

Summary of pottery development to knowledge

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Abstract

Pottery has been defined and redefined by many scholars of history and anthropologist. Pottery is wrapped in the past with no written record; this study intends to work on the historical analysis of form, style and techniques of Pottery tradition, the various pottery associations in Nigeria will be identified and discussed. The study will also examine the symbolic meaning of each of the traditions, it will also project the aesthetic qualities, and the effects of new ideas of pottery of the indigenous Benin people, and how pottery is interpreted/ the study hopes to compile and analyze forms of pottery that will rekindle interest in pottery, and serve as reference point for the future generation.

Keyword: pottery, summary, development, knowledge.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Clay is the material from which pottery *ware* is made; the major types include Earthenware, Stone ware and Porcelain. The place where such wares are made is also called a pottery. Pottery also refers to the art or craft of the potter or the manufacture of pottery, Allen (1986). *Pottery* can also be referred to as "all fired ceramic wares that contain clay when formed, except technical, structural, and refractory products" (ASTM international, 2007). Pottery is made by forming a clay body into objects of a required shape and heating them to high temperatures in a kiln which removes all water from the clay, induces reactions that lead to permanent changes including increasing their strength and hardening and setting their shape. A clay body can be decorated before or after firing. Prior to some shaping processes, clay must be prepared. Kneading helps to ensure even moisture content throughout the body, air trapped within the clay body needs to be removed. This is called de-airing and can be accomplished by a machine called a vacuum pug or manually by wedging. Wedging can also help produce even moisture content. Once a clay body has been kneaded and de-aired or wedged, it is shaped by a variety of techniques. After shaping, it is dried and then fired. (See Figures 1 and 2)

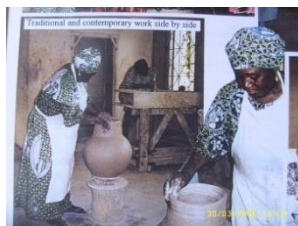


Figure 1. Pottery workshop
Source. Uzzi 2015.



Figure 2. Traditional Pottery
Source. Uzzi 2015

1.2. Brief history

The discovery of pottery has been viewed by different scholars, Green (1996), Encyclopedia Americana (1989), Wangboje (1982) linked the discovery of pottery with the basket "theory". Early man used animal skins made into bags and red baskets lined with mud for storing his food items and water sometimes, one of such basket lined with clay suddenly fell into the fire. The basket burnt off, but the clay did not burn, instead it became hard, strong and rock like. From this moment, man began to think of a better and more effective way of improving on his new discovery. Thus a new method of making containers began and so was the process of firing.

Another theory about the discovering of pottery as reported by wangboje is "hearth theory" It is speculated that the early man was exposed to harsh weather conditions, especially cold weather, as a result he was forced to warming himself up around a hearth. While putting off the fire with water he observed that the ground hardened up.

Pottery artifacts provide for a telescopic view of another time or place, to see cultural behavior, custom, ideas and skills of the people. Pots had been highly valued and are beautiful in their own right. According to Udemé (2006) "pottery art reflects the technological trend and the development of the time of production". But when and how pottery started still remain unknown- Wangboje (1982) Ahuwan (1987), Ekong Fatunsin (1991), Agberia (1996; 2002), Bakinde (2006), Okuna & Umunna (2009), and Areo (2010) write that pottery is one of the oldest of all the surviving craft which has been practiced from pre-historic time to the present. From pottery, historical record can

be derived, not only from the pot shards found in archaeological sites but also the continued practice of the craft and its marriage to traditional beliefs.

Several other writers have also attempted to give some historical accounts of pottery, its emergence and development. In all these accounts, Agberia noted that the common denominator is the dating of pottery to the pre-historic time. Norton (1956), Bakar (1961), Chark (1977) and Fowowe (2004) took different positions; that pottery-making extends so far back in time that it is useless to attempt to place its beginnings in any one region. The general belief is that Neolithic man pioneered the art of pottery. Eyo (1975) and Igwilo (1983) share the opinion that the art of pottery has been in existence in Nigeria for many thousands of years, (15,000 – 10,000 BC) with the dawn of the Neolithic age. Shillington (1998) dated the evolution of pottery to the Stone Age period of human existence between 800B.C. Despite all the controversies about dates and origin of the art, Ibigbanmi (1975) sees pottery making as the oldest human efforts in crafts where ever clay is available. Norton is of the opinion that “one of the most remarkable things about pottery making is its almost universal association with the early man over the surface of the earth and because communication was practically non- existent, we are left to the conclusion that it evolved independently in many regions.

