

An Ethnoarchaeological Study of Pottery in Evurore Division, Mbeere North District, Embu County, Kenya, 2014

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to examine pottery production, marketing and consumption by the contemporary Mbeere people. Pottery production was one of the earliest technologies adopted by farming communities whereby they used pots as storage facilities for their agricultural produce (Sharer and Ashmore, 1987). This industry has continued to date and thus studies in pottery have been carried out to understand cultural groups, how they adapt and manipulate the environment to meet their needs. The study revolved around selected villages of Evurore Division, Mbeere North District, Embu County, Kenya. An investigation of cultural continuity/discontinuity was carried out using archaeological potsherds. This was achieved by comparing the archaeological Evurore potsherds from the sites and contemporary Mbeere pottery. The study adopted descriptive design. Data was collected through interviews, questionnaires, on – site observation, museum artifacts and library research. The study employed snow ball type of purposive sampling because the renowned contemporary potters were few thus mentioning other potential potters. Systems theory and functionalist approach guided the study. Attribute and thin section analysis as well as qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis were used. Attribute analysis was extended to comparative data analysis in investigating cultural continuity/discontinuity. The study found Evurore contemporary potters to be using a flattened coil in forming their vessels, decorating them through incising, firing them in open fire and using them for domestic purposes. The results from this study showed that pottery industry in Mbeere is a cultural continuum. The researcher recommends the study of the clays in Kogari in order to improve the quality of vessels made in this village. Finally, the findings of the study may be used by the policy makers in addressing issues that have emerged to improve pottery in Evurore Division