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**The pre-Roman elements of the Sardinian lexicon**  
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## 6 Culture and economy

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This chapter contains words referring to human activity. This includes agricultural terms (§ 6.1), and more general material and cultural concepts (§ 6.2).

### 6.1 Agriculture

#### 6.1.1 Bran

Reconstruction	Forms
1: * <i>ʒelá(C)u</i>	DES (II: 541): <i>teláu</i> (1: Luras, 2: Monti, 3: Berchidda, 4: Oschiri, 6: Pattada), <i>taláu</i> (7: Buddusò) ‘bran’
2: * <i>ʒála(C)u</i>	DES (II: 541): <i>ʒálu</i> (5: Posada, 8: Siniscola, 9: Orosei, 10: Dorgali) ‘id.’

In this word, we find two different stress patterns. One has the stress on the penultimate syllable (type 1), the other on the antepenultimate (type 2). Wagner (DES II: 541) proposes a pre-Roman origin for this word, which is plausible in light of initial \**ʒ*- and the impossibility to derive this word from a Latin source. For the ending *-au*, we need to assume the loss of an original intervocalic consonant, as Lat. *-au-* regularly yields *-a-* in Sardinian (Wagner 1941a: 14). Type 2 most likely represents the original stress pattern, as there are several examples of final *-au* secondarily receiving the stress by analogy to other words ending in stressed *-áu*; e.g. Log. *kannáu* < *kánnau* (both are attested) < Lat. *cannabu* < *cannabis* (Wagner 1941a: 2–3). Wagner (1941a: 115; DES II:541) tentatively considers a link between these Sardinian forms, and Bq. *zalaus* ‘tanbark’, *za(h)i* ‘bran’ and *zalki* ‘dandruff’.<sup>215</sup> These forms are derived from a root \**zal-* (Santano Moreno 2000: 168), or \**azal-* (Lakarra et al. 2019: 57–59) ‘skin, bark, surface’. The only Basque word directly comparable to the Sardinian forms is *zalaus* ‘tanbark’, which is probably a compound of *azal* ‘skin’ and *hauts* ‘dust’ (Lakarra et al. 2019: 58). In my view, the formal and semantic discrepancy between the Sardinian and the Basque forms is too great to confidently posit a shared origin.

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<sup>215</sup> I have not been able to verify Bq. *zalaus*. In EH (638) ‘dandruff’ is given as *zalgi*, rather than *zalki*. This does not influence the argument however.

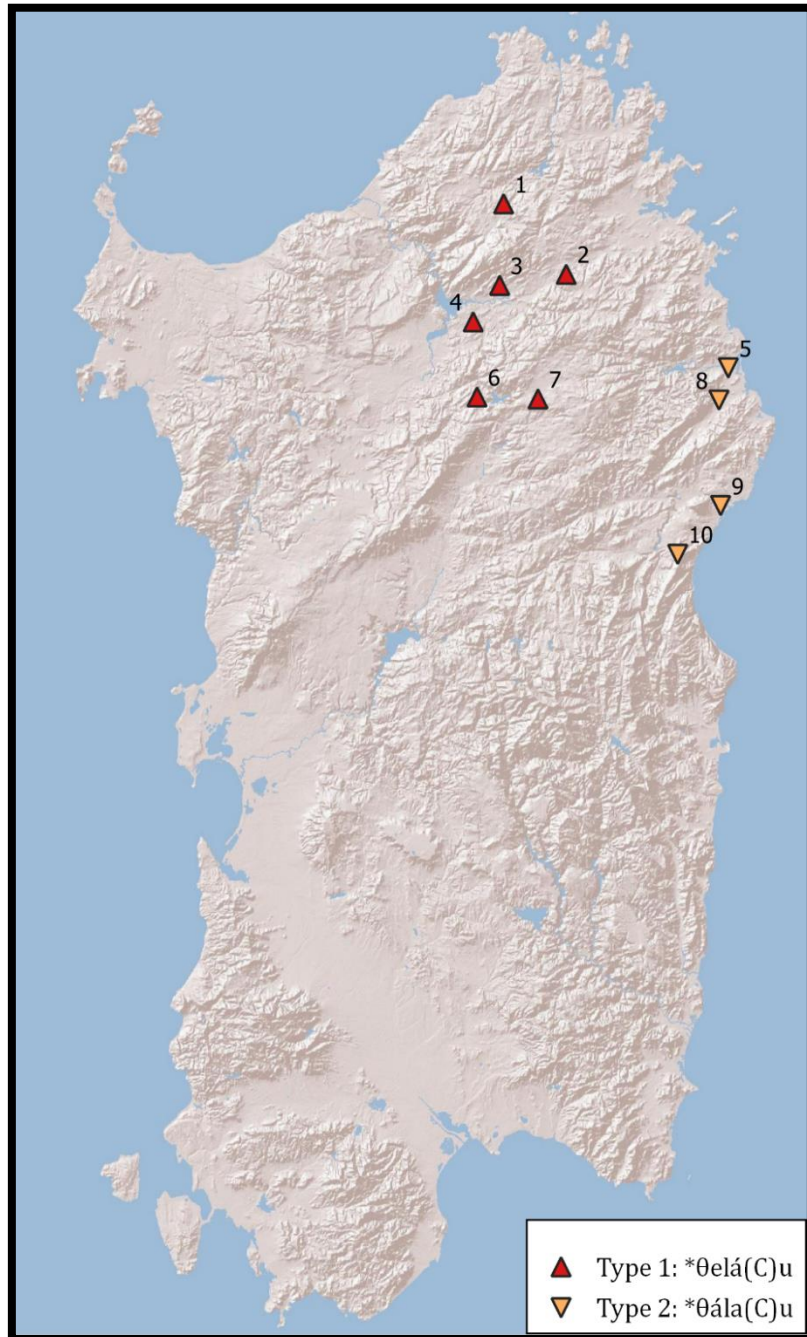


Figure 6.1.1: Bran

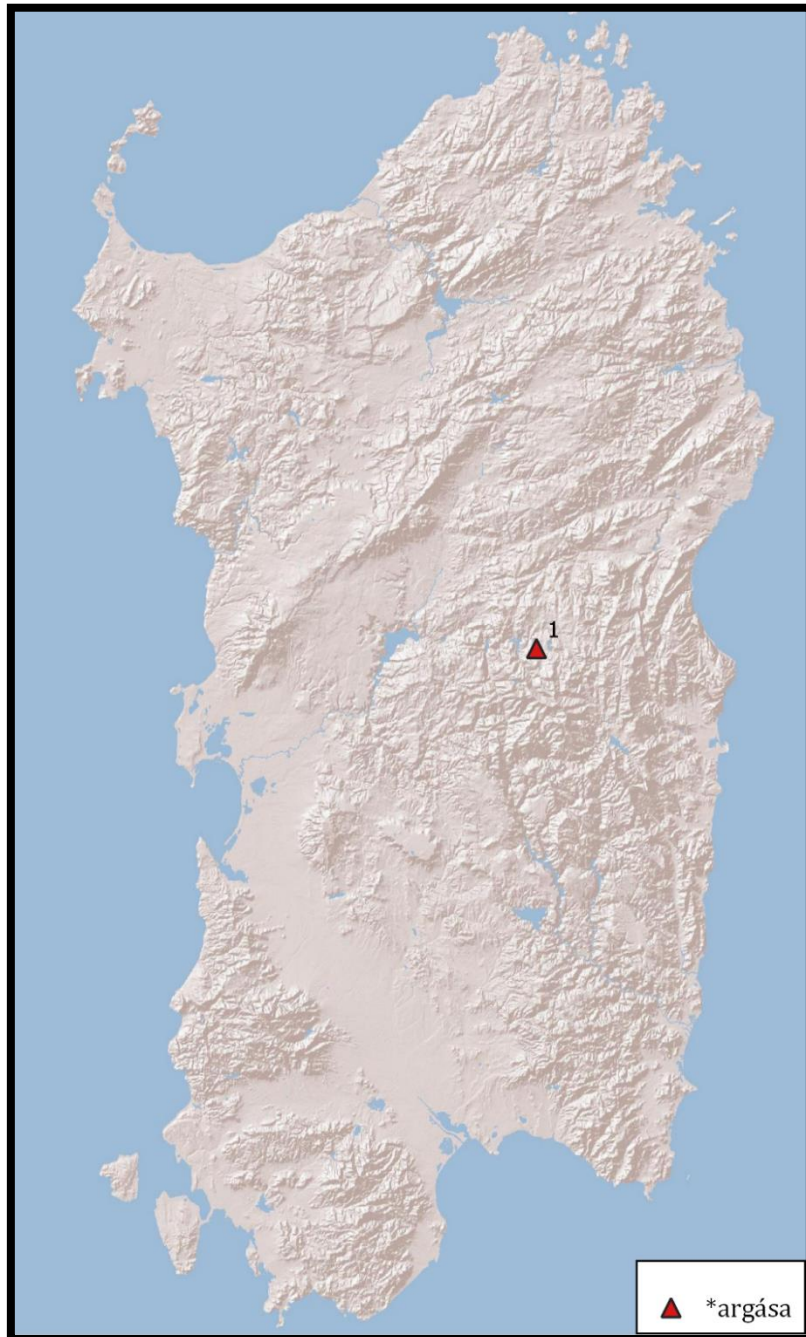


Figure 6.1.2: Goat or sheep that lost its young

## 6.1.2 Goat or sheep that lost its young

Reconstruction	Forms
* <i>argása</i>	DES (I: 110): <i>argáša</i> (1: Fonni) <sup>216</sup> ‘goat or sheep that has lost its young’; deriv.: <i>argašare</i> (1: Fonni) ‘remove the young from goats or sheep’

This word is only attested in Fonni. Wagner (DES I: 110) proposes a pre-Roman origin. On the basis of a single occurrence this is hard to substantiate however. Similar in form and meaning are forms like *argágǵu* ‘one-year old goat that has not had young yet’ (Urzulei), *argárǵu* ‘id.’ (Desulo), but these go back to Lat. *gregārius* ‘of the flock’ (DES I: 589). This is impossible for *argáša* though, as Lat. *gregārius* is reflected in Fonni as *grayárǵu*, -a ‘one year old goat’ (DES I: 589).