The earliest-known pottery objects are Gravettian figurines such as those discovered at Dolní Věstonice in the modern-day Czech Republic. The Venus figurine is a statuette of a nude female figure dated to 29,000–25,000 B.C. The earliest pottery vessels found include those excavated from the Yuchanyan Cave in southern China, dated from 16,000 B.C., Associated press (2009) and those found in the Amur River basin in the Russian Far East, dated from 14,000 B.C. Derevianko (2004) and Hunan (2009). See Figure 3:



Figure 3. Earliest known ceramics are the 8,000 BCE) Figurines that date to 29,000 to 25,000 BC Japan credit Tokyo National Museum Japan



Figure 4. Jomon pottery vessel (10,000-credit Tokyo National Museum

Other early pottery vessels include those made by the Incipient Jōmon people of Japan from around 10,500 B.C. Kainer (2003) and Diamond (1998). The term “Jōmon” means "cord-marked" in Japanese (fig. 4). Pottery was independently developed in Sub-Saharan Africa during the 11,000-10,000 B.C. Barnett & Hoopes (1995) and in South America during the 10,000 B.C.) Chinese ceramics has excelled in all categories in the history of making pottery. Shards have been found in China and Japan from a period between 12,000 to 16,000 years ago. Emmanuel (2010) Glazed Stoneware was created as early as the 15th century B.C. in China. Porcelain became a renowned Chinese export during the Tang Dynasty (618-906 B.C.) and subsequent dynasties.

In South Asia, pottery use in ancient India include areas now known as Pakistan and northwest India, during the Merhgarh Period II and III (5,500-4,800 B.C.) and (4,800-3,500 B.C.), known as the ceramic Neolithic and chalcolithic Period. The ed-Dur vessels have been found in a number of sites in the Indus Valley Civilization.

The earliest history of pottery production in the Near East can be divided into four periods, namely: The Hassuna period (7000-6500 B.C.), the Halaf period (6500-5500 B.C.), the Ubaid period (Mesopotamia sometime between 6,000 and 4,000 B.C. revolutionized pottery production. Specialized potters were then able to meet the expanding needs of the world's first cities. Aegean region, Civilization developed concurrently with the Fertile Crescent in the ancient Mediterranean islands around Greece from about 3200 to 1000 B.C. and carried to Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome that is considered the Classical era in the Western world. The arts of these cultures eventually became a hallmark for Europe and the New World. The Minoan pottery was characterized by elaborate painted decoration with natural themes.

The classical Greek culture began to emerge around 1000 B.C. featuring a variety of well crafted pottery which now included the human form as a decorating motif. The Etruscan pottery carried on the Greek pottery with its own variations; the Ancient Roman pottery started by copying Greek and Etruscan styles but soon developed a style of its own. The distinctive Red Samian ware of the Early Roman Empire was copied by regional potters throughout the Empire.

Islamic pottery followed the forms of the regions which the Muslims conquered. Eventually, however, there was cross-fertilization between the regions. This was most notable in the Chinese influences on Islamic pottery. Trade between China and Islamic nations took place via the system of trading posts over the lengthy Silk Road. Islamic nations imported stoneware and later porcelain from China. China imported the minerals for Cobalt blue from the Islamic ruled Persia to decorate their blue and white porcelain, which they then exported to the Islamic world. Unique Islamic Spanish forms were also developed; major emphasis in ceramic development in the Muslim world was the use of tiles and decorative.

Europe developed pottery at about the same time as in the Near East, (5500–4500 B.C.) These cultures and their pottery were eventually shaped by new cultural influences and technology with the invasions of ancient Rome and later by Islam. The Renaissance art of Europe was a melting of the art of Classical era and Islamic art.

The independent development of pottery in the Amerindian cultures started with their Archaic Era (3500–2000 B.C.), and into their Formative period (2000 BCE-200 CE). These cultures did not develop the stoneware, porcelain or glazes found in the old world.

