero delle Colonie, 1913), which describes a "wooden trumpet" from the Barawa region identified as *simbar* in Somali and *pandha-pandha* in Bravanese[118]. The latter designation is especially revealing: its presence in the Bravanese lexicon points to a locally rooted terminology, distinct from the Cushitic Somali language.

8.4. *Malachit* and *ambeltà*

Ferrandi documents two additional wind instruments—the *malachit* and the *ambeltà*—which he classifies as elongated, slender trumpets with comparable structures:

> "The malachit and ambeltà are species of long, thin trumpets; the former are made of leather, with an iron pavilion; the latter are made of wood."[119] (Ferrandi, 1903:183)

Although similar in form, the two differ primarily in construction materials: the *malachit* is made of leather and features a metallic bell, while the *ambeltà* is constructed entirely from wood. Ferrandi remarks that both instruments produce a monotone sound, which renders them suitable for particular contexts, such as military ceremonies. In describing a wartime scene, he notes that the monotone sound of the *malachit* and the *ambeltà* lent the scene a somewhat choreographic quality.[120] This remark suggests that these instruments were employed not merely as sonic embellishments but as functional tools for communication and coordination during conflict, due to their loud, penetrating timbres.

From a lexical perspective, the term *malachit* appears to correspond closely to the modern Somali *malkad* (Zorc & Osman, 1993).[121] In his 1987 article *Musical Instruments*[122], Giannattasio describes the *malkad* as a trumpet approximately 70 cm in

utilizzato il legno) e il numero inferiore di fori, lo strumento africano orientale mostra una somiglianza molto più pronunciata con il suo corrispondente indonesiano (fig. XI,2), che sembra anch'esso importato dalla Cina."

[118] Cf. V. - Catalogo della collezione etnografica delle genti di Brava. (Cap. Gustavo Pesenti), subsection: 10. Musica, item no. 149: Tromba di legno, denoted by the terms *simbal* and *pandha-pandha*. (Ministero delle Colonie, 1913:94)

[119] Cf. Ferrandi, 1903:183: "I malachit e gli ambeltà sono specie di trombe lunghe e sottili; le prime sono di cuoio, col padiglione di ferro; le altre sono di legno."

[120] Cf. Ferrandi, 1903:183: "Questa scena guerriera era resa un po' coreografica dal suono monotono dei *malachit* e degli *ambeltà*."

[121] Cf. the dictionary entry **malkad** (-ka) *n1-m* wood-pipe (musical instrument)

[122] Cf. Giannattasio, 1987:83: "**Tromba (*malkad*, *siimbaar*)**. Tromba in legno ricoperto di pelle (ma parte dello strumento può essere in corno animale), difftusa in diverse regioni. soprattutto agricole, della Somalia. Il *malkad* (in alcune zone *siimbaar* ha una funzione prevalentemente cerimoniale, ad es, nella celebrazione di nascite o matrimoni. Suona inoltre, ad Afgoye, nell'importante festa dell'*istun*. 10. lung. cm 70 max. campana cm, 6. Coll. N.N. (Gellb).

length and 6 cm in diameter, made of wood and covered in leather, with the bell section occasionally fashioned from animal horn. He notes that the instrument is used in ceremonial contexts across various Somali regions, particularly in rural and agrarian areas. It is typically employed during weddings and childbirth celebrations, and most prominently during the Istunka (or Istun) festival, a ritualised stick-fighting event held annually in Afgoye.

Giannattasio also documents a comparable instance among the Oromo people in the Chelenko region[123], where a similar instrument—named *malekata* in Oromo, a local variation of the term *malakat*—enjoys widespread use throughout much of Ethiopia. In this context, the instrument is characterised as a trumpet constructed from wood and leather, measuring approximately 52 cm in length, with a bell diameter of about 8 cm.

