


CERAMICS OF THE TERENA PEOPLE EXHIBITED AT THE "PROFESSOR PEPE" PALEONTOLOGY MUSEUM: PRESERVED INDIGENOUS ANCESTRAL TRADITION

 <https://doi.org/10.56238/arev7n2-097>

Submitted on: 10/01/2025

Publication date: 10/02/2025

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ABSTRACT

The ceramics of the Terena People, recognized as intangible heritage in Mato Grosso do Sul, are produced with ancestral techniques, such as co-locking and finishing in jatobá resin. This article addresses the curatorship of the collection of 26 ceramic pieces exhibited at the Museum of Paleontology "Professor Pepe" of FCT/UNESP, originating from the collection of the Center for Museology, Anthropology and Archaeology (CEMAARQ), according to the curatorial protocol proposed by Faccio (1998). Identifying varied decorative patterns and a general state of good preservation.

Keywords: Ceramics of the Terena People. Museum of Paleontology "Professor Pepe".

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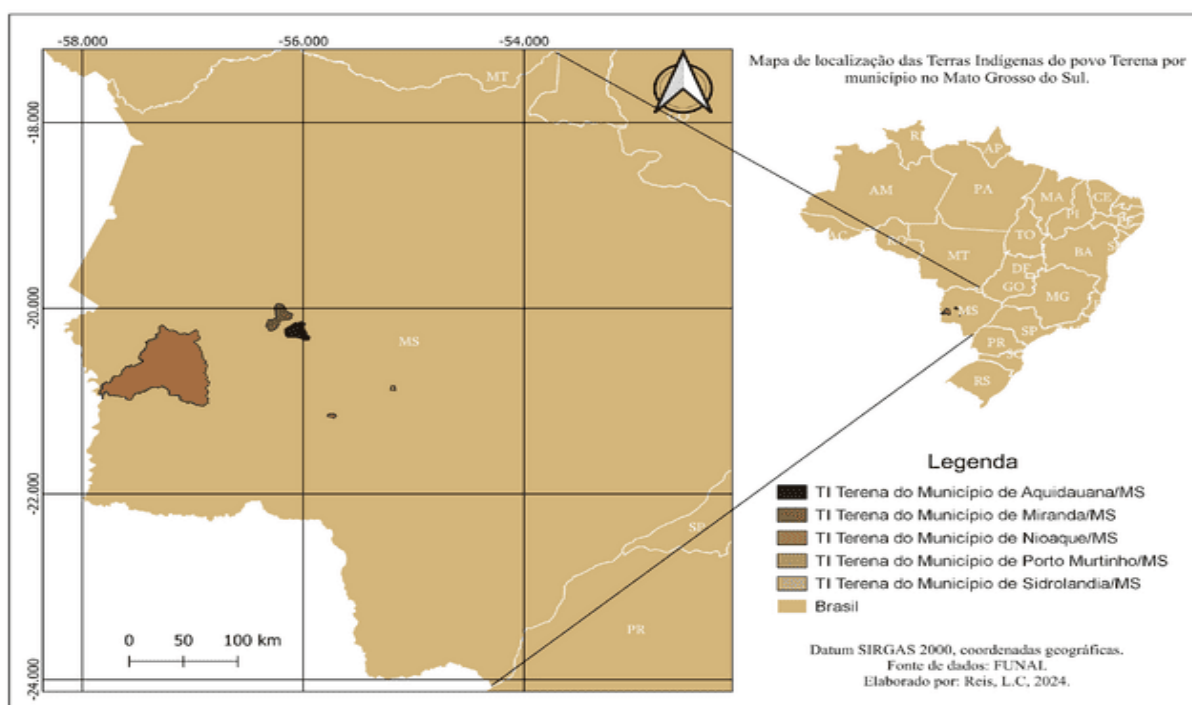
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INTRODUCTION

The Terena People belong to the Arawak linguistic group and have a population of more than 29,000 individuals in the states of Mato Grosso do Sul (**Figure 1**), Mato Grosso and São Paulo. Since the 1500s, the Terena have faced wars and been removed from their ancestral territories, but they have nevertheless preserved their culture and identity. Currently, among the Terena, processes of retaking their ancestral territories are registered , as is the case of the Terena of Aquidauana.

