AN ETHNO-ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY OF POTTERY VESSELS FROM THE SAUNYAMA TERRITORY IN NORTH EASTERN ZIMBABWE

By

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APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certifies that he has read and recommended this dissertation to the Department of Archaeology, Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies at Midlands State University for acceptance as a research project entitled: ***An ethno-archaeological study of pottery vessels from the Saunyama territory in North-Eastern Zimbabwe,*** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Archaeology, Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies in the Faculty of Arts.

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I **Nyamushosho Robert Tendai** declare that; ***An ethno-archaeological study of pottery vessels from the Saunyama territory in North- Eastern Zimbabwe*** is my own work that has not been submitted for an award of a similar or any other degree in any other institution of higher learning.

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DEDICATION

To God and my loving mother

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The success of this work is attributed to a number of individuals and institutions. To begin with lam greatly indebted to *Jehovah Ebenezer* who led me this far. Had it not been you Lord surely where would i be? You stood by me in all trials and tribulations. Surely you are so amazing Lord for indeed i am a living testimony of your great love for mankind.

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All views, errors and opinions are entirely my responsibility.

ABSTRACT

The Nyanga archaeological complex has been linked to a number of contemporary ethnic groups that include the Saunyama. These groups have been accredited to as the terrace builders of the complex but however this has been mostly perpetuated on the basis of incomplete archaeological inquiry and oral traditions. Such a scenario is the case of the Saunyama where archaeologists and historians have developed the archaeological identity of the Saunyama in relation to the Nyanga complex on the basis of incomplete archaeological enquiry and oral traditions hence their accounts remain hazy and fragmented. Surprisingly amongst other sources of ethnoarchaeology there is some evidence to confirm this link between the Saunyama and the hilltop settlements of Mt Muozi, an early phase of the Nyanga complex though this has not been proven. Given such a context in which Saunyama oral traditions have been given much precedence following the presence of 'their' sacred sites in this ancient cultural landscape. This study comes in with an attempt to develop a ceramic ethno-archaeological comparative study of archaeological complete pottery vessels situated at 'their' shrine of Muozi and ethnographic complete pottery vessels consumed by their descendants as one of the possibilities that could assist in verifying this link. This study portrays the prowess of ceramic ethno-archaeology in solving archaeological problems as it successfully confirms the link between the contemporary Saunyama and hilltop settlements of the Nyanga complex whereby stylistic and decoration attributes from both assemblages greatly show high levels of continuity from the archaeological record to the ethnographic present even though some changes are notable. The study also crafts the humanistic side of the story that had lacked in most archaeological texts as concluded by Beach (1980).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AD	Anno Domino (In the year of our Lord)
DA	District Administrator
DIHP	Discontinuous Incised Herringbone Pattern
EFCs	Early Farming Communities
EIA	Early Iron Age
FDGs	Focus Group Discussions
IHSL	Incised Horizontal Single Lines
INCN	Incision
LFCs	Late Farming Communities
LIA	Late Iron Age
LPRVHR/R	Lattice Pattern of Raised Vertical and Horizontal Ridges/Ribs
PNCT	Punctates
PNCTN	Punctation
RDGN	Ridging

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Ceramics have been one of the most forms of archaeological evidence that have been extensively exploited by archaeologists to address technological changes as well as movement and behaviour of societies in the archaeological record of Africa. Description and characterisation of pottery has also assisted in establishing cultural affiliations of these societies in both prehistoric and historic eras (Caton-Thompson 1931; Summers 1958 and Huffman1976). However, it appears that much of the research by then became largely concentrated on the ceramics rather than the makers of the pottery hence Beach (1980: xvii) concluded that,

"Too many archaeological texts in the past have given me the impression that the countryside was inhabited by pots rather than people".

The same sentiments were echoed by other scholars like Hall (1983) cited in Lindahl and Matenga (1995:5) who argued that ceramics had been persistently used to support the Bantu migration theory to the extent that one would imagine if they were, "*Bantu speaking pots*". Post Processual archaeologists and anthropologists now realized this shortfall hence the need to complement archaeology with ethnographic studies arose. For instance Pikirayi (1997, 1999 and 2007) advocated for ceramists to go beyond typology when it came to analysis of ceramics and to understand from the onset that these ceramics did carry with them social messages for which archaeologists were supposed to understand first the theory of communication so as to deduce the messages secreted in these prehistoric potteries. This had to involve studying of contemporary traditional societies, aligned to the archaeological record focusing on aspects like technology, taxonomy, ethnicity, vessel function, symbolism, style, recycling and disposal hence the outcome would serve as an analogy to vessels presented in the archaeological record. Henceforth the similarities and differences from these comparisons would then be used either to recreate the possible lifecycle of these vessels or cultural and technological contexts in which they operated as well as past human behaviour portrayed in the archaeological record and establishing cultural continuity or change.

Emanating from a ceramic ethno-archaeological perspective this research comes in by attempting to develop a comparative study of archaeological complete pots and bowels from the site of Mount Muozi and ethnographic pots and bowls consumed by the contemporary Saunyama community which are both situated in Nyanga district, north eastern Zimbabwe. The results of this study are expected to assist in authenticating the archaeological identity and historical connection of the Saunyama to the hilltop settlements of the Nyanga archaeological complex which has been mostly speculated on the basis of oral traditions and incomplete archaeological enquiry (see Soper 2002, 2006 and 2007) It is also the motivation of this study to go beyond typology by developing a diachronic perspective of pottery use-life and symbolism from the ethnographic present into the archaeological past of the Saunyama so as to demonstrate continuity or change from the possible cultural context in which the Muozi assemblage could have operated from in the archaeological record.

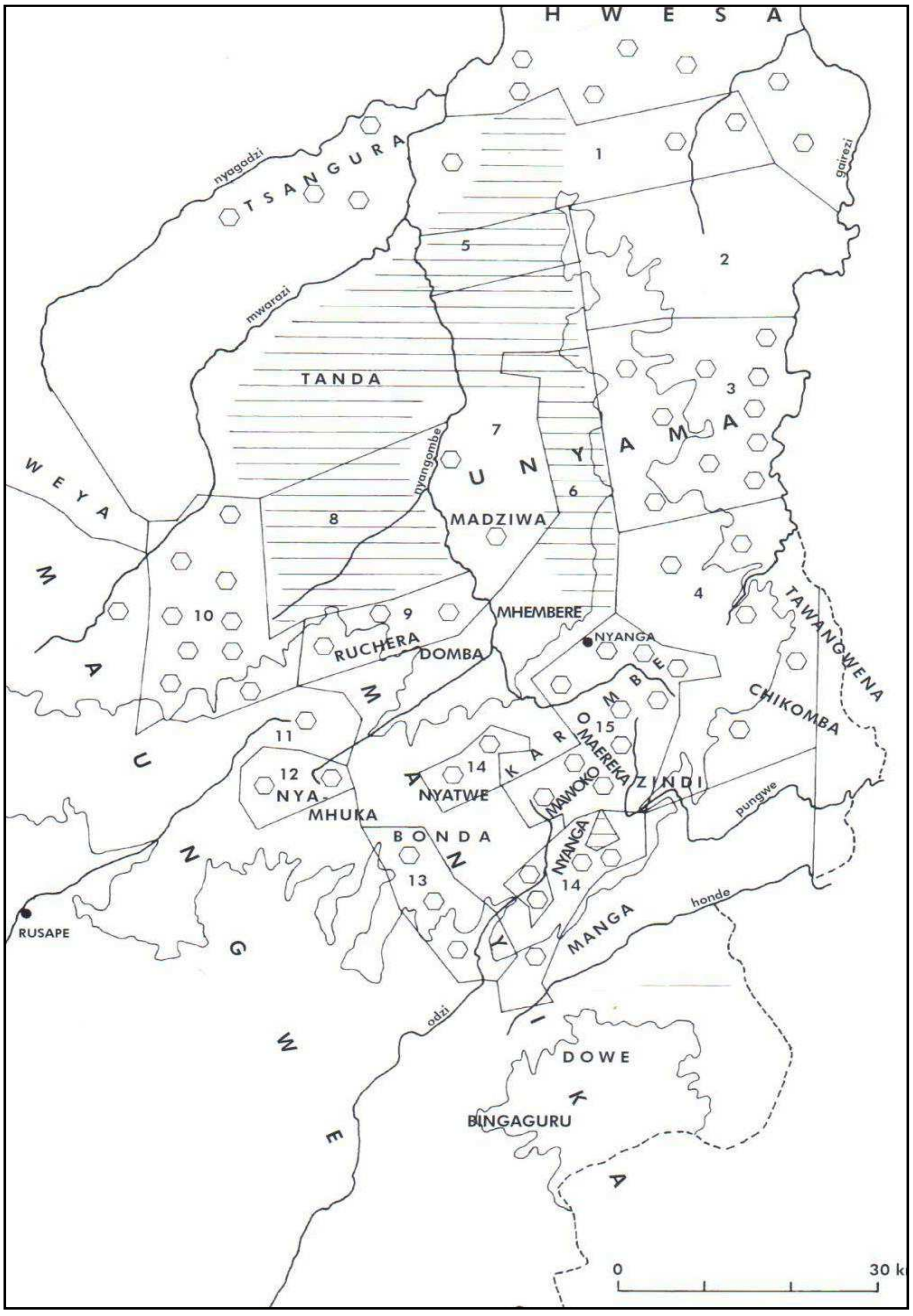
1.2. Background to the study

In terms of potter communities, the Nyanga complex was initially inhabited by the Early Farming Communities (EFCs) in the 1st millennium AD and their ceramics were characterised as Ziwa ceramics which were decorated using the comp stamping technique (Soper 2002 and 2006). Later the Ziwa-ware was replaced by a unique cultural tradition in the 2nd millennium AD which produced a totally different pottery that bore no resemblance to either the Ziwa-ware or other Late Farming Communities (LFCs) such as the contemporary Msengezi and Harare traditions (Soper 2006). The only promising possible connection could be in the adjacent Mozambican districts which are yet to be fully explored archaeologically (Huffman 2007; Soper 2007). Nevertheless this kind of pottery became widely characterised as Nyanga pottery since it had less decorations and unique design which only presents a cultural continuity with the later phases of the complex (see Soper 2002, 2006 and 2007).

Among the LFCs dynasties in which the Nyanga complex is attributed to are the Saunyama. These are one of the local communities among the Manyika and the Maungwe that reside in the heart of the complex (see Figure 1.1) Initially Summers (1958) and Beach (1980) attributed the origins of the Saunyama ancestry to the *Barwe* of a *Sena* dialect based in Mozambique (this was concluded from a linguistics perspective) however Beach (1996) and (2002) later diverted from this perspective since this did not correspond with oral traditions he largely discovered from accounts of early colonialists concerning the Saunyama which attributed their dynasty to the 18th century exodus from which their ancestors are believed to

have migrated from the *'Nembire'* in Mutapa state which was also perpetuated by Soper (2002), Mupira (2003) and Shenjere (2003).

Figure 1.1: Distribution of the Saunyama and other polities that reside in the complex



Source: Modified from Beach (2002:226)

Thus basing on oral history these scholars more of attributed the complex to the Saunyama and other polities whose ancestors are said to have migrated from northern Zimbabwe. This is summarised by Soper (2002:3) who asserts that,

"As Beach points out there are no indications of any major migrations or population replacement, so we must attribute the complex to relatively recent ancestors, even though little direct memory of the archaeological remains seems to be preserved. The core area of the complex north of Nyanga town falls within the territory of the Nyama people under Chief Saunyama...There appears to have been little basic change in the distribution of these political units for several centuries and the genealogies of their ruling dynasties extend at least well back into the 18th century in the case of the Saunyama and considerably further for others".

However Huffman (2007) disagrees with the views of the aforementioned scholars and re-addresses Summers (1958) argument which favoured a *Barwe* ancestry for the Saunyama. He asserts that,

"The previous identification therefore has better support, the Nyanga complex is most likely the product of Barwe people, some of whom have since become shona. Compared to shona, the Barwe were recent inhabitants of Zimbabwe. The major language groups today in South Africa have somewhat greater time depth." Huffman (2007:428)

Given this context the Saunyama seems to be hardly connected to the archaeological settlements of the Nyanga complex. However basing on oral testimonies and occupational debris associated with the archaeological site of Mount Muozi (which appear to have been occupied throughout all the phases of the complex) as well as speculation that the Saunyama are believed to have introduced the culture of fort erection, the archaeological identity of the Saunyama as part and parcel of the terrace builders of the Nyanga complex appears to be true especially when considering further documentary research that was carried out by Beach (2002), Mupira (2003), Shenjere (2003) and Soper (2006). According to Mupira (2003) Mt Muozi was the territory on which the Saunyama first established themselves upon their arrival from northern Zimbabwe. Up to today the territory is regarded as their most sacred shrine and this archaeological site is believed to have been used as a centre for rainmaking and chief installation ceremonies as well as a burial zone for Saunyama chiefs' right from the period of their establishment. It is in these ceremonies that probably pottery vessels were left at the sacred site and this is confirmed by the presence of a collection of not less than 34

complete and partly broken clay pots and bowls that suggests the site to probably have been used for a long period of time as further elaborated by Murimbika (2006), Chiwaura (2007) and Soper (2007).

These pots potrayed in Figure 1.2 were 'discovered' as a result of the archaeological surveys that were carried out between 1995 and 1997 under the research project, *"Agricultural History and Archaeology in Nyanga and the adjacent Districts of Zimbabwe"* which was pioneered by the British Institute in Eastern Africa and the University of Zimbabwe. Soper (2002) notes that these pots were only photographed hence their provenance was never disturbed. He further asserts that these more or less complete vessels demonstrate both cultural continuity and discontinuity as they show some similarities and differences to the assemblages that were excavated from other archaeological sites within the complex.

Figure 1.2: Part of the pottery vessels situated at the archaeological site of Mt Muozi

Source: Soper (2006: Back cover)

Another oral tradition recited by Soper (2002), (2006) and (2007), (which is also attested by Mupira 2003 and Shenjere 2003) linked these vessels with the archaeological site of Mt Muozi as a remnant package of appeasement ceremonies that were carried out to appease the avenging spirit of a great medicine man and rainmaker by the name Muozi. He is said to have lived within the mountain range and it is believed he became so popular that Chief Saunyama by then felt threatened hence he murdered him which in the long term brought negative

consequences in the form of a curse on the Saunyama dynasty. This is said to have resulted in numerous droughts until they paid reparations to appease the avenging spirits, of which they are believed to be still practicing up to date.

Given this background the archaeological identity of the Saunyama in connection with the Nyanga complex still remains hazy since it has been mostly perpetuated on the basis oral traditions. Surprisingly amongst other sources of ethnoarchaeology there is some evidence to confirm this link between the Saunyama and the hilltop settlements of Mt Muozi, an early phase of the Nyanga complex though this has not been proven. Given a context in which Saunyama oral traditions have been given much precedence following the presence of 'their' sacred sites in this ancient cultural landscape. A comparative study of archaeological complete pottery vessels situated at 'their' shrine of Muozi and ethnographic complete pottery vessels consumed by their descendants is suggested as the one of the possibilities that could assist in verifying this link.

1.3. Physiography of the area under study

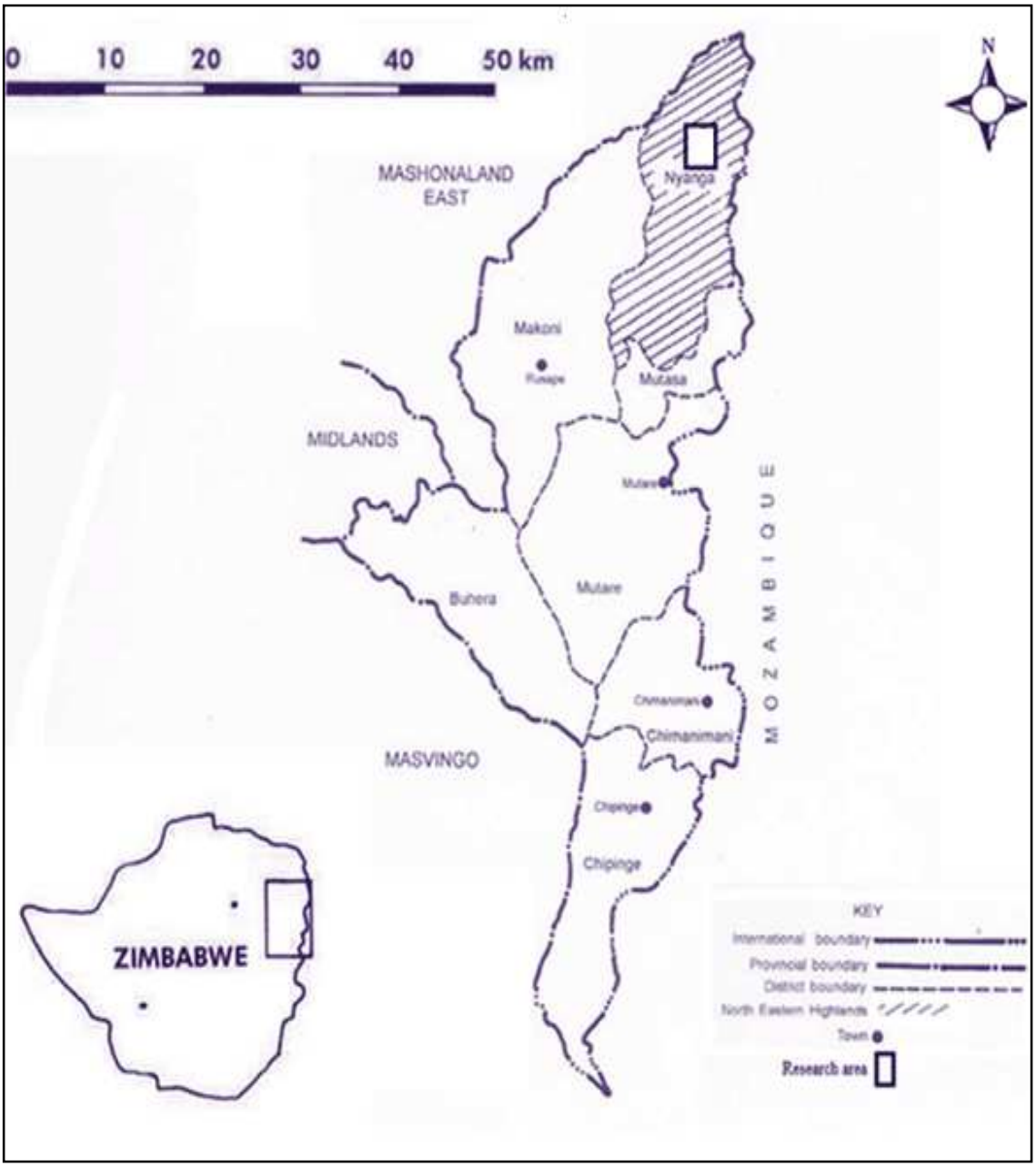
The Saunyama territory is largely concentrated on the northern side of Nyanga district which is a fraction of the Manicaland Province in Zimbabwe (see Figure 1.3). As a result it is centrally located within the Nyanga complex bordered by the respective rivers of Nyangombe, Nyarerwe, Nyamudira and Gaerezi as well as Nyanga town, stretching northwards as far as Chirimanyimo range. It is in this same area that we find the archaeological sites of Muozi, Nyahokwe and Ziwa. Muozi site is situated within Mt Muozi range in the Nyangui forest and the vicinity of Maristvale (see Figure 1.4). It has a grid reference VR741154 and is designated 1732DD36 by the Archaeological Survey Section of the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe. Generally it has an altitude of 2100m and protrudes from an isolated plateau.

The area under study falls within the Agro-ecological Region1, whilst lowland areas like Nyatate stretching as far as Nyamaropa more of fit in into Region 2 (Vincent and Thomas 1960). These regions receive an average annual rainfall which varies between 650 and 1500mm due to differences in altitude Areas within the foot of Chirimanyimo, Muozi and Rukotso range receive more rainfall compared to those which are adjacent such as Nyatate mainly because of the mountain ranges which result in orographic or frontal rainfall (Soper 2002). Like the rest of Nyanga, the area enjoys a moderate climate with fair wet and long dry

summer season and short cold winter. Most of the rain falls between November and March and sometimes extends up to April especially in this prevailing era of global climate change.

In terms of geology the area is largely concentrated by granite, however with peaks and highlands mostly composed of dolerite, felspathic sandstone and *cok-homfels* strata (Stocklmeyer 1978). Dolerite produces soils with a high clay content which probably provided potters with clay to make their pots in the archaeological record just like as it is in the ethnographic present. A number of permanent streams descend the escarpment conveying on the Pendeke and Nyahuku rivers forming tributaries of Nyajezi River.