This usage is also confirmed by the *Dizionario somalo-italiano*, which defines the *malkad* as a woodwind instrument played during the *Istun*[124], and by the *Historical Dictionary of Somalia*:

> "***Malkat***. Also called *siimbar*. A wooden trumpet covered with hide, which may in part be made of horn or metal. It is commonly used in the agrarian areas of the Inter-riverine region. The malkat has a ceremonial function, for example, during birthday celebrations and weddings. In Afgoy, it is played during the Istunka (stick-fighting) festivities." (Historical Dictionary of Somalia, Mohamed Haji Mukhtar, African Historical Dictionary Series, No. 87, The Scarecrow Press, Inc.Lanham, Maryland, and Oxford 2003)

The association between the *malkad* and the Istunka festival—an event imbued with martial symbolism—further reinforces Ferrandi's original observation concerning the instrument's connection to warfare. The Istunka itself consists of ritualised performances characterised by symbolic enactments of combat, typically expressed through choreographed stick-fighting duels.

Linguistically, while Ferrandi's *malachit* can be confidently associated with the Somali *malkad*, the term *ambeltà* appears to lack a direct equivalent in contemporary Somali. However, both terms seem to derive from Amharic[125]. The former may stem from a term such as Amharic *mäläkät* (መለከት)—commonly associated with ceremonial metal trumpets—while the latter clearly corresponds to *əmbilta* (እምቢልታ), which denotes a wooden, flute-like instrument (Vergari, 2025: 92-93).

Notably, no other explorers or ethnographers appear to have documented the *malachit* and *ambeltà* in comparable detail, suggesting their use may have been geographically and culturally circumscribed. The absence of corroborating accounts may indicate either the

MPE inv. n. 95322" (English translation: "Trumpet (*malkad*, *siimbaar*). Wooden trumpet covered with skin (although part of the instrument may be made of animal horn), found in various regions—especially agricultural ones—of Somalia. The *malkad* (in some areas called *siimbaar*) has a primarily ceremonial function, for example, during the celebration of births or weddings. It is also played in Afgoye during the important *Istun* festival. Length: max 70 cm; bell: 6 cm. Coll. N.N. (Gellb). MPE inv. no. 95322").

[123] Cf. Giannattasio, 1987:83: "**Tromba oromo (*malekata*).** Analogo strumento reperito a Chelenko, fra gli oromo Ala. questo tipo di tromba è infatti diffuso in molte parti dell'Etiopia col nome di malakat (in oromo malakata). lung. cm 52 max, campana cm 8. Coll. R. Bricchetti Robecchi (Chelenko ant. 1888)". (English translation: "Oromo trumpet (*malekata*). A similar instrument found in Chelenko, among the Ala Oromo. This type of trumpet is indeed widespread in many parts of Ethiopia under the name *malakat* (in Oromo: *malekata*). Length: 52 cm; bell: 8 cm. Coll. R. Bricchetti Robecchi (Chelenko, before 1888)".

[124] Cf. the dictionary entry **malkad2** *n. f.* (**-do**, *m.*) - Strumento musicale a fiato fatto di legno (usato durante la festa dell'istun. (English translation: "malkad: musical wind instrument made of wood (used during the festival of istun)"). (Agostini et al., 1985)".

[125] ISO 639-3: amh.

marginal status of these instruments in broader Somali musical practice or the specificity of their role within particular ritual or martial contexts.