Figure 1: Location of the Terena People in the State of Mato Grosso do Sul



Source: Reis (2024).

In the State of São Paulo, the Terena People are established in the Municipality of Braúna, in the Icatu Indigenous Land, where they live in an area of 301 hectares - together with the Kaingang and Guarani Peoples.

The Terena have preserved, for 500 years since the colonization process, the tradition of making ceramics, which has specific characteristics and functions as a cultural marker. Ceramics are part of the history of the Terena People of Mato Grosso do Sul, and are also a form of cultural preservation.

The Terena People stand out in the tradition of ceramic production, which is recognized for its technique, modeling and decoration style. Terena pottery is valuable for

its utilitarian function, and also for its cultural significance, since it is part of the daily and ritualistic practices of the community (Silva, 1949).

Terena ceramics was registered as historical, artistic-cultural intangible heritage and as an intangible asset (Book of Knowledge) of the State of Mato Grosso do Sul. The women of the Terena People produce the pottery following the ritual process that includes: 1) not being menstruating, as this condition threatens the final result; 2) not cooking, because salt cancels out the properties of ceramics; 3) not being in the period of the new moon, because ceramics are governed by the moon (Gomes; Kabad, 2008).

The Terena ceramic collection exhibited at the Museum of Paleontology "Professor Pepe" of FCT/UNESP, belongs to the Center for Museology, Anthropology and Archaeology (CEMAARQ) of FCT-UNESP, this was obtained in the region of Mato Grosso do Sul, where the Terena people traditionally live⁵.

Most of the pieces in this ceramic collection belonged to the "Miguel Angel Menéndez" Center for Indigenous Studies (CEIMAM), of the Faculty of Sciences and Letters, Araraquara Campus.

With the death of Professor Miguel Angel Menéndez, from UNESP, Araraquara Campus, in 1991; 25 Terena ceramics were transferred to the CEMAARQ collection. Added to these 25 ceramics, another piece, donated to CEMAARQ, by Professor Maria Angela D'Incao, professor at the postgraduate course at UNESP, Araraquara Campus, who died in 2023. Later, the pieces were transferred to the exhibition of the Museum of Paleontology "Professor Pepe" in 2024.

After the curatorship of the ceramic pieces, an itinerant exhibition was set up at the Museum of Paleontology "Professor Pepe". The exhibition of ceramics can be seen in **Figures 2 and 3** that present the two showcases with the 26 pieces.

⁵ There is no information about the village that gave rise to the ceramics on canvas.

Figure 2: Showcase 1 of the exhibition of ceramics of the Terena People at the Museum of Paleontology "Professor Pepe" (MPP) of FCT/UNESP



Source: The authors (2024).

Figure 3: Showcase 2 of the exhibition of ceramics of the Terena People at the Museum of Paleontology "Professor Pepe" (MPP) of FCT/UNESP



Source: The authors (2024).

METHODOLOGY

CEMAARQ plays an important role in the preservation of ethnographic materials of Brazilian Indigenous Peoples and partnership with LAG (Laboratory of Guarani Archaeology and Landscape Studies), MAR (Museum of Regional Archaeology), and the Museum of Paleontology "Professor Pepe", of FCT/UNESP performs curatorship and restoration of ceramic materials.

The curatorship carried out for the 26 Terena ceramic pieces of CEMAARQ makes it possible to characterize them, even if in part, as much can still be researched in these ceramic specimens.

For the curatorship of Terena ceramics, the method proposed by Faccio (1998) was used, to identify classes of technological, stylistic, morphological attributes, marks of use and the state of conservation.