## 6.1.3 Herd

Reconstruction	Forms
1: * <i>grústu</i>	DES (I: 595): <i>grústu</i> (Nuor., 4: Fonni, 5: Desulo), <i>rustólu</i> (1: Bitti), <i>vrústu</i> (3: Orani) ‘herd (of mouflons, goats, sheep, pigs); group (of people)’
2: * <i>grústi(C)u</i>	DES (I: 595): <i>grústju</i> (2: Nuoro) ‘id.’
3: * <i>rustía</i>	Casu (2011: s.v. <i>rustia</i> ): <i>rustia</i> (Log.) ‘group of children, especially poor ones’

The forms in type 1 can all be derived from *grústu*, with a suffix *-ólu* in Bitti (1), and with replacement of initial *g-* with *v-* in Orani (3) due to reanalysis of the onset in lenited contexts (cf. Wagner 1941a: 207). The ending *-ju* in type 2 is the past participle suffix. Wagner (DES I: 595) considers these forms to be of “probable pre-Roman” origin. The evidence for this is mainly the lack of an etymology. Because of the semantic distance, I am not convinced by his connection of this word to *kurústa*, *rústa* ‘bed bug, vermin, fox etc.’ (§ 4.1.3). The word *rustia* ‘group of children, especially poor ones’, mentioned by Casu (2011) may perhaps rather be a derivation of *rústa* in the sense ‘vermin’ (§ 4.1.3).

<sup>216</sup> This form is actually cited in DES as *argáša*, in which *-š-* would be an alveolar sibilant (DES I: 33). However, with the exception of this specific lemma, Wagner consistently uses *-š-* instead of *-ś-* to represent the alveolar realization of sibilants in Fonni.

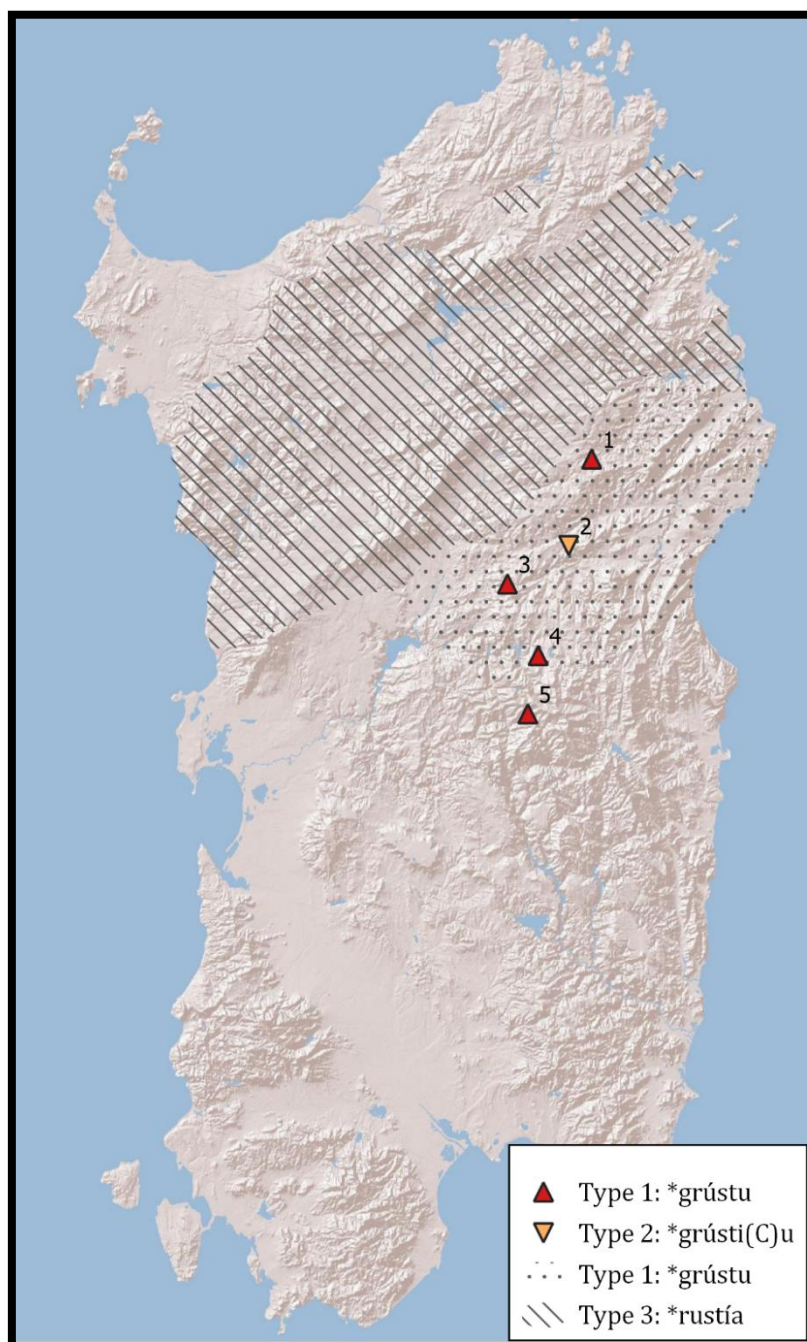


Figure 6.1.3: Herd

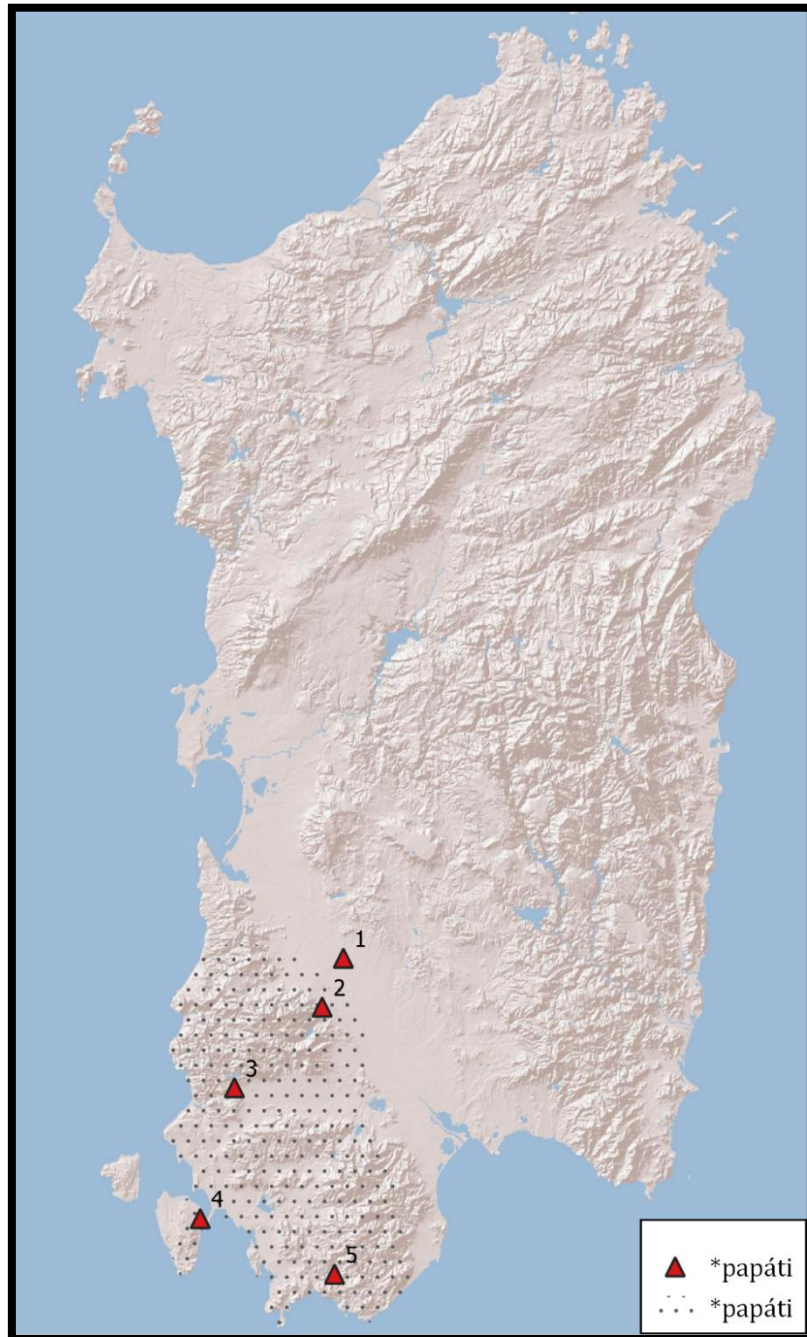


Figure 6.1.4: Hornless (of goats)

## 6.1.4 Hornless (of goats)

Reconstruction	Forms
* <i>papáti</i>	DES (II: 200): <i>paβáða</i> (1: San Gavino Monreale), <i>paβáði</i> (Sulcis reg., Iglesias reg., 2: Villacidro, 4: Teulada), <i>paβári</i> (3: Iglesias, 4: Sant'Antioco) 'hornless (of goats)'

This adjective, that is used for hornless goats, is found in the Sulcis and Iglesias regions in the southwest of Sardinia. The ending *-i* in *paβáði* etc. could go back either to original *\*-i* or *\*-e*. It is uncertain whether the final *-a* in *paβáða* (1: San Gavino Monreale) is secondary due to its reinterpretation as a feminine participle, or whether the ending *-i* was added secondarily (cf. Wagner 1941a: 218–219).