8.5. *Ghes*

Always associated with the military sphere, a particular class of musical instruments is introduced by Ferrandi in Chapter III, within the section devoted to social life. Here, he describes the ceremonial investiture of high-ranking individuals—referred to as "Notables" (*Gob*)—as well as depictions of raids and armed conflicts. Among the objects associated with these contexts, Ferrandi includes wind instruments, which he collectively refers to as *ghes* (modern Somali *gees*[126]), noting their use in both martial and civil domains:

> "The hordes also possess horns (ghes) made of wood or of antelope horn, specifically from the godri or béhit, which produce a sound similar to that of a metal trumpet or a large seashell when a hole is properly made and air is blown into it: a deep sound that can be heard from a great distance. During my fortunate retreat from Mansur in 1892, while I was on the high cliffs, I could hear the sound of the enemy searching for me more than two miles down in the low Ganana Valley. The sound of these horns is not used solely for warfare, but also by shepherds and the general populace: in Lugh, for example, when it is necessary to gather the Gubahin, their leader, who keeps the shell in his custody, gives the agreed signals, and they rush to work or to whatever tasks they are called to"[127] (Ferrandi 1903: 275)

According to Ferrandi's account, the *ghes*[128] could be made either of wood or of antelope horn. In particular, the explorer refers to two distinct species of antelope: *behit* and *godri*. The term *godri* appears in modern Somali in a variety of lexical forms—*godir*, *godir-ca*, and *goodir*—all of which are associated with specific species of antelope, most notably the kudu (*Strepsiceros kudu*)[129]. The term *behit*, as employed by Ferrandi, is consistently identified in Somali lexicons as referring to the oryx, another prominent species of antelope native to the region[130].

These instruments fulfilled multiple functions, serving not only in military contexts but also in pastoral and communal settings. They were used by shepherds and community leaders to summon individuals for work or other collective tasks. Ferrandi observes that

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[126] Cf. the dictionary entry **gees2** (-ka) *n1-m* horn (Zorc & Osman, 1993).

[127] Cf. Ferrandi 1903:275: "Le orde hanno pure dei corni (*ghes*) di legno o di corna d'antilope godri o béhit, che danno un suono come di tromba metallica o d'una grossa conchiglia marina, quando, praticatovi in modo acconcio un foro, vi si soffia dentro: suono cupo, che s'ode assai di lontano; ed io, nella fortunosa ritirata da Mansur nel 1892, trovandomi sulle alte coste, potei sentire il suono del nemico che mi ricercava, a più di due miglia giù nella bassa valle del Ganana. Il suono di questi corni non serve solo per uso di guerra, ma anche per i pastori e per le genti in generale: a Lugh, quando si ha bisogno di radunare i Gubahin, il loro capo, che ha in custodia la conchiglia, fa dare i segnali convenuti, ed essi accorrono sia al lavoro, sia alle altre bisogne cui sono chiamati".

[128] Cf. the dictionary entries **ges,** *m. n*., horn, antler. —**ki**; —**as** or **geso** (*plur.*). (de Larajasse, 1897); **Ghes-ea:** *s. m*. Corna, i pugnali delle corna del cervo (*da* Palermo, 1915); **gees1** *n. m.* (**-so**, *m.*) **- 1**. Corno. **2.** Antenna (di alcuni artropodi). **3.** Estremità" (Agostini et al., 1985); corne**,** *n. f.* Gees (Geesaha lo'da, riyaha, baciidka iwm) (Maxamed Cabdi Maxamed, 1985); **GAAS.** Horn of buffalo or deer, widely used in the **Inter-riverine region** for ritual and ceremonial occasions instead of a trumpet. *Gaas* is also a military term for regiment" (Mohamed Haji Mukhtar, 2003); **horn** /horn/ (n) gaas (hoola gaasjho). 2. aalyt muusik oo ly weeriyaw. 3. hoonky baaburky. (Mukhtar & Omar Moalim, 2007).

[129] Cf. the dictionary entries **goodir1** (-ka) *n2-m-col* male kudu (antelope) Cf: adeeryo - gaadeeryo (Zorc & Osman, 1993); **godir**, *m. n*., male koodoo antelope (*Strepsiceros kudu*).**—ki.** (de Larajasse, 1897); **Godir-ca** *s. m.* Il cervo (*strepsiceros kudu*), **aderjo-da**, la femmina. (Dizionario della lingua somala, Da Palermo, 1915); **goodir** *n. m.***- 1.** Cudu. (Dizionario somalo-italiano, curatori; Agostini et al., 1985).