Figure 1.3: Map showing the research area

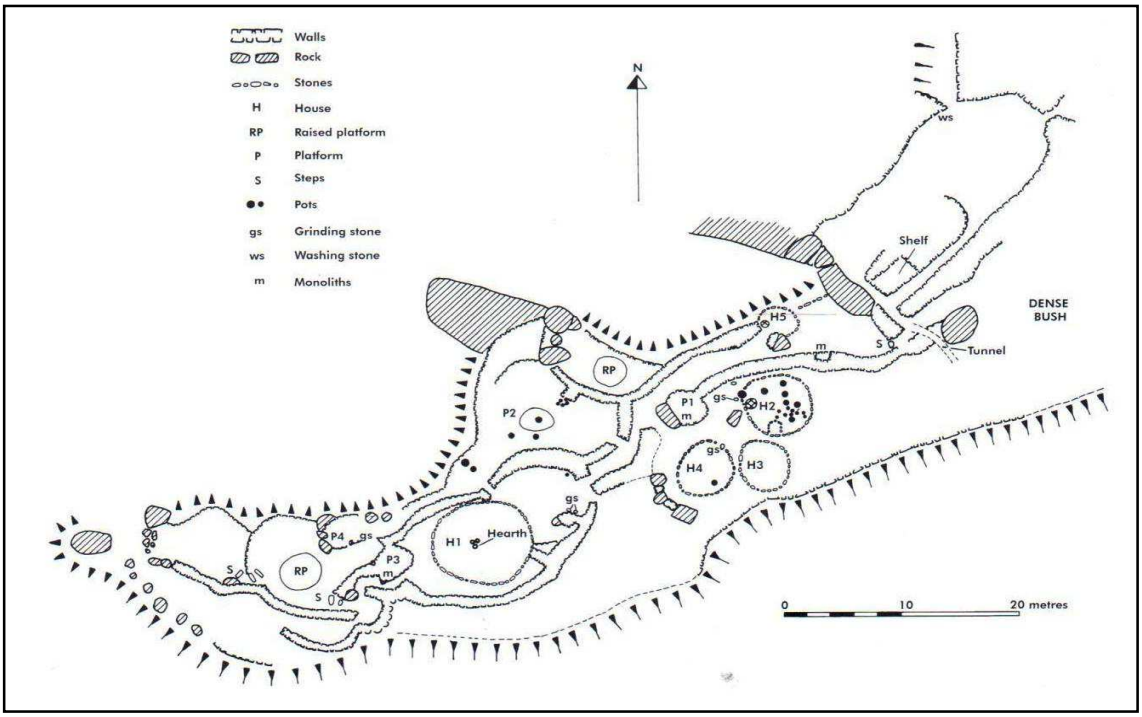


Source: Modified from Soper (2002:6) and Chibisa etal (2008:662)

Figure 1.4: Mt Muozi

Source: Fieldwork data

Figure 1.5: Site map of Mt Muozi showing scattered archaeological complete vessels



Source: Soper (2002:103)

In terms of vegetation the area is characterized by open and closed montane forests whilst settled area is grassland with scattered bushes, however the northern end is dominated by *brachystegia speciformis/msasa* woodlands whilst the *widdingtonia nodiflora* species are prevalent in the Muozi range (Soper 2002). Overally the area has been used for agriculture and settlement purposes (Beach 1996; Soper 2002, 2006, 2007) and besides this set up is believed to have dated back as far as the 18th century which provides a basis to verify the link between the archaeological site of Muozi and the contemporary Saunyama using pottery.

1.4. Statement of the problem

Complete pots and bowls situated at the archaeological site of Mt Muozi (see Figure 1.5) have been linked to the Saunyama ancestry on the bases of oral traditions. This was done without tracing an archaeological relationship with the present day ethnographic pottery from the same lineage. The same pottery was also treated as 'meaningless' by previous researchers hence little is known about its uses and symbolism. This study attempts to establish a link between the contemporary Saunyama and the occupational debris on the hilltop settlements of Mt Muozi and possibly to deduce the relationship that existed between these people and their pots in the archaeological record.

1.5. Aim of the study

The aim of this ceramic ethno-archaeological study is to compare pottery vessels situated at the archaeological site of Mt Muozi with ethnographic pottery vessels produced and used by the contemporary Saunyama using the multidimensional approach. This will be carried out so as to authenticate the archaeological identity and connection of the Saunyama dynasty to Mt Muozi one of the early hilltop settlements of the Nyanga complex which has been mostly perpetuated on the basis of oral traditions and incomplete archaeological enquiry.

1.6. Objectives of the study

The following objectives were crafted towards fragmenting the whole scope of the research into achievable units, as a result the researcher was mandated to respectively:

- Make a comparative study of the archaeological and ethnographic vessels using the multidimensional list approach, focusing on decoration and stylistic attributes.
- Trace and establish the link between the Saunyama dynasty and the archaeological pottery vessels situated at the archaeological site of Mt Muozi.

- To infer on the use-life and symbolism of the ethnographic pottery vessels so as to recreate the possible technological and cultural contexts that governed the use and symbolism of the Muozi assemblage.

- Evaluate the data accumulated for evidence of continuity or change from the archaeological past to the ethnographic past.

1.7. Main research questions

i. What are the tangible similarities and differences between the vessels from the archaeological site of Muozi and those currently produced and utilized by the contemporary Saunyama in terms of stylistic and decoration attributes?

ii. What are the socio-political and cultural relations that existed between the Saunyama and the complete pottery vessels situated at the archaeological site of Muozi?

iii. What are the possible uses of these vessels from the two assemblages and what are the symbolic meanings associated with them?

iv. Is there continuity or change in terms of decorations, style, use and symbolism from these two assemblages that could be used to establish the archaeological identity and connection of the contemporary Saunyama to Mt Muozi one of the early hilltop settlements of the Nyanga archaeological complex?

1.8. Assumptions of the study

This ceramic ethnoarchaeological study assumes that there is a relationship that exists between Mt Muozi pottery vessels and the contemporary Saunyama in the archaeological record of the Nyanga complex. It also assumes that the Muozi pottery assemblage carries with it attributes that can tell us more about its makers and consumers towards their use and symbolism. Therefore it is the motivation of this study to verify this possible connection using both archaeological and ethnographic data as well as attempting to recreate the possible cultural and technological contexts in which the Muozi assemblage operated in the archaeological record using the ethnographic context.

1.9. Justification of the study

Ceramic ethno-archaeological studies undertaken across the world have revealed that contemporary traditional societies aligned to the archaeological record can help us to establish group identities and their connections to past societies e.g. Huffman (1980); Gronenborn and Magnavita (2000); Cunningham (2006) and Haour etal (2011). In addition we can also learn more about the use-life of prehistoric pottery as well as the symbolic meanings attached to it through recreating the possible contexts in which it operated. This was well articulated by Huffman (1980) when he wrote that,

"Ceramic style can reflect group identity ...ceramic style is complex, it can represent the repetitive code of cultural symbols in the larger, designed field, and can be used to recognise groups of people in the archaeological record" Huffman (1980:156)

Hodder and Hutson (2003) reinstated this idea when they emphasized that material culture such as pottery had been treated as mute by most archaeologist yet clues to its meanings could be unearthened by its operational context. They posed the question why most archaeologists concentrated on functions of material culture rather than on the cognitive aspects behind the innovations. This aspect same applies to the Muozi complete pots in which previous archaeological research have been concentrated on the typological aspects leaving the possible cultural context in which the pots operated vague and unknown. Ceramics indirectly indicate past subsistence activities in the archaeological record and these maybe represented symbolically on vessel surfaces through decoration and style as a social statement (Pikirayi 1996). This means inferring on the use-life and meanings attached to the contemporary Saunyama pottery has high chances of yielding useful information such as use of space that promises to be useful in rebuilding the past subsistence of the terrace builders of the Nyanga complex as shall be examined in the coming chapters.

In addition ceramics are widely represented in the archaeological record (Shotriya 2007) and these help in the reconstruction of past human behaviour and environment. It is also from stylistic and decoration attributes of such pottery that we can deduce information that can help us in the recreation of thoughts and actions behind production, exchange, consumption and discard of prehistoric pottery hence enabling us to get an insight of the use-life and symbolic meanings attached to prehistoric pottery.

Shrotriya (2007) also comments that even though pottery has been viewed as a product of prehistoric and historic eras the fact that it is still widely used by contemporary societies at

global level it therefore contains great potential to aid in the recreation of archaeologies of past societies when the ethn-oarchaeological approach is employed. Thus analogies from ethnoarchaeology give valuable insight on the relations between human behaviour and material culture. Therefore application of ethno-archaeology to ceramic studies of the Nyanga complex through drawing analogies from the Saunyama community helps in recreating the humanistic side of the story which has lacked in most archaeological texts as concluded by Beach (1980); Hodder and Hutson (2003) as well as Pikirayi (2007).

The Saunyama are ideal for the ceramic ethnoarchaeological study that is to be undertaken since they are deeply rooted within the Nyanga complex as can be evidenced by 'their' speculated occupational debris on Mt Muozi which dates back as far as the 18th century. This provides a basis for the research to establish a connection between the contemporary Saunyama represented by the ethnographic pottery vessels and the speculated 'archaeological' Saunyama who are represented by the complete vessels situated at Mt Muozi. In addition even though the Muozi pots were partially analysed by Soper (2002) on the basis of typology and compared with other excavated assemblages from hilltop settlements like Chirimanyimo and Nyangui little is known about the social and cultural institutions that governed their use and significance. Therefore this study comes in attempting to fill this gap and this can be summarized by Lindahl and Matenga (1995:5) who argues that,

''In order to assess the value of pottery in the archaeological determination one has to understand the relationship between the pot and its maker. In order to do this one has to study current traditional pottery industries''

Therefore it is against this background that the researcher intends to carry out a ceramic ethno-archaeological study amongst the contemporary Saunyama with the intention of using the data accumulated to trace any link through establishing patterns of continuity or change from the two assemblages focusing on decoration, style, use and symbolism so as to authenticate their archaeological identity and connection to the Nyanga complex as well as recreating the possible operational context and meanings associated with the Muozi assemblage.

1.10. Limitations of the study

The sacred nature of Mt Muozi posed as a serious challenge towards the success of this research project. Thus access to the archaeological site of Muozi and the opportunity to

systematically analyse the vessels deposited on the hilltop settlements was restricted. Nevertheless this did not stop the researcher to carry out the comparative study of archaeological and ethnographic pottery using the Muozi assemblage as the sample representing the archaeological record. Thus given such a situation in which access to the site and the pots was restricted, the research relied on Soper and Chirawu (1997) as well as Soper (2002), (2006) and (2007) results whereby they quantified the pots and systematically characterised and described the assemblage using clear illustrations, photographs and associated oral testimonies as well as noting its similarities and differences with excavated assemblages from Muozi middens and other hilltop and lowland settlements. Thus the mentioned texts had promising data that was used to characterise the Muozi assemblage hence this guaranteed the researcher to be in a position to continue carrying out the comparative study despite restrictions that had been posed by the local authorities following the sacred nature of Mt Muozi.

Acknowledging change was also another limitation to this study. As noted by Stark (2003) speedy globalization of the world is destroying the natural set up of contemporary traditional societies and this limits applicability of ceramic ethnoarchaeology. Thus like any other traditional contemporary society the Saunyama are largely vulnerable to globalization in which culture is changing dynamically. Therefore the degree of originality in terms pottery produced and consumed remained a subject of debate but however for the purpose of this research traditional pottery was treated as clay pots that were made by potters using locally available raw materials such as clay, water, tempering material excluding modern inputs like paints.

1.11. Theoretical Framework

This study is fashioned from a ceramic ethno-archaeological approach and according to Stark (2003) ceramic ethno-archaeology is mostly viewed as a research strategy or means to promote archaeological understanding which in the long run provides food for archaeological thought. Ceramic ethnoarchaeology enables archaeologists to gain a better understanding of the social theory. The social theory emanates from Post Processual archaeology and argues that groups are reflected in the material culture they produce, (see Huffman 1980; Hodder and Hutson 2003; Stark 2003 as well as Pikirayi 2007). Therefore authentication of the Saunyama archaeological identity and connection to the Nyanga complex and as well as the

possible cultural context in which the Muozi assemblage operated in the archaeological record shall be explored basing on the social theory.

Also informing this research are the views of Neo Processual ethno-archaeologists who see ceramic ethno-archaeology as a tool for understanding use of space, human behaviour and contextualizing material culture in the archaeological record (e.g. Sinopoli 1991; Lindahl and Matenga 1995; Ndoro 1996; Costin 2000; Hegmon 2000 as well as Lindahl and Pikirayi 2010). They use the holistic approach which considers both technical factors that are enshrined within, ecology, economy, functional properties of artefacts and cultural factors that are enshrined within history, politics and society which all produce variability in ceramic systems. Likewise this research also falls within the parameters of Neo Processual ethno-archaeology since it seeks to be guided by a holistic approach that tries to pay equal attention to both cultural and technical factors that could have possibly shaped the lifecycle of the Muozi complete pots in the archaeological record of the Nyanga complex.

1.12. Structure of the dissertation

A general introduction to the motivation of the study, the Muozi assemblage, the Saunyama and the various oral traditions associated with their identity and connection to the Nyanga archaeological complex is presented in chapter one. Chapter two reviews related literature where emergence and development of ceramic ethno-archaeological approach as a research strategy that helps archaeologists to build models in which prehistoric ceramics operated is explored from an African perspective narrowing down to Zimbabwe. Ultimately the review is narrowed down to the Nyanga complex in which literature concerning the Saunyama and Mt Muozi is explored. Chapter three provides the research methodology where the research design, the research sample, data collection, as well as data presentation and analysis methods are presented. Chapter four presents the data collected and its analysis. Thus data from the comparative study, interviews, and group discussions pertaining to the vessels decorations, style, use and symbolism is coded and evaluated. Lastly chapter five provides an in-depth discussion and conclusion of results gained from the ethnoarchaeological survey as well as highlighting aspects that need to be further researched.

1.13. Summary

This chapter provided an introductory background to various aspects that make up the research. Among these include the intended ceramic ethnoarchaeological study, the research area inhabited by the Saunyama as well as the Mt Muozi archaeological pots which are later going to be compared with ethnographic pottery from the Saunyama. Broader aim and objectives as well as the various theoretical frameworks that shape up the research are also outlined. In overall this chapter serves as a framework of reference to the issues to be outlined in the coming chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the development of ceramic ethno-archaeology towards understanding human behaviour and technological changes that transpired in the archaeological record. This is explored from a continental perspective where earlier work on ceramic studies was largely rooted in archaeology. Ultimately the chapter narrows down by exploring the need for ethnographic information on which to conduct analogical comparative analysis with pottery recovered from the archaeological record especially in the last quarter of the 20th century which motivated archaeologists to combine both archaeological and ethnographic procedures towards ceramic studies.

2.2. The Archaeological Approach

Following the advent of archaeology as a colonial package in most African countries, earliest ceramic studies were mostly typological orientated just like in Europe hence mostly were carried out for dating purposes using imported ceramics such as Chinese blue-on-white porcelain and celadon. Notable works are those of Hall and Neal (1902) as well as Randall-MacIver (1906) who dated archaeological sites such as Great Zimbabwe and the Nyanga complex using foreign ceramics. Consequently locally manufactured ceramics were never given precedence following their obtiqious nature and the belief that local cultures which produced them were similar and largely stagnant (Pikirayi 1997).

Later, emphasis began to be extended on the once cast-off local wares. Systematic studies began to be carried out on local pottery using the archaeological approach in which archaeological problems were resolved using local ceramic evidence. Amongst the outstanding was the Great Zimbabwe controversy in which researchers immensely debated on the identity of the builders of the outstanding complex. However through systematic research by Caton-Thompson (1931) who classified the pottery she excavated at Great Zimbabwe using colour, texture and finish, the complex was finally attributed to its rightful owners who were the local Africans. Thus local ceramics proved to be an effective tool towards solving archaeological problems, especially in Southern Africa.

As more archaeological problems arose, the more the archaeological approach became useful in ceramic studies. This time local ceramics were used to trace group identities and migration patterns of the farming communities into Eastern and Southern Africa and the chief protagonists were Huffman (1970); Soper (1971) and Phillipson (1977) who used typological evidence to support their Bantu migrations model hypothesis. Using the multi-dimensional list approach both Huffman (1970) and Soper (1971) discovered a relationship between pottery of various regional groupings which followed a north-south trend from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe hence they concluded that farming communities originated and migrated from the north into Southern Africa. However Soper's (1971) model was given much precedence than Huffman's (1970) since he managed go beyond similarities by accounting for the differences in which he attributed them to a continuous movement that resulted in the adoption new ideas and discarding of old ones (Pikirayi 1997). Phillipson (1977) further developed Soper's (1971) model by suggesting that the coming Bantu groups entered southern Africa through western and eastern streams as evidenced by similarities and differences within the ceramic groups in Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

With the progression of time the focus of the archaeological approach towards ceramics was shifted from typology to technology. In Zimbabwe for instance as cited in Pikirayi (1997) this period saw the emergence of distinct technological studies that tried to address issues relating to group interactions. Notable works are those of Nyanhete (1988) and Muringaniza (1989) who explored the degree of contact between the cultural groups of Musengezi and Great Zimbabwe tradition sites. They managed to establish some level of contact. However up to now separate technological studies are yet to be pursued following the complexity of the process as well as expenses involved.

Forthcoming ceramic studies were then redirected to typology. For instance Sinamai (1990) carried out a typological classification of Harare tradition pottery from which he discovered a closer relationship that existed between the Musengezi and Harare traditions as evidenced by complete pots that served as grave goods in both traditions. Following this discovery he concluded that even though the Harare Tradition had little differences with Musengezi, treating it as a separate entity was misleading hence he regarded it as a regional variant of the Musengezi tradition.

Pikirayi (1993) on the other hand successfully established the archaeological identity of Mutapa state in northern Zimbabwe using local pottery and other sources of archaeological

and historical evidence. Through inferring on the relationship that existed between Great Zimbabwe pottery and those from Baranda, a Mutapa site he discovered a typological continuity from Great Zimbabwe to Mutapa. However this was later characterised by a high frequency of graphite burnished pottery and an increase in production of open hemispherical bowls. To him this suggested a change in consumption patterns of pottery types which however does not contradict the fact that they were high levels of continuity from Great Zimbabwe to Mutapa.

Cultural continuity and change in northern Zimbabwe right from the advent of farming communities up to the 2nd millennium AD was also highlighted by Pwiti (1996) through a comparative analysis of local pottery. He identified the Zambezi valley as the first settlement location for the early farmers and proposed Kadzi pottery to be a typical of these societies hence he concluded Kadzi as regional variant of Gokomere/Ziwa tradition rather than a unique tradition. Further he also realised a gradual change in local pottery which was evidenced by the development of Musengezi tradition in the 2nd millennium AD. As a result he concluded Musengezi as a local innovation which had distinct ceramics that were largely characterised by decorated pottery with wrapped fibre impressions.

Despite Pikirayi's (1999) call for archaeologists to go beyond typology, the archaeological approach was persisted into 21st century ceramic studies. This time much of the research was concentrated on establishing group identities and their interactions in the archaeological record. For instance Chirikure, Pikirayi and Pwiti (2002) carried out a comparative study of pottery from the archaeological sites of Khami and Kasekete. The trio discovered a correlation between the two sites which was characterised by dominance of polychrome band and panel ware hence they concluded the two sites to be extensions of the Zimbabwe culture which stemmed from Great Zimbabwe.

Local pottery also aided Machiridza (2012) to systematically authenticate and develop the archaeological identity of the Rozvi in Southern-western Zimbabwe. Using the multi dimensional approach he carried out a comparative analysis of pottery assemblages from the respective sites of Khami and Danamombe. He discovered that whilst polychrome band and panel ceramics at Khami turned out to be diverse and complex, Danamombe pottery became more simple and homogenous. This was evidenced by the dominance of spherical constricted pots with little or no necks unlike polychrome band and panel ware which occurred in very restricted numbers. Thus he concluded that such a scenario probably emanated from a setup

where production and distribution of polychrome wares was manipulated and controlled by Rozvi elites as a strategy of establishing their ideology and power structures.

It is evident that the archaeological approach to ceramic studies in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular has been mostly dominated by typological classifications and descriptions towards solving imminent archaeological problems. Therefore this research seeks to go beyond mere typological description and characterisation of the Muozi assemblage.

2.3. The Ethnographic Approach

Among the notable pioneering anthropological works concerning ceramics are those of Martin (1941) who carried out an inquiry on the pottery vessels that were manufactured and used by the Manyika of Mutasa dynasty. The most intriguing vessel she discovered was a big beer pot called *mbiziro* which had two mouths whereby two people could drink from it at the same time. However its use was only restricted to chiefs and headmens during special ceremonies like seeding time locally known as *maganza* .Thus it became clear that use-life of some beer pots was governed by restrictions that were related with aspects to do with social stratification.

Aschwaden (1982) discovered that among the Karanga domestic clay pots symbolise the relationship between a husband and his wife which is determined by the way a husband handled his wife pots. As a result a Karanga woman can stop conjugal rights by placing a pot upside down. He also discovered that the *shambakodzi* and *hadyana* stands as sex symbols. Thus the *shambakodzi* which is used to prepare a daily maize meal (*sadza*) represents mother's breast since it brings growth to a family whilst on the other hand the *hadyana* used to prepare relish stands for intercourse since it produces delicious "food" to everyone. *Rongo* a vessel used to store water represents menstruation as well as fertility whereby a wife uses its contents to clean her husband in the morning likewise menstruations cleances her from his sperm.The *mbia* shaped more like a dish which is wide open with no neck was also discovered by Aschwaden (1982) to represent an immature girl *(bumha)* and at the same time a young woman who was ready for marriage hence if the husband after intercourse with her for the first time reffered to her as *chimbiya* it symbolically meant she was not prepared fully to satisfy her husband. Among the Karanga before firing, a pot is likened to a girl who has not reached puberty and if she happens to walk where the clay is sourced or touch a pot that is yet to be fired the force within these two may result in her tearing off her hymen hence menstruating. Virginity of the girl child is symbolised by a small jar with a small neck in

which a wife offers sweet beer to her husband. Man are also forbidden to be present where a pot will be fired since the might end up losing their virility and at the same time they should not be first to eat from a newly fired pot. These observations have greatly helped in the interpretation of archaeological ceramics as far as gender and sex is concerned since they go beyond the limit of archaeology to derive these symbolic massages and restrictions that were possibly attached to and that governed the use-life of prehistoric potteries of the Karanga.