In Africa, during the early Mediterranean civilizations of the Fertile Crescent, Egypt developed a unique non-clay-based high-fired ceramic which has come to be called Egyptian faience. During the Umayyad Caliphate of Islam, Egypt was a link between early center of Islam in the Near East and Iberia which led to the impressive style of pottery. Egypt early examples assigned to about 500 B.C. at Merinda and Taiyum Marceau et al (1997)

As for Sub-Saharan Africa, in 2007, Swiss archeologists discovered pieces of the oldest pottery in Africa in Central Mali, dating back to at least 9,500 B.C. The findings from the Borno area are the oldest dated known examples in Nigeria, assigned to about 6000 B.C. Allsworth – Jones. (1992). Other earlier Nigeria archaeological evidence as recorded by Kalilu, Akintonde and Ayodele, (2006) are: -

5500-4000 B.C.), and the Uruk period (4000-3100 B.C.). The invention of the potter's wheel in

Dutse Kongba, a rock shelter near Jos indicates that pots other ceramic wares were produced as early as 4000 B.C. York, (1978). Also, excavations by Shaw and Daniel (1984) associated ceramic wares, dated to about 3000 B.C., with a late Stone Age site at Iwo Eleru in the present Ondo state. Other late Stone Age sites associated with ceramic manufacture are rock shelter at Rop in Plateau State, Kagoro in Kaduna State, Ukpa in Abia State, Aba-Pele in Osun State and Iffe-Ijumu in Kogi State Fatunsin, (1992). The Nok culture has been assigned to 500 B.C. Fagg. (1990) while ancient Ife in Southwestern Nigeria has been assigned to around 1100 A.D. Shaw, (1978). The foregoing show that pottery and ceramic production was undoubtedly very wide in Nigeria as early as the Late Stone Age.

Pottery has helped in knowing a lot about the civilization of very many places in Nigeria such as the Nok Culture, Igbo Ukwu and Benin. Barley (1994) is of the opinion that “pottery is intimately connected with the social and cultural milieu that creates it”. While Igwilo referred to pottery as “the mirror of civilization,

2. Development Of Contemporary Nigerian Pottery

According to Agberia, the earliest efforts at revolutionizing pottery production in Nigeria are recorded by E. W. Duckworth (1938). This attempt was by a British potter, Mr. D. Roberts in 1904. His efforts met with no substantial success. For nine years at Ibadan he attempted to train some male

folks in new pottery art fusing clay and glazes. This experiment did not succeed as a result of two main reasons. First, the tradition of pottery making was singularly in the hands of women who essentially produced pots on part-time basis. Secondly, the trainee potters could not cope with technical complexities in pottery production.

Between 1930 and 1938 another futile attempt was made by K. C. Murray in the Eastern region of Nigeria at Umuahia. Although he recorded failures in the aspects of craft pottery, his efforts however yielded results in the general art curriculum development which he established for the teacher's colleges, as recorded by Evelyn Brown (1966), Bab Fafunwa (1974), Idowu (2006) and Danladi (2002). In August 1951 a British potter called Mr. Michael Cardew established a pottery training centre in Suleja recorded by Telkins (1971), Ahuwan (2003) and Ozioma (2004). Cardew was invited by the then Northern Regional government to set up a training school where local potters from the rural villages all over the Northern Nigeria could be trained in modern methods of making pottery using locally available raw materials. Prominent among the trainees recruited at the centre was a woman Hadjiya Ladi Kwali who brought both fame and glory to the centre and the entire Nigerian nation.

In the words of Cardew remarked in Brown (1966)

“We have four women potters arrive here in 1964. They all come from districts near Abuja because women from distant places can't dig themselves up and leave their families. They are doing well but Ladi is still *prima inter pares*”.

Between 1958 and 1972 Cardew organized an exhibition for Ladi Kwali in Great Britain, Germany and America where she gave her lecture on art too. Her contribution to ceramics earned her distinguished national and international awards. The achievements of Ladi Kwali at the pottery training centre are important not only from the angle of pottery as an art but also from how traditions have been adapted for modern use. The marriage of the indigenous and modern techniques inherent in her pottery art helps as a model for experiments aimed at managing the two traditions of art in aesthetics with modern technology in contemporary Nigerian pottery.