The first step of the curatorship was to identify each of the pieces, numbering them with black India ink, in sequence, starting from the number 1 and the acronym TRN, which refers to the consonants of the word Terena. After the India ink had dried, a layer of colorless enamel was passed over this identification.

The second step was to record the characteristics of each ceramic piece in a Curatorial Sheet, which presents the following classes: piece number, type of piece, seasoning/antiplastic, thickness, height, length, width, mouth diameter and lip shape (in the case of vessels), surface treatment, decoration and state of conservation.

The third step consists of the characterization of the pieces, based on the elaboration of tables and data analysis.

RESULTS: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TERENA CERAMIC COLLECTION FROM MS

Table 1 presents the types of the 26 examples of ceramic pieces in the Terena collection, in the categories: vase, bowl, bowl with lid, bowl in the shape of a bird, kettle, cup, pot, pot with handle, pot with lid, bird, mammal, miniature pot and miniature pot with lid.

Table 1: Grade of Terena ceramics from MS

Category	Quantity	Frequency
Jar	2	7,7%
Bowl	2	7,7%
Bowl with lid	1	3,84%
Bird-shaped bowl	3	11,53%
Kettle	1	3,84%
Cup	2	7,7%
Pot	2	7,7%
Pot with handle	1	3,84%
Pot with lid	1	3,84%
Bird	1	3,84%
Mammal	3	11,53%
Miniature pot	5	19,23%
Miniature Pot with Lid	2	7,7%
Total	26	100%

Source: The authors (2024).

Analyzing the data in Chart 1, the presence of eight bowls, ten pots, two jars, a kettle, a glass, a mammal and three birds can be seen. Of the eight bowls, two have a lid. Of these ten pots, one has a handle. The handles and lids are characteristic of the colonizer's influence, as well as the kettle and cups. So, of the 26 pieces, nine show interference from the colonizer in their form.

Of the 26 pieces, in only five it was possible to analyze the type of clay seasoning, as they presented fractures; In these vessels, the antiplastic/seasoning identified was the mineral.

The thickness of the pieces was measured only for the jars, bowls, lids and jars. In all the pieces, the thickness varied from 0.4 to 1 centimeter. **Table 2** shows the height,

length, width, diameter of the mouth and shape of the lip; and **Figure 4** shows the 26 pieces that make up the collection.

Table 2: Height, length, width, mouth diameter and lip shape of Terena ceramics from MS.

Identification number and type	Height	Comp	Width	Mouth diameter	Lip type	Appendix/handle
1 - Kettle	18 cm	27 cm	0.8 cm	25 cm	Rounded	Rounded handle/spout
2 - Bird-shaped bowl	20 cm	27.5 cm	0.8 cm	58 cm	Rounded	Bird's head and tail
3 - Mammal	13 cm	14 cm	11 cm	-	-	-
4 - Bowl in the shape of a bird	15 cm	36 cm	0.9 cm	86 cm	Rounded	Bird's head and tail
5- Bowl	12 cm	19.5 cm	0.9 cm	28 cm	Rounded	-
6- Bowl with lid	7 cm	14 cm	0.6 cm	34 cm	Rounded	-
6a – Bowl lid	5 cm	12 cm	0.6 cm	-	Rounded	-
7 – Bowl	7 cm	17 cm	0.8 cm	34 cm	Rounded	-
8 - Bowl	13 cm	15 cm	0.6 cm	11 cm	Rounded	-
8a - Bowl lid	4 cm	6 cm	0.6 cm	-	Rounded	-
9 - Pot	11 cm	9.5 cm	0.8 cm	25 cm	Rounded	-
10 - Cup	9.5 cm	8 cm	0.6 cm	24 cm	Rounded	-
11 - Pot with handle	14 cm	10 cm	0.6 cm	24 cm	Rounded handle and edge	-
12 - Cup	9 cm	7.5 cm	0.7 cm	23 cm	Rounded	-
13 - Bowl in the shape of a bird	10 cm	15 cm	0.4 cm	25 cm	Rounded	Bird head and tail
14 - Miniature pot	4.5 cm	8 cm	0.8 cm	17 cm	Rounded	-
15 - Miniature pot	7 cm	7 cm	0.6 cm	16 cm	Rounded	-
15a – Lid of the Miniature Jar	3 cm	5 cm	0.6 cm	-	-	-
16 - Pot	13 cm	12 cm	0.9 cm	26 cm	Rounded	-
17 - Miniature pot	7 cm	7 cm	0.5 cm	16 cm	Rounded	-
17a - Pot Miniature Lid	4 cm	6 cm	0.6 cm	-	Rounded	-
18 - Miniature pot	5 cm	5 cm	0.4 cm	8 cm	Rounded	-
19 - Pot	13 cm	10 cm	0.6 cm	14 cm	Rounded	-
20 - Miniature pot	7 cm	9 cm	0.7 cm	9 cm	Rounded	-
21 - Bowl in the shape of a bird	17 cm	21 cm	1 cm	7 cm	Rounded	Head and tail of the bird
22 - Mammal	9 cm	18 cm	5 cm	-	-	-
23 - Bird	8 cm	17 cm	7 cm	-	-	-
24 - Mammal	11 cm	20 cm	7 cm	-	-	-
25 - Miniature pot	6 cm	5 cm	0.5 cm	10 cm	Rounded	-
26 - Miniature pot	6 cm	7 cm	0.5 cm	11 cm	Rounded	Beak