Basic understanding of production, functions and types of pottery among the shona ethnic groups was also aided by Ellert (1984) who researched on the various ethnographic collections that make up the material culture of Zimbabwe. From the various vessels he explored, Ellert (1984) discovered that shape was instrumental in determining the use of domestic pots.

Jacobson-Widding (1992) carried out an anthropological inquiry on the African cultural symbols on the Manyika of Nyanga district in Zimbabwe. Amongst the collection were traditional clay pots. She discovered that women's pots were placed low in the kitchen whilst men's weapons were kept high above. This symbolises the status of men as greater than that of women. She also discovered that clay pots as cultural symbols among the Manyika are likened to human beings. For instance virginity tests of the female counterpart during marriage is presented through a clay pot whereby if filled with water to the brim it symbolises "the fullness of a girl" and if half filled it symbolizes her impurity.

Fowler (2011) provides us with a well elaborated summary of contextual factors that govern production of Zulu pottery following an ethnographic survey that was carried out in Msinga region of South Africa. Through paying particular attention to every aspect that governed production of pottery among the Zulu, Fowler (2011) discovered that unlike in the previous decades where pottery vessels were evenly produced both for cooking and brewing purposes as well as serving the bi-products of these two, potters of today largely produce vessels for brewing than the later. This probably follows the simple reason that cooking vessels unlike brewing vessels are being easily replaced by metal vessels even though the two are concurrently used. He also discovered that the Msinga potters use three techniques in decorating their pottery namely the grooving, appliqué and burnishing methods, In terms of symbolism, Fowler (2011) realised that motifs found on these pots had no deeper meaning. Instead the potters only recognised them in association with those found on traditional clothing whilst some motifs were copied from vessels they came across in other markets.

This matches with one of the three related hypotheses that have emerged from African ethnographic studies of technical style of pottery whereby the tangible and intangible characteristics of pottery corresponds in one way or the other to the prevailing economic situation of potters, their age and the interaction networks through which their products are consumed (see Fowler 2011).

2.4. The Ethno-archaeological Approach

The use of the ethno-archaeological approach towards ceramic studies was initially developed in the West (David and Kramer 2001). However with progression of time especially the last decade it became extensively used in Africa particularly West Africa following its diversified culture history. Consequently a wide range of topics have been pursued, among these include technology, taxonomy, division of labour, ethnicity, distribution, vessel function, stylistic change, longevity, recycling and disposal (Kramer 1985 and Stark 2003). However Stark (2003) stresses out that most studies have been concentrated on production of ceramics whereby aspects such as behavioural factors that influence selection of raw materials, firing of clay pots, spatial organization for production of ceramics and division have been pursued. She also points out that the ethnoarchaeological approach has been also utilised to infer on the use and symbolism of ceramics whereby aspects such as cultural transmition through marriage, migration, conflict and ritual contexts have been studied.

Ceramic ethno-archaeological studies in Africa have greatly helped in expanding knowledge about the possible secondary functions of clay pots in the archaeological record. David and Henning (1972) carried out a research among the Bedik of West Africa and discovered that life of a pot did not just automatically end following its breakage but rather gained another lease of life as need arose. Thus ceramics as sheds got another secondary value in which they could either be used for carrying hot coals or as supports for pots to gain balance when cooking. Large pots on the other hand could be converted in terms of function and end up used as chicken coups. This means function of pottery in the archaeological record was not necessarily rooted within its basic uses but rather gained secondary uses as need arose.

Evers etal (1988) tried to answer the question why archaeological pots were decorated the way they were. Considering previous researches and their personal experiences, they considered a number of reasons ranging from symbolism, group identity and aesthetic beauty. In terms of symbolism the trio suggested the reasons to be enshrined within philosophies and

ideologies of different social systems that produced them. On the aspect of group identity they agreed with previous scholarly work that advocated for the notion that some decorations were an extension of designs on human bodies and other forms of material culture hence they qualified it as useful in tracing group identity even though one had to be cautious. However they disagreed with the idea of differentiating the social systems that produced these using differences in decorations motifs and techniques since changes in these aspects was not always a pointer to culture change but rather changes in style and decorations within similar time and space. Lastly they disputed the concept of attributing meanings of decorations along parameters of aesthetic beauty since they discovered that consumers were less interested in decorations but rather the ability of a pot to serve its functions. In overall the trio only ended up giving reasons on why pots were decorated rather than stating the exact reasons. However credit must be given to their work since they managed to state symbolism as one of the reasons why pottery is decorated a phenomenon which is going to be explored by this research.

Basing on the ethno-archaeological survey he carried out among the Bafia potters of Cameroon Gosselain (1992) refuted the then prevailing tradition of stylistic approach to ceramics and any other artefacts by archaeologist which was only restricted to decoration and morphology. He emphasized this by detailing and analysing every successive stage of pottery production among Bafia potters and comparing their technological process with those of other cultural groups. The survey produced inspiring results that showed that pottery technology can be justified in its own right to be a locus of stylistic expression apart from decoration and morphology. Moreover, some aspects of the manufacturing process proved to be worthy considering as markers of stylistic cultural variation as they appeared to be better preserved by the potters.

Dietler and Herbich (1994) also carried out a similar ethno-archaeological research among the Luo of Kenya in which they revealed the micro-styles of ceramics that result from social networks and processes that operate within the context of different communities. They managed to bring out the differences between social context of production and social context of consumption which aided in the understanding of ceramics hence they concluded that stability of a ceramic tradition should not be mistaken to indicate stability of an ethnic population in the archaeological record but rather the stability of the producing community of potters.

Focusing on the distribution trend of pottery vessels, Vander Linden (2001) carried out a ceramic ethno-archaeological research among the Dowayo of Northern Cameroon. He discovered that pottery exchange was not regulated by preferred economic relationships between producers and consumers like as illustrated by Hodder (1979a, b) model whereby the main factor to pottery vessel exchange was from the idea of buying a good pot. Rather he discovered that pottery consumers were not homogeneous when it comes to cultural perceptions of what a good pot is but rather its distribution was largely influenced by the aspects of reputation of the potter.

Arthur (2002) carried out a two year ethno-archaeological study of ceramics among the Gamo people of south western Ethiopia with the goal to provide archaeologist an analogy to understand diet and socio economic complexity as well as ceramic function through deciphering one form of use-alteration and surface attrition. The study focused on the lifecycle of pottery exploring how pots move through different social and economic contexts from the time they are produced to their eventual discard. Arthur (2002) discovered that Gamo woman were largely responsible for pottery production whereby larger vessels especially jars served as storage facilities whilst smaller vessels were used for cooking food stuffs. The surface attrition analysis also demonstrated pottery as a contributor to better understanding of household wealthy variables within a society whereby in the case of the Gamo large vessels were associated with the wealthy since wealthier households had surplus grains they could use to prepare beer as well as enough resources to acquire large vessels such as beer jars unlike the poor. The study also provided models to archaeologists in understanding why beer vessels were mostly prone to interior surface attrition as compared to food vessels. Thus Arthur (2002) discovered that the most contributing factor to surface attrition especially to beer vessels was fermenting of beer that eroded the vessels walls. At the same time the study also clarified why the life span of large vessels was twice as much as that of smaller vessels since smaller vessels were largely prone to heaths and continued movements which could end up in breakages unlike large vessels which eventually broke as a result of surface attrition.

Cunningham (2006) also conducted a ceramic ethno-archaeological study of ceramic exchange and consumption in the inland Niger Delta of Mali and focused his study on the issue of “style” in ceramic availability. He discovered that style is seductive since when an

assemblage of shreds from a given area is organized in a laboratory to an archaeologist it appears as a relationship between artefact style and identity. However in daily practice as derived from ethnoarchaeology the process that leads to such patterning are summarized in production, exchange and consumption whereby consumers of the pottery might not necessarily be related to the pottery or potters. In terms of function he discovered that pottery vessels were largely used to transfer the products of woman's work and In terms of symbolism he also discovered that a beautiful jar was essential to a sound marriage because a water jar encouraged a husband to "drink" the water she has brought to her husband. He also discovered that water jars symbolized newlyweds just like a new water jar in the household.

Ogundele (2006) carried out an archaeological reconstruction of the history and aspects of the culture of the Tiv of Central Nigeria using models generated from oral traditions and ethnography. Having studied Tiv vessels, he realised that differences in vessel thickness was not necessarily a reflection of cultural traditions but errors of the potter. Furthermore Ogundele (2006) also discovered that during pot making even unwanted particles could find their way onto the clay which was misleading to archaeologist since they just interpreted every particle during petrographic studies as tamper. This therefore accounted for certain variations in decorations.

Norman (2009) also researched in West Africa on the entrepot of Quidah in Benin where he revealed that production, installation and consecration of ceramics was governed by ritual restrictions. Thus he discovered that ritual ceramics ware were only made by post-menopause women who were trained at an earlier stage whilst firing of the pots was left in the hands of menopause women.

In a joint cooperation Haour etal (2011) carried out ceramic ethno-archaeological studies on the West African Sahara-Sahelian region. They inquired on the potential of ceramics in adding new knowledge on micro-scale processes in the archaeological record through examination of stylistic experimentation and village identity in the Tilemsi Valley of Mali. Focusing on Mali ceramics they questioned the classification of archaeological ceramic cultural entities by highlighting the complex and often highly personal processes by which researchers develop them. They also provided an overview of recent archaeological materials, from the central Sahel and the Niger Bend which helps to examine the impact of political influences on stylistic homogenization. Finally they explored on production and distribution networks of ceramics in the society of the Halpulaaren of Senegal hence they derived

encouraging results with which they promote continued examination of ethnoarchaeological data for better understanding of the role of ceramics as mediators and trackers of past social interaction and culture change.

In Zimbabwe the ceramic ethno-archaeological approach to the understanding of ceramics is still a developing feature as noted by Lindahl and Matenga (1995). Early work date back as far as 1972 when Thomas Huffman carried out a research among Shona potters in the township of Pumula in Bulawayo. Though the sample was not typical since the pottery was largely manufactured for commercial purposes in an urban set up, the study of the Shona vessels gave promising results as it demonstrated that quantitative characterisation of pottery sherds was less meaningful as compared to characterisation of complete vessels on the basis of weight, size and decoration as it produced a picture of an assemblage that closely equated with the actual vessels. Likewise this could aid the researcher towards a meaningful comparative study of ethnographic and archaeological pottery on the basis of stylistic and decoration attributes. Huffman (1980) also carried out another ceramic ethno-archaeological survey but this time focusing on the Ndau of south-western Zimbabwe and other various groups outside Zimbabwean borders. His study demonstrated that stylist differences aided in discerning between potteries of various ethnic groups which could serve as identity markers of these respective groups.

Collet (1993) discovered a strong relationship that existed between a woman and her pots. For instance the decorations in the form of triangles on two mostly frequently used pots, locally known as the *hadyana* and *shambakodzi* represented the *zvikwati* which refer to a chevron pattern on aprons of women. Thus he suggested the form of these vessels to represent the body of women especially the curves on their body. Likewise production of pottery was not supposed to be polluted by presence of men, sexual contact and in some cases menstruating and pregnant women hence he concluded pottery as woman's property, a stance which was also adopted by Misago (1996) and Ndoro (1996).

Lindahl and Matenga (1995) carried out an ethno-archaeological study in Buhera district in south-eastern Zimbabwe. They based their research on traditional methods for the study of vessel shape and ornamentation whereby they employed both petrographic studies and ethnographic surveys. Through petrographic studies Lindahl and Matenga (1995) discovered that similar clay was still used to manufacture pots like in the archaeological record, an aspect

which was also confirmed by ethnographic observations which in overall pointed to continuity in terms of raw material use.

On vessel function the authors discovered two basic classes of pottery. The fist class was composed of vessels solely used for cooking purposes. These included the *shangwa* used for cooking food stuffs like sweet potatoes, the *hadyana* and *chimbira* respectively used for preparing relish as well as children's porridge. The *shambakodzi* specifically used to cook sadza and lastly the *chishangwa* used to cook groundnuts. On the other hand the second class was composed of vessels for storage purposes. This included the *gambe* and the *gate* used for storing beer as well as the *nyengero* and *chipfuko* used for serving beer and lastly the *shangwa* and *chirongo* used for storing dried food and carrying water respectively.

In trying to answer the question, *"What happens to a ceramic vessel when it is broken down"?* Lindahl and Matenga (1995.101) considered a number of factors from which the most contributing were effects from human and animal activities. They also discovered that vessels buried as grave goods had a better life span than household vessels as well as the fact that the most part of a pot which was prone to damage was the rim in which they attributed use as the most contributory factor. They traced on how broken sherds found their way to the garbage hence they suggested household maintenance as the most contributing factor. Further they discovered that at the garbage they were chances of further disposal especially by domesticated animals such as dogs. Apart from that heavy rains could further dispose or erode the sherds as well as fires resulting from ashes removed from fire places. On the other hand the remaining broken pot could continue its use however if severely broken it would end up temporarily discarded. Thus the ethnoarchaeological survey proved to be effective towards meaningful ceramic studies as it unearthened the social and technological factors that possibly governed Zimbabwe culture pottery in the archaeological record.

Ndoro (1996) also carried out a similar study on the Karanga but focusing on the possible meanings and symbols associated with Gokomere pottery. He explored this by comparing the assemblage with modern Karanga pottery however paying particular attention to its decoration and use. Overally he got encouraging results on some variables of pottery like soot which discovered to be difficult to conclude considering function since pottery uses varied with time and need. Thus he encouraged a continuous dialogue between archaeology and ethnography which believed could help in shedding more light on the meanings and symbolism of ceramics.

Marufu (2008) used pottery and other forms of material culture to determine relations between settlement and funerary contexts of the Musengezi tradition sites in northern Zimbabwe. Using both archaeological and ethnographic approaches he carried out a comparative study of pottery from the respective contexts paying particular attention to decoration and style hence he discovered that pottery and other material culture recovered from funerary context was much decorated and stylised than the settlement counterpart. Application of the ethnoarchaeological approach to this inquiry proved to be very useful as he discovered that funerary pottery was intentionally selected from household assemblage mostly because of its potential in communicating social messages.

Lindahl and Pikirayi (2010) furthered on what had been previously covered by Lindahl and Matenga (1995) hence they presented ceramics as part and parcel of a technological process. Like the previous research their area of study included Buhera district and extended into Dande lowlands, Murehwa, Gutu, Mutoko north east and Masvingo area near Great Zimbabwe as well as the Mashamba area of the Limpopo province in South Africa. Through merging petrographic and ethnographic studies Lindahl and Pikirayi (2010) managed to differentiate Early Iron Age (EIA) pottery from Late Iron Age (LIA) as well as establishing continuity and change in vessel forming techniques as they discovered that the modelling technique is still prevalent among the Shona of today.

To add more to their discovery they interviewed women potters from the Zimbabwe plateau within the various districts and areas afore mentioned. They discovered that not every woman was able to make pottery but rather it came from zeal and talent and besides, skill was passed from generation to generation through internship from the seniors. In terms of symbolism the pair discovered a unique practice of giving back to the quarry whereby after quarrying clay a potter had to plough back to the quarry either in form of a bundle of twigs or a lump of clay which was interpreted as a ritual of thanking the ancestors for the clay. They also discovered some differences when it came to the choice of fuel to fire clay pots whereby Venda potters preferred wood and grass unlike the Shona who used tree bark and cow dung. At the same time unlike the shona, to the Venda successful manufacture was guaranteed by consultation of ancestral spirits. Thus they concluded ceramics as part and parcel of forces that initiated culture change.

2.5. The Saunyama and Mt Muozi

Narrowing down to the Saunyama several aspects have been put under study by various scholars. Matowanyika and Mandondo (1994) cited in Soper (2002) carried out an analysis on the current practices on the use and conservation of areas of old terracing as well as traditions concerning Mount Muozi and its significance to the Saunyama. Chirawu (1995) also emphasized on the significance of Mount Muozi to the Saunyama people following its richness in archaeological collections. Beach (1996) gave an overview of the role historical archaeology played in interpreting the Nyanga complex. He also traced the earliest ruler of the Saunyama way back into the 18th century. He alluded the Nyanga complex mostly to the Saunyama people. Soper and Chirawu (1997) also carried out a test pit excavation on an ash midden in Mount Muozi in which they concluded that Muozi was deeply rooted in the early phases of the Nyanga complex and probably fitted on the early phases of the hill settlements.

Further analysis was also made on the faunal remains recovered from Muozi where Plug, Soper and Chirawu (1997) concluded that animal resource exploitation on Mount Muozi was lavishly represented as evidenced by the various species of animals which included dwarf cattle. Soper (2002) provided a well annotated and detailed account of the archaeology of Mt Muozi right from the test pit excavation on the ash midden in which he identified potsherds, faunal remains and beads which he analyzed and concluded that some of the potsherds had affinities to some of the complete vessels found on the same archaeological site which and advocated a cultural relationship as the beads dated back as far as the 16th and 19th century. Soper also shed more light on the complete vessels found on Mt Muozi which he summed up to more than 36 including the partly broken. He concluded these as ritual vessels which could have been brought uphill following a ritual ceremony.

Emanating from a cultural heritage management perspective Mupira (2003); Shenjere (2003) and Chiwaura (2007) reiterated the strong relationship that exists between the Saunyama and Mt Muozi. Mupira (2003) looked at the local community perceptions on Nyanga cultural landscape and how such perceptions could influence its survival with special reference on the Saunyama and Mt Muozi hence he concluded Mt Muozi as archaeologically significant following its richness in beads and faunal remains as well as the complete pots. Shenjere (2003) on the other hand focused on the intangible values asserted by the Saunyama people on Mt Muozi hence she concluded that Muozi still remained a preserve for the Saunyama basing on the evidence that they still carried out rainmaking ceremonies like before.

Murimbika (2006) provided a brief outline on how the Saunyama conduct their rain making ceremonies *(makasva)* on Mt Muozi in comparison with other local ethnic groups and emphasized on sexual purity between man and woman to be a pre-requisite. Using Mt Muozi as a case study Chiwaura (2007) reviewed various pieces of legislations that have a bearing on the Zimbabwean heritage. Despite citing Mt Muozi as a contested heritage between the Saunyama and Hata houses in terms of ownership he concluded that the administration of Mt Muozi was best left in the hands of traditional systems since despite adoption of legal frameworks during the colonial era it sorely survived on traditional systems up to the present.

2.6. Summary

Ceramic ethnoarchaeological studies carried out across Africa and Zimbabwe in particular have revealed that contemporary societies connected to the archaeological record can aid archaeologists to understand the possible cultural and technological contexts that governed the use-life and symbolism of ceramics in the archaeological record as well as tracing similarities and differences in terms of stylistic and decoration attributes. It is also evident that several works have been put under study by different scholars concerning the Saunyama and Mt Muozi which produced enlightenment on the evolution of the Nyanga complex. However no studies have been undertaken to confirm the archaeological relationship between the Saunyama and the early hilltop settlements of the complex. Therefore this research sought to cover this gap by carrying out a comparative ceramic ethnoarchaeological study of the two respective pottery assemblages from Mt Muozi and the contemporary Saunyama.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This research methodology is mainly consisted of the research design, the research sample, targeted population, and data collection methods as well as data analysis and presentation procedures. London (2000) and Shrotriya (2007) suggested first the need for a carefully planned research design, then selection of an appropriate community and sharp fieldwork skills whenever planning to conduct an ethno-archaeological investigation. Therefore a framework for data collection, presentation and analysis for the ethnoarchaeological survey we will be laid out in this chapter.

3.2. Research design

According to Kumar (2008) a research design is a written plan for a study which communicates the purpose of the study together with a step by step plan for conducting the research. In this ceramic study, an ethno-archaeological approach whereby both quantitative and qualitative methods were used was adopted. Murimbika (2006) defines ethnoarchaeology as a method of collecting primary data in a non excavation situation directly related to archaeological problems and subsequently used for theoretical frameworks and analogies. Thus the overall aim was to document so as to understand the relationship between the culture, environment and the vessels from the ethnographic present into the archaeological past.

Also the research was more inclined to qualitative paradigm since it was largely dealing with cognition aspects. Basically qualitative method is concerned with developing explanations for a social phenomena through discovering the underlying motives and desires which motivate people to adopt a way of life in the manner they do as well as exploring their feelings about that phenomenon whilst quantitative research method is basically concerned with numbers, statistics and facts (Key 1997; Hancook 1998; Kumar 2008 as well as Marshall and Rossman 2010). Thus both quantitative and qualitative methods enhanced the ethnoarchaeological enquiry since they both sought a wider context in which Saunyama traditional pottery is used. This greatly helped in reconstructing the possible cultural context in which the Muozi archaeological vessels operated as well as authenticating their archaeological identity to the Nyanga complex.

3.3. Research sample

To ensure a systematic investigation of similarities and differences in terms of decoration, style, use and symbolism, purposive sampling was only adopted. Purposive sampling entails selection of individuals or objects as samples accordingly to the purpose of the research and its controls (Brewer 2003). Thus the researcher specifies the characteristics of the objects of interest and locates prominent objects with the needed characteristics.