Wagner (DES II: 200) rightly rejects Serra's (1954b: 219) proposed derivation from *\*vacativus* on formal grounds. Moreover, the actual reflex of *\*vacativus* is attested as *bayađú* 'bachelor(ette), unmarried'. Serra (1954b: 219) cites the forms *baβáđia*, *baβađía*, but Wagner (DES II: 200) questions their reality, and they are not included in Puđu (2023) either.

As such, the forms discussed are of unknown origin, and seem to go back to *\*papate/i*. The matter is complicated by the fact that similar formations are found in southernmost Calabria, e.g. Calab. [*crapa*] *papáttsa* (Cataforio, Melito di Porto Salvo, San Pantaleone), Greco-Calab. *popáttsa* (Ghorio di Roghudi), Abruzz. [*la krápa*] *kəkóćća*, *pəkóttsa* (Scanno) etc. 'hornless' (AIS 1082; Rohlf's 1932: 120). It is difficult to establish the relationship between the Sardinian and the southern Italian forms, as the latter appear to lack any cognates elsewhere. If the Sardinian and south Italian forms are to be connected, they perhaps share a pre-Roman origin. Alternatively, one wonders whether we could be dealing with independent expressive formations.

## 6.1.5 Sheep (old, skinny)

Reconstruction	Forms
1: <i>*čúrra</i>	DES (II: 602): <i>tsúrra</i> (Marghine reg., Planargia reg., 1: Padria), <i>čúrra</i> (2: Fonni), <i>giurrítta</i> <sup>217</sup> (Log.) 'old, skinny sheep'

<sup>217</sup> In Spano's handwritten notes (*non vidi*) on his own dictionary (i.e. Spano 1851).

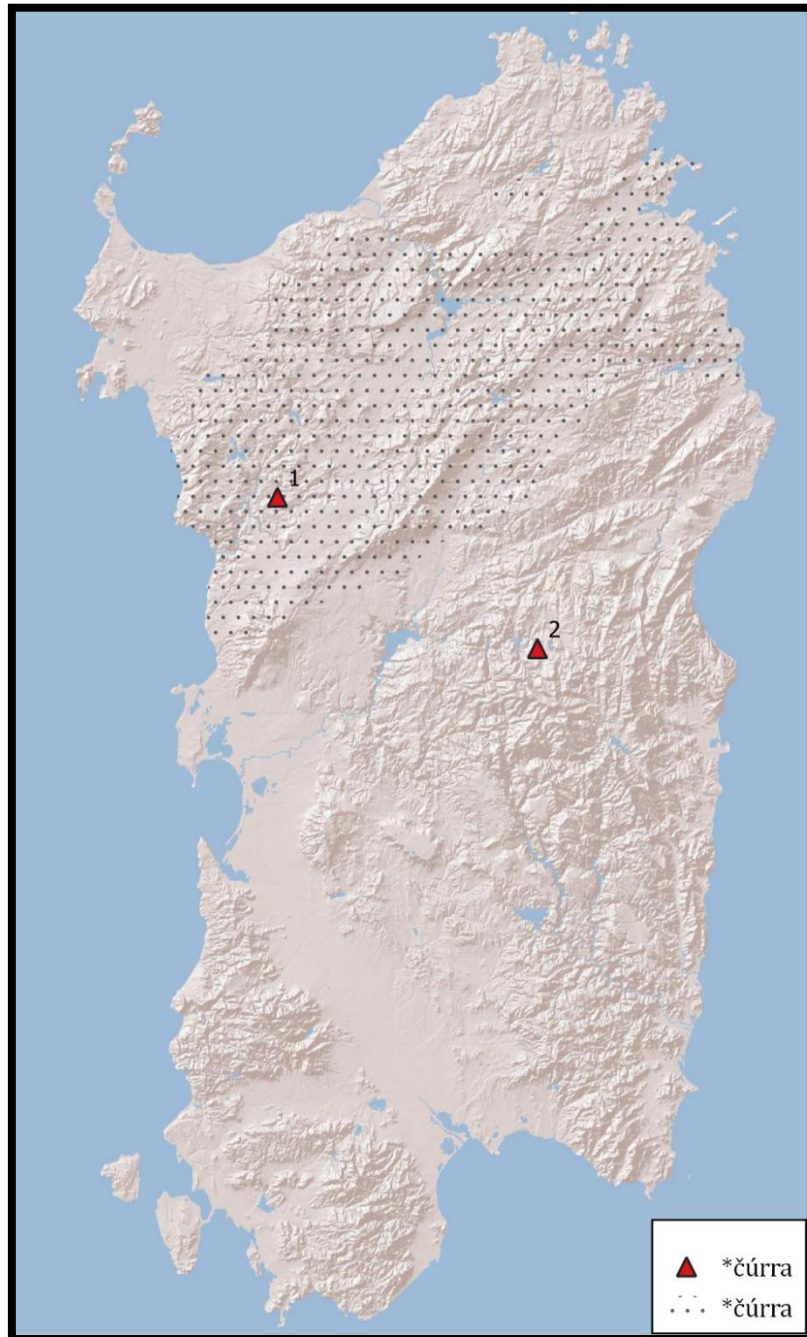


Figure 6.1.5: Old, skinny sheep

These Sardinian forms contain initial *ts-* and *č-*, which do not have a clear inherited source in the Logudorese dialects in which this word is found (§ 8.1.4). Jud (1937: 312) compares Trent. *ciorla* ‘skinny cow’, Lomb. *ciorla* (Como) ‘cow of little value’, Calab. *zurra* ‘hermaphrodite goat’. Hubschmid (1950c: 14–15) adds Lad. *čorla* ‘skinny cow’ (Val di Fassa), Abruz., Nap., North Pugl. *tsurrə* ‘he-goat’ (cf. AIS 1080), (modern) Umbrian *ciorro* (Amelia) ‘ram’ (cf. AIS 1069), and MGr. τζοῦρος (Cyprus) ‘he-goat’.<sup>218</sup> All of these words refer to livestock animals that are somehow of reduced value, be it by being of poor health or by being infertile. In DES (II: 602), these forms are compared to Sp. *churra* ‘sheep with *churra* wool’. This adjective belongs to a much larger group of Ibero-Romance forms referring to such negative notions as ‘filth, dirty, greedy etc.’ (DCEC II: 409–12).

Whereas the connection between Srd. *tsúrra*, *čúrra* and Sp. *churra* is attributed to a shared pre-Roman origin in DES (II: 602), I see no reason why the Sardinian forms could not simply represent loans from Spanish (cf. Virdis 2017). This could also account for the irregular correspondence of initial *ts-* and *č-* in the Sardinian forms.

#### 6.1.6 Sheep (old)

Reconstruction	Forms
<i>*bòlla</i>	DES (I: 215): <i>bòḍḍa</i> (Barb., 1: Orani) ‘old sheep’

This word can go back either to *\*bolla* or to *\*volla*, neither of which are explained in terms of inherited material. Wagner does not propose an etymology for this word, but does compare Calab. [*crapa*] *uoḍḍa* (Pentedattilo) ‘goat whose horns curve behind its ears’ (Rohlf’s 1932: 351). There are two Berber etyma that are comparable in shape and meaning. One is Bb. *ullī*, *wəllī* ‘small livestock (i.e. sheep and goats)’ < *\*wǎllī*/*\*wǎllē* (Haddadou 2007: 85; cf. Kossmann 2020a: 28). The other is Ghadames *taβali*, Mali Tuar. *tehāle*, Nef. *tili* etc. ‘sheep’ < *\*tē-bālē* (Kossmann 1999: 97).<sup>219</sup> It is difficult to decide which Berber etymon offers the better comparison. It is moreover unlikely that the Sardinian word is related to both the Calabrese and the Berber forms.

<sup>218</sup> For additional forms, see Rohlf’s (1925: 673). Rohlf’s explanation involves the lexicalisation of a call for goats of the shape *zurra-*. However, it is hard to imagine that animal calls referring to infertile/worthless livestock arose parallelly in multiple areas and with such formal similarity.

<sup>219</sup> The reconstructions of both Berber etyma are by Maarten Kossmann, p.c.