Source: The authors (2024).

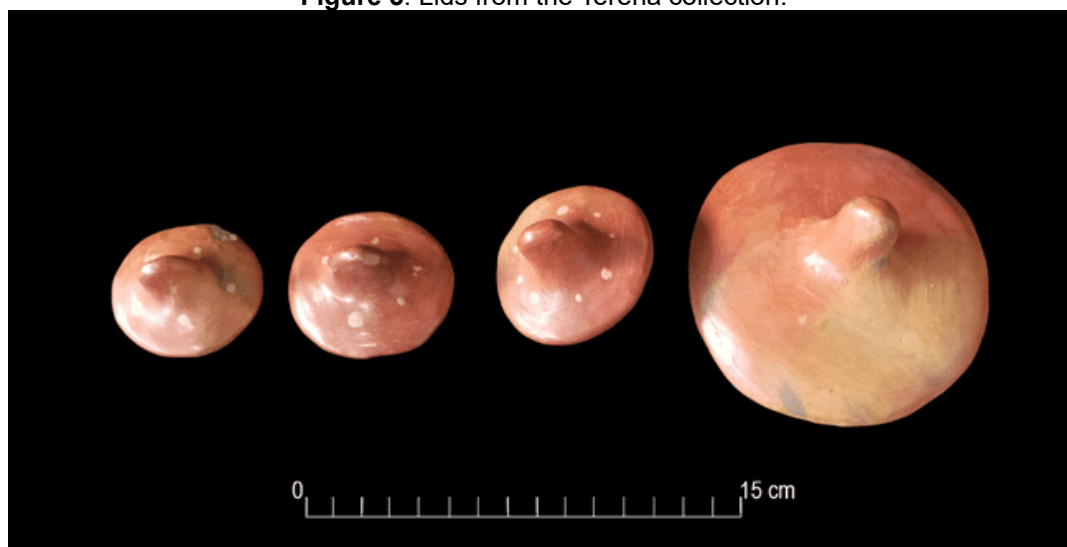
Figure 4: Terena ceramic collection exhibited at the Museum of Paleontology "Professor Pepe".



Source: The authors (2024).

The appendages of the caps are nipple-shaped (**Figure 5**). The other appendages are in the bird-shaped bowls and are represented by the bird's head and tail (**Figure 6**). The handles are rounded, in the form of rollers (**Figure 7**).

Figure 5: Lids from the Terena collection.