Therefore in this research, samples of the research were only drawn from Mt Muozi and the Saunyama community. These served as both the archaeological and ethnographic samples for the comparative analysis. The Muozi sample consisted of 34 complete and partly broken pots. Out these only 32 vessels were adopted for the archaeological assemblage since they were still intact and complete. On the other hand a total of 36 pottery vessels were drawn from 5 respective homesteads of the Saunyama leaders and potters. Consequently only 32 of these qualified for the ethnographic assemblage since the remainder were decorated using modern paints. Altogether the research sample for the comparative study amounted to 62 pottery vessels.

3.4. Target population

The target population for the ethnoarchaeological survey was largely derived from the *Nyoka* household of the Saunyama since Mt Muozi falls within their jurisdiction. The population mainly consisted of traditional leaders, potters and various individuals especially the elderly since in the shona culture it is common knowledge that old age is associated with knowledge and wisdom (Marufu 2008). These were chosen following their competence in the subject matter hence local informants were relied onto when it came to identifying these individuals.

3.5. Data collection methods

In this study, the researcher concentrated first on tracing and establishing the link between the contemporary Saunyama community and the pottery vessels situated at the archaeological site of Mt Muozi mainly relying on documentary sources which in overall produced various identities that have been associated with the Saunyama in relation to Mt Muozi**.** This was followed by a two weeks ethnoarchaeological survey where the researcher visited Mt Muozi as well as inquiring on the stylistic, and decoration attributes of the ethnographic vessels. Use of these vessels and the various symbolic meanings attached to them was also learnt through frequent visits to Saunyama homesteads where interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted.

3.5.1. Documentary sources: In order to appreciate the various identities associated with the Saunyama and Mt Muozi, the researcher largely relied on both primary and secondary sources housed in various information centers. This included the respective Libraries of the Museum of Transport and Antiquities (Mutare Museum), Africa University as well as the Midlands State University.

3.5.2. Interviews: These were carried out so as to understand the social dimension of the two pottery assemblage's. The main objective was to collect data that would assist in verifying and developing the archaeological identity of the Saunyama as well as decoding the symbolic meanings behind the vessels decorations and stylistic attributes. These interviews were conducted on the respective Saunyama leaders, potters and various elders within the community. With the aid of informers the interviewees were intentionally chosen according to their knowledge capability concerning the subject matter. Therefore for the purposes of maintaining a holistic approach, prearranged questions were utilised to guide the researcher during interviews as well as making sure that each responded was asked similar questions. In this regard a total of 13 elders who were only identified as the potential candidates were interviewed. This was carried out through use of predefined questions (see interview guide in Appendix 2) which were extended to the targeted participants. Documentation of these interviews was mostly done through tape recording, photographing and note taking.

3.5.3. Focus Group Discussions: Focus groups were utilized in verifying the authenticity of the Saunyama as one of the primary stakeholders to the Nyanga archaeological complex as well as deducing the uses and symbols associated with their pots and those situated at Mt Muozi. Thus groups of Saunyama leaders, potters and the rest of the elderly were targeted most. Advantage of focus groups to this enquiry was that they presented a natural setting whereby individuals freely discussed their views pertaining to beliefs and social systems attached to the vessels and mostly their archaeological connection to the complex. Ultimately only 2 Focus Group Discussions (FDGs) sessions were conducted and these were composed of less than 5-10 individuals as recommended due to transport difficulties in gathering them together. This was carried out through use of a guide (see interview guide in Appendix 2) whereby predefined questions were extended to the targeted participants. Likewise documentation of these discussions was mostly done through tape recording, photographing and note taking.

3.6. Data analysis procedures

In this comparative study the researcher relied on two data analysis methods which were archaeological and ethnographic approaches.

3.6.1. Archaeological approaches

Firstly the researcher made a comparative study of the archaeological vessels from Mt Muozi and ethnographic vessels from the contemporary Saunyama. The archaeological approach to ceramic analysis in this research was based on the multidimensional approach that was developed by Soper (1971); Huffman (1980) and (2007). This enabled a comparative study of selected ceramic dimensions in relation to the objectives of the inquiry. Therefore vessels from these two assemblages were systematically analysed paying particular attention to stylistic and decoration attributes hence the results were documented using the data capture sheet in Appendix 1.

3.6.1.1. Stylistic attributes

Varied definitions have been given concerning style by many archaeologists. For the purpose of this study, style was treated as unique features that make up an artefact, obtained during its production, which in one way or the other influences its use and the cultural context in which it operates (Marufu 2008). Huffman (2007) notes that investigation of typical stylistic attributes assists in connecting archaeological entities with historically known groups. Similarly this was the anticipation of this comparative study so as to establish a link between the contemporary Saunyama and the hilltop settlements, an early phase of the Nyanga archaeological complex. Therefore the following attributes were analysed concurrently, Vessel form, Lip form, Surface treatment, Height and Diameter.

3.6.1.1.1. Vessel form: Vessel shape was classified basing on Soper's (2002) illustrations of the Muozi vessels (see Figure 4.17). However it must be noted that he did not categorise the vessels systematically as to the concerns of this research therefore proper classification of the vessel shapes as shown below in Figure 3.1 was schemed in accordance with various vessel shapes that have been recognised by previous archaeologists who have analysed pottery such as Gutu (2007) Marufu (2008) and Sinamai (2008).

Figure 3.1: Vessel form classes for both assemblages

Class 1: Small semi-constricted hemispherical bowls (ii and iv)

Class 2: Large semi-constricted hemispherical bowls (i and ii)

Class 3: Small necked bowls with short-out-turning rims (v)

Class 4: Large necked bows with short-out-turning rims (vi and viii)

Class 5: Small necked pots with out-turning rims (xii and xii)

Class 6: Small wide mouthed pots with vertical or in-sloping rims (ix)

Class 7: Large wide-mouthed pots with vertical or in-sloping rims (xx)

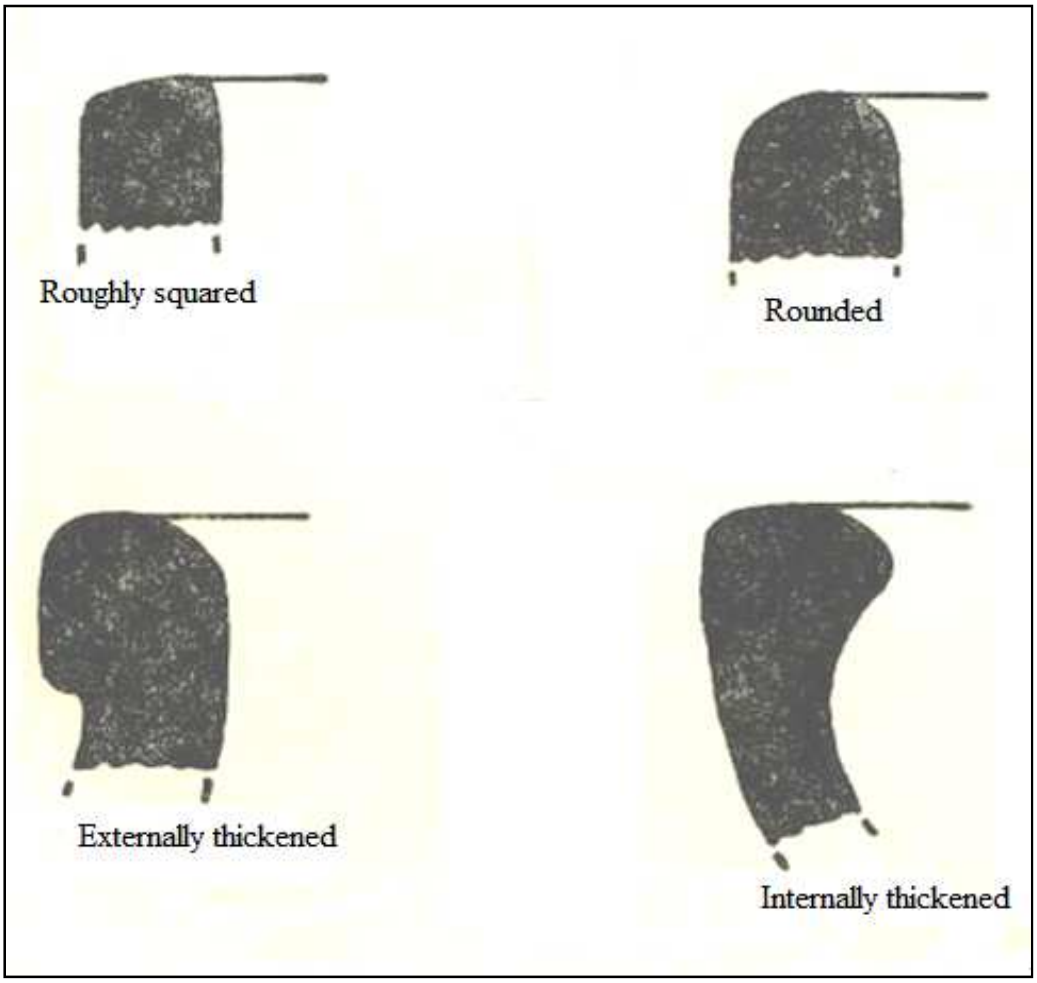
Class 8: Large necked pots with out-turning rims (xxv and xxviii)

Class 9: Open deep straight sided bowls (6)

Source: Fieldwork data

3.6.1.1.2. Lip form: Phillipson (1976) believes that they are basically 9 lipforms that are portrayed by pottery from Southern Africa and these ranges from rounded to thickened lips. In order to gain a general character of the two pottery assemblages 4 of these were adopted for the study as potrayed in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Lipforms that characterised vessels from both assemblages



Source: Modified from Phillipson (1976).

3.6.1.1.3. Surface treatment: Basically surface treatment involves embellishment of the exterior of pottery surface for various reasons that include beautification (Gutu 2007). In most cases this is evidenced by surfaces that are polished, presence of red ochre or graphite. Therefore in this study surface treatment was one of the stylistic attributes that was used to establish continuity and change from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present hence it was given closer attention.

3.6.1.1.4. Height: In this study true height of the vessels was determined from measuring the vertical distance between the base and the lip of every pot. This was carried out using a ruler hence the vessels were classified accordingly.

3.6.1.1.5. Diameter: Maximum diameters were the only considered for the vessels from both assemblages and these were measured using a string which was strung around a vessel then measured onto a ruler to determine its circumference first. This was then calculated to determine a vessels diameter.

3.6.1.2. Decoration attributes

Decorations within pottery consist of the entire additions to the inside and outside of a vessel after its production and their application do not change the original design of the vessel (Marufu 2008). Basically these are differentiated following their location, pattern produced and the instrument used. As a result, these were categorised into 3 respective classes which are decoration placement, decoration motif and decoration technique. Huffman (1989) notes that intergration of these attributes into the multidimensional analysis approach greatly helps in establishing group identity. On the other hand Ndoro (1996) believes decorations on a vessel can help us to understand more about its use as well as symbols attached to it. Therefore these decoration attributes were critically classified and analysed with the aim of developing the archaeological identity of the Saunyama as well as the cultural context in which the Muozi assemblage operated.

3.6.1.2.1. Decoration placement: This is the actual location on which the decorations are situated on a vessel. In this study, these locations ranged from the lip, rim, neck, shoulder, body or base of each and every vessel. All these variations were recorded and comparatively analysed.

3.6.1.2.2. Decoration motif: This involved the full pattern that was portrayed by the decorations. The motifs were classified basing on the dominant techniques that were used to produce them and finally presented using illustrations.

3.6.1.2.3. Decoration technique: Various methods were used to decorate the vessels. These varied basing on the tools or substances used but in the long run these were documented on recording sheets and comparatively examined to infer similarities and differences on the two assemblages.

3.6.2. Ethnographic approaches

Using the content analysis recommended by Hancook (1998), data obtained from the interviews and focus group discussions was transcribed, classified, tabulated and summarized using descriptive accounts. Concurrently data from the ethnographic survey was analysed basing on the themes and categories in which it was classified. Major themes were discussed first followed by minor. The data was then comparatively analysed basing on these categories hence calculations were carried out respectively. Focus was then concentrated on authenticating the archaeological identity of the Saunyama people to the Nyanga complex. The ethnographic data was then used to understand the social dimension of the two assemblages. Thus simultaneously data was analysed using discussions, pottery illustrations, charts, graphs, tables, maps and photographs.

3.7. Data presentation procedures

According to Hancook (1998) data presentation involves summarizing the mass of data collected and presenting results in a way that communicates the most important factors so as to bring out the broader picture or major findings. Therefore data was presented in accordance to the approach used to gather it. In this respect, data from the archaeological methods was presented first then followed by data derived from the ethnographic survey. These sets of data were digitised then systematically tabulated and quantified using Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel programmes.

3.8. Ethical considerations

According to David and Kramer (2001) ethnoarchaeologists must consider ethics when conducting their research. Like any other research it is vital to respect indigenous practices and knowledge systems through considering the effects of one's research on the people understudy. Adhering to such ethics is a small price to pay for the wealthy of knowledge and experience that these host communities will be willing to share with researchers (Stark 2003). Therefore the following ethical considerations were taken into consideration during the research.

- Seeking authority to carry out the research from responsible authorities.
- Seeking informed consent from all participants before and during the research.
- Maintaining confidentiality of the information from participants where necessary.

- Protecting the research participants from negative reactions by other members of the society if necessary.
- Adhering to myths and taboos that govern sacred heritage places such as Mt Muozi.

3.9. Summary

In overall this chapter provided the blueprint plan that was used by the researcher to gather data during the ethnoarchaeological survey. This included the research design, the research sample, targeted population, the data collection methods, data analysis and presentation strategies as well as the ethics that directed the researcher.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter strives to authenticate the archaeological identity of the Saunyama dynasty in relation to Mt Muozi, an early hilltop settlement of the Nyanga complex through a comparative analysis of ethnographic vessels produced and consumed by the contemporary Saunyama and the archaeological vessels situated at Mt Muozi. In order to achieve this focus is directed on the vessels stylistic and decoration attributes for evidence of similarities and differences. Use-life and symbolism of both assemblages is also put under study in which the possible cultural and technological contexts in which the vessels operated are comparatively analysed. It closes by presenting and analysing gathered local perspectives for evidence of continuity or change towards stylistic and decoration attributes as well as use-life and symbolism.

4.2. Stylistic attributes

Assemblages were comparatively studied using the multi-dimensional lists approach. This was carried out in order to establish the general character of the respective vessels.

4.2.1. Vesselform

Using Soper's (2002), Gutu's (2007) and Sinamai's (2008) accounts, where they carried out comparative studies that also dealt with complete pots and bowls, shapes of the vessels were categorised into 9 classes as illustrated in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Summary of vessel forms from archaeological and ethnographic assemblages

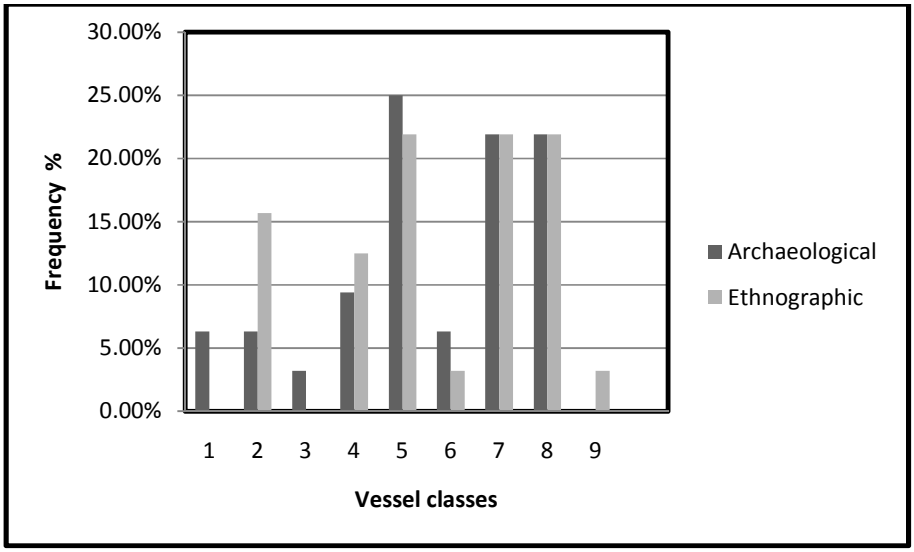
Vessel Form (Class)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Archaeological	2	2	1	3	8	2	7	7	0	32
Percentage	6.3%	6.3%	3.2%	9.4 %	25.0%	6.3%	21.9%	21.9%	0 %	100 %
Ethnographic	0	5	0	4	7	1	7	7	1	32
Percentage	0 %	15.7%	0 %	12.5%	21.9%	3.2%	21.9%	21.9%	3.2%	100 %

Source: Fieldwork data

It is clear that the most dominant vessel form category were from **Class 5** of the archaeological assemblage which is composed of necked pots with out-turning rims that constituted 25% of the vessels. On the other hand the most dominant vessels among the ethnographic assemblage were from 3 categories namely **Class 5** composed of small necked

pots with out-turning rims. **Class 7** composed of large wide mouthed pots with vertical or in-sloping rims and finally **Class 8** composed of large necked pots with out-turning rims which all constituted 21.9% respectively. It is also evident from Figure 4.2 that they are no open deep straight sided bowls categorised under **Class 9** within the archaeological sample. A similar phenomenon is also evident on the ethnographic sample whereby small semi-constricted hemispherical bowls categorised under **Class 1** and small necked bowls with short-out turning rims grouped in **Class 3** were respectively not identifiable within the assemblage. Probably this could be explained either by the limited flexibility of the respective samples to represent all the typical vessels classified or aspects to do with technological as well as cultural continuity and change.

Figure 4.2: Graph showing frequency of vessel forms for both assemblages



Source: Fieldwork data

As presented in Figure 4.2 all the 62 vessels from both the assemblages tend to complement each other especially **Class 7** and **Class 8**. However the most outstanding difference is only noticeable between archaeological and ethnographic vessels grouped under **Class 2** which is constituted of 6.3% and 15.7% respectively.

4.2.2. Lipform

Lipforms of the vessels from the respective assemblages were also analysed in order to ascertain any similarities and differences that could be used to verify any possible link between the Saunyama and the Nyanga archaeological complex. The most dominant vessels within the respective assemblages in terms of lipforms were characterised by externally thickened lips as portrayed in Figure 4.3 below.

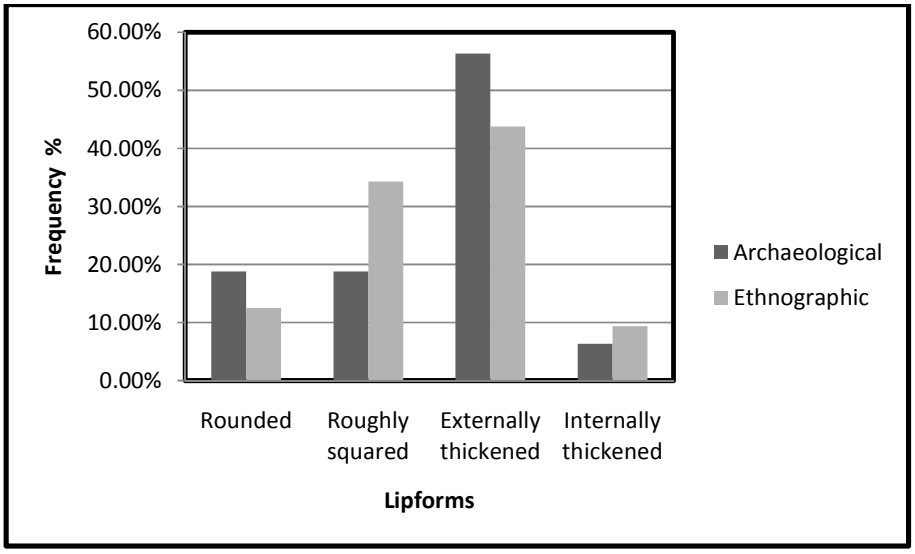
Figure 4.3: Summary of lipforms from archaeological and ethnographic assemblages

LipForm	Archaeological	Percentage	Ethnographic	Percentage
Rounded	6	18.8%	4	12.5%
Roughly squared	6	18.8%	11	34.3%
Externally thickened	18	56.3%	14	43.8%
Internally thickened	2	6.3%	3	9.4%
Total	32	100%	32	100%

Source: Fieldwork data

On the archaeological assemblage vessels with externally thickened lips constituted 56.3% whilst they constituted 43.8% on the ethnographic assemblage. Similarly the least dominant vessels in terms of lipforms within the respective assemblages were also characterised by internally thickened lips which constituted 6.3% and 9.4% respectively.

Figure 4.4: Graph showing frequency of vessel lipforms for both assemblages



Source: Fieldwork data

The most intriguing aspect portrayed by these vessels from the respective assemblages concerning lipforms as shown in Figure 4.4 is that their frequencies tend to harmonise with each other as evidenced by constant fluctuations that complement each other.

4.2.3. Surface treatment

Treatment of the exterior surface of the vessels was also analysed in order to establish similarities and differences that characterise both the archaeological and ethnographic assemblages (see Figure 4.5 below).

