

# POTTERY TYPOLOGY AND USES AT HUNKUYI IN KUDAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KADUNA STATE

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## **Abstract**

*This paper is an ethnographic survey conducted at Hunkuyi in Kudan Local Government Area. At first it briefly defined the meaning of Pottery-making, pottery typology and discussed their importance and significance in archaeological reconstruction. It also list and explain the various types of pots used in the Hunkuyi area and the procedure involved in the making of these objects. Finally it explained how it aided the understanding of the technology and the impact of pottery making on the socio-economic life of the people in Hunkuyi.*

## **Introduction**

Basically, pottery is used for the storage, preparation and consumption of food. It fulfils an important basic need of human society. It also remains a very important craft in Nigeria. Nigerian pots range from tiny and small containers with lids used for cosmetic oil and local pomade to big and large water storage pots. The size and shape of a pot is determined largely by its use.

When fired, clay becomes highly resistant to decay and becomes almost indestructible. Therefore pottery is one of the most reliable and durable artifact. It is also unique in the sense that whenever and wherever it is found, it has its own language and can reflect accurately the historical point in time. According to Bakinde (2006) pottery speaks volumes concerning the culture of a people. This is because most pottery were manufactured based on their utilitarian value. Behavioural patterns such as religious lifestyle and health care delivery system of a people can be reconstructed from an in-depth study of their pottery because potters manufacture their wares based on need and purpose.

To the archaeologist, pottery is very important because it has a high surviving rate in archaeological context than other artifacts such as bones, leather, shell and metals. It is

also a very good source of information to the archaeologist particularly for the purpose of differentiating between locally made vessels and vessels traded into an area. This helps the archaeologist to trace the form of cultural contact which existed within a given society or region in the past, especially in terms of trade, early population movement, marital contacts and diffusion of ideas. Pottery can also be used to analyze or reconstruct early agricultural beginnings, and also to establish chronology.

## **Pottery Typology and uses**

The data for this paper was gathered through direct and participant observation of the processes and methods of pottery making at hunkuyi from Mallam Hassan in 2007. This is in line with what Ahuwan (2014) referred to as the Hunkuyi experiment as cited by Jari and Gambo (2015). Ahuwan recounted that he learnt clay preparation, the use of perforated drums and firing to obtain an interesting finishing from Mallam Idi, his private teacher. The present writer obtained an enormous amount of data through her interactions with potters and this will be recounted as follows:

## **Raw Material Procurement**

Pottery is the ceramic act of making pottery ware, of which major types include earthenware, stoneware and porcelain. The

place where such wares are made is also called a pottery (plural "potteries"). The Hunkuyi potters have no special workshop ("*magina*"). The art of pottery making takes place outside or within the potter's compound. Also the finished pots are kept in the "Zaure" before and after firing. The "Zaure" is a Hausa word for the entrance room in every compound. It is like a rest room and can also be used as "*magma*" (workshop).

In Hunkuyi, the basic raw material for pottery-making is clay. There are two kinds of clay used by Hunkuyi potters. They are known as "*Yambu*" and "*Taboo*", which differs in colour depending on the nature of the parent rock. Clay is defined as a fine grained earthy material that develops plasticity when wet and loses its water of chemical combination when fired. The "*Yambu*" is found at Masafa about two kilometers west of Hunkuyi. The "*Taboo*" another type of raw material used for making pottery is actually a loamy soil mined at Arewaci about one kilometer north of Hunkuyi. The implement used in obtaining the clay are the small hoe, which is used in digging, and a container for packing the clay home.

### **Typology**

Typology can be seen as a classification according to general type, especially in archaeology, psychology or the social sciences. Typological analysis is the classification of material culture into types based on similarities in form, construction, style, content, and or use. Before the advent of modern dating techniques, typological analysis provides the chief basis for dating material objects.