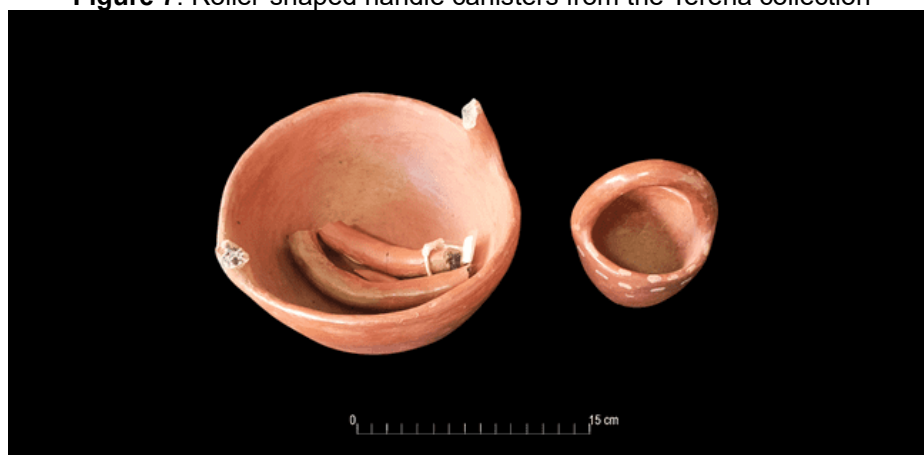
Source: The authors (2024).

Figure 6: Bird-shaped bowls from the Terena collection.



Source: The authors (2024).

Figure 7: Roller-shaped handle canisters from the Terena collection



Source: The authors (2024).

Of the ten jars in the collection, seven are miniatures. The miniatures are used by the Indigenous Peoples potters in their daily activities, but also, after colonization, they begin to be made on a large scale for sale.

Sculptures of birds and mammals are also made by Indigenous Peoples in wood, and are easy to be sold today.

Terena pottery is produced by the technique of co-selling, with red clay, left to dry, polished and finished with Jatobá resin (Silva, 1949). This technique was used in the vessels, pots, bowls, kettle and handles of the collection under analysis. In the case of mammals, birds, miniatures and appendages, the technique used was modeling.

Terena pottery features a painting of floral decorative patterns or that resembles white lace (Gomes, 2016) (**Figure 8**). **Figures 9, 10 and 11** present pieces with decoration in the form of waves.

Figure 8: Pieces 14, 15 and 17 with floral decorative pattern.



Source: The authors (2024).

Figure 9: Part 9, with white paint on the lip, on the inside of the pot near the lip and a little below the middle of the bowl, in the form of waves.



Source: The authors (2024).

Figure 10: Parts 16 and 19, with a decorative pattern in the shape of waves.



Source: The authors (2024).

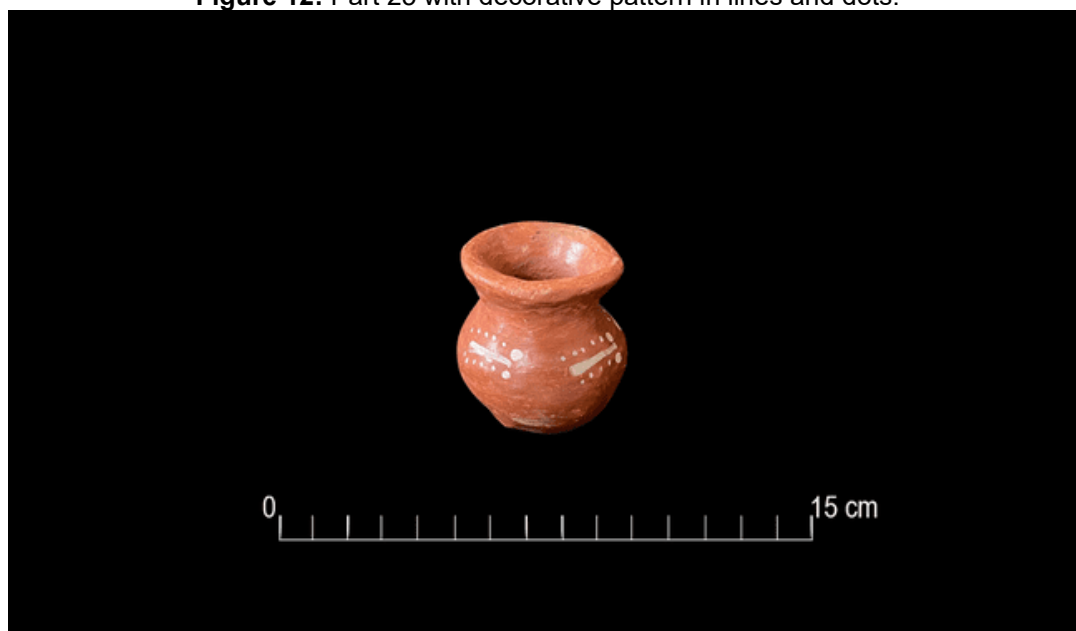
Figure 11: Part 8, with decorative pattern in the shape of waves.