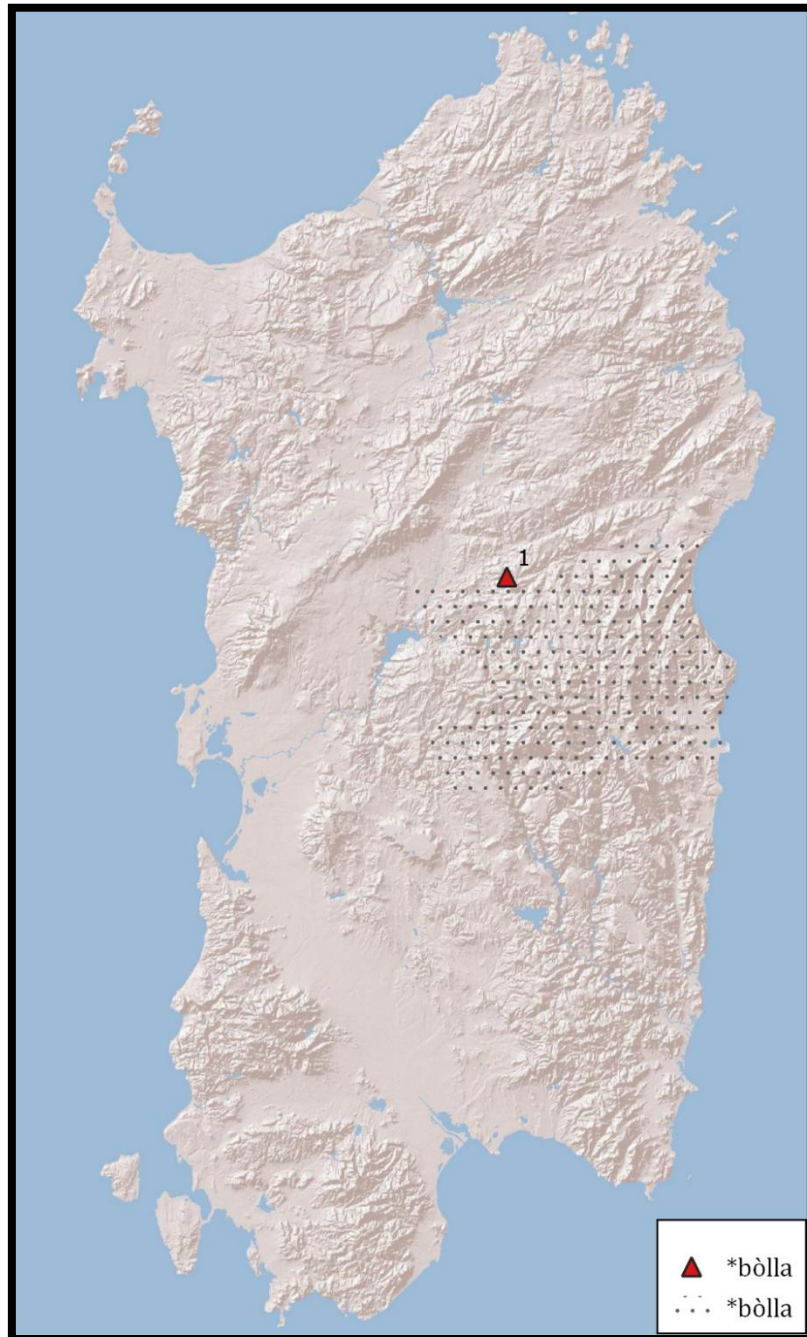


Figure 6.1.6: Old sheep

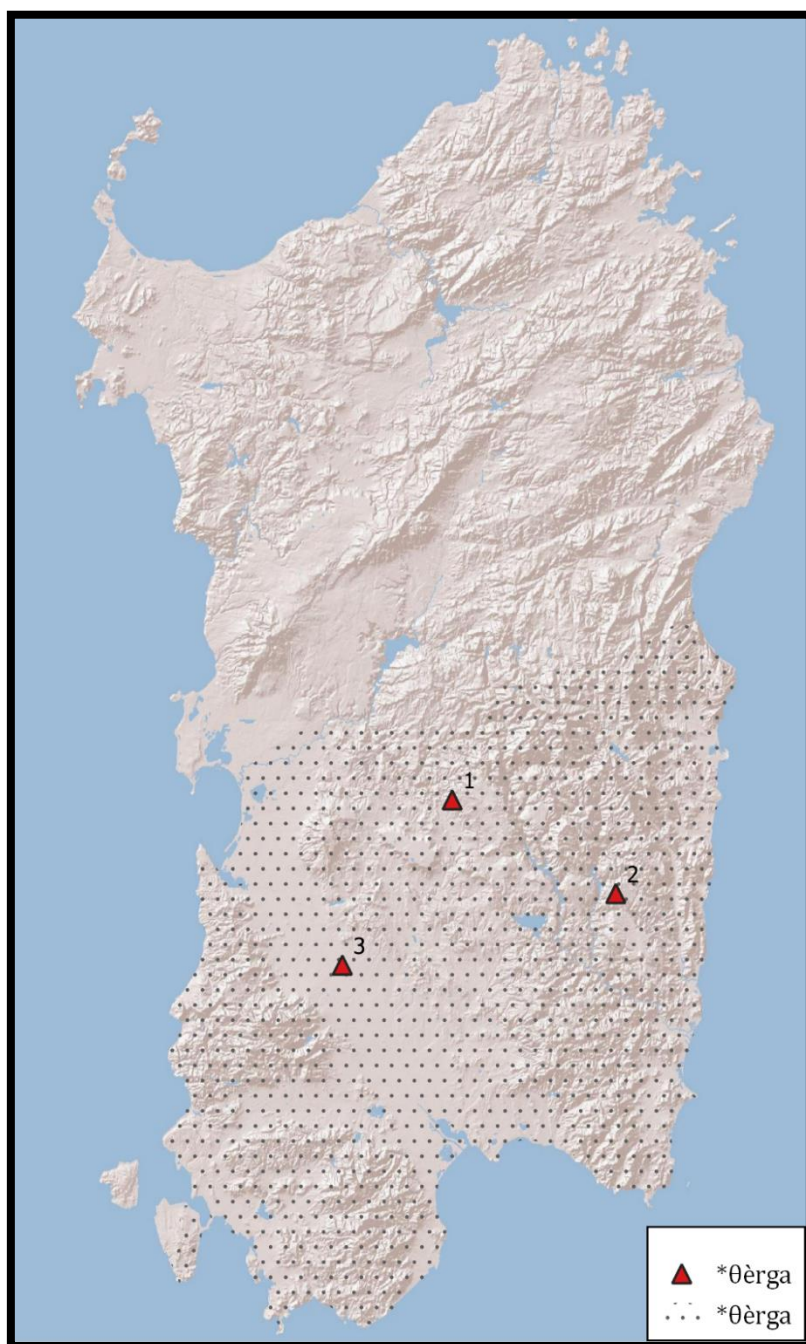


Figure 6.1.7: Stack of wheat

## 6.1.7 Stack of wheat

Reconstruction	Forms
* <i>ḡèrga</i>	DES (II: 588): <i>tsèrga</i> (Camp.), <i>tsrèya</i> (1: Laconi, 3: San Gavino Monreale), <i>sèrga</i> (2: Perdasdefogu) 'stack of wheat'

Wagner (DES II: 588) does not offer an etymology for these forms, which go back regularly to \**ḡèrga*. He does mention Srd. *sèrra* 'saw', in the construction *sèrra de ḡrìyu* 'pile of grain' (cf. DES II: 408-9), but a link between *tsèrga* and *sèrra* is phonologically impossible. In my view, initial *tse-* < \**ḡe-* makes an inherited origin unlikely. As a consequence, a pre-Roman origin is a possibility, but besides the onset there is not much direct evidence. Perhaps it is the same word as *ḡèrga*, *tsèrga* 'cloths that a master gives to his servants on holidays or at the end of the year' (§ 6.2.3).

## 6.1.8 Tilled land

Reconstruction	Forms
1: * <i>tèle</i>	DES (II: 481): <i>tèle</i> (1: Lodè) 'scrub'; (2: Bitti, 3: Lollove, 4: Nuoro, 5: Dorgali) 'steep and wooded terrain, that has recently been tilled for the cultivation of grain'; (5: Dorgali) 'field sown with oats, beans or flax'. <sup>220</sup>
2: * <i>tevèle</i>	DES (II: 481): <i>tevèle</i> (6: Oliena, 7: Orgosolo) 'steep and wooded terrain, that has recently been tilled for the cultivation of grain'

Despite some differences in meaning, this word refers mostly to a patch of land that has recently been prepared (i.e. either tilled or sown) for the cultivation of crops. Spano (*apud* DES II: 481) mentions *tuvèle* 'threshing floor, sown field', but without specifying its place of attestation. Wagner (DES II: 481) thinks a pre-Roman origin is likely on the basis of the ending *-èle*, which he identifies as a suffix that also occurs in toponyms like *Sarunele* (a nuraghe), *Gabutele* (a mountain), *Neoneli* (a town) (cf. Wolf 1998a: 64). However, there is no direct evidence that *-èle* is a suffix in *tèle*, *tevèle* 'tilled land', nor do we have any clues as to what the function of this suffix would be. Serra (1956: 203) suggests that *tevèle* could be cognate to Log., Camp. *tùla*, *tulèḡḡa* 'furrow' < Lat. *tubula* (REW 8968), with secondary introduction of *-èle* by analogy to pre-Roman toponyms. This is rather far-fetched, and does not explain the variant *tèle*, as Lat. *tubula* is expected to yield \*\**tùḡbula* in the dialects where type 1 *tèle* is found.

<sup>220</sup> "Campo seminato a biada, o fave o lino."