Ceramic objects have been dated relative to each other based on typological or stylistic shift in a material culture through time (seriation), one of the earliest seriation techniques used is an indexing Scheme to measure the similarity between artifacts. Today, computer-based statistical methods, including multidimensional analysis, and cluster analysis are commonly used to date object based on stylistic similarities. Thermoluminescence (TL) dating is used to date crystalline materials which has either been heated or exposed to sunlight. Thermoluminescence is used for material ware when radiocarbon dating is not available. Its use is common in the authentication of old

ceramic wares for which it gives the appropriate date of the last firing (Sharer and Ashmore, 2003).

### **The People of Hunkuyi**

According to Mallam Isah Maigini at Augwan Danzanga and Alhaji Aminu Dalhatu Sarkin, the chief of Hunkuyi, Hunkuyi village has existed for about four hundred and eighteen years. The few Christians found in the village are the Igbo who engage in trade. During the Jihad of 1804, Usman Danfodio posted one of his sons called Mohamadu Jade the first Fulani or village head to Hunkuyi. Before this there had been several village heads who ruled the village at a time before Islam came to be accepted by the inhabitants.

The word Hunkuyi simply means "fat", "big" or "a giant". It is also synonymous with a chief or village head. "Hunkuyi was the name of the first village head of the settlement. He was said to have discharged his duties faithfully and was loyal to his people.

### **Location**

Hunkuyi is a traditional Hausa farming community about 7km North of Zaria and located along the old Kano road, on a plateau of about 670-56m above sea level. It falls within the present day Kudan Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Hunkuyi lies on latitude 11' 16' 06"N and longitude 070 39'E. It is a clustered village system pattern. The houses are built with locally made sun dried bricks, made of mud and dried grass. The roofs are also made of mud, except for some that have corrugated iron-sheets. The architectural framework of these houses shows an Arabic civilization with darning shaped mud roofs. There are also outlets on the side of the building to collect run off rain water. This is to prevent the collapse of the building due to prolonged absorption of water.

Hunkuyi potters produce a variety of vessels and these include different groups classified into two categories. In the first category are those referred to as pots? Pots are vessels that have their rim diameters shorter than their projected or actual heights. In this groups are pots like "Tukunyan Magani" a small globular vessel with a short inverted rim. The mouth of the vessel is wide and has a clay cover made to fit. The rim diameter measures 11cm while

the height of the vessel is about 17cm. used in storing medicinal herbs. Some pots in these category are Tukunyan na hufe uwa, Butan kasa, Tulu, and Tukunyan Miya

The second category consists of three groups referred to as bowls. Bowls generally are those vessels that their rim diameters are larger than their projected or actual height. They are vessels like "Kasko" it is a small open mouth neck-less vessel. The mouth of the vessel is wider than the base. The bottom of the vessel is spherical. And the rim diameter measured 20cm while the height is about 18cm. Also, "Kwataniyya" is an open-mouthed hemispherical vessel with a thick squared rim-lip. The rim diameter is 48cm and the height is about 49cm. it is used for post-natal bathing by women who have just given birth. "Asusu" is another vessel shaped like a ball with a slit at the top through which money is dropped into the vessel. It is used as a piggy bank. The height is about 32cm and the circumference is 49cm.

#### **The Impact of Pottery making on the Socio-Economic life of the People in Hunkuyi**

Pottery making at Hunkuyi was chosen to document this indigenous technology and explain how its knowledge can enhance our understanding of the significant role it plays in the development of the society as well as in the life of the people. Pottery has become important in providing various vessels for household, commercial and religions functions. Earthenware vessels have become objects of commerce within Hunkuyi and neighbouring village whose inhabitants come to Hunkuyi to buy from potters. Because Hunkuyi is of great advantage in terms of trade, it has continued to be a trading centre right from historical times up to the present for the surrounding settlements like Ungwan Damuga, Ungwan Shika, Bassawa in Zaria and environs. In Hunkuyi, most of the vessels used by the people for cooking soup, food and for storing water are made of pottery. Vessels are mostly bowls and pots of various sizes and they have saved the society the cost of purchasing metal vessels for the same purposes. Pots are also used for the storage of agricultural seeds like millet, beniseed, maize and so on. Big pots containing these seeds are sealed at the mouth with mud to avoid insect from getting into them, which has

helped the people in the farming activities over the years and has also saved them money which could have been used in buying modern chemical for preservation. Though the economic strength of the people of Hunkuyi depends mainly on the sale of agricultural produce, but the impact of pottery making on the people of Hunkuyi is also a very great importance. Besides, potters who produce these vessels sell them for money at home and nearby markets like Tashan Matasha, Na'uche, Danja and son on. This has made them to experience some degree of wealth especially during dry season when they are not engaged in farming activities.