[130] Cf. for example: **b'e'id**, *m.n.,* antelope, oryx.—**ki** (s. **b'i'id**). (de Larajasse, 1897); **Beid-ca** *s. f.* L'orige (specie di cervo) (da Palermo, 1915); **biciid** *n. m. co.* - Orice. (Agostini et al., 1985).

when the *ghes* was made from animal horn, it produced a deep, resonant sound reminiscent of a metal trumpet or a large marine conch—especially when a hole was skilfully drilled and air blown into it. This powerful acoustic quality made the *ghes* an effective tool for long-distance communication, whether during wartime or in the coordination of everyday pastoral activities.

This dual function—military and civil—is further corroborated by the testimony of other colonial observers. For example, Vannutelli and Citerni (1899) report the use of horns to signal both assembly and combat operations during intertribal conflicts:

> "Upon reaching the village of Didiglòle, we see many hundreds of Somalis gathered and hear the sound of the horns repeating the signals for assembly and attack."[131] (Vannutelli & Citerni, 1899:66)

8.6. *Cori*

In Chapter IV, dedicated to means of transport, and specifically in the section dedicated to camels, Ferrandi introduces an additional musical instrument of considerable importance within pastoralism and trade: the *cori* (modern Somali *koor*[132]).

> "In a country like this, largely flat and covered in dense bush, visibility is very limited, and even more so due to the camel's skin mimetism, whose colour easily blends in with the ground, tree trunks, or dust-covered leaves. For this reason, they wear a kind of wooden bell called *cori*, crafted to a point with a knife or rasp, made from a hollowed-out piece of wood. The sound of the *cori*, although not loud, can be heard from very far away; thus, at night—especially in areas dangerous due to raiders—it is common to stuff the crude bell with grass so that it does not ring and alert the enemy."[133] (Ferrandi, 1903:341)

This refers to a wooden bell hung around the necks of camels, serving a crucial role in managing these animals during pastoral activities. According to Ferrandi, the *cori* is crafted by carving wood with a knife or rasp and functions to make camels audible in low-visibility environments characterised by dense vegetation. The bell helps prevent the animals from becoming lost or blending into their surroundings, where their colouration might easily merge with the terrain or natural elements. While the *cori* was vital for safety, especially at night in areas prone to predators, Ferrandi notes a particular strategy to mitigate risk: the bell was sometimes filled with grass to muffle or silence its ringing, preventing unwanted attention from potential threats.

Later accounts largely corroborate Ferrandi's description while providing more nuanced details. Giannattasio (1987:80), for example, categorises the bell as a musical instrument, emphasising its role as a "sonorous mark". Unlike Ferrandi, who focused primarily on practical aspects such as visibility and safety, Giannattasio highlights the auditory dimension, describing the bell as varying in size according to the type of camel

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[131] Cf. Vannutelli & Citerni, 1899:66: "Giunti presso il villaggio Didiglòle vediamo raccolte molte centinaia di Somali, e udiamo il suon dei corni ripetere i segnali di riunione e d'attacco".

[132] Cf. the dictionary entries **koor2** (-ta) *n1-f* camel ~ animal bell Cf: dawan (Zorc & Osman, 1993); **koor2** *n. f.* (**-ro**, *m.*) - Campanaccio, segno distintivo di onta (Agostini et al., 1985); cloche, n. f. cloche à chameaux. Dawan (gambaleelle). *Koor.* (Maxamed, C. M., 1985); **bell** /bel/ (n) koor (gambaleel). (Mukhtar and Omar, 2007).