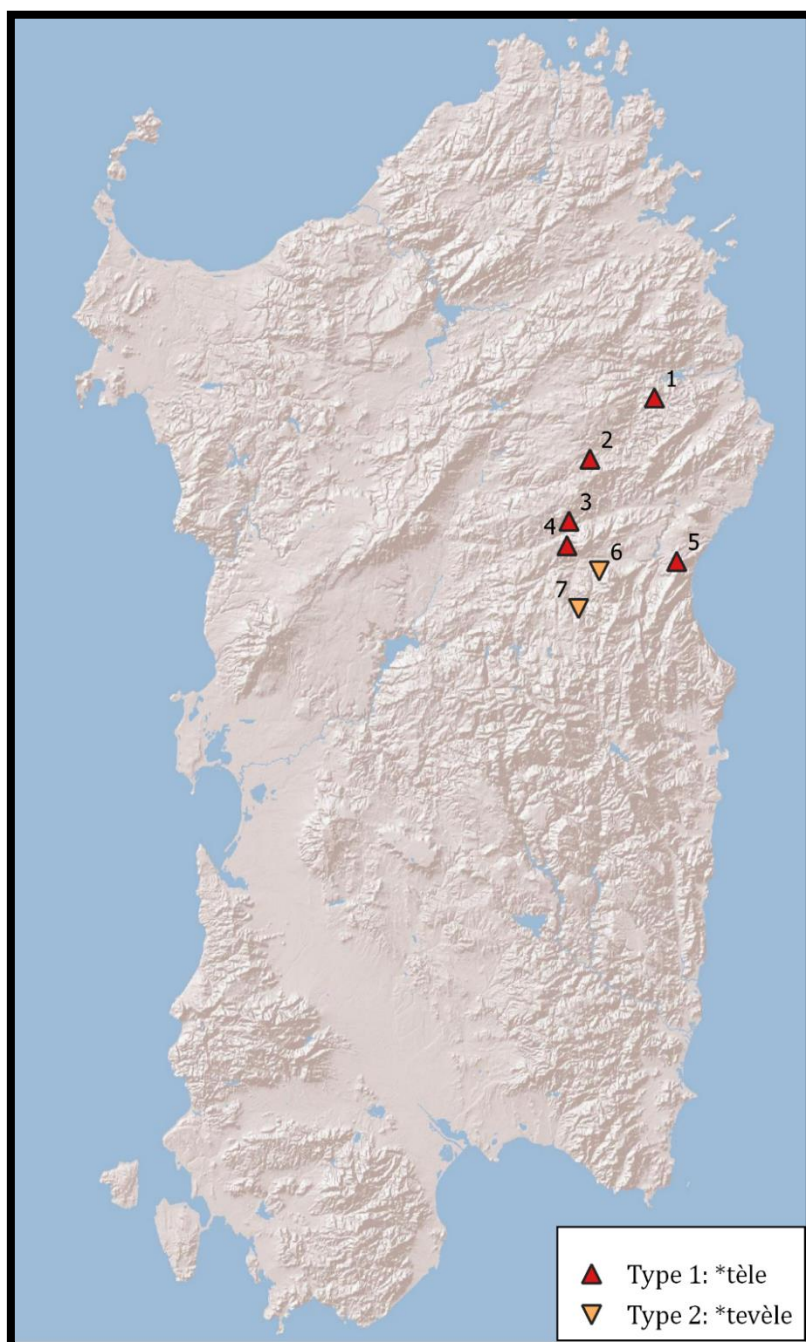


Figure 6.1.8: Tilled land

Another indication of pre-Roman origin is the apparent irregular correspondence between the attested forms. For type 2 we find *tevèle*, with an intervocalic *-v-*, which is absent in the forms of type 1. In DES (II: 481) this is explained as an instance of irregular and hypercorrect *-v-* deletion in words where the Campidanese dialects do have an intervocalic *-v-* (cf. Wagner 1941a: 100–101). However, it is not clear from Wagner’s description of this phenomenon that the geographical extent of this phenomenon extends to the dialects of Bitti (2) and Nuoro (4). Moreover, Paulis (1984b: 533) points out that this word is not attested in Campidanese. Nor can the loss of *-v-* in type 1 be attributed to influence from Logudorese forms, as it is not attested there either.

Paulis (1992: 305) compares the Sardinian forms to It. *debbio* ‘slash and burn’, which would be from ancient Ligurian *\*debelo-* < PIE *\*d<sup>h</sup>eg<sup>wh</sup>-* ‘to burn’. While the semantic and formal similarity between the Sardinian and Italian forms is undeniable, a hypothetical form in an unattested language of uncertain affiliation does not constitute an acceptable etymology for the Italian or the Sardinian forms (cf. § 1.3.2.1).

## 6.2 Material culture and food

### 6.2.1 Bread made of acorns and clay

Reconstruction	Forms
<i>*ispéli</i>	Wagner v: [ <i>pan'</i> ] <i>ispéli</i> (1: Urzulei, 2: Talana, 3: Triei, 4: Baunei, 5: Villagrande Strisaili, 6: Gairo) ‘bread made of acorn flour and clay’

This word, restricted to the northern part of the Ogliastra, refers to a highly specific and peculiar type of bread that is made of acorn flour paste mixed with clay. Its consumption has declined to the point that it is now restricted to special festivities, and its production process is only remembered by a few elderly women (Pinna 2013: S72).<sup>221</sup> Whereas it may have originated as a “poor man’s” substitute of cereal flour, as Wagner (1921: 60) suggests, Pinna (2013: S73) notes that its production has come to be associated with certain ritual and religious practices.

<sup>221</sup> According to Pinna (2013: S72), the existence of this pastry may once have been more widespread than the Ogliastran villages cited by Wagner (1921: 60) where it is still remembered. However, even if *pan' ispéli* was once known in towns like Orani and Sarule in the Barbagia, the local terminology associated with this bread has been lost to us.

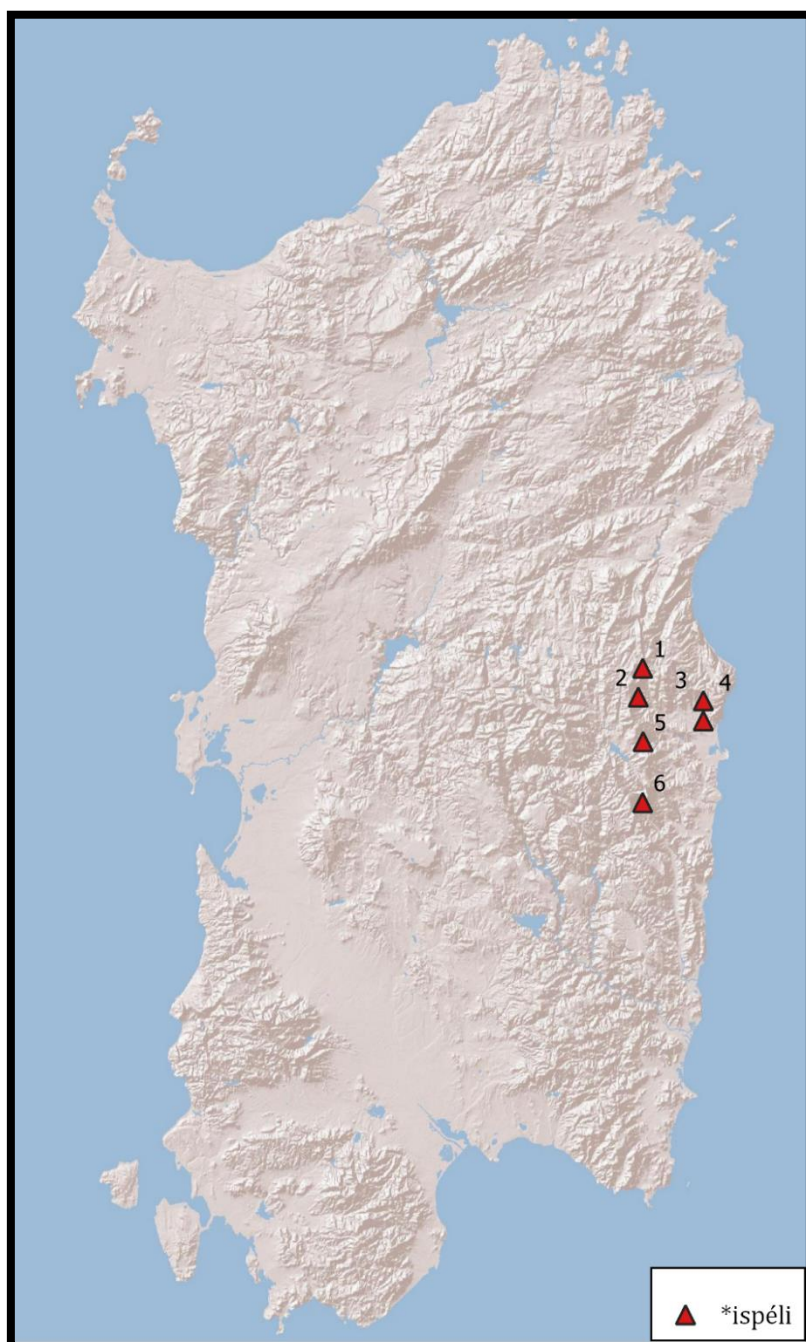


Figure 6.2.1: Bread made of acorns and clay

Wagner (DES I: 676) considers the word *ispéli* to be of “probable pre-Roman” origin, in part because of its semantics, being highly specific to local culture, and because the consumption of acorns is considered an “ancient” and “primitive” practice (cf. Wagner 1921: 60). Although objective notions such as “primitivity” do not substantiate a pre-Roman origin, the cultural specificity of this word and its relation to certain rituals may indeed be indicators of an older local tradition. A formal feature indicating a pre-Roman origin is word-final *-i*, which is rare in the inherited nominal and adjectival lexicon (§ 8.1.5.1). On the basis of this we may conclude that *ispéli* is likely the original shape of this word. Although some of the locations where *ispéli* is attested exhibit regular (or at least frequent) *i*-prothesis in word-initial clusters of the type *sC-* (Baunei, Triei, Urzulei, Talana), this process is exceptional in Villagrande Strisaili and absent in Gairo, indicating that initial *i-* is original (cf. Wagner 1984: map 2).