This impact can also be seen in the way it has enabled most of the people to become gainfully employed. The potters alone cannot by themselves obtain enough fire wood and cow dung often required for the firing of pottery. So they engage other people in the community or neighbouring villages in the supply of these finishing raw materials required for pottery making. The impact of this industry is also demonstrated in the way they bury their dead bodies. The size of pot broken and used for burial depends on the size of the grave. Pots especially a complete pot is divided into (2) parts and arranged in a particular pattern that will not allow sand to make any contact with dead body. Some of the pots are used for the burial of the placenta immediately a woman gives birth to a baby. The pot is usually covered and buried in the compound or in the pit toilet. Some of the small pots can also be used for keeping medicine. These pots are called "*Tukunyan Magani*". Also a special medicine used to stop thieves from entering the house is usually kept in pot and buried in the compound. Burial pots can be distinguished from domestic pot. This is because pots used for burials are not decorated and are not usually slipped. The body diameter of pots used in burials is wider than the rim diameter. Also pots broken during firing are not discarded. They are kept within the household and used for certain functions like feeding animal and used as tiles around the compound. This can also aid the archaeologist in interpreting when he comes across such findings.

Functional reasons for the differences in the shape of pots or pottery vessels have been observed in Hunkuyi because the pottery for

eating meals are different in shape and size from the ones used for storing water. This could be as a result of the difference in functions. The bowls used for serving meals are wide-mouthed vessels with hemispherical bodies because the wide-mouth permits several people to eat from the same bowl at the same time. On the other hand, vessels for storing and fetching water have mouths with averted rims and constricted necks to avoid dirt from falling into the water and to prevent spilling. These functional differences could give clues for archaeological interpretation because potsherds found in the archaeological record that have rims that are similar in shape with what has been described above could be interpreted better with the aid of this ethnographic record.

Beds made of clay were discovered during this research. The bed is rectangular in shape. It measures about 180cm long, 65cm wide and 48cm high with an opening at front side. The opening is a fire place for warming the bed during the harmattan and rainy seasons. A mat is spread on the bed and pillows are also used, in the archaeological context if it possesses the characteristic mentioned above and is found in a habitation site. It was discovered that the potter's workshop or located in or around his compound. He carries out his potting activities in front of his house or at the entrance hut known as "Zaure" or within his compound. This information will go a long way to help archaeologist recognize workshops during excavations when one come across any. Among other things found in workshops are fully completed pots, potting tools like the mound (upturned pot), raw materials for making pots such as clay and the carved stone implement used for smoothing ("dindinge"). These are likely to survive in the archaeological context. Potting tools like the wooden paddle ("madadi") the decorated instrument ("mazaniya") and the animal skin ("pata") are not likely to survive because they are made from organic materials.

Pottery making in Hunkuyi has demonstrated that clays from different sources can be combined to produce the required raw material for the successful manufacture of earthen wares. These demonstrate that the

pottery makers are able to explore their environment and use appropriate means and ideas to produce raw materials with the appropriate qualities for their industrial needs. This could also help figure out the geology of the area where the various clays were obtained. In the case of Hunkuyi the clays were obtained from the immediate environment. This suggests how intelligent the potters have been to figure out the usefulness of these materials for use in the potting industry and to satisfy their industrial needs. This has also provided information to caution archaeologists to realize that clays from the same pot may have come from different sources rather than from a single source. This information is important for interpretation of results of mineralogical analyses.

