

The focus of this study is on Production, Consumption and discard of Contemporary local pottery on the Kenya Coast. It revolves around a number of sites around Jomvu Kuu (Mombasa) Lamu and Pate areas.

An analysis of pottery from these sites was made with a view to understand the operations of this industry in archaeological past. For comparative purposes aimed at supporting cultural continuity or discontinuity, an archaeological analysis of the 14th-16th century sherds from sites such as Kipini, Ungwana, Idabu and Pate was made.

To achieve these objectives various methods including both physical and chemical analyses were used. The physical methods included attribute analysis, thin sections while chemical methods included x-ray fluorescence.

In attribute analysis the discrimination of a specified member of characteristics were synthesized. Some of the attributes studied were:- the clay texture, method of manufacture, vessel forms, decorative techniques and motifs, rim profiles and basal shapes. Through this analytical framework it was construed that the contemporary pottery attributes were in agreement with those found on sherds in archaeological excavations.

Two sets of sherds; the contemporary and archaeological sherds were exposed to chemical and physical analytical frameworks. These results showed similarities in the fabric for a number of sites. For example most if not all the sherds had fossils in their quartz particles showing a sedimentary origin characteristic of the Kenya Coast.

The chemical analytical approach, the x-ray fluorescence is an important method in provenance of studies. It was important in ascertaining the Kenyan Coast as the source of clays used in pottery manufacture, From the results of this method, the element composition in terms of percentage for Idabu (Lamu) and Jomvu Kuu (Mombasa): Ungwana and Pate Island were similar. This showed exchange of pottery objects or clay in this region.

This study does illustrate that pottery industry on the Kenya Coast is a cultural continuum. This guarded knowledge was probably kept ablaze by being passed from one generation to the next as the case still is today.