Following this initiative and the success recorded pottery workshops and ceramics centers were established by ex-trainees from these early centers between 1960 and 1984. Different centers were established such as the Jacaranda and Maraba pottery in Kaduna, Ekiti, Okigwe, Oji River, Badagry and Pidev in Warri, between 1970 and 1990 different institution started ceramics departments, e.g. ABU, Ife, Nsukka, Auchu Polytechnic and Colleges of Education. More and more students were turned out. Just when pottery workshops were developing, Nigeria witnessed a tremendous increase in the establishment of new techniques of mass-production. These were reported by D. W. Mcrow (1955) established at Korodu for the manufacture of tea pots, jug, cups, saucers, plates etc. other ceramics industries are Riceware, Ilupeju-Lagos, modern ceramics at Umuahia, in late 70's we have ceramics manufacturers ltd. In Kano and Royal ceramics Abuja specialized for the production of sanitary wares. Between 1978 and 1985 other ceramics industries established were Quality ceramics ltd. Uyo, Plateau ceramics ltd. Jos, Shagamu, Ipetumodu, Ede and Sokoto. Bricks and refectory companies also sprang up such as Ezenachi, Enugu, Maiduguri, Bauchi, Kaduna, Ibadan, etc.

By 1984 when Ladi Kwali died, modern pottery practice had become firmly rooted among ex-trainees of the pottery centre. Among those recruited is one madam Asibi Ido who worked with Ladi Kwali for 26 years and a senior pottery instructor at the Dakin-Gwari, a special room for the production of all the randa and tulu pots. Other grandaunts of the centre in the era of Ladi Kwali are now in towns and communities still holding forte. In Minna, Danlami Aliu works with the ceramics centre. In Zaria, Prof. Abbashiya Ahuwan and Mohammed Tankko Asjada, teaching and working at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Mr. Kofy Athey (now retired) and Saidu Na'Allah are in Jos, Augustina Kauta in A. T. C. Akwaga, Michael O'Brien (also retired) A.O. Ike in Okigwe, Sam Pugala in Uganda and others. In all these, there is no doubt that the popularity which the training centre gained through Ladi Kwali had helped to establish pottery workshops and factories.

In 1990 Abbashiya Ahuwan and other lecturers in A.B.U. Zaria tried to form ceramics academic association which was a failure. Along the line, between 1985 and 1987, a British woman Joy Voisey and Ben Drew first visited Nigeria in Borno state to work in Bama, a technical Teachers Training Programme where they built oil Kiln for firing. In 1987 – 1990 Joy returned to U.k. where she arranged a commonwealth grant for Ayuba Gadzama. During this period Joy worked as an advisory teacher in the U.K. In U.K. Joy met Tony Ogogo, a Nigerian who owns and runs the Heritage ceramics

workshops in London. Tony, Ben and Joy became interested in the prospects of a resource centre in Nigeria for the development of ceramics. Between 1990 and 1992 Joy returned to Nigeria to assess, as far as possible, the major set-backs facing potters at that time. And where they felt their main problems lay. Margaret Mama of jacaranda Pottery, Kaduna, was introduced to the ideas at that time and she was able to help set up links with the British High Commission in Nigeria, University ceramics departments and many individuals. In 1993 the second commonwealth foundation grant was negotiated for Mr. Umar Sulaiman (ceramics lecturer in Industrial Design, A.B.U. Zaria) to study semi-industrial ceramics in U.K. from April – July 1993. Ben and Joy traveled to Nigeria with general questionnaire on the possibility of establishing a Resource Centre for ceramics in Nigeria. Joy founded the ceramics Voice in Nigeria as a forum for dealing with contemporary ceramics issues in Nigeria.

The establishment and operations of some selected cottage ceramic industries which were in operational as at then in Nigeria are Maraba pottery at Kaduna, Dajo pottery at Markudi, Buhari pottery and Ushafa pottery both at the Federal Capital Territory, Sweet art Nigeria Ltd situated in Lagos, (Atamora pottery) close to Ikire in Osun state, Uzzi ceramics in Benin, Pot-purit Pottery center located in Lagos, Saubana and son's Pottery at Ibadan and Heritage ceramics established in Lagos etc.