Finally, pottery-making in Hunkuyi has demonstrated the various techniques employed in decorating pottery. For example, the Zig-zag roulettes found on excavated pottery in the Zaria Region is now known to have been achieved by the use of "mazaniya" which consists of a string wound around a cylindrical piece of wood. However, a lot of improvements need to be made so as to make the finished products of the traditional industry effectively compete with modern ceramic. Such an improvement will also help to entice the younger folk to learn pottery manufacture and thereby preserve this important aspect of the people's culture and heritage.

### **Conclusion**

The potting industry at Hunkuyi is an example of indigenous technology and of the application of culturally-determined and directed scientific knowledge of practical use. This is done through the harnessing of available raw materials in the environment towards local production. With this in view, the researcher wishes to make the following recommendations: The local government should encourage people to develop their skills more and obtain useful pieces of advice from the Art and Culture section of the Local Government Area. The Local Government should also make sure that pottery is taught as a craft in schools in the Hunkuyi area. Pupils should be taken to the potting centre to learn the practical ways of making pots.



Plate 2: Showing *Yambu* (Sandy soil)



Plate: Showing *Tabo* (Loamy soil)



Plate 1: Showing Hunkuyi Village

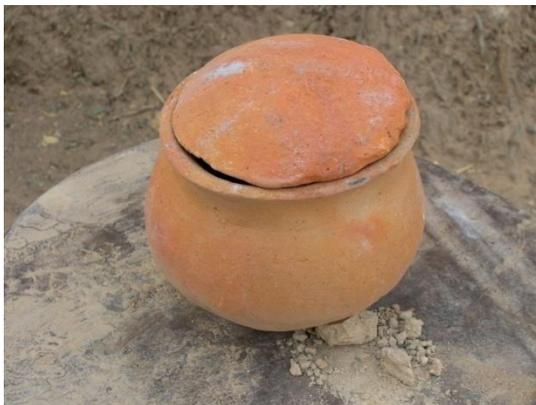


Plate 21: *Tukunyan Magani*

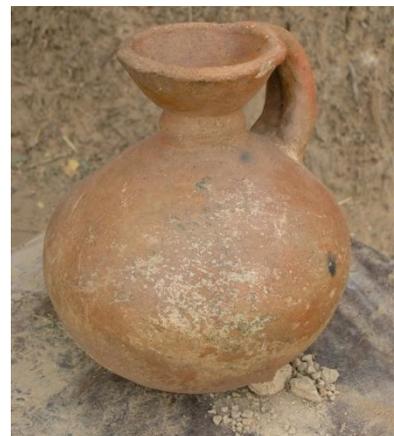


Plate 22: *Butan Kasa*

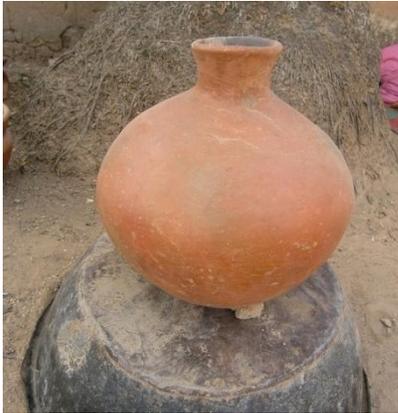


Plate 23: *Tulu*



Plate 24: *Tukunyan Miya*

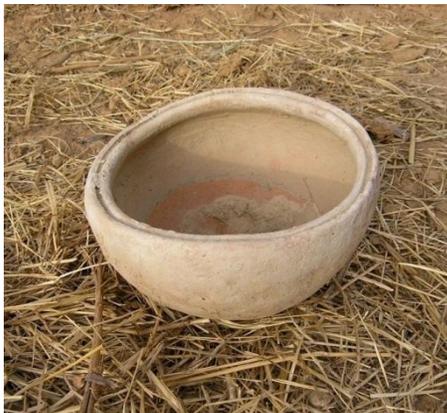


Plate 25: *Kasko*



Plate 26: *Kwataniyya*



Plate 27: *Asusu*



Plate 28: Showing bed made of Clay

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