Figure 4.5: Summary of surface treatment from both assemblages

Surface Treatment	Red Ochre	Graphite Burnished	Polished	Total
Archaeological	0	0	32	32
Percentage	0%	0%	100%	100%
Ethnographic	0	0	32	32
Percentage	0%	0%	100%	100%

Source: Fieldwork data

All the 62 vessels from both assemblages were only polished. No paints or finishes such as graphite burnish or red ochre were noticeable to have been applied on the vessels and this raised a number of questions. Numerous reasons were gathered and these are presented in the coming Section 4.7, but chiefly among them was that both assemblages coincidentally happened to be ritualistic vessels hence they were only required to be polished when it came to the aspect of surface treatment during their production.

4.2.4. Height

Height for all the ethnographic vessels was successfully measured. However due to restrictions to handle archaeological vessels situated at Mt Muozi following its sacredness, the researcher ended up only considering minimum and maximum height for the largest vessels only for the analysis as presented in Figure 4.6. For the archaeological statistics, data was derived from Soper's (2002) partial characterisation of the Muozi assemblage in relation to other archaeological sites within the Nyanga complex. In terms of minimum height for the largest vessels, there was a slight difference unlike as compared to maximum height for the largest vessels that were characterised by a sharp difference between the two assemblages. Probably the reason why both the assemblages had little differences in terms of minimum height for the largest vessels was because the most prevalent vessels under this category included large pots used to ferment beer locally known as *mbiziro* as well as large pots used

to serve beer known as *musudze* which were mostly functioning within their expected parameters of use-life just like in the archaeological record and at the same time their use-life was never threatened by adoption of large metal vessels by the contemporary Saunyama in the process of preparing beer for the rituals.

Figure 4.6: Summary of the vessels height from both assemblages

Sample	Minimum height for the largest vessels	Maximum height for the largest vessels
Archaeological	50cm	69cm
Ethnographic	42cm	51cm

Source: Fieldwork data

On the other hand the sharp difference between archaeological and ethnographic vessels in terms of maximum height for the largest vessels could also be explained by gradual replacement of the largest vessels used to brew beer locally named *gate* by large metal vessels which were now serving their purpose hence few of the typical pots were identified within the ethnographic vessels unlike in the archaeological record.

4.2.5. Diameter

As noted earlier, due to restrictions to the sacred site of Muozi where the archaeological sample was situated, the researcher was forced only to consider the maximum diameter ranges for the larger vessels in relation to Soper's (2002) results.

Figure 4.7: Summary of the vessels diameter from both assemblages

Sample	Maximum diameter range for larger vessels
Archaeological	50-65cm
Ethnographic	34-49cm

Source: Fieldwork data

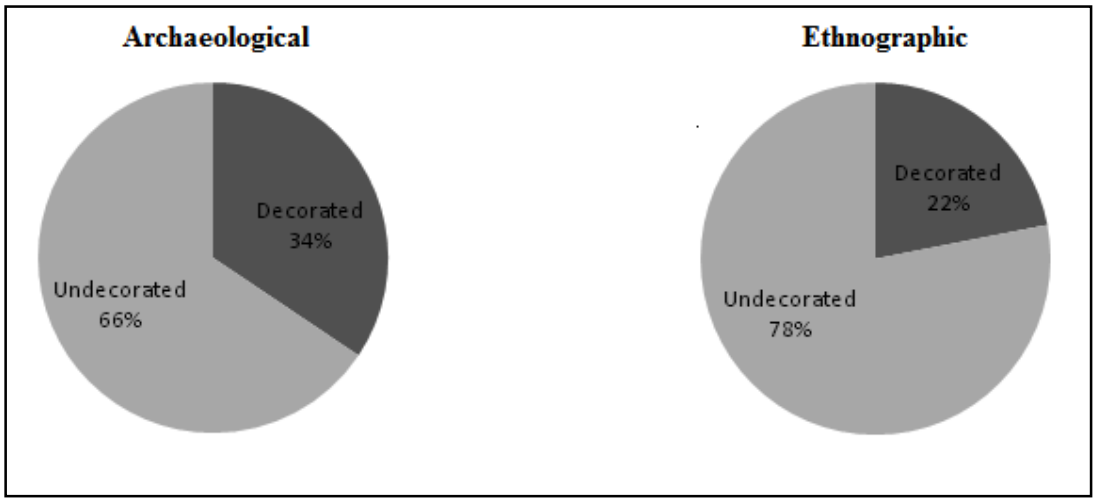
As portrayed in Figure 4.7 the maximum diameter for the largest vessels within the archaeological sample ranged from 50 to 65cm. This probably points to the fact these vessels had a larger surface area that could accommodate much volume as compared to the ethnographic larger vessels whose maximum diameter ranged from 34 to 49cm. Thus a general picture is painted whereby large vessels from the archaeological sample are bigger as compared to those from the ethnographic sample since height and diameter in most cases determine how large a vessel is. Probably the reason why there is a steady reduction in terms of maximum diameter for largest vessels within the archaeological assemblage could be

possibly explained by reduction in production of larger pots used to brew beer (*gate*) which are being gradually replaced by large metal vessels used for the same purpose.

4.3. Decoration attributes

The respective decoration attributes of the pottery vessels namely decoration placement, decoration motif and decoration technique were also comparatively analysed using the multi-dimensional list approach in order to establish their general features.

Figure 4.8: Frequency of decorated and undecorated vessels from both assemblages



Source: Fieldwork data

As shown in Figure 4.8 only 34% of the archaeological vessels were decorated whilst 66% were undecorated. On the other hand only 22% of the ethnographic vessels were decorated. This is typical of Nyanga pottery which is hardly decorated. Probable reasons were sought and this can be largely explained by ethnographic data whereby it was discovered that ritualistic vessels amongst the Saunyama are rarely decorated and to be specific mostly pots are decorated rather than bowls.

4.3.1. Decoration placement

Most decorations were exerted on the shoulders when it came to archaeological vessels. On the other hand ethnographic vessels were mostly decorated on both their shoulders and bodies (see Figure 4.9).

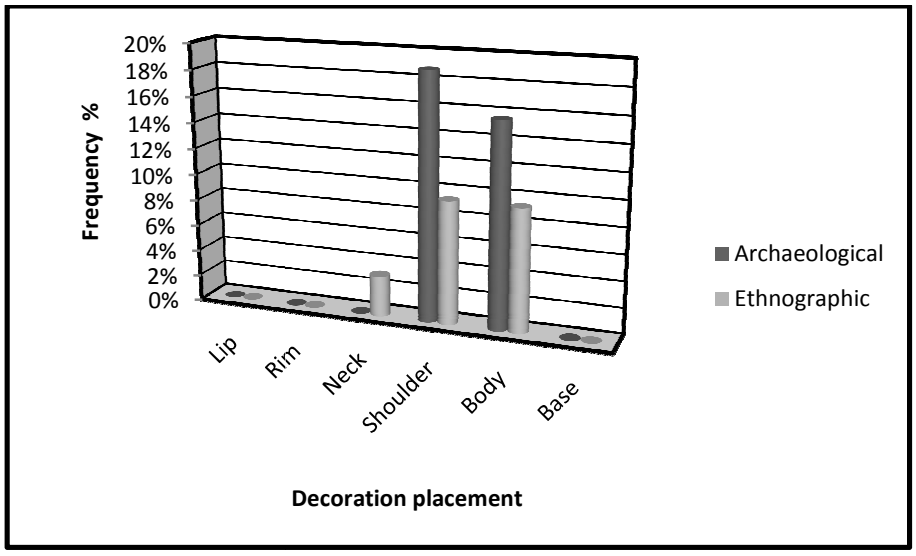
Figure 4.9: Summary of decoration placement for the vessels from both assemblages

Decoration Placement	Archaeological	Ethnographic
Lip	0	0
Rim	0	0
Neck	0	1
Shoulder	6	3
Body	5	3
Base	0	0
Total	11/32	7/32
Percentage	34.4%	21.9%

Source: Fieldwork data

It was discovered that not a single vessel was decorated on the lip, neither on its rim nor base. Only ethnographic pots had decorations exerted on their necks. In overall as presented by Figure 4.10 placement of decorations on the archaeological sample is only extended to the shoulders and bodies of the vessels whilst on the ethnographic sample it ranges from the neck, shoulder and body of the vessels. Thus it is evident that there are slight differences from both the assemblages when it comes to placement of decorations which could be possibly explained by forces of cultural as well as technological continuity and change.

Figure 4.10: Frequency of decoration placement for the vessels from both assemblages

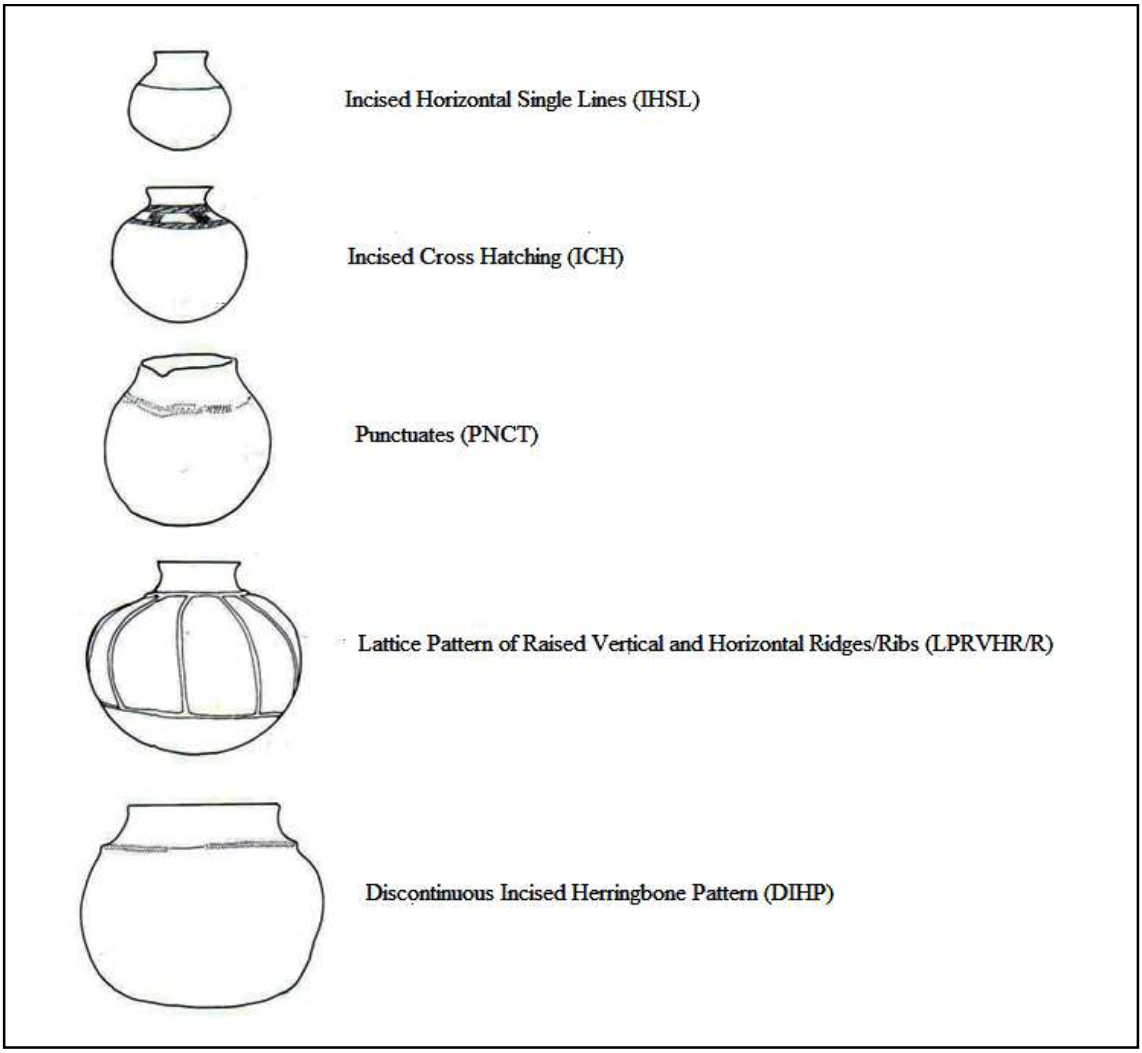


Source: Fieldwork data

4.3.2. Decoration motif

Considerably 5 motifs were identified on the decorated vessels from both assemblages as potrayed in Figure 4.11a. These included Punctuates (PNCT), Lattice Pattern of Raised Vertical and Horizontal Ridges/Ribs (LPRVHR/R), Discontinuous Incised Herringbone Pattern (DIHP), Incised Horizontal Single Lines (IHSL) and Incised Cross Hatching (ICH). The most dominant motif on the archaeological assemblage was discontinuous incised herringbone pattern which mostly constituted 9.4% of the decorations. On the other hand lattice pattern of raised vertical and horizontal ridges/ribs were the most dominant motif when it came to decorations on the ethnographic vessels which constituted 6.3% of the entire decorations.

Figure 4.11a: Decoration motifs for the vessels from both assemblages



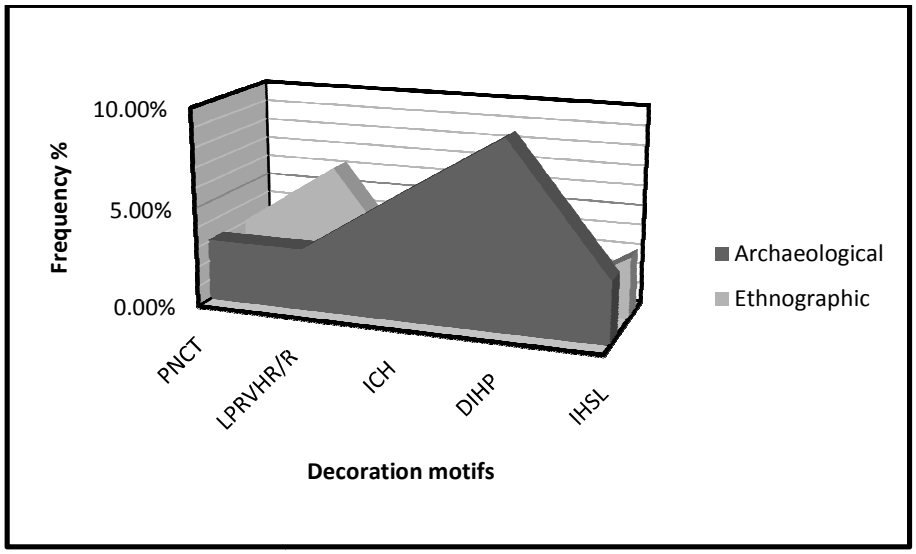
Source: Modified from Soper (2002:105-106)

Figure 4.11b: Summary of decoration motifs for the vessels from both assemblages

Decoration Motif	Archaeological	Percentage	Ethnographic	Percentage
PNCT	1	3.1%	1	3.1%
LPRVHR/R	1	3.1%	2	6.3%
ICH	2	6.3%	0	0%
DIHP	3	9.4%	0	0%
IHSL	1	3.1%	1	3.1%
Total	8/32	25/100%	3/32	12.5/100%

Source: Fieldwork data

Figure 4.12: Frequency of decoration motifs for the vessels from both assemblages



Source: Fieldwork data

The archaeological assemblage as illustrated in Figure 4.12 had all the motifs identifiable within its sample unlike the ethnographic whereby incised cross hatching and discontinuous incised herringbone pattern were not identifiable within the decorated vessels. Probably this could be better explained with the forces of continuity and change rather than unequal representation of the decoration motifs following the limited nature of the samples from the respective samples.

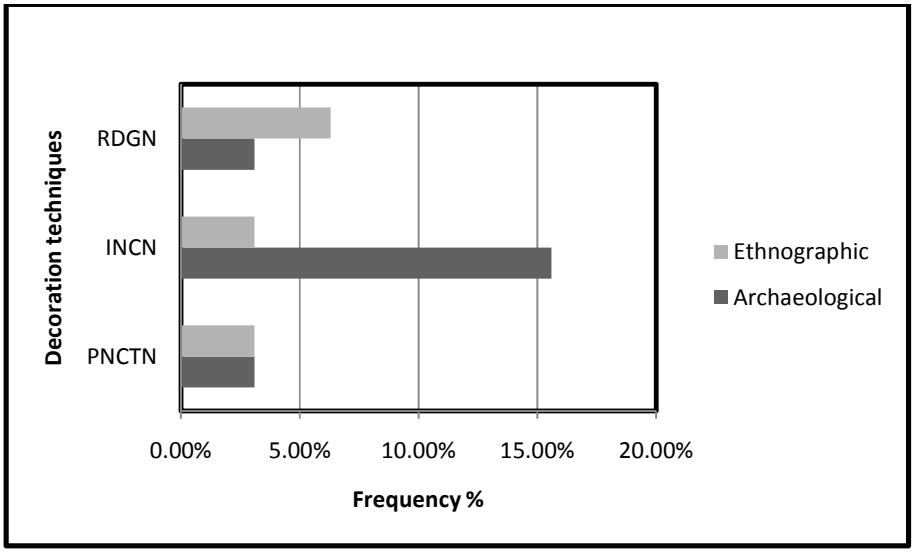
4.3.3. Decoration technique

Figure 4.13: Summary of decoration techniques for the vessels from both assemblages

Decoration Technique	Archaeological	Percentage	Ethnographic	Percentage
PNCTN	1	3.1%	1	3.1%
INCN	5	15.6%	1	3.1%
RDGN	1	3.1%	2	6.3%
Total	7/32	21.8/100%	4/32	12.5/100%

Source: Fieldwork data

Figure 4.14: Frequency of decoration techniques for the vessels from both assemblages



Source: Fieldwork data

As portrayed in Figure 4.13 techniques used to decorate both the assemblages ranged from Punctation (PNCTN), Incision (INCN) and Ridging (RDGN). For the archaeological assemblage 3.1% were decorated using the punctation technique, whilst 15.6% were decorated using the incision technique and lastly another 3.1% of the vessels were decorated using the ridging method. On the other hand 3.1% of the ethnographic vessels were decorated using the punctation technique. Another 3.1% of the vessels from the same category were also decorated using the incision method and last but not least the remaining 6.3% were decorated using the ridging method. All in all the most dominant decoration technique was on the archaeological assemblage and this was characterised by incision technique whilst ridging technique dominated the ethnographic assemblage as illustrated in Figure 4.14.

4.4. The Saunyama and the Nyanga archaeological complex

In order to authenticate the archaeological identity of the Saunyama dynasty in relation to the Nyanga complex, a follow up survey was made up on the contemporary Saunyama descendants of the *Nyoka* household and Mt Muozi an early hilltop settlement of the Nyanga complex. This was made possible through interviews and focus group discussions. The ethnographic survey revealed a great deal about the identity of the Saunyama as well as their relations to the Nyanga complex especially the archaeological site of Muozi. Elders interviewed pertaining to the identity of the Saunyama belonged to the *Nyoka* lineage. They all strongly believed their ancestors migrated from the adjacent districts in an area called Saatsiro in Mozambique time immemorial where the grave of their founder Mudziwepasi (meaning founding father) is said to be. The Saunyama identified their ancestors to be of a *Barwe* ancestry who originally spoke a *Sena* dialect long before they unconsciously adopted the *Chimanyika* a branch of the shona language spoke by the Manyika of Mutasa dynasty who already had occupied the complex before their arrival. Their ancestors came from Mozambique as meat hunters hence named *sauNYAMA* and by totem they refereed to themselves as the *mheta- chifambanedumbu* (python). According to the Saunyama their ancestors came as two brothers namely Dzimbiti and Kanyoro who were sons of Mudziwepasi. Having identified the current Saunyama territory as rich in wild game the two brothers got interested in the area, went back and took their families and settled within the Nyanga archaeological complex. However as mentioned above it must be noted that initially before they settled in the area, the territory belonged to Chief Mutasa Chifambausiku by then. As a result they had to make an alliance in which the younger brother Dzimbiti had to offer one of his daughters named Masiyiwa as a wife to Chief Mutasa in exchange for the landscape hence it became theirs officially. In terms of boundaries it was bordered by Nyarerwe River, Gaerezi River, Nyangombe River and Nyamudira River and up to today their territory is still marked by these boundaries. However this exempted the northern end under Chief Katerere of the *Hwesa* as well as the Tangwena on the east. Within their territory also falls Chief Hata's area of jurisdiction or the *Hata* household that they only recognise as a sub-chief since they are an offshoot of a brother who rebelled against them and bribed the colonialists to gain chieftainship. Eventually the Saunyama ancestors are said to have settled within the Tani range in which Mt Muozi is part and parcel.

To the Saunyama the archaeological site of Mt Muozi is not only the sacred mountain within their territory, rather they are a couple of them which include, Nyagota, Nyaunguzu,

Muchena, Dzimbahwe and the rest of the Tani range. However they believe that Mt Muozi is the most sacred and revered among them all since that is where their ancestors first lived when they came from Mozambique. As a result the significance of the mountain only lies within the parameters of stabilising and signifying the Saunyama chieftainship. According to the Saunyama even though the mountain represent their chieftainship, chiefs are neither installed there nor buried there. Installation of the chiefs takes place at their respective homesteads and upon death they are buried in Nyaunguzu Mountain west of Muozi. Neither Saunyama chiefs nor family members are allowed to ascend the mountain unless ordered by their spirit medium or *mhondoro* known as Magodo Nyaruvembera based in Barauro in Mozambique. The mhondoro is said to be possessed by the Saunyama ancestral spirits *(mashavi)* and one of its tasks is to help Saunyama elders in choosing spiritually pure candidates for the chieftainship as well as disciplining them in the course of their reign. It is believed any member of the Saunyama household who happens to ascend the Muozi will not live long therefore if the mhondoro is no longer pleased with any reigning period of any chief which in most cases happens due to failure to providing rains for the people, (which is regarded as one of the major role of the chiefly duties) the *mhondoro* orders the chief to ascend the mountain with a sacrificial package of a black bull *(mukono wemombe),* male sheep *(junju rehwai)* and a white cloth *(jira).* The last chief who was given a similar order is said to have died within a short period of time after descending Muozi.