[133] Cf. Ferrandi, 1903:341: "In paese come questo, in gran parte pianeggiante e denso di boscaglia, la visibilità è molto limitata, e lo è più ancora per quel mimismo della pelle del cammello il cui colore si confonde facilmente col terreno o con tronchi d'albero o con foglie coperte di polvere. Per questo essi portano appesa una specie di campana di legno detta cori lavoro fatto a punta di coltello o di raspa, di un pezzo di legno scavato. Il suono del cori, benché poco rumoroso, si sente molto lontano; onde la notte, massime nei luoghi pericolosi per le scorrerie dei predoni, s'usa riempire d'erba la rozza campanella, perchè non suoni e non metta così sull'avviso il nemico.".

and featuring a double clapper that produces a distinctive sound. This sound serves as a locator for the animals across vast and challenging landscapes, with tonal variations dependent on the bell's size[134].

The use of wooden camel bells was already widespread during the colonial period. This is evidenced in the ethnographic section of *Le Mostre coloniali all'Esposizione internazionale di Torino del 1911* (Ministero delle Colonie, 1913), which mentions wooden bells (*cor ghel*) used by herders in the Mogadishu region[135]. This attests to the bell's integral role in pastoral traditions and the relationship between nomadic communities and their livestock[136].

9. Analytical Summary: Linguistic Complexity in Early Colonial Horn of Africa

In this section, we present a summary table (Table 2) that synthesises the data discussed in the preceding sections. For each term, the table includes the following fields: the definition, the origin (certain or proposed), the corresponding modern Somali form, when available, and other variants attested in related languages. Although it represents only a subset of all the terms attested in Ferrandi's corpus—and any attribution to specific languages or dialects must remain tentative—this preliminary overview highlights the remarkable linguistic diversity of the Horn of Africa, particularly in the Luuq region during Ferrandi's time. Terms from several languages and dialects—including Somali (both Standard and Maay varieties), Oromo, Swahili, Amharic, and Harari—are clearly attested.

[134] Cf. Giannatasio, 1987:80: "Campana di legno (koor). Campana in legno a doppio battaglio che i pastori mettono al collo dei cammelli, costruita in una varietà di taglie, e conseguentemente di toni, in funzione dei diversi tipi di cammello. Queste sue caratteristiche di 'marchio sonoro' ne giustificano la classificazione fra gli strumenti musicali." (English translation: "Wooden bell (koor). A double-clapper wooden bell that herders hang around the necks of camels. It is made in a variety of sizes—and consequently tones—depending on the type of camel. These features as a "sound marker" justify its classification as a musical instrument.").

[135] Cf. I. - Collezione etnografica della regione di Mogadiscio. (Cap. Gustavo Pesenti), subsection: Pastorizia., item no. 14: Campanaccio di legno per cammello, denoted by term *Cor ghel*. (Ministero delle Colonie, 1913:77)

[136] Several examples of the *cori* are preserved in both national and international museum collections. Notably, one such specimen—meticulously crafted by Somali artisans—is housed in the British Museum (https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_Af1928-0509-86).
Complementing Ferrandi's earlier observations, the account from the Reading Museum (http://collections.readingmuseum.org.uk/index.asp?page=record&mwsquery=%7Btotopic%7D=%7BWorld%20Collection:%20Unusual%20Materials%7D&filename=REDMG&hitsStart=20) further enriches our understanding of the wooden camel bell's practical and cultural significance. The North African example held there, made of acacia wood and suspended by a cord, features an internal cavity with clappers that emit sound through two openings at the top—an intricate structural detail not explicitly highlighted in earlier sources.