It is noteworthy that the bread is referred to as *pan'ispéli*, i.e. ‘*ispéli* bread’. The form *ispéli* therefore appears to denote a certain quality of the bread, but it is impossible to establish whether it refers to acorns, to clay or to some other feature of the bread altogether. Paulis (2011; cf. Putzu 2019: 4) notes that other types of pastry are called *pistiddu* < Lat. *pistillum* ‘pestle’.<sup>222</sup> Paulis hypothesizes that pre-Roman *ispéli* referred to a ‘pestle’ as well. From there, he compares *ispéli* to Bq. *ezpel* ‘box tree’, based on the idea that pestles are frequently made of box wood. This comparison is problematic. It requires the double assumption that both Srd. *ispéli* and Bq. *ezpel* originally meant ‘pestle’, rather than ‘clay bread’ and ‘box tree’ respectively, which significantly weakens the comparison. Moreover, Bq. *ezpel* ‘box tree’ probably contains the element *ez-*, which occurs as the first part of various tree names, and *\*-bel* ‘dark’ (Trask 1997: 256; 2008: 188). The etymology of Bq. *ezpel* as originally meaning ‘dark tree’ renders any connection to pestles, and therefore to Srd. *ispéli*, unlikely.

The specific type of clay that is used to make *pan'ispéli* is called *trókko* or *tòrko* (DES II: 522), which may also be of pre-Roman origin (§ 6.2.2). The other terms related to the production of *pan'ispéli* cited by Pinna (2013) are inherited.

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<sup>222</sup> I have unfortunately not been able to consult Paulis (2011) myself.

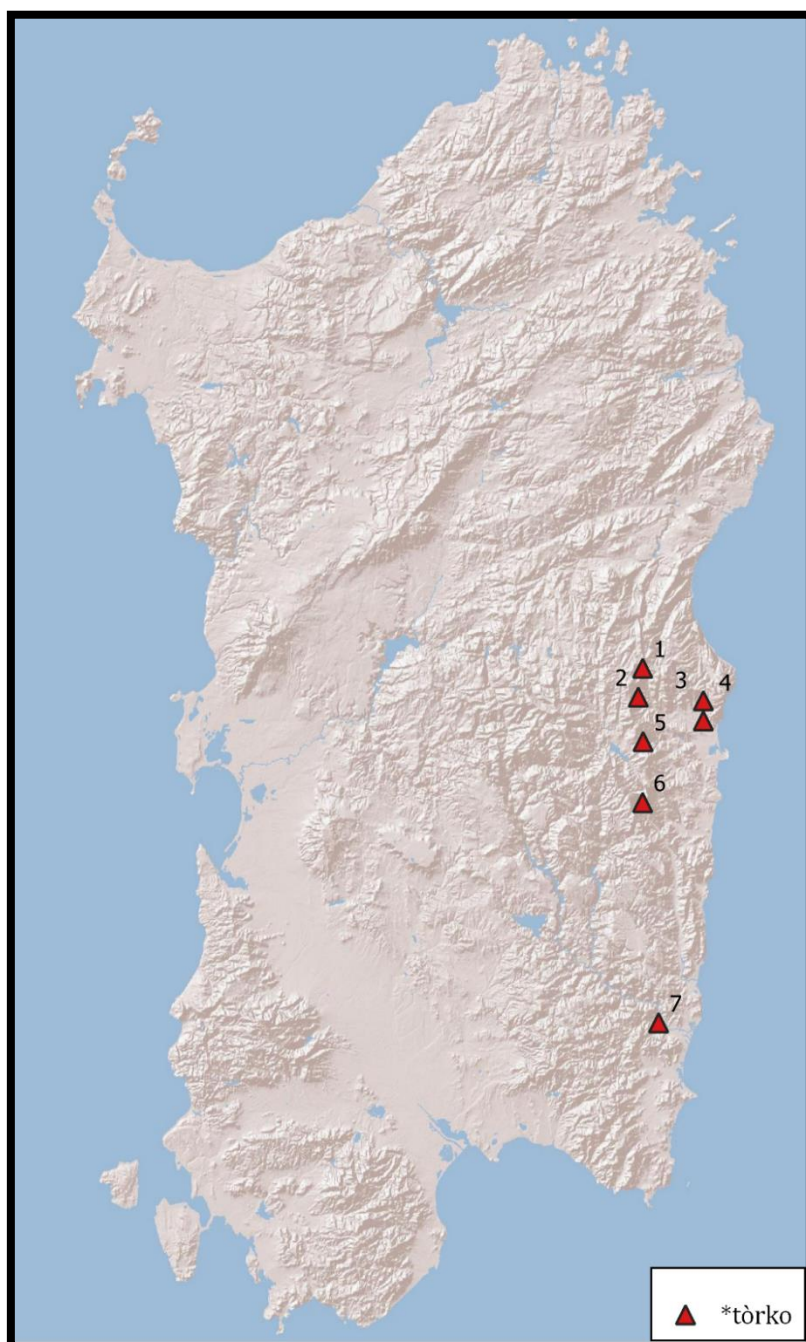


Figure 6.2.2: Clay used to make acorn bread

## 6.2.2 Clay used to make acorn bread

Reconstruction	Forms
* <i>tòrko</i>	DES (II: 522): <i>tròkko</i> , <i>tòrko</i> (1: Urzulei, 2: Talana, 3: Triei, 4: Baunei, 5: Villagrande Strisaille, 6: Gairo) 'type of red clay used to prepare acorn bread'
	Böhne (1950: 69): <i>trókkku</i> (7: San Vito) 'clay'
	AIS (416): <i>tòrko</i> (4: Baunei) 'clay'
	Blasco Ferrer (1988: 176): <i>tròxo</i> (1: Urzulei)

The form *tòrko* is likely original, with *tròkko* and *trókkku* as the result of a metathesis. In the Ogliastran dialects, this word refers specifically to a type of clay used in the production of *pan' ispe'li*, a kind of bread made from acorns (§ 6.2.1). In the Sarrabus (represented by San Vito), it has a more general meaning 'clay' (Böhne 1950: 69), which is also recorded by AIS (416) for Baunei (4). The ending *-o*, as well as the reference to a specific and likely ancient cultural practice, make it plausible that this word goes back to some pre-Roman source. Wagner (DES II: 522) considers a relation to *trókkku* 'ravine' found in Fonni (§ 5.1.17), but this is semantically unattractive.

## 6.2.3 Clothes given to servants as a gift on certain holidays

Reconstruction	Forms
* <i>ḡèrga</i>	Wagner (1921: 158; DES II: 544): <i>ḡèrga</i> (Nuor.), <i>tèrga</i> , <i>attèrga</i> (Log.), <i>tsèrga</i> , <i>tsrèrga</i> (Camp.) 'cloths that a master gives to his servants on holidays or at the end of the year'

Wagner (1921: 158 fn. 2; DES II: 544) compares this word, which is found all over Sardinia, to Alb. *çergë*, *cergë* 'blanket of coarse wool', which is cognate to Turkish *çerge* 'type of tent', Rom. *cergă* 'blanket; tent canvas', MGr. τσέργα etc. 'id.' (cf. Ciorănescu 1958: s.v. *cergă*). These words are probably all loans from Turkish *çerge* 'type of tent' (Meyer 1891: 440; Ciorănescu 1958: s.v. *cergă*).<sup>223</sup>

<sup>223</sup> Contrary to the claim in DES (II: 544) that Albanian would be the donor to the other Balkanic languages.