According to the Saunyama elders, pots and bowels situated at Mt Muozi were left there by their ancestors' time immemorial and just like any other tangible and intangible cultural heritage within the mountain, the pots signify and give stability to the Saunyama chieftainship. These pots and bowls are said to be ritualistic vessels by the Saunyama and they are believed to be always full to the brim with sorghum (njera) except one pot said to contain a white cloth (jira) hence the reason why a chief does not need to carry sorghum when ascending the mountain since it will be readily available. Apart from the Saunyama locals also distance themselves from Muozi following its sacredness, one informant from Maristvale following personal experiences referred Muozi as a deadly 'spiritual' zone inhabited by dangerous wild animals and dense vegetation especially at the apex. According to him even though students and teachers from Maristvale boasted of ascending to the apex of the mountain where the archaeological vessels are situated he doubted very much if they ever reached there.

4.5. Use-life of the pottery vessels

In order to develop the technological and cultural context in which the vessels situated at the archaeological site of Mt Muozi possibly operated, an inquiry was also made on the ethnographic vessels produced and consumed by the contemporary Saunyama. The results derived were used to gain insight on the possible factors that governed the use-life of the Muozi assemblage. Initially it was discovered that both the assemblages were ritualistic vessels that served during rituals and these are characterised by beer pots and bowels except one small bowel *(nhera)* in Figure 4.19 used to store traditional snuff locally *(bute).* Through a critical study of the vessels functions the pots and bowls were traditionally classified into 8 classes. The first class is composed of large pots that were used to brew beer locally known as *gate*. The second class is composed of large pots used to ferment beer known as *mbiziro*. The third class is composed of medium sized pots used to serve beer known as *musudze*. Class 4 and 5 are respectively composed of similar pots used to serve beer and water for the *mhondoro* respectively known as *chipfuko* and *pfuko yemvura*. Vessels within class 6 are used to store beer to drink from larger vessels and these are locally known as *tukaha* in plural and *kakaha* in singular. The next class is composed of bowels with multiple functions known as *mbiya* which are used for storing beer for drinking from larger vessels, burning ritualistic herbs as well as serving as lids for the larger pots. The last class is made up of smaller bowels locally known as *nhera* which are used to store traditional snuff. A comparison of traditional classes for both assembleges portrayed in Figure 4.15 clearly shows that the ethnographic vessels were mostly dominated by smaller pots and bowls used to store beer for drinking which is served from larger pots known in singular as *kakaha* and these constituted 31.3%. On the other hand archaeological vessels are mostly dominated by large pots used to ferment beer *(mbiziro)* which constituted 34.4%. Only 6 out of 8 vessel classes are only identifiable within the archaeological sample and this is evidenced by absence of vessels classified as *chipfuko* and *pfuko yemvura* which are reserved for use by the *mhondoro*.

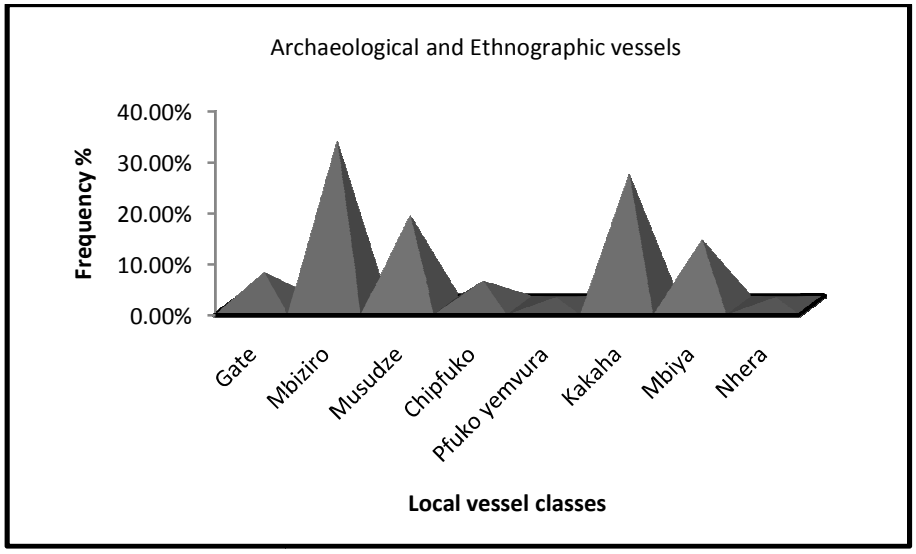
Figure 4.15: Summary of local vessel classes in relation to use for both assemblages

Local names for the vessels	Gate	Mbiziro	Musudze	Chipfuko	Pfuko yemvura	Kakaha	Mbiya	Nhera
Archaeological	3	11	7	1	0	6	4	0
Percentage	9.4%	34.4%	21.9%	3.1%	0%	18.8%	12.5%	0%
Ethnographic	1	9	4	2	1	10	4	1
Percentage	3.1%	28.1%	12.5%	6.3%	3.1%	31.3%	12.5%	3.1%
Total Number	4	20	11	3	1	16	8	1
Total Percentage	6.5%	32.3%	17.7%	4.8%	1.6%	25.8%	12.9%	1.6%

Source: Fieldwork data

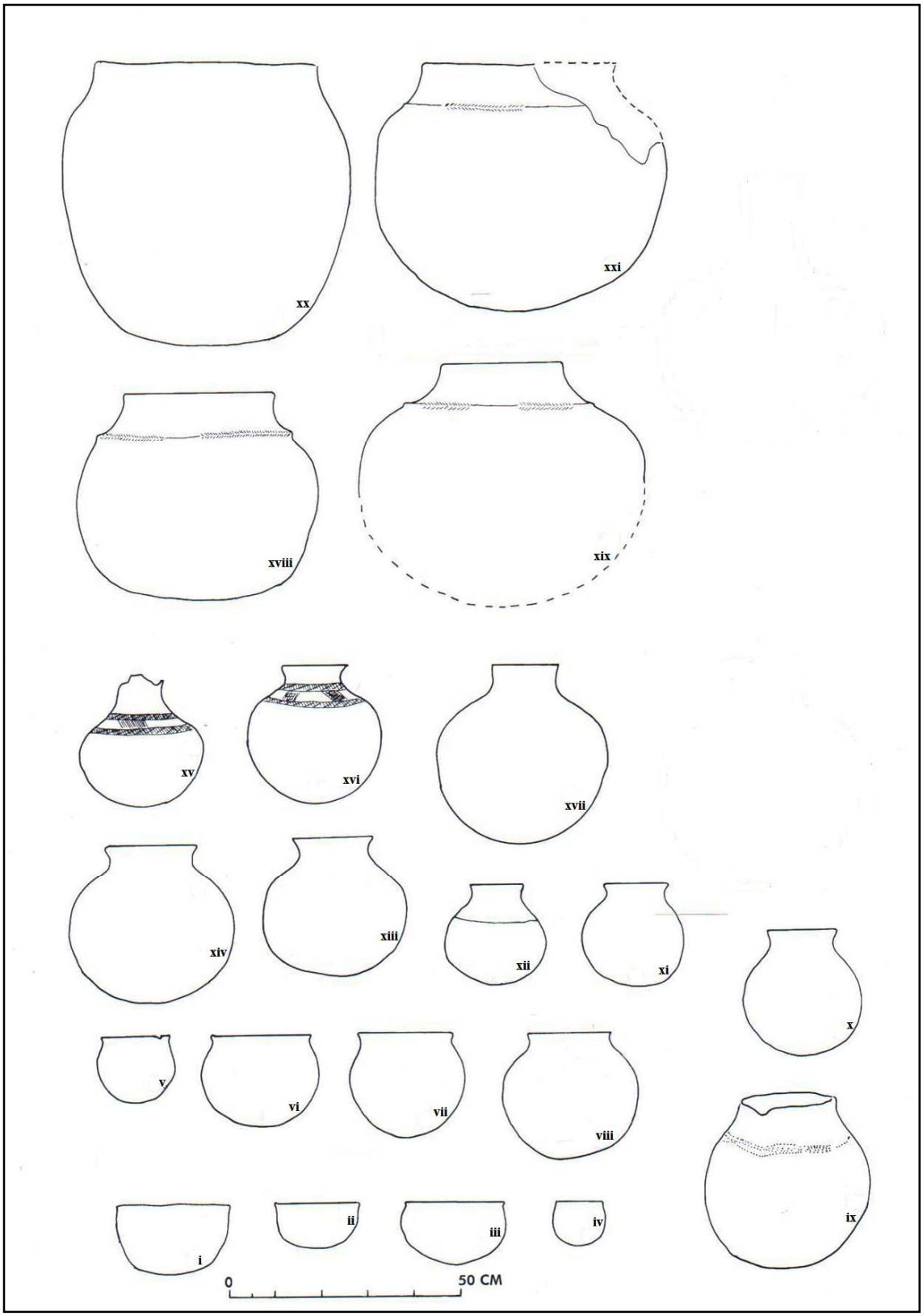
Representation of the vessels from both assemblages depict a scenario whereby the frequently used vessels are those used to ferment beer *(mbiziro)* which constitute 32.3%,followed by those used to store beer for drinking poured from larger vessels *(kakaha)* which constituted 25.8% of the 62 vessels. This frequency is followed by large pots used to ferment beer *(musudze)* which constituted 17.7%. Bowels *(mbiya)* followed suit and these constituted 12.9%.

Figure 4.16: Frequency of local vessel classes in relation to use for both assemblages

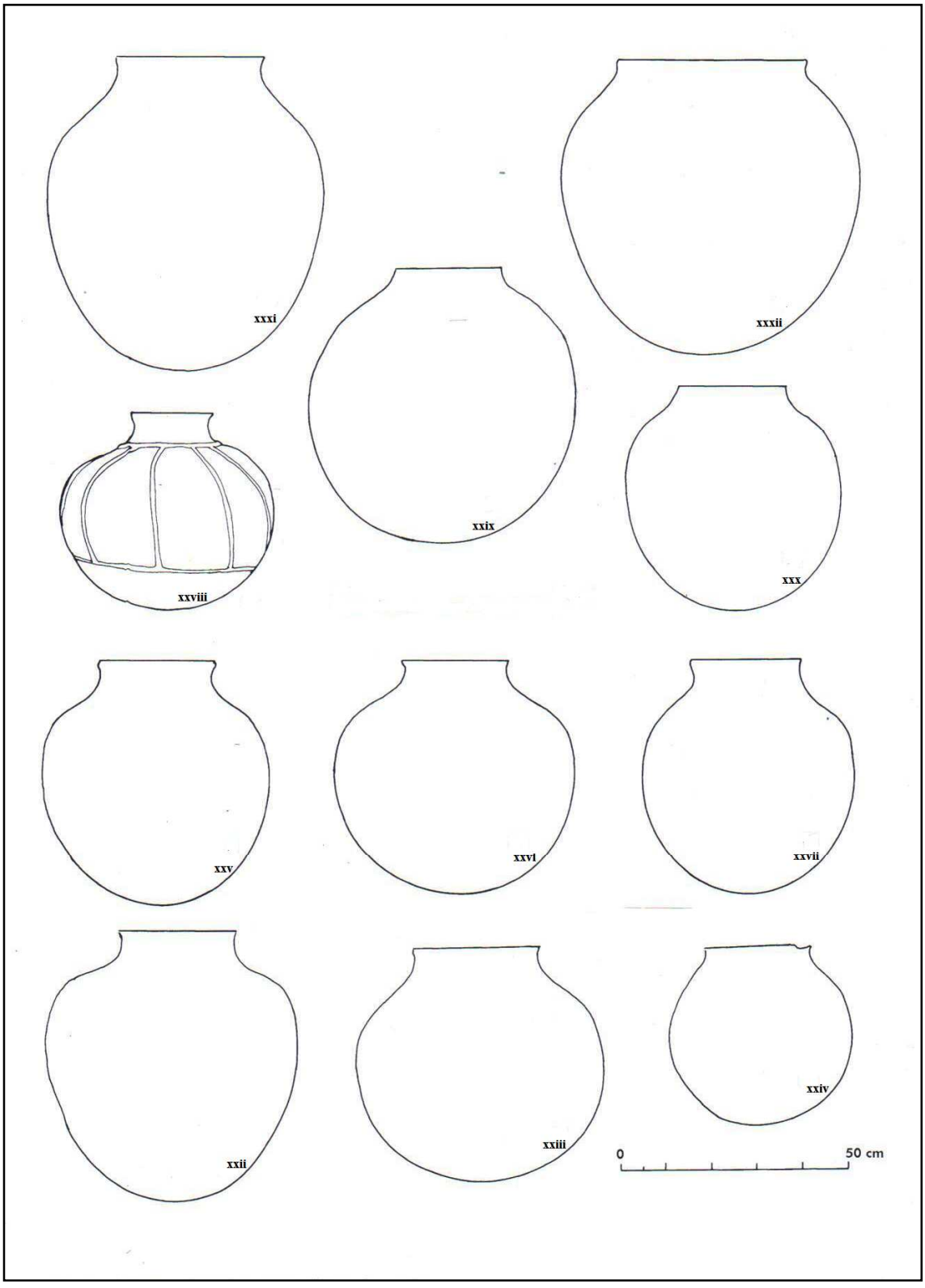


Source: Fieldwork data

Figure 4.17: Pots and bowels that represented the archaeological assemblage



(Continued) Pots and bowels that represented the archaeological assemblage



Source: Modified from Soper (2002:105-106)

Figure 4.18: Summary of local classes, uses and symbolism of the archaeological vessels

Vessel Number	Possible Names		Possible Uses	Possible Significance
	Shona (local)	**English**		
i.	Mbiya	Large semi-constricted hemispherical bowl	-Used as a container to drink traditional beer served from the larger vessels -Also used as a lid for the larger vessels	Stabilise & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
ii.	Mbiya	Small semi-constricted hemispherical bowl	-Used as a container to drink beer served from the larger vessels -Also used as a lid	Stabilise &signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
iii.	Mbiya	Large semi-constricted hemispherical bowl	-Used as a container to drink beer served from the larger vessels -Also used as a lid	Stabilise &signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Iv.	Mbiya	Small semi-constricted hemispherical bowl	-Used as a container to drink beer served from the larger vessels -Also used as a lid	Stabilise &signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
V.	Chipfuko	Small necked bowl with short-out-turning rim	-Used as a container to drink beer served from the larger vessels -Also used as a lid	Stabilise &signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Vi.	Kakaha	Large necked bowl with short-out-turning rim	Used to drink beer served from the larger vessels	Stabilise &signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Vii.	Kakaha	Large necked bowl with short-out-turning rim	Used to drink beer served from the larger vessels	Stabilise &signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Viii.	Kakaha	Large necked bowl with short-out-turning rim	Used to drink beer served from the larger vessels	Stabilise &signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Ix.	Musudze	Small wide mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	Used for serving beer from the larger vessels	Stabilise &signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
X.	Kakaha	Small necked pot with out-turning rim	Used to drink beer served from the larger vessels	Stabilise &signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xi.	Kakaha	Small necked pot with out-turning rim	Used to drink beer served from the larger vessels	Stabilise &signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xii.	Kakaha	Small necked pot with out-turning rim	Used to drink beer served from the larger vessels	Stabilise &signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xiii.	Musudze	Small necked pot with out-turning rim	Used for serving beer from the larger vessels	Stabilise &signifies the Saunyama chieftainship

Continued summary of local classes, uses and symbolism of the archaeological vessels

Vessel Number	Possible Names		Possible Uses	Possible Significance
	Shona (local)	**English**		
Xiv.	Musudze	Small necked pot with out-turning rim	Used for serving beer from the larger vessels	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xv.	Musudze	Small necked pot with out-turning rim	Used for serving beer from the larger vessels	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xvi.	Musudze	Small necked pot with out-turning rim	Used for serving beer from the larger vessels	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xvii.	Musudze	Small necked pot with out-turning rim	Used for serving beer from the larger vessels	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xviii.	Mbiziro	Large wide-mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	Used to ferment beer	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xix.	Mbiziro	Large wide-mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	Used to ferment beer	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xx.	Gate	Large wide-mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	Used for brewing beer	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xxi.	Gate	Large wide-mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	Used for brewing beer	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xxii.	Mbiziro	Large necked pots with out-turning rims	Used to ferment beer	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xxiii.	Mbiziro	Large necked pot with out-turning rim	Used to ferment beer	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xxiv.	Musudze	Small wide mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	Used for serving beer from the larger vessels	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xxv.	Mbiziro	Large necked pot with out-turning rim	Used to ferment beer	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xxvi.	Mbiziro	Large necked pot with out-turning rim	Used to ferment beer	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship

Continued summary of local classes, uses and symbolism of the archaeological vessels

Vessel Number	Possible Names		Possible Uses	Possible Significance
	Shona (local)	**English**		
Xxvii.	Mbiziro	Large necked pots with out-turning rim	Used to ferment beer	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xxviii.	Mbiziro	Large necked pot with out-turning rim	Used to ferment beer	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xxiv.	Mbiziro	Large wide-mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	Used to ferment beer	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xxx.	Mbiziro	Large wide-mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	Used to ferment beer	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xxxi.	Mbiziro	Large necked pot with out-turning rim	Used to ferment beer	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship
Xxxii.	Gate	Large wide-mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	Used to brew beer	Stabilises & signifies the Saunyama chieftainship

Source: Fieldwork data

The *gate* used to brew beer made up 6.5% of the total vessels from the respective assemblages and this was followed by *chipfuko* which had 4.8% frequency. Lastly the *nhera* and *pfuko yemvura* respectively constituted 1.6% of the vessels. Emanating from an archaeological perspective into the recent times it is clear that most of the larger vessels *(gate, mbiziro* and *musudze)* used to prepare beer that were broadly represented in the archaeological record are reducing in frequency as evidenced by the ethnographic assemblage. A similar trend is also evident within the ethnographic assemblage whereby unlike in the archaeological record there is a gradual increase in the production and use of medium sized and small pots as well as bowls *(chipfuko, pfuko yemvura, kakaha* and *nhera)* (see Figure 4.15). The frequency of the *gate* is also reducing unlike in the archaeological past where it constituted 9.4%, this is evidenced by a frequency of 3.1% that it constituted in the ethnographic present. This possibly maybe explained by adoption of large metal vessels which are now used to brew beer in place of the *gate* hence decreasing in frequency in the ethnographic present.