Ferrandi's Term	Definition	Origin	Modern Standard Somali	Other Variants
jembe	Small hoe to shallow furrows	Swahili: *jembe*	*yaambo*	Maay: *yemmby*
acaf	Wooden hoe to till the soil	Est Oromo: *akaafa*	*cagaf* (?)[137]	Amharic: *akafa* East Oromo: *akaafa* Harari: *ḥakŌfa* Oromo: *acŌf*-a West Oromo: *akaafaa*
melindi gorgus	Harvesting knife	unknown	unknown	unknown
hell	Water source / well	Somali	*ceel*	Borana: *eela-i* Harari: *'ela* Maay: *eel*
uar	Rainwater catchment basin	Somali	*war*	Maay: *war*
bakar	Barrel-shaped grain storage	Somali	*bakaar*	—[138]
got	Grain storage	Somali	*god*	Harari: *gädu* Maay: *god/gof*
fandal	Wooden spoon	Somali	*fandhaal*	—
hero	Hollow wooden vessel	Somali/Maay: *xeero*	*xeedho*	—
corilaca	Wooden ladle for mixing porridge	Somali: compound word, *cori* + *laqa*	*qori* "wood" *laaqa* "the one who mixes"	—
mende (malinde)	Small knife	Somali	*mindi*	—
moi (moh)	Wooden mortar	Somali	*moy/moye*	—
madag (madeg)	Traditional fire-making tool	Somali	*madag*	—
aiat	Percussion instrument consisting of two wooden tablets	Somali (?)	*xayaad* (?)	—
goma	Tall wooden drum with animal skin head	Swahili: ngoma	*goma*	—
parapanda	Wooden clarinet	Swahili: *parapanda*	—	Bravanese: *pandha-pandha*

[137] This symbol "(?)" indicates that the information carries a certain degree of uncertainty, based onthe sources analysed.
[138] This symbol "—" indicates that the information is not attested based on the sources analysed and the research conducted.

malachit	Leather trumpet with metal bell	Somali	*malkad*	Amharic: *mäläkät* (መለከት)
ambeltà	Wooden trumpet	unknown	—	Amharic: *əmbilta* (እምቢልታ)
ghes	Horn made of wood or antelope horn	Somali	*gees*	—
behit	The kudu antilope (*Strepsiceros kudu*)	Somali	*biciid*	—
godri	The oryx antilope	Somali	*bicgodir* *godir-ca* *goodiriid*	—
cori	Camel wooden bell	Somali	*koor*	—

Table 2. Summary of Ferrandi's lexical entries with definitions and probable linguistic origins

10. Conclusions

This preliminary analysis of Ugo Ferrandi's linguistic notes reveals the richness and complexity of a corpus that remains largely unexplored in scholarly research. Beyond their ethnographic and historical value, Ferrandi's notebooks provide rare lexical insights into the material culture and linguistic diversity of southern Somalia at the turn of the twentieth century. Despite the limitations inherent in his methodology—most notably his lack of phonetic training and the inconsistencies of his orthography—his records offer a unique window onto local terminologies prior to standardisation and external codification.

By examining terms related to agriculture, cooking, and music, this study has shown how even fragmentary and unsystematic lexical documentation can shed light on the socio-technical practices of the time and deepen our understanding of the region's intangible heritage. Ferrandi's work also highlights the layered and hybrid nature of linguistic identity in colonial settings, where dialectal, ethnic, and social boundaries often overlapped and defied simplistic classification.

As the broader project advances toward the compilation of a comprehensive glossary, future research will aim to refine the phonological analysis of the terms, verify their usage across dialects, and situate them within wider lexicographic and ethnolinguistic traditions. In doing so, Ferrandi's notes may be repositioned not merely as relics of a colonial past, but as dynamic documents that can still contribute to contemporary understandings of Somali language and culture.