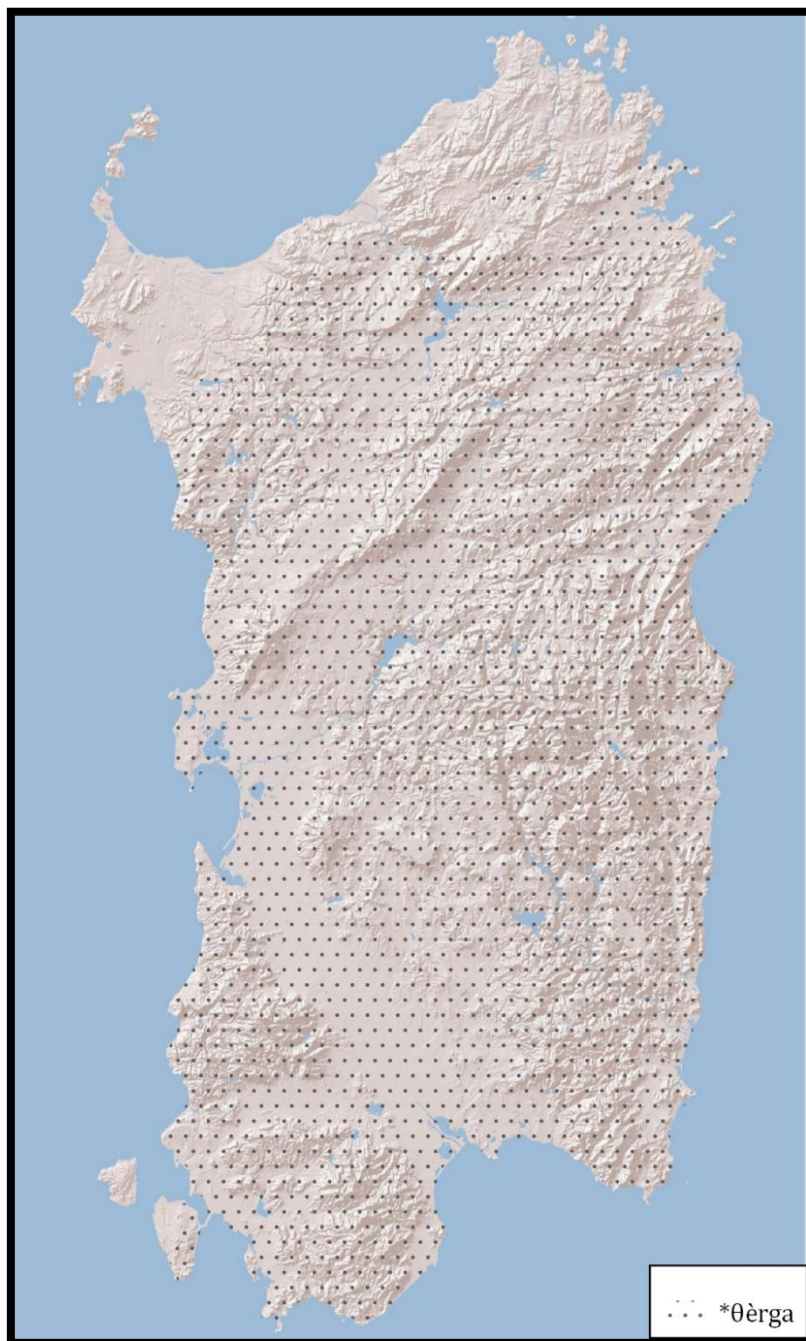


Figure 6.2.3: Clothes given to servants as a gift on certain holidays

Since for Srd. \**ḡèrga*, both a derivation from Lat. *sērica* ‘silk’ (cf. REW 7848) and a loan from its apparent continuant Sp. *jerga* (cf. DCEC III: 507) are formally difficult,<sup>224</sup> one wonders whether \**ḡèrga* could be a loan from MGr. τέρρα. This would have to be of Byzantine date. It is in any case clear that these Sardinian forms are not of pre-Roman origin.

#### 6.2.4 Mat<sub>1</sub>

Reconstruction	Forms
* <i>lóssja</i>	DES (II: 39): <i>lúša</i> (Log., Gallur.), <i>rúša</i> (1: Sassari), <i>lússa</i> (3: Siniscola), <i>lússa</i> (4: Bitti, 5: Bonorva), <i>lússja</i> (6: Nuoro), <i>lóssja</i> (Campidano di Milis, 8: Milis) ‘mat made of reed or rushes; cylinders made of these mats used to store grain’
	AIS (1488): <i>rúša</i> (1: Sassari), <i>lúša</i> (2: Ploaghe), <i>lússias</i> (pl.) (7: Macomer) ‘cylinders made of reed mats used to store grain’
	Böhne (1950: 98–99): <i>lóssja</i> (10: San Vito) ‘big reed mat used in carts; the plant used to make these mats’

Wagner (1921: 36 fn. 3) argues that most of the Sardinian forms presented above are interdialectal loans from *lóssja* (8: Milis). Vendors from Milis and its surroundings, where reeds and rushes are common, would have travelled the island to sell their woven mats, thus dispersing their word for it. Wagner (1921: 36 fn. 3) initially suggested an origin in Lat. *lōdīx* ‘cover, blanket, counterpane’, by a derivation \**lōdīcia*. This etymology has been taken over by FEW (V: 397) to account for OProv. *lodissa* ‘blanket’. In DES (II: 39) however, Wagner questions his own etymology because of the fact that the same form *lóssja* in San Vito does not only refer to mats, but also to the plants from which they are made (Böhne 1950: 98). This would make a derivation from Lat. *lōdīx* ‘cover, blanket, counterpane’ semantically more difficult. However, whereas a semantic shift from ‘mat made of rushes’ to ‘rush’ is perhaps imaginable, it is rather the formal development that makes a derivation from *lōdīx* problematic.

<sup>224</sup> The large amount of Romance forms that are similar to each other and to Lat. *sērica* ‘silk’, but that do not correspond regularly amongst themselves or to the Latin form (e.g. REW 7848; DCEC III: 507–08; FEW XI: 511–513) could suggest that we are dealing with some kind of medieval *Wanderwort*. This process is clearly continued by OFr. *sarge*, Fr. *serge*, whatever its exact origin, which was taken over in multiple languages: It. *sargia* ‘light fabric’, Flemish *sargie*, Westfalian *Schassen* ‘blanket’, Bret. *charj*, *serch* ‘twill’ etc. (FEW XI: 513a).

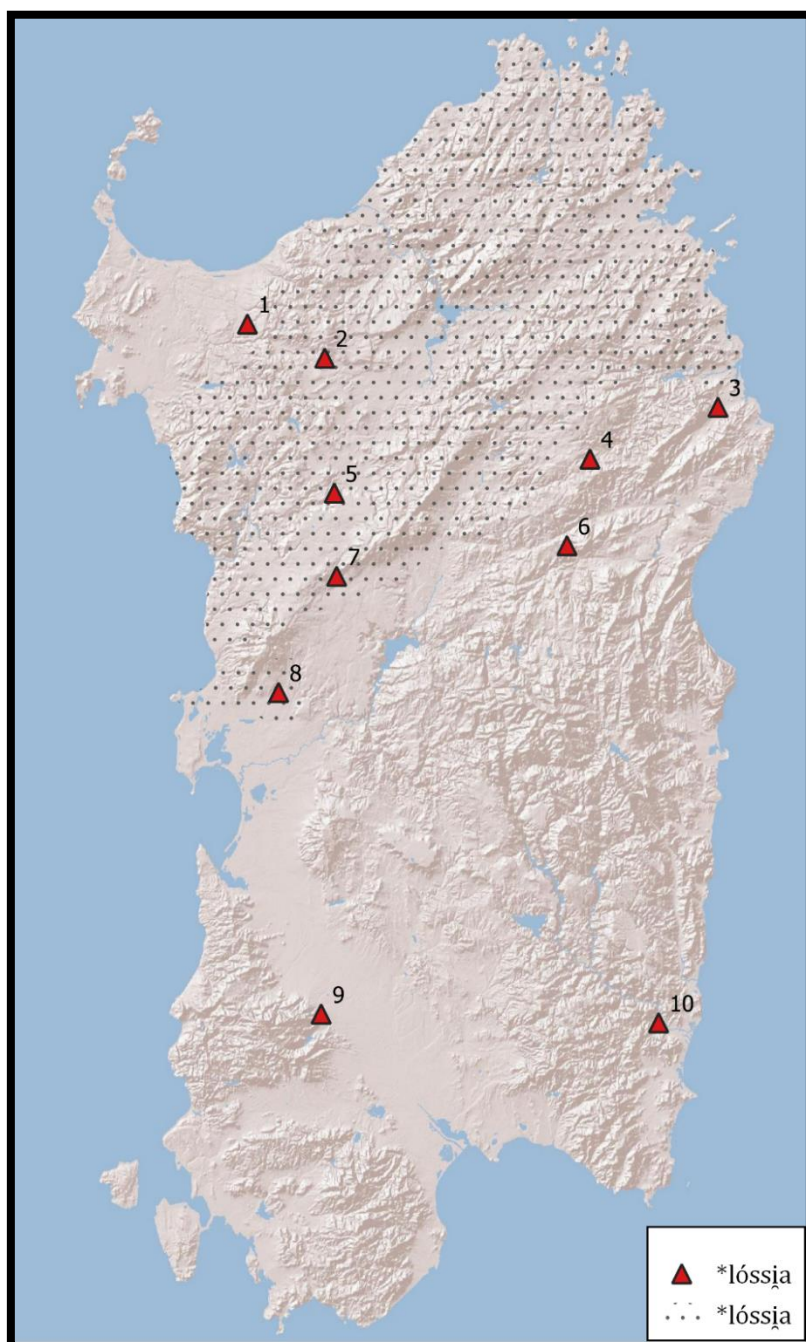


Figure 6.2.4: Mat

A form of the shape *\*lōdīcia*, as proposed by Wagner (1921: 36 fn. 3), would rather be expected to yield *\*\*loíttsa*, as he himself also notes (Wagner 1921: 36 fn. 3; cf. also Wagner 1941a: 109–110). As a parallel development, he compares Srd. *ḡustītsja*, *ḡustíssa* ‘justice’, but this is clearly a learned borrowing from It. *giustizia* ‘id.’, rather than a form inherited from Lat. *iustitia*. It can therefore not be used as an argument concerning of the development *\*lōdīcia* > *lóssa*. In order to derive *lóssa* from *lōdīcia*, the retraction of the accent and the irregular development of *-ci-* remain unaccounted for.<sup>225</sup> At face value, *lóssa* (8: Milis, 10: San Vito) seems to reflect *\*lōCsia*/*\*lōCsea* (in which *-Cs-* may also reflect *\*-ss-*; cf. Wagner 1941a: 152–153, 170–172). This does not bring us any closer to a convincing etymology however. Perhaps Wagner (DES II: 39) is right in positing a pre-Roman origin for this word, in which case the forms from Milis (8) and San Vito (10) could be independent continuations, while the other forms are still probable loans from the form from Milis. The original meaning would have been ‘rush’, which was extended to ‘reed/rush mat’ in the area of Milis, and from there was introduced to the rest of the island. However, as Milis *lóssa* ‘mat made of reed or rushes’ and San Vito *lóssa* ‘mat made of reed or rushes; rush (*Juncus sp.*)’ are formally identical, there is no evidence for a pre-Roman origin other than the absence of a convincing etymology. Because of the formal issues discussed here, OProv. *lodissa* ‘blanket’ mentioned by FEW (V: 397), whether it is from *\*lōdīcia* or not, can probably not be upheld as a cognate to the Sardinian forms.<sup>226</sup>

### 6.2.5 Mat<sub>2</sub>

Reconstruction	Forms
1: <i>*kētra</i>	DES (I: 446–447): <i>čèrda</i> (Camp.), [ <i>sa</i> ] <i>žèđra</i> (1: Mogoro) ‘mat woven from straw or rushes that serves to spread out fruits on and that is also put in carts, so that the transported straw or fruits cannot fall out’ <sup>227</sup>
2: <i>*čèrda</i>	DES (I: 446–447): <i>ḡèrda</i> , <i>ḡèlda</i> (Log.), <i>dzèrda</i> (Nuor.) ‘id.’