Figure 4.19: Summary of local classes, uses and symbolism of the ethnographic vessels

No.	Vessel	Names	Use	Significance
1.		**Shona (Local)** Nhera **English** Large semi-hemispherical bowl	-Used to store traditional snuff (bute) during rituals e.g. during rainmaking ceremonies	
2.		**Shona (Local)** Mbiya **English** Large semi-hemispherical bowl	-Used as a container to drink traditional beer served from the larger vessels -Also used as a lid to cover mouths of the larger vessels	
3.		**Shona(Local)** Mbiya **English** Large semi-hemispherical bowl	-Used as a container to drink traditional beer served from the larger vessels -Also used as a lid to cover mouths of the larger vessels	-As a lid to the hari yepasi pot (No.21) it symbolises open and closed heavens whereby total coverage symbolises harvesting period and semi-coverage symbolises rain season
4.		**Shona (Local)** Mbiya **English** Large semi-hemispherical bowl	-Used as a container to drink traditional beer served from the larger vessels	
5.		**Shona (local)** Chipfuko **English** Large semi-hemispherical bowl	-Used as a container to drink traditional beer served from the larger vessels	

Continued summary of local classes, uses and symbolism of the ethnographic vessels

No.	Vessel	Names	Use	Significance
6.		**Shona (Local)** Mbiya **English** Open deep straight sided bowl	-Used to burn ritualistic herbs and grain	
7.		**Shona (local)** Kakaha **English** Large necked bowl with short-out-turning rim	-Used to drink beer from the larger vessels especially from hari youbaba (No.21)	
8.		**Shona (local)** Kakaha **English** Large necked bowl with short-out-turning rim	-Used to drink beer from the larger vessels	
9.		**Shona (local)** Kakaha **English** Small wide mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	-Its original use was for beer drinking from the larger vessels	
10.		**Shona (local)** Chipfuko **English** Large necked bowl with short-out-turning rim	-Used to drink served from larger vessels by the spirit mediums (mhondoro) before they get into trance	

Continued summary of local classes, uses and symbolism of the ethnographic vessels

No.	Vessel	Names	Use	Significance
11.		**Shona (Local)** Pfuko yemvura **English** Small necked pot with out-turning rim	-Used to serve water for drinking for the spirit medium/s (mhondoro) during rituals e.g. rainmaking ceremony	
12.		**Shona (local)** kakaha **English** Small necked pot with out-turning rim	-Used to drink beer from the larger vessels	
13.		**Shona (local)** Kakaha **English** Small necked pot with out-turning rim	-Used to drink beer from the larger vessels	
14.		**Shona (local)** Kakaha **English** Small necked pot with out-turning rim	-Used to drink beer from the larger vessels	
15.		**Shona (local)** Kakaha **English** Small necked pot with out-turning rim	-Used to drink beer from the larger vessels	

Continued summary of local classes, uses and symbolism of the ethnographic vessels

No.	Vessel	Names	Use	Significance
16.		**Shona (local)** Kakaha **English** Small necked pot with out-turning rim	-Used to drink beer from the larger vessels	
17.		**Shona (local)** Kakaha **English** Small necked pot with out-turning rim	-Used to drink beer from the larger vessels	
18.		**Shona (local)** Musudze **English** Large wide-mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	-Used for serving beer from the larger vessels	
19.		**Shona (local)** kakaha **English** Large wide-mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	-Used for drinking beer from the larger vessels	
20.		**Shona (local)** Musudze **English** Large necked pot with out-turning rim	-Used for serving beer from the larger vessels	

Continued summary of local classes, uses and symbolism of the ethnographic vessels

No.	Vessel	Names	Use	Significance
21.		**Shona (local)** Hari yemvura/ Hari youbaba/ Hari yepasi/ Hari yemazamo (Musudze) **English** Large necked pot with out-turning rim	-Serves as a rainmaking tool that governs the coming and going of rains both at local and national level -Also used to serve beer	-Symbolises either rainy or harvesting period - Symbolises fatherhood to the Saunyama chieftaincy -Symbolises fatherhood to the whole nation
22.		**Shona (local)** Mbiziro **English** Large wide-mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	-Used for fermenting beer	
23.		**Shona (local)** Mbiziro **English** Large wide-mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	-Used for fermenting beer	
24.		**Shona (local)** Mbiziro **English** Large wide-mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	-Used to store grain(njera) for future rituals -Used for fermenting beer -Also used to store ceremonial cloth (machira)	The decorations (vertical and horizontal ridges) symbolises the Saunyama people
25.		**Shona (local)** Mbiziro **English** Large necked pot with out-turning rim	-Used for fermenting beer	

Continued summary of local classes, uses and symbolism of the ethnographic vessels

No.	Vessel	Names	Use	Significance
26.		**Shona(local)** Mbiziro **English** Large necked pot with out-turning rim	-Used for fermenting beer	
27.		**Shona (local)** Musudze **English** Large necked pot with out-turning rim	-Used for serving beer	
28.		**Shona (local)** Mbiziro **English** Large wide-mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	-Used for fermenting beer	
29.		**Shona (local)** Gate **English** Large necked pot with out-turning rim	-Used for brewing beer	
30.		**Shona (local)** Mbiziro **English** Large necked pot with out-turning rim	-Used for fermenting beer	

Continued summary of local classes, uses and symbolism of the ethnographic vessels

No.	Vessel	Names	Use	Significance
31.		**Shona (local)** Mbiziro **English** Large wide-mouthed pot with vertical or in-sloping rim	-Used to ferment beer	
32.		**Shona (local)** Mbiziro **English** Large necked pot with out-turning rim	-Used to ferment beer	

Source: Fieldwork data

The least used vessel from the archaeological sample is the *chipfuko* which is used to serve beer to the ancestors whilst on the ethnographic sample it is the *pfuko yemvura*. All in all use frequency for all vessels from both assemblages seems to follow a trend that is complimentary.

4.6. Symbolism associated with the vessels

It is very clear as presented from the respective Figures 4.18 and 4.19 that even though both the assemblages consist of ritualistic vessels it was mostly archaeological vessels that carried with them symbolic messages except a few vessels from the ethnographic sample. All the 32 vessels representing the archaeological sample as portrayed in Figure 4.18 are symbolic whilst out of the 32 vessels that represent the ethnographic sample only 3 carry with them symbolic messages (see Figure 4.19). This could be explained by the fact that symbolism within pottery vessels is attained with time and space. The dominant symbolic messages within the archaeological assemblage have to do with identity and protection of the Saunyama chieftainship whilst on the ethnographic sample it has also to do with identity of the Saunyama people. On the other hand decorations within the respective assemblages were

interpreted by the Saunyama potters as their own markers of identity varying from one potter to another and in some instances were solely for aesthetic beauty.

4.7. Contexts of use and symbolism

In order to appreciate the contextual parameters that possibly governed the use-life and symbolism of the archaeological pottery assemblage, a follow up was made on factors that govern the lifecycle of the contemporary Saunyama ritualistic vessels. According to the Saunyama elders, production of pots and bowels that they ended up adopting as ritualistic vessels is done by a specialised and chosen household of the *mbeva* (mice) totem. These are closely related to the Saunyama as wives to the king and they are locally known as *Vamwenye*. It is believed this role was delegated to them by the Saunyama way back into prehistory hence it has been passed from generation to generation through a mother daughter criterion. According to the Vamwenye they are expected by the Saunyama to present a gift of a large pot *(gate, mbiziro or musudze)* with a smaller bowel *(mbiya or nhera)* whenever a new chief is installed. Apart from that their duty is also to produce these two respective vessels whenever the chief requests them. In the event that the individual from whom the vessels are requested is not able to pot these vessels she has to rely on other local potters. It was also gathered that the potters are never given specifications when it comes to the requested vessels hence they produced them with their own stylistic and decoration attributes. The only restriction is that these pots are not supposed to be painted hence probably that's the reason why all the vessels from both assemblages are only polished. Concerning decorations the potters argued that all the vessels they produced or purchased on behalf of the king were decorated at their own interests and these were rooted within aspects to with personal identity or aesthetic beauty. This means symbolic meanings attached to the vessels by the Saunyama were secondary to these hence this helps in explaining why archaeological vessels situated at Muozi are only significant to the Saunyama. Of all these vessels produced and purchased for the king not a single vessels had its function known by the *Vamwenye*. Thus it appears that unlike symbolism, function of the vessels in the archaeological context was only determined by their consumers rather than their producers. Probably this is the reason why it was difficult to differentiate the stylistic and metric attributes between brewing vessels *(gate),* fermenting vessels *(mbiziro)* and serving vessels *(musudze)* hence they are likely to have been interchangeably used for the same purposes (see Figure 4.18 and Figure 4.19 respectively). The *Vamwenye* also managed to familiarise with the Muozi assemblage. To them these were typical vessels they made and purchased for the kings especially the larger pots numbered

xiv, xxi, xxii, xxvii, xxxi, xxxii as well as smaller bowls numbered i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi presented in Figure 4.17

According to the Saunyama a number of culturally constructed restrictions and belief systems govern the use of these ritualistic vessels. They strongly believe such typical vessels should not be handled or utilised by a woman whenever she is in her periods. Handling of these vessels is also restricted to both sexes in the case when one would have previously indulged in sexual intercourse, murdered or assaulted someone or performed witchcraft. Handling or use of these vessels with any of the above mentioned impurities is a taboo which is locally known as *kudarikira* meaning overlapping set parameters and this is evidenced by unexpected breakage of the vessels or malicious things happening. Also these vessels that are exempted and preserved for the chiefs hence they use should not be used by anybody else and women who handle these should be sexually and spiritually pure otherwise they end up shortening the reigning period of a chief which is locally referred to as *kudimbura hushe hwamambo*.

Among the Saunyama it was also discovered that there is a household that was given custody of the greatest and most significant vessel within their dynasty. This vessel has multiple names and it is largely known as *hari yemvura* (meaning rainmaking pot) *hari youbaba* (meaning a vessel that represents fatherhood of the Saunyama chieftainship), *hari yepasi or hari yemazamo* (meaning a vessel that represents the whole nation). In terms of the local vessels classes this vessel is classified under *musudze* pots since one of its functions is to serve beer. According to the pot bearer whose household was given custody to take care of the pot, the role of their house among the three households that make up the Saunyama dynasty whereby the first and second households are to become chiefs and sub-chiefs respectively his household was given the role to serve as the fatherhood *(hubaba)* to the Saunyama chieftainship whose role is to install both chiefs and sub-chiefs chosen from the other two houses. The pot is said to be very old even though it appears to be intact as portrayed in Figure 4.19 (pot number 21). It is believed the first custodian of this pot was Ndarangwa from whom it was passed from generation to generation through firstborn sons of the family up to the present bearer who is more than 80 years of age. Thus custodianship of the pot follows a trend whereby it is passed from father to firstborn son whom the office of fatherhood to Saunyama chieftainship is designated to.

Blackish colour portrayed by the pot in Figure 4.19 is not as a result of firing since right from its production it has never been put on fire but rather it's a sign of old age. Basically this pot amongst all the vessels within the Saunyama territory is regarded as the most significant and most sacred. This is because it is the pot that governs their livelihood since it determines falling of rains from which they derive their agricultural produce and water to drink. According to the pot bearer even though the pot has multiple functions the greatest among them all lies within its service as *hari yemvura* or rainmaking pot whereby around October each and every year beer is brewed on behalf of the pot. This rainmaking ceremony is locally known as *Mukwerera* and it's carried out during *Maenza* or summer season. The beer is brewed at the homestead of the pot bearer who is the father to all the Saunyama's. Rituals are carried out whereby he asks for rains from the ancestors on behalf of his 'children', the Saunyama subjects and the entire nation. The ceremony is also characterised by drinking of the brewed beer which is first presented to the ancestors using the pot *(hari yemvura)* and later distributed to the rest of the gathered people using other pots and bowels such as *musudze, tukaha and mbiya*. The end of the ceremony marks the beginning of the rainy season and this is symbolised by semi-closing of the pot *(hari yemvura)* with a lid in the form of a bowl *(mbiya)* (see Figure 4.19). This symbolises open heavens hence rain is destined to be adequately given by the ancestors. According to the Saunyama failure to open the lid as illustrated in Figure 4.19 usually result in erratic or no rains at all. A case was given of the 2012 summer season whereby the pot bearer forgot to open the lid of the pot after the *Mukwerera* ceremony hence rains did not fall until the locals became suspicious and confronted him only to discover that he had left the pot closed by its *mbiya*. Brewing of beer for the pot is also done around May and June and this time the ceremony marks the end of the rainy season and this is locally known as *Matatenda* meaning thanks giving. Likewise the locals gather at the home of the *baba* (father) to all Saunyama's where he performs rituals giving thanks to the ancestors for giving them rains which is followed by drinking of beer served from the *hari yemvura* (rainmaking pot). End of the ceremony marks the end of the rainy season and this is symbolised by total closure of the lid or bowel *(mbiya)* that covers the pot. According to the Saunyama if this is not carried out properly rains will continue pouring down hence their harvest will rot.

It is intriguing to note that even though the pot is of great significance to the Saunyama, like any other clay pot it stays on the *chikuwa* (a platform where pots, bowels and the rest of kitchen utensils are kept) (see Figure 4.19). However a lot of restrictions govern the use-life

of this pot. Among these, include the fact that the pot must remain immovable except during ceremonies, this means the place on which it rests onto must not be disturbed no matter how dirty it becomes which probably explains why its external surface has turned into blackish colour. Women within the household are not supposed to handle the pot rather this privilege is only left for the males who share the Saunyama totem. This restriction obviously extends to the daughters in-law of this household who are required to remove their head coverings and lie down on the floor as a sign of reverence whenever the pot is opened or closed to mark beginning of the raining season or harvesting period. According to the pot bearer it is only him and his sons that can only handle or use the pot otherwise the rest of the Saunyama's from the other two houses are not allowed, thus handling and use of the vessel is only a preserve for the *baba* to the Saunyama chieftainship and his sons who for this role are all exempted from chieftainship and sub-chieftainship offices. In this regard besides serving as a rainmaking vessel the pot also serves as a symbol that represents fatherhood to the Saunyama chieftainship hence it's also known as *hari youbaba* hence without the blessing of the *baba* no Saunyama can ascertain power as a chief or headman.

The pot is decorated with a lattice pattern of vertical and horizontal ridges on its shoulder and neck which is locally known as *mitwi* see Figure 4.19. According to the caretaker of the pot these decorations represent the Saunyama dynasty hence probably the name *hari yemazamo* (pot of the breasts). Such typical decorations are also found on the archaeological vessels especially pot number xxvii in Figure 4.17 and Figure 4.19. The pot is also said to represent the entire nation of Zimbabwe basing on its function as a rainmaking pot hence it is also recognised as *hari yepasi*. Therefore its rainmaking prowess is not only for the Saunyama and their subjects but rather for the whole nation since the rains extend beyond the Saunyama borders.

4.8. Continuity and change: Local perspectives

According to the Saunyama even though modernisation in the form of christianity and technology has mostly affected consistence in the production and use of pottery vessels especially among the chiefly houses and the Saunyama potters *(Vamwenye)* there are still some considerable levels of continuity from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present as evidenced by the respective assemblages.

When the archaeological sample was presented to them both the Saunyama leaders and the *Vamwenye* managed to familiarise these vessels with most of the pots and bowels they

produce and use within their ethnographic present. According to them vessels such as xxvii in Figure 4.17 were identical to theirs e.g. number 21 in Figure 4.19 even though the placement of decorations slightly differed. They also managed to note some levels of continuity in terms of stylistic attributes like vessel shape, lipforms and surface treatment whereby ethnographic vessels such as number 3, 7, 22, 24 and 28 in Figure 4.19 were similar to vessels such as i, vii, xii, xxi, xxvi, and xxix from the archaeological assemblage in Figure 4.17. In terms of use continuity was also noted whereby just like in the archaeological record use-frequency of the vessels proved to be complimentary towards one another as evidenced by slight differences except for bowels used to store traditional snuff *(nhera)* and small pots used to serve spirit mediums with water *(pfuko yemvura)* which are absent from the archaeological assemblage. Perhaps this could be explained by the limited nature of the sample to represent all typical vessels used for rituals in the archaeological record or simply decomposition of the vessels due to human and environmental hazards. In terms of symbolism continuity is also evidential. According to the Saunyama the social massages carried by their pots in the archaeological record are more of the same carried by their pots in the ethnographic present. For instance lattice pattern of vertical and horizontal ridges from both assemblages are said to have their meanings rooted in identity issues whereby they both represent the Saunyama.

However it must be noted that they are some considerable levels of change, according to the Saunyama pots and bowels produced today are a bit less refined in terms of stylistic attributes as compared to those recovered from the archaeological record. For instance a comparison of pot number 18 in Figure 4.19 and number ix in Figure 4.17. They largely attributed this to lack of expertise among the contemporary potters whereby transmission of potting skills from mother to daughter was heavily affected by modernity. Also in terms of decoration attributes change was noted by absence of decoration motifs like herringbone pattern and the Saunyama potters argued that perhaps this could have been influenced by personal interests whereby recent potters unlike in the past favoured decorations like incisions and ridges for identity or beautification purposes. In terms of use, notable changes were also identified by the Saunyama whereby use-life of the brewing pots like *(gate)* was threatened by adoption of large metal vessels to serve its purpose hence its frequency was marked by a gradual decrease from the archaeological past to ethnographic present (see Figure 4.15). In terms of symbolism considerable changes were also noted by the Saunyama whereby only a few vessels within the ethnographic sample carried social messages with them unlike archaeological vessels where all the vessels were symbolic. According to them this change could be possibly

explained in terms of modernity whereby aspects to do with traditional religion are now looked down upon as evil hence ritualistic vessels are now treated with little or no respect at all as well aspects to do with 'maturity' whereby symbolism within pottery vessels is attained with space and time.

4.9. Summary

In overview this chapter concentrated on presenting and examining the data gathered during research so as to ascertain the general characteristics of the two pottery assemblages. Various indices that govern the use-life and symbolism of the ethnographic vessels were explored so to recreate the possible cultural and technological contexts in which the Muozi vessels operated in the archaeological record. Lastly local perceptions were considered towards establishing continuity and change from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on synthesising the similarities and differences in terms of stylistic and decoration attributes portrayed by the two pottery assemblages for possible relationship. Results from documentary sources and oral testimonies concerning the Saunyama and Mt Muozi are critically discussed. Operational factors derived from the ethnographic survey that governs use-life and symbolisms of ritualistic vessels are cautiously used to recreate the possible technological and cultural contexts in which the vessels from the archaeological site of Muozi operated. All this data is finally synthesized towards authenticating the archaeological identity of the Saunyama in relation to Mt Muozi, an early hilltop settlement of the Nyanga complex as well as citing continuity and change in terms stylistic and decoration attributes, use and symbolism from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present. Lastly the chapter ends by highlighting possible areas to be researched in the future concerning the Saunyama and Mt Muozi.

5.2. Stylistic attributes

Similarities and differences between the two assemblages portray a high level relationship between contemporary Saunyama and the ancient Saunyama presented in the archaeological record. A link is presented from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present whereby the respective assemblages exhibit continuity in the production and consumption of pottery vessels with similar stylistic attributes. It is intriguing to note that dominant vessels in the form of necked pots with out-turning rims are prevalent within the respective assemblages. Proliferation of such vessels from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present can be explained by data derived from Saunyama ethnography where it was discovered that such typical vessels were largely used to serve beer drawn from larger pots. Thus just like in the contemporary process of preparing beer, vessels that are used to prepare beer until it is ready to be drunk are fewer as compared to those that are used to serve it to its respective drinkers. Therefore probability is very high that such a context also prevailed in the archaeological record. Also their frequency dominated probably due to their potable sizes which enabled them to serve beer from one individual to another hence potters were influenced to produce then in large numbers as compared to other vessels. Absence of deep straight sided bowls

within the archaeological sample as well as semi-constricted hemispherical bowls and small necked bowls with short-out-turning rims within the ethnographic sample is largely explainable in terms of changing needs of the respective producers and consumers within the two time frames. However continuity is still identifiable as evidenced by equal frequency of large wide mouthed pots with vertical or in-sloping rims within both assemblages which are used either to brew or ferment beer.

In terms of lipform high levels of continuity are noticeable from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present whereby externally thickened lipforms dominate in both assemblages. This is an interesting feature that justifies the vessels from both assemblages as beer vessels since typical lipforms allow easy pouring of beer from one vessel to another. Similarities in terms of lipforms are also noticed on the vessels whereby least dominant lipforms between both assemblages are both characterised by internally thickened lipforms. These respective lipforms have been continually produced from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present possibly due to the use-nature of such vessels which is rooted within brewing or drinking since brewing is done in large mouthed pots which are heavy to carry hence pouring out of beer is only made possible by use of a gourd *(mukombe)*.

Greatest relationship portrayed by the two assemblages amongst all attributes is that they have all their surfaces polished. This is typical of Nyanga pottery which is rarely decorated (see Soper 2002 and Huffman 2007). However this is largely explained by data derived from the ethnographic survey whereby production of vessels that ended up being adopted as ritualistic vessels by the Saunyama were only supposed to be polished.

The respective assemblages also portray some considerable form of relationship in terms minimum height for the largest vessels where they tend to be a slight difference from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present. Probably this could be better explained by the fact that vessels of such height are still produced with similar height just like in the archaeological record unlike on the aspect of maximum height for the largest vessels in which there is a decrease in frequency from archaeological past to the ethnographic present hence such a gradual change could be explained in the context of ethnographic settings whereby typical vessels that fall within this class are brewing pots *(gate)* which are being gradually replaced by large metal containers that are now serving their purpose.

In terms of vessel diameter there appears to be a gradual decrease from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present and this can be largely explained by reduction in production

and consumption of larger vessels particularly the *gate* whereby unlike in the archaeological record the *gate* is now threatened by large metal vessels that have replaced its role in the process of brewing beer.

Considering results from vessel height and diameter enquiries it can be also noted that larger vessels from the archaeological sample are taller and wider hence with or without beer their weight would obviously make it impossible to carry them uphill like what has been unconsciously perpetuated by other scholars such as Soper (2002); Mupira (2003); Shenjere (2003) and Murimbika (2006) whereby these pots were concluded as ritualistic vessels that were carried uphill either for chief installation, rainmaking or appeasement ceremonies. This line of argument is also presented without considering the terrain of the mountain top which is steeper which would obviously have made it difficult to carry them uphill. Rather the vessels should only be treated as occupational debris of the Saunyama ancestors who stayed on top of the mountain.

5.3. Decoration attributes

There is a remarkable link from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present as revealed by the levels of decorations from both assemblages. Thus all the vessels within the respective samples are largely undecorated and this is a true reflection of pottery from the Nyanga tradition, (see Soper 2002). The best explanation comes from ethnographic data whereby the Saunyama potters *(Vamwenye)* articulated that the reasons they decorated their pottery were primarily rooted within aspects to do with personal identity and aesthetic beauty. According to them it was only secondary reasons that were later attached by the Saunyama who manipulated their decorations for their own identity purposes. Therefore it can be argued that pottery decorations apart from stylistic attributes do not only reflect group identity as previously argued by Huffman (1989), (2007); Pikirayi (1999) and (2007). Rather this is only applicable to groups that chose to manipulate their own ceramics (among other forms of material culture) as their own identity markers/signatures like the Rozvi (see Machiridza 2012).

Considerable continuity in terms of decoration placement by the Saunyama potters is also noticeable on both assemblages whereby the most decorated area within all the vessels from both assemblages is the shoulder. However this is characterised by a slight change especially in the ethnographic present whereby decoration placement has been extended to the necks of the pots unlike in the archaeological record. This slight change could be explained in terms of

the potter's preferences whereby they probably extended their interest to the necks of the vessels as time progressed. Nevertheless higher levels of similarities are consistent within the respective assemblages since not any one vessel among them has decorations on its lip, rim or base. Thus all in all there is considerable continuity from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present and a slight change whereby decoration placement is extended to the necks of the pottery.