Figure 5. Picture of pioneering Exhibitors at British Council 1996. (Credit uzzi 1996)

TABLE 1: LIST OF PIONEERING EXHIBITORS AT THE EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA CERAMICS, THE BRITISH COUNCIL, KADUNA 1ST – 7TH FEB., 1996

Reg. No	Name	State	Address	Status
96/CP/001	Abubakar lawal	Abuja	Arts Council, P.M.B.199	Corporate Body
96/CP/002	Capital ceramics	Abuja	P.O. B0x 656 Suleja	"
96/CP/003	Okoeguale O. A.	Edo	Federal Poly. Auchi	Individual potter
96/CP/004	Alasan Shaibu	Edo	"	"
96/CP/005	Ibude Ikechukwu	Edo	"	"
96/CP/006	Ohimai John	Edo	"	"
96/CP/007	Uzzi Festus	Edo	33 1 st Republic lane U/ Sakpoba rd, Benin City	"
96/CP/008	Margeret E. Mama	Kaduna	Jacarada Pottery Kaduna	Corporate Body
96/CP/009	Umaru Aliyu	Kaduna	Maraba Pottery Box 3213 Kaduna	"
96/CP/010	Cuthbert Ilika	Kaduna	305 Dantina palace 25 Yakwo st Kaduna	Individual potter
96/CP/011	Ester Dokyoung	Kaduna	National Museum	"
96/CP/012	Suzia Shok	Kaduna	" "	"
96/CP/013	Dahiru Makama	Kanu	Sch. Of Technology P.M.B. 3348 Kanu	"
96/CP/014	Fatima Bello	Kanu	"	"
96/CP/015	Jide Ayodela	Katsina	Fed. College of Technology P.M.B.2041	"
96/CP/016	Rosemary Ojugbana	Lagos	1 Adeshine Close, Iwaya Onika, Yaba	"
96/CP/017	Akintude Oke	Lagos	" "	"
96/CP/018	Levi Obem Yakubu	Benue	Dajo pottery P. O. Box 2242 ,Makurdi	Corporate
96/CP/019	Sam O. Egbadho	Niger	Ceramic Centre P.M.B 92 Minna	Individual potter
96/CP/020	Okpan Oyeoku	Enugu	Universityof Nigeria, Nsukka	"
96/CP/021	Ali Vincent	Enugu	" "	"
96/CP/022	Jeremaial Tuhenba	Enugu	F. C. E., P.M.B. 1038, Obudu	"
96/CP/023	David Olukotu	Kogi	F.C.E., P.M.B. 26 Okene	"
96/CP/024	Habila Gukas	Plateau	F.C.E. P.M.B. 27 Pankshin	""
96/CP/025	Royal Ceramics	Abuja	P.O.Box 1141, Suleja	Corporate
96/CP/026	Dave Ampah	Kaduna	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	Individual potter
96/CP/027	Sanusi Abdulkadir	"	"	"
96/CP/028	Umar Sullayman	"	"	"
96/CP/029	Eric Okpoko	"	"	"
96/CP/030	James Ewele	"	"	"
96/CP/031	Elizabeth Ewele	"	"	"
96/CP/032	Abbas M. Ahuwan	"	"	"
96/CP/033	Mike Aluwong	"	"	"
96/CP/034	Adele Garkide	"	"	"
96/CP/035	Ozioma Ugbekile	Enugu	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	Student
96/CP/036	Patience Ugbekile Bala L.	Lagos	Yaba Tech. P.M.B.2011, Lagos	"
96/CP/037	Abubakar	Kaduna	Jakaranda pottery, Kaguna	Individual potter
96/CP/038	Haruna Hussein	Kaduna	"	"

In conclusion the long tradition of fine ceramics table ware manufacturing, to bricks, roofing tiles, wall and floor tiles, sanitary ware and clay pipes, the ceramic industry in Nigeria plays a major role in our daily environment. Technical ceramics are now used in a whole range of high-tech products including computers, jet engines, lasers, radars thermal imaging devices and artificial joints, to list but a few. Equally important is the abrasive industry producing grinding tools. Last not least, the manufacture of any steel, cement or glass is impossible without refractory ceramics. In fact, the importance of ceramics to everyday life in the 21st century cannot be overstated.

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