<sup>225</sup> Loss of intervocalic *\*-d-* (or of *-b-*, *-g-* or *-v-* for that matter) would be regular (Wagner 1941a: 79). However, if *\*lōdīcia* is given up as an etymology for Srd. *lóssa*, there is no reason to assume the contraction of two syllables on the basis of the attested evidence.

<sup>226</sup> Cf. however Van Sluis (2024: 100), who cites similar Gallo-Romance and Germanic forms for sedge: Clairvaux *lôche*, Dauphinois *lātša* Middle Low German *lusch* ‘sedge’. If and how these are related to the Sardinian forms remains to be investigated.

<sup>227</sup> See Wagner (1921: 71) and Argiolas (2012: 2737) for images of carts with *čèrdas*.

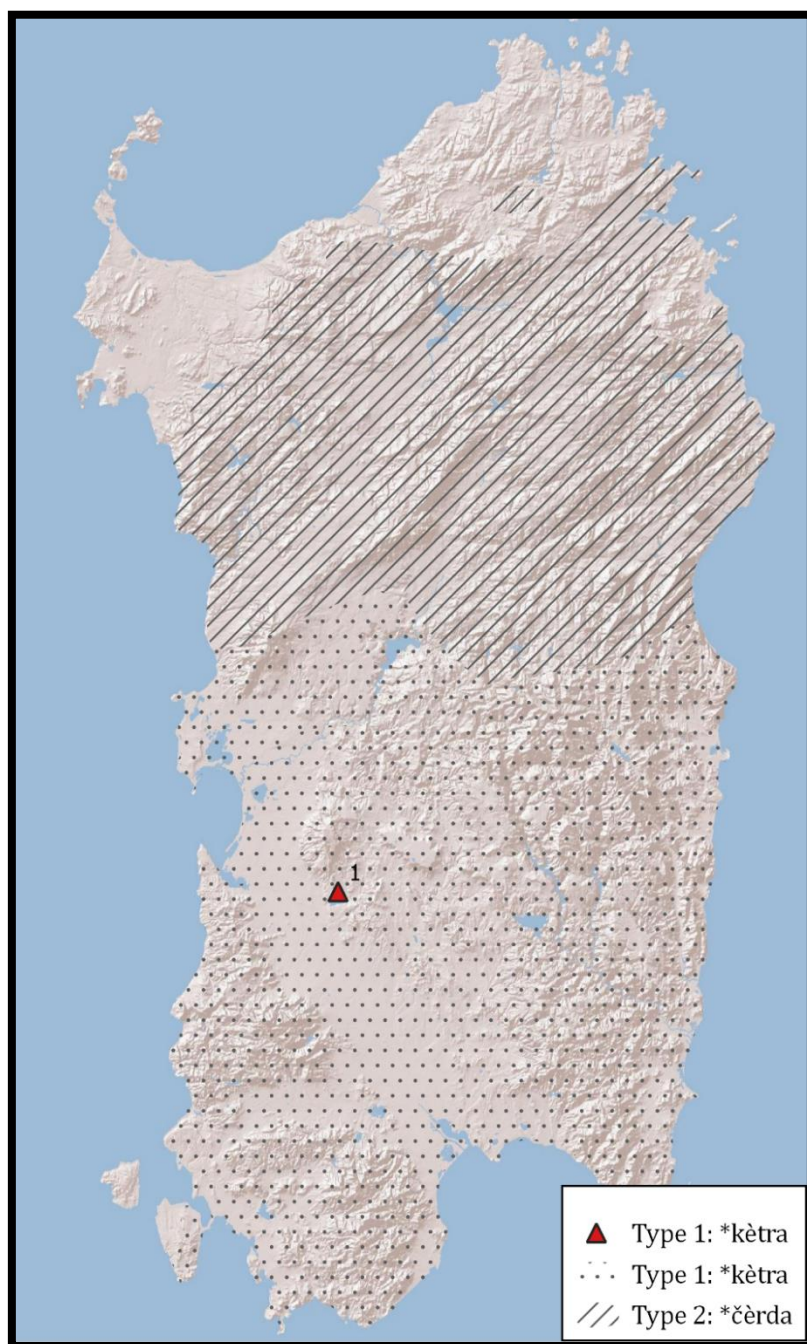


Figure 6.2.5: Mat

Like in the case of *lóssja* (§ 6.2.4), this word was borrowed from Campidanese (type 1) into Logudorese and Nuorese (type 2). The explanation for this is that the mats in question were traded predominantly by merchants from Milis, in the Campidano (Wagner 1921: 71). The variant *čërda* (and *čěđra*, 1: Mogoro) can go back either to *\*ketra* or *\*kerda*, and has been connected to Lat. *caetra*, *cētra* ‘type of Spanish and/or African shield’ (cf. Walde & Hofmann 1938: 135). Wagner’s (1943: 196) connection of the Sardinian word to Ast. *sardu*, *sarda*, *zarda* ‘wicker-work placed over the kitchen stove’<sup>228</sup> is questioned by Hubschmid (1953: 22–23) and DCEC (VI: 102a) on justified formal grounds. Hubschmid (1953: 22–23) instead regards both the Sardinian and the Asturian forms as independent pre-Roman loans from an “Afro-Hispanic” language. In this, he accepts Bertoldi’s (1947b: 201) comparison to Tmz., Tsh., Rif. *ažərtil* ‘big mat made of wool and esparto grass’ (cf. Haddadou 2007: 81),<sup>229</sup> which can be reconstructed as *\*gʷVrtil*.<sup>230</sup> A connection between the Sardinian and the Berber forms suffers from some formal objections however. These include the lack of *-l-* in the Latin and Romance forms and the irregular voicing of *\*-rt-* that would have to be assumed to arrive at Srd. *čërda* (as well as Ast. *sardu*, *sarda*, *zarda*, which Bertoldi (1947b: 201) still connects).<sup>231</sup>

Argiolas (2012: 2737–2741) alternatively proposes a derivation from the Berber root *\*yrd*, found in Tmz. *γərd* (Ayt Izdeg) ‘to lie down on the floor’ (cf. Taïfi 1991: 202), Kb. *əyruṛəd* ‘to sleep without being able to wake up’ etc. On the basis of these attestations, she proposes a base meaning ‘mat’ for this root. Its supposed Libyco-Berber predecessor *\*yerd* would have entered African Latin first as *cherda* ‘some plant’ (probably eryngo, cf. André 1985: 62) and from there as *caetra*, *cētra* ‘woven shield’. There are some semantic issues with this account, however. First, the motivation for a semantic shift from ‘mat’ to ‘eryngo’ to ‘woven shield’ is not evident. Moreover, assuming an original meaning ‘mat’ for *\*yrd* on the basis of verbs meaning ‘to lie down, etc.’ is not evident either. A semantic shift like ‘to lie down’ > ‘mat’ > ‘woven shield’ would perhaps be more plausible, but this still does not resolve the formal issue that the metathesis and devoicing of *-rd-* >> *-tr-*, required to explain Lat. *caetra* from either Bb. *\*yrd* or from African Lat. *cherda*, are irregular and unexpected.

<sup>228</sup> “Tejido de mimbres que se coloca sobre el llar, para abrigar la cocina y donde se ponen las avellanas para turrar” (Wagner 1943: 196).

<sup>229</sup> Cited by Bertoldi (1947b: 201) as *ažeršil*.

<sup>230</sup> Maarten Kossmann, p.c.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. also Argiolas (2012: 2736), who rather sees a link between the Berber forms and Gr. *κάρταλλος*, Lat. *cartallus*, which are of unknown origin (cf. Beekes 2010: 650).

For Camp. *čèrda*, I agree with Wagner (DES I: 447) that it is most economical to simply assume inheritance from Lat. *caetra* ‘type of shield’, whatever its origin.<sup>232</sup> The phonological development is as expected and for the semantic shift from ‘shield’ to ‘type of mat’, we may compare Gr. γέρρον ‘oblong shield; wicker body of a cart; wattled screen’. Although Latin *caetra* is evidently of foreign origin (Walde & Hofmann 1938: 135),<sup>233</sup> it is inherited in Sardinian, and does not offer any information about the pre-Roman language(s) of Sardinia.

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<sup>232</sup> This Latin word potentially belongs together with some other words referring to weaving or to woven products without a clear etymology. Cf. Lat. *cartallus* ‘basket’, *gerdius* ‘weaver’, which are identical to Gr. κάρταλλος ‘basket with a pointed bottom’ and γέρδιος ‘weaver’, but which lack good etymologies (Beekes 2010: 268, 650). Because of the obvious phonological similarity, Gr. γέρδιος has been connected by Argiolas (2012: 2738) to the Berber root *γrd* ‘to spread out’ as well.

<sup>233</sup> Cf. Múrcia Sánchez (2011: 423).