In terms of decoration techniques and motifs, changes are noticeable from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present whereby dominant technique and motif are incisioning whilst in the ethnographic present it is ridging. However it must be noted that continuity is evident as shown by proliferation of ridges and incisions into the ethnographic present. In this regard the absence of discontinuous herringbone pattern could be justified as a slight change that can be best explained by personal interest of the potters since Saunyama potters have the freedom to apply whatever decoration technique they wanted to use to, a phenomenon which dates back into the archaeological record. Therefore it can be concluded that production of vessels that were adopted by the Saunyama for ritualistic purposes in the archaeological record was indirectly controlled unlike in other ethnic groups such as the Rozvi whereby production of polychrome vessels was directly controlled by the elite (see Machiridza 2012).

5.4. The archaeological identity of the Saunyama in relation to Nyanga complex

In the first chapter the researcher highlighted the inconsistencies of oral history in defining the archaeological identity of the Saunyama in relation to Mt Muozi, which had been mostly perpetuated basing on oral history hence linking the Saunyama with the Nyanga complex on such a basis is problematic and misleading. Rather besides tracing the surmised Saunyama signatures that had been left in the archaeological record in the form of complete pots and bowls situated at Mt Muozi. Oral history concerning the Saunyama and the Nyanga complex investigated gave new insights on the histography of the Saunyama and this had similarities and differences with accounts presented by other scholars such as Beach (2002); Soper (2002); Mupira (2003); Shenjere (2003) and Chiwaura (2007). The most intriguing aspect was that they vehemently denied that they migrated from the north in *'Nembire'* which is associated with Mutapa state as suggested by the above mentioned scholars. Rather their account concerning the area, from which their ancestors migrated from, tended to favour Huffman (2007) line of argument which he initially adopted from Summers (1958) who concluded the Saunyama dynasty to be of a *Barwe* ancestry and *Sena* dialect. Apart from that,

the similarities and differences portrayed by the two pottery assemblages also supports Huffman (2007) line of argument since just like in the archaeological record the pottery remains unique hence its most likely to be a product of a unique group that was never affiliated to the Zimbabwe culture. This argument obviously holds more water since Nyanga pottery did not have any affiliation with pottery from Mutapa state which was mostly characterised by a high frequency of graphite burnished pottery and an increase in open hemispherical bowls which Pikirayi (1993) concluded it to be a typological continuation of the Zimbabwe culture from Great Zimbabwe. In this regard since the pottery shares a number of similarities with the vessel produced and consumed by the current Saunyama the only remaining option lies within the adjacent districts in Mozambique which Soper (2006) cited as partially explored in terms of their archaeology. Therefore for now previous research by Beach (2002); Mupira (2003); Shenjere (2003) and Soper (2006) which sympathised with the views that concluded a northern Zimbabwe origin for the Saunyama ancestry is dismissed in favour of a Mozambican origin which was suggested by their descendants as well as Summers (1958) and Huffman (2007). Also considering Pikirayi's (1993) work in Northern Zimbabwe scholars such as Soper (2002) and Machiridza (nd) recognise Nyanga pottery as typical of Mahonje tradition/'Refuge period' sites largely basing on its rarity in terms of decorations. However despite such a similarity this must not be misunderstood to imply a cultural connection with Northern Zimbabwe nor interference of foreign groups into the politics of the complex but rather this should be used towards justifying the Nyanga tradition as a distinct culture in its own right whose origins are largely explainable within the adjacent districts of Mozambique.

Another aspect which raises controversy is the issue of oral traditions associated with Mt Muozi that are used to justify the presence of the archaeological vessels at the site. As noted in Chapter one Muozi is associated by a powerful diviner who is believed to have been murdered by the Saunyama chieftaincy as a result of jealous hence the vessels were concluded as remnants of ritual ceremonies that were carried out by the Saunyama to appease the avenging spirits of Muozi (see Chapter one for more details). This has been perpetuated by Soper (2002); Mupira (2003) and Shenjere (2003) who consider this as the most convincing possible explanation of why the pots were deposited there and also why the Saunyama treat the mountain with much respect hence why they are not allowed to go uphill. However this has been vehemently denied by the current Saunyama who are sure that their ancestors never performed such an injustice. To them the name Muozi is not in any way

related to a diviner, it's just a name without any connotations and the reason why they are not welcome to ascend the mountain and how the pots got to be deposited there have nothing in common with this tradition as clearly explained in Chapter 4. A dilemma here now comes since the above mentioned scholars like Soper (2002) who sympathises with this oral tradition cannot be simply castigated since their evidence is also from Saunyama oral history from which they claim to have sourced from the files of the District Administrator's office of Nyanga District. Thus a scenario where historical information from both oral accounts clashed was created since one concluded the pots to be remnants of an appeasement ceremony that were occasionally carried out to appease the avenging spirits of Muozi whilst the other concluded the pots to be occupational debris of the Saunyama ancestors that had nothing to do with appeasement of any avenging spirits. Surprisingly when questioned over this the Saunyama elders had a convincing explanation of probably why there was such a clash of oral accounts. To them they suggested the inconsistencies as the 'evil' work of one of their sons Chief Hata who rebelled against them way back during the early colonial era and collaborated with the colonialists hence informally they awarded him the chieftainship status which his descendants still hold on up to now. Therefore they label him as the probable candidate who gave such wrong information so as to make up stories that would make him justified to have broken away from the main Saunyama house. Apart from that they also suspect this 'wrong' information to have been siphoned from a layman who had no knowledge on why the Saunyama are not allowed to ascend the mountain hence he/she speculated everything to be enshrined within aspects to do with avenging spirits since in the African culture such behaviour is usually associated with murder hence this falsely reached the DAs office. Given such a context it becomes difficult to consider which line of argument to follow but from a closer look into both accounts it seems like the oral testimony from the contemporary Saunyama holds much water. This is because they are vivid when it comes to their histography as evidenced by similarities between the information in Chapter one and Chapter four. Thus they know from the onset up to the present concerning their histography therefore their account seems to be convincing. Also it is a fact that them and Chief Hata do not mix and mingle therefore probability is very high that that's where the incorrect data came from since he was said to have a tendency of tarnishing their image as a way of justifying his informal gaining of chieftainship from the colonial government. Therefore presence of the complete pots and bowels at Muozi can be best explained as occupational debris of the Saunyama ancestors who dwelt within the mountain.

Another similar oral account of why we find the pots at the site of Muozi is also explained by Soper (2002); Shenjere (2003); Mupira (2003) and Murimbika (2006) as remnants of either recent rainmaking or chief installation ceremonies or burial rites for Saunyama chiefs. However comparison of this data with the one presented in Chapter four which was recovered from the ethnographic survey leaves us without option but to only consider oral accounts from the recent Saunyama since neither rainmaking nor chief installation ceremonies or burial of chiefs happens at Muozi. Rather rainmaking ceremonies takes place at the homestead of the father *(baba)* to the Saunyama chieftainship where the rainmaking pot *(hari yemvura)* is based whilst chief installation ceremonies are carried out at the respective homes of the chieftainship candidates and lastly Saunyama chiefs are only buried in Nyaunguzu mountain west of Muozi as presented in Chapter four. Therefore even though the presence of the archaeological pots and bowls at Mt Muozi is explainable in ritualistic terms it is arguable that probability is very high that these largely had nothing to do with recent rainmaking and chief installation ceremonies as well as burial of chiefs unless argued in the context of LFCs era.

5.5. Possible use-life of the Muozi complete vessels

A comparison of both assemblages towards recreating the possible cultural and technological context factors that governed use of archaeological pots situated at Mt Muozi reveal a great deal of continuity from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present. It is clear that one of the most contributing factor that has perpetuated the use of ritualistic pottery vessels into 21st century among the Saunyama is chiefly rooted within rainmaking ceremonies. Therefore for the reason that rains are needed annually for them and their livestock to survive as they largely depend on agricultural produce, willingly or unwillingly proper rainmaking ceremonies characterised by use of traditional rainmaking utensils that include pottery have to be carried out each and every year as a survival strategy otherwise failure to do so results in drought.

Another aspect that was discovered that probably spanned into the archaeological record is that function is the most contributing factor that determines the classification of a vessel amongst the Saunyama. A similar phenomenon was also discovered by Ogundele (2006) among the Tiv of Nigeria hence he argued that to the archaeologist when presented with a sample of brocken or complete pots, it was obviously that shapes of the vessels and the rest of their stylistic attributes would be the mostly considered at the expense of its function when it

came to its classification, rather such classification is only justified when there is no link from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present since ethnographic data greatly helps in the classification of pottery vessels.

Another discovery was that unlike domestic vessels, function for ritualistic vessels is only limited to its primary uses which ranges from brewing, fermenting, serving and storage of beer or burning of traditional herbs. These vessels cannot be used for domestic purposes like cooking up to the period of their discard probably thus when they can gain secondary functions as chicken coops or ash trays as discovered by David and Henning (1972) among the Bedik of West Africa. However it must be noted that these same vessels complement each other in terms of their functions and at the same time carry with them multiple functions. It can be also noted that use of larger vessels amongst the Saunyama like as discovered by Arthur (2002) among the Gamo of North Africa is mostly explained in storage rather than brewing terms. Thus very few of these pots are exposed to fire during their use-life especially the *gate* which is now being gradually replaced by large metal vessels that are now serving its function.

To the Saunyama the *mbiziro* is a large pot which is used to ferment beer and basically it has one mouth. However as discovered by Martin (1941) the pot with a similar name among their neighbours, the Manyika of the Mutasa dynasty is a big pot with two mouths which is only restricted for use by chiefs and headmens on important occasions such as the seeding festival locally known as *Maganzo* by the Manyika which is equivalent to *Maenza* season (rainmaking season) of the Saunyama. It interesting to note that among other shona groups the *mbiziro* serves similar functions with the *gate* whilst to the Saunyama uses of these respective pots although complimentary are greatly different. Operational contexts of ritual vessels among the Saunyama portray a picture whereby functions of pots and bowls as ritualistic vessels in the archaeological record was not determined by the potters but rather the consumers as described by the *Vamwenye* who manufacture the vessels yet they never know their exact uses by the Saunyama.

Use of ritualistic vessels is also governed by restrictions, myths and taboos. Not everyone is welcome to handle the vessels especially the most significant such as the rainmaking pot *(hari yemvura).* This emanates from reasons ranging from self purity to stranger hood whereby in some cases male off springs from a family may only be the eligible candidates e.g. the case of the *hari yemvura*.This is also a similar case among the Manyika as noted by

Martin (1941) whereby use of one of their sacred ceremonial vessel is restricted to those in authority as noted above. It was also noted that production of vessels that ended up serving in ritual ceremonies was not any others potters responsibility but rather a selected household of potters in which skill was passed from mother to daughter. This is also similar to a case in West Africa as discovered by Norman (2009) where production of ritualistic ceramics was only restricted to post-menopause women who inherited the skill at a tender age just like the Saunyama potters. Also just like as discovered by Davison (1985) who studied Southern African beer pots, due to their unique size, huge pots such as *gate* and *mbiziro* among the Saunyama are fewer and they are mostly owned at family level unlike smaller pots that are produced in large numbers and owned at individual level. Such a phenomenon was likely to have been the same in the archaeological record.

5.6. Symbolism

As recommended by Hodder and Hutson (2003) study of operational context of ethnographic pottery has great potential in revealing secrets embedded in prehistoric potteries which have been previously treated as mute and meaningless by most archaeologists. Saunyama ritualistic vessels carry with them symbolic messages just like other potteries as suggested above and these demonstrate high levels of continuity from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present even though slight changes are noticeable from both assemblages. Some great deal of relationship is evident as all the vessels are hardly decorated but however despite the limited decorations a couple of plain and decorated vessels carry with them symbolic messages which Pikirayi (2007) advised that one has to understand first the theory of communication so as to successfully decode these messages. Symbolic messages enshrined within these vessels from the respective assemblages are greatly linked in one way or the other and these range from identity markings to aesthetic beauty. It can also be noted that not every ritualistic vessel primarily carries with it symbolic messages rather symbolic status for a vessel comes as a secondary status and this is likely to have been the similar case with vessels from the archaeological site of Muozi whereby they accumulated their symbolic status due to their location. Thus because they are situated in a sacred mountain that symbolises the Saunyama chieftaincy they ended acquiring a similar symbolic status just like any other tangible heritage within the mountain. This is also similar with the ethnographic present whereby symbolic vessels like the rainmaking pot *(hari yemvura)* and its lid *(mbiya)* were primarily not symbolic in the first place. However their adoption and use as ritualistic vessels later gave them a symbolic status whereby they now symbolise various aspects of the

Saunyama which range from fatherhood to rainmaking and harvesting seasons. Therefore it is clear that symbolic status of Saunyama ritualistic vessels was probably a status that a pot or bowl gained as a secondary function in the archaeological record unlike what Norman (2009) discovered in West Africa.

Also it must be noted that symbolism of vessels is in two parts amongst the Saunyama. Primarily a vessel can be given symbolic status by its maker as noted by the Saunyama potters *(Vamwenye)* whereby a potter decorates a vessel either for personal identity or aesthetic beauty purposes. Secondarily the same vessel also gets some symbolic status from their consumer (the Saunyama) who attaches their identity onto its decorations. Therefore it is clear that symbolic messages within the Saunyama pots and bowls emanate from two contexts, firstly the primary which is influenced by the producer and secondly the secondary status which is influenced by the consumer. Probability is very high that such a scenario also influenced transpired in the archaeological record.

Unlike what Collet (1993) discovered among the Karanga where domestic vessels are labelled as woman's property partially due to their curvilinear form which is largely associated with women, despite having a similar form, ritualistic vessels among the Saunyama are treated solely as property of the ancestors. Therefore they are treated with more respect as compared to domestic vessel, however the more a symbolic vessel is the more the respect it gains.

5.7. Conclusion

This study has portrayed the prowess of ceramic ethnoarchaeology in solving archaeological problems (Shotriya 2007). Through a comparative study of ethnographic and archaeological pottery, authentication of the archaeological identity of the Saunyama in relation to the Nyanga complex has been achieved whereby unlike as preferred by previous researchers such as Beach (2002); Soper (2002); Mupira (2003) and Shenjere (2003). It is clear that the origins of the Saunyama ancestry is largely explainable through Huffman's (2007) line of argument which favours a *Barwe* ancestry of a *Sena* dialect in the adjacent districts of Mozambique unlike in northern Zimbabwe as favoured by these scholars. The comparative study has also confirmed a link between the complete pottery vessels situated at the archaeological site of Muozi and those produced and consumed by the contemporary Saunyama whereby stylistic and decoration attributes have greatly shown high levels of continuity from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present. This is evidenced by a continued production

and consumption of necked pots with out-turning rims and large wide mouthed pots with vertical or in-sloping rims which have remained dominant in both respective time periods. Vessels from both assemblages have also showed great levels of linkage from past to present as evidenced by dominance of externally thickened lipforms and polished surfaces with little decorations. Thus despite having typical affinities which complement pottery from Mahonje tradition/'Refuge period' sites, continued production of less decorated pottery into the ethnographic present justifies the Nyanga tradition as a distinct culture in its own right.

Nevertheless even though aspects to do with continuity are largely dominant within the respective assemblages considerable changes are noticeable from the archaeological past to ethnographic present whereby height and diameter of larger vessels decrease in frequency from past to present and these changes are largely explainable in the context of modernisation whereby large brewing pots *(gate)* have decreased in production and use-frequency due to gradual replacement by large metal vessels that serve a similar purpose. The view by Shotriya (2007) that ceramic ethnoarchaeology has the potential to recreate the archaeologies of the past through studying of potteries from contemporary societies is largely true as can be evidenced by the ability of the research to recreate the possible cultural and technological contexts in which the Muozi pottery vessels operated in the archaeological record. The ethnographic survey has also helped in crafting the humanistic side of the story that had lacked in most archaeological texts as concluded by Beach (1980), for instance it has been discovered that use and handling of ritualistic vessels was governed by restrictions that were socially constructed and breaking of these restrictions could result in mysterious events. Further it revealed that unlike what Huffman (1980) and (2007) concluded that ceramic style reveal group identity, ceramic style (in consideration of Saunyama pots) is not only limited to group identity but rather personal identity of the potters. Furthermore unlike what Norman (2009) discovered in West Africa, ritualistic vessels among the Saunyama are not originally produced to serve in rituals but rather gain such a status whereby they are intentionally selected for ritualistic purposes (also see Marufu 2008).

The assertion by Pikirayi (1996); Hodder and Hutson (2003) as well as Huffman (2007), that stylistic and decoration attributes on ceramics carry with them symbolic messages is also true in the case of the Saunyama. However the research went as far as discovering that symbolism amongst the Saunyama came in two contexts. Firstly the primary context which was determined by the producer for personal reasons and secondly the secondary context which was determined by the consumer for group purposes. Therefore it can be concluded that

symbolism was probably situational in the archaeological record as it varies from one context to another. It was also discovered that production of vessels that ended up serving in rituals was indirectly controlled by the king whereby the Saunyama potters *(Vamwenye)* had the liberty to express their expertise in their own ways unlike other ethnic groups like the Rozvi where production and distribution of significant pottery such as polychrome bundant and panel wares was directly controlled by the elite as suggested by Machiridza (2012).

It has been also revealed that one of the chief reasons that has perpetuated the production and consumption of pottery vessels (that end up being used in rituals) is the need for rains hence rainmaking ceremonies characterised by use of ritualistic vessels are carried out annually for survival purposes. The comparative ceramic ethnoarchaeological research also managed to recreate the possible cultural context in which the Muozi complete pots operated whereby unlike what had been suggested by Soper (2002); Mupira (2003); Shenjere (2003) and Murimbika (2006) the pots stand as occupational debris that were left by the Saunyama ancestors and they have nothing to do with recent burial of Saunyama chiefs but probably other aspects to do with the Saunyama chieftaincy that are not current. Thus the ceramic ethnoarchaeology has greatly helped in the authentication of the archaeological identity of the Saunyama in relation to the Nyanga complex and as reflected from the social theory noted by Stark (2003) that groups are reflected in the material culture they produce it is crystal clear that there is greater continuity and slight change from the archaeological past to the ethnographic present. Therefore further investigation towards developing the archaeological identity of various dynasties including the Saunyama that were suggested as the terrace builders of the Nyanga complex by Soper (2006) is recommended using the ceramic ethnoarchaeological approach.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

DATA CAPTURE SHEET FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL/ETHNOGRAPHIC POTTERY VESSELS

Vessel Number & Local Name.	Vessel Form									Lip Form				Surface Treatment			Height		Diameter range for largest vessels	Decorations		Decoration Placement						Decoration Motif				Decoration Technique			Comments
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	R	E	I	P	Ro	Gb	Po	Max	Min		Und	Dec	L	R	N	S	B	*B*	Pu	Lp	DI	Ih	Pn	Ic	Rd	

KEY

R - Roughly squared **E** - Externally thickened **I** - Internally thickened **P** - Polished **Ro** - Red ochre **Gb** - Graphite burnished **P** - Polished ***B*** - Base

Und-Undecorated **D**ec - Decorated **L** - Lip **R** – Rim **N** – Neck **S** – Shoulder **B** - Body **P** - Punctates **Pn** - Punctation **Ic** - Incisioning **R** - Ridging

Max - Maximum diameter for the largest vessels **Min** - Minimum height for the largest vessels **Di** - Discontinuous incised herringbone pattern

Lp - Lattice pattern of raised vertical and or horizontal ridges/ribs **Ih** - Incised horizontal single lines

Appendix 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE

I want to thank you for sacrificing your time to meet with me today. My name is Robert Tendai Nyamushosho. lam a final year student at Midlands State University (MSU) where lam studying towards the attainment of a Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Archaeology, Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies. In partial fulfilment of the degree requirements lam currently carrying out a research project entitled: ***An ethno-archaeological study of pottery vessels from the Saunyama territory in north eastern Zimbabwe*** using a ceramic ethnoarchaeological approach.

I would like to interview you about your experiences either as a Saunyama traditional leader, potter or elder in relation to traditional pottery. Specifically this is meant to gather information that can help in authenticating the archaeological identity of the Saunyama in connection to the Nyanga complex as well as reconstruction of the socio, political and economic contexts in which the Mt Muozi complete pots possibly operated in the archaeological record.

This interview will not take much of your time therefore will you allow me to digitally record the session because I do not want to miss any one word from you and at the same time I cannot possibly write fast enough to get everything on paper. Please will you speak up as we record to make sure that we do not miss any of your information.

I will make sure that all the information l will get from you will be treated as confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be shared within the research members and if necessary l will ensure that any information l include in my report does not identify you as the respondent. Remember you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and it is your right to end the interview at any time you feel to.

1. Who are the Saunyama?

2. Can you tell me about the link between the Saunyama and Mt Muozi?

3. Can you tell me about the complete pots that are situated at Mt Muozi?

4. What do you think were the original uses of these vessels?

5. Could there be symbolic meanings attached to these vessels? If so what could they possibly mean?

6. Can you tell us more about the various pottery vessels that you produce and use in your day to day life?

7. What are their uses?

8. What are the symbolic meanings associated with these vessels?

9. Would you say there is continuity or change from the pots situated at Mt Muozi and the pots that are produced and used today by the Saunyama please explain?

10. Does the pots you produce and use identify you as a Saunyama if so how?

NB: Is there any information you feel you might want to add on to what you have said?

Thank you for your time.