DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other University.

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RECOMMENDATION

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as the University supervisors:

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DEDICATION
This work is dedicated to my parents, John Njoro and Margaret Njeri, my brother Emmanuel Wang’ombe, and my son Pure Bliss. They have been my love and strength.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is my pleasure to thank the many people who have influenced my thoughts on the issues discussed in this study. They have moulded me and for that I am eternally thankful.

I am sincerely grateful to my supervisors, Prof. Reuben Matheka and Dr Peter Waweru, for their guidance, advice and encouragement throughout this study. I also owe gratitude to the lecturers in the Department of Philosophy, History and Religion at Egerton University, especially Dr Dorothy Nyakwaka and Dr Isaac Tarus, for words of encouragement which kept me going.

I also take this opportunity to thank my colleagues and friends, Prof. Tom Nyamache and Phillip Kirui, for reading and critiquing this work. My friend and classmate, Sheela Ambani, deserves a mention for her invaluable comments on the work. All three helped me shape ideas into a product of appreciable quality.

Fieldwork in Samburu County was possible because of the support of my research assistant, Musa Lekamario, who was both my guide and translator. I am grateful to various people in Samburu County who gave me important information on Samburu culture, especially aspects of body adornment.

My sincere thanks go to the staffs of the Kenya National Archives, in Nairobi and Nakuru, the Macmillan Library, Kenyatta University Library, and the National Museums for their cooperation. I would like to express my deep appreciation to Eunice Muria and her sister Beth Muthoni for offering me accommodation in Nairobi when I was collecting data at the Kenya National Archives.

Finally, I thank my brother, Emmanuel Wang’ombe, for companionship and support. To my parents, Margaret Njeri and John Njoroge, I say thank you “very for all much” you have done and been to me.

“Ultimately, Thank you Lord for always being
ABSTRACT

Self-adornment plays a significant role in ensuring the continuity of the political and cultural life of pastoralists. This study outlines changes in Samburu body adornment from the pre-colonial period to the present. In the study it is argued that Samburu body adornment in the pre-colonial period was influenced by interaction with neighbouring communities like the Rendille. Colonial policies and mingling of cultures in the post-independent period also shaped Samburu body adornment either positively or negatively. The study employed cultural theory of history. Cultural history combines the approaches of anthropology and history to look into popular cultural traditions and cultural interpretations of historical experience. The ideas were borrowed from Edward Tylor and Simon Gunn. Tylor’s main concern was on culture. He stated that culture developed from primitive stages. He argued that communities within each stage of development had distinct traits which show slow replacement as new generations set in. As societies advanced some traits survived to present day culture. On the other hand Gunn had interest in periodization of body history and stated that modernity was specifically focusing back to the changes in the ancient symbols with the belief inspired by modern science towards social and moral development. Thus there is need to write a history of historically specific bodies, which provides an understanding of the body that is neither static nor coherent. Data was collected from literature search in the libraries and Kenya National Archives, photography and oral interviews on individuals and groups. Data from both primary and secondary sources was analyzed chapter by chapter within the parameters set by the research problem and the theoretical framework. Findings indicate that forms of body adornment among the Samburu are pre-historic. Many forms of traditional body adornment have evolved overtime and still exist within the community, however, examples of recent forms of body adornment, show that although still very much in practice, in many cases the meaning has been lost. The impact of Christianity, colonial policies, trading of new materials, have all played a major part in the evolving patterns of Samburu body adornment. Tourists brought new fashions, materials, creations and designs that changed Samburu views of everyday body adornment. Body adornment among the Samburu is today is based on what looks good as apposed to a ritual or rite of passage that marked one's body. The study will contribute to the preservation of the Samburu cultural values in Kenya’s historiographys.will Further,used as reference for researchers who may want to understand similar or different aspects of the Samburu cultural practices and of other communities in Kenya.
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