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Appendix

Ugo Ferrandi's Glossary

Abbreviations and Symbols

adj.	Adjective
cf.	Compare
f.	Feminine
l	Lughiano (language, according to U.F.'s classification)
m.	Masculine
n.	Noun
ND	Not Determined (when information cannot be provided or is unavailable)
p.	Page
pp.	Pages
r	Rahanuin (language, according to U.F.'s classification)
s	Somali (language, according to U.F.'s classification)
som	Somali (contemporary language)
swa	Swahili (language)
U.F.	Ugo Ferrandi
unc.	Unclassified (U. F. does not provide language information)

Glossary Entries

acaf (unc.), (som *cagaf*, n. m.), <AGRICULTURAL TOOL>: small, heavy wooden hoe with a short handle, used by Galla (Oromo) communities to dig furrows approximately 12 cm deep, particularly suited for sowing. It differs from the hoe known as *jembe*, which has distinct structural features. (p. 26). *Cf. jembe*

aiat (*l*), (som *xayaad*, n. m.), <MUSICAL INSTRUMENT>: percussion instrument used in orchestral contexts, shaped like a parallelepiped and consisting of two wooden boards struck together in rhythmic cadence. It is employed particularly during celebrations involving the active participation of the *Gubahin* and enslaved individuals, accompanied by dance and song. (p. 287).

ambeltà (unc.), (som ND), <MUSICAL INSTRUMENT>: long, thin wooden trumpet. (p. 183)

bacar (*r*), (som *bakaar,* n. f.), <AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE>: barrel-shaped pit or hole dug in the ground, unlined, for storing unhusked cobs. Typically, 2–2.5 metres deep and up to 2 metres in diameter. Before inserting new cobs, a fire is sometimes lit inside to dry and purify the space or kill insects. Placed at field edges, marked with a stick, or in courtyards and sheds (where they usually contain shelled grain). To prevent rainwater penetration, a mound of dirt is placed over the closure. (pp. 28–29). Cf. *silò*, *got*.

baccarà (*l*), (som *bakaar*, n. f.), <AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE>: tank for storing sacks of wheat (*dura*) for provisioning purposes. (p. 119)

cori (*s*), (som *koor*, n. f.), <MUSICAL INSTRUMENT>: bell hung around the neck of camels to make them more visible. Made of wood carved using a knife tip or rasp, with two small sticks inside. Its sound, though not very loud, carries over long distances. At

night, near dangerous locations, it is usually filled with grass to silence it and avoid alerting enemies. (p. 341)

corilaca (*l*), (som *qori* n. m.; *laaqa* adj.), <COOKING TOOL>: wooden ladle used in the preparation of polenta, known as *asida* or *sor* (p. 250). Cf. *sor, asida*.

fandal (*l*), (som *fandhaal,* n. m.), <COOKING TOOL>: wooden spoon used in the kitchen by the inhabitants of Luuq and the Raxanweyn, typically for stirring or mixing unhusked coffee beans (*bun*) as they are fried in butter in dedicated pans or pots. Also used to remove some of the butter during the recitation of the *Fatah*, the first surah of the Koran, when it is customary to oil the face and hands. (p. 251). *Cf. bun*.

ghes (*l*), (som *gees*, n. m.), <MUSICAL INSTRUMENT>: wooden horn producing a deep sound, similar to that of a metal trumpet or a large seashell blown through a drilled hole. Used in warfare by soldiers, and more generally by shepherds or tribal leaders, to summon the *Gubahin*. (p. 275)

goma (*swa*), (swa *goma n., ngoma* n.; som ND), <MUSICAL INSTRUMENT>: tall wooden drum made from a hollowed-out tree trunk and covered with taut skin. Sound is produced by striking the skin with two wooden sticks. Used during festivals in which the *Gubahin* actively participate, alongside enslaved individuals, with dance and singing performed by the orchestral players. In some dances, the drum's sound can induce a state of trance in women. Believed to possess such potent power that it is thought to hide the devil. (pp. 275, 287–288)

got (*r*), (som *god,* n. m.), <AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE>. *Cf. bacar, silò*

hell (*s, l*), (som *ceel*, n. m.), <AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE>: water well, natural or dug, probably six to seven metres deep, often located along caravan routes or near settlements. Mentioned in various locations such as Hell Bar, Hell Uac, and Hell Dera. Used for drinking water or irrigation. (pp. 252, 268–269, 275, 324, 326, 328, 366–367).

hero (*s, r*), (som *xeero* n. f., *xeedho* n. f.), <COOKING TOOL>: plate used to serve coffee during a pre-wedding banquet celebrated by the groom together with the village chief (*gherad* or *daffalan*) and dignitaries (*Gasar-Guddà* and *Gubahin*). Notables receive coffee served in these dishes – one for the *Gubahin* and two for the *Gasar-Guddà* – and consume it immediately during the feast. Unlike the *uadad* (priest officiating the marriage), who receives coffee in a cup called *manuna* to enjoy later, the notables drink it directly from the *hero*. (pp. 254–255). *Cf. manuna*

jembe (*swa*), (swa *jembee* n.; som *yaambo*, n. f.), <AGRICULTURAL TOOL>: small hoe used by the Raxanweyn, particularly by enslaved individuals, consisting of an isosceles triangle-shaped iron blade attached to a wooden handle about one metre long, ending with a large head to aid pressing the tool into the ground. The apex of the blade is elongated and pointed, resembling a truncated nail; the blade measures approximately 20 cm long and 12 cm wide at its widest point. Imported from the coast, especially Marka, it is used to make shallow furrows called *lun*, 60 cm apart, in preparation for sowing *dura*, usually after the first rain. Differs from the *acaf*, which has distinct structural features. (pp. 26–27). *Cf. acaf, lun, dura*

madag (unc.), (som *madag*, n. f.), <COOKING TOOL>: *Cf. madegg*

madegg (*l*), (som *madag*, n. f.), <COOKING TOOL>: tool used to produce fire by friction, consisting of two rounded wooden sticks. Used particularly where burning embers are unavailable. (pp. 55, 224). *Cf. madag*

malachit (unc.), (som *malkad*, n. f.), <MUSICAL INSTRUMENT>: long, thin trumpet made of leather, featuring an iron bell and capable of producing a monotonous sound. Also used in warfare. (p. 183)

malinde (*l*), (som *malindi*, n. f.), <COOKING TOOL>; <WEAPON>: *Cf. mende*

melindi gorgus (*r*) (som ND), <AGRICULTURAL TOOL>: knife used in some areas to detach the corn cob (*lan* or *saval*) from the plant during harvesting. (p. 28). *Cf. mende*

mende (*l*), (som *mindi*, n. f.), <COOKING TOOL>; <WEAPON>: a small knife. *Cf. malinde*

moh (*l*), (som *mooye*, n. m.), <COOKING TOOL>: *Cf. moi*

moi (*l*), (som *mooye*, n. m.), <COOKING TOOL>: cooking tool or wooden mortar used by village women to pound *dura* (a type of grain) into flour. Mortars are hollowed-out tree trunks about 30 cm in diameter and 0.5 m high. Linked to a popular belief: if left outside during rain with water inside, they would attract lightning. Therefore, during storms, they are moved indoors. (pp. 122–124, 299). *Cf. moh, dura*

parapanda (*swa*), (swa *parapanda*, n.; som ND), <MUSICAL INSTRUMENT>: primitive wooden clarinet with a straw-covered mouthpiece and finger holes for playing notes. Referred to by a Swahili term by enslaved individuals. Sometimes used during celebrations where the *Gubahin* actively participate with slaves, organising dances and singing accompanied by orchestra players. (p. 183)

silò (*r*), (som ND), <AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE >: *Cf. bacar, got*

uar (*s*), (som *war*, n. f.), <AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE >: artificial rainwater tank of variable shape, often elongated oval, 50–60 m long and up to 20 m wide. Created from natural depressions in the ground, surrounded by 4–5 m high dirt banks following the depression's shape, with a channel to collect rainwater. Additional water is gathered by converging a small ditch at the tank's mouth. Found in cultivated areas and near rivers, it is unsuitable for irrigation or livestock, but provides domestic water for several villages. (pp. 31, 39–43).