Source: The authors (2024).

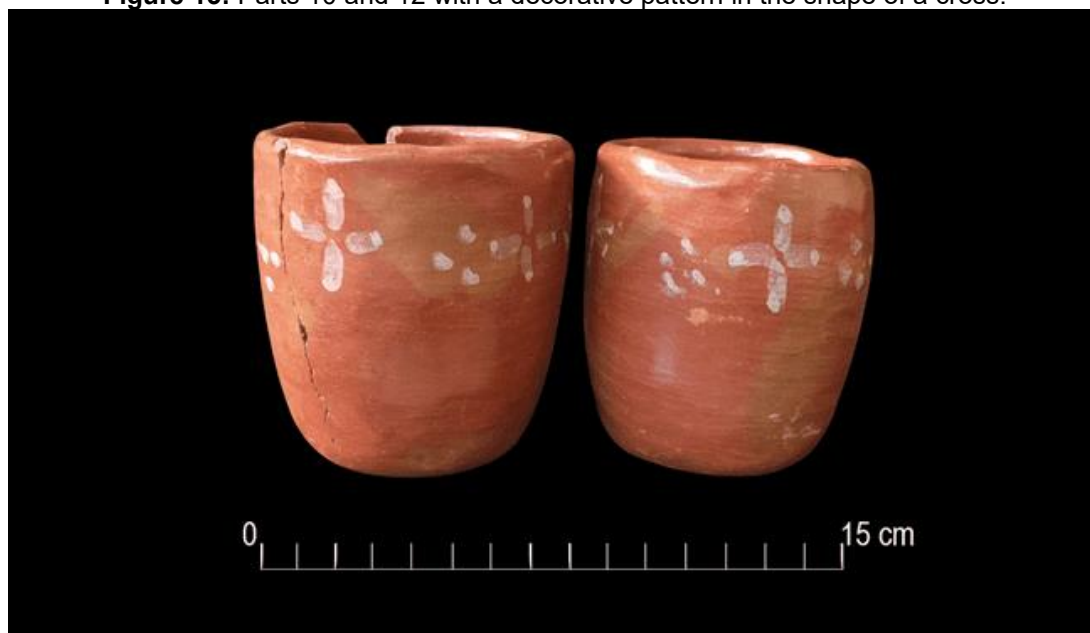
As shown in Figure 8, it is possible to identify that pieces 14, 15 and 17 have a floral decoration, while Figures 9, 10 and 11 have pieces with wave-shaped decoration. Piece 25 (**Figure 12**) is decorated with sparks and dots of different sizes, and pieces 10 and 12 (**Figure 13**) have a decoration format that resembles a cross or a flower.

Figure 12: Part 25 with decorative pattern in lines and dots.



Source: The authors (2024).

Figure 13: Parts 10 and 12 with a decorative pattern in the shape of a cross.



Source: The authors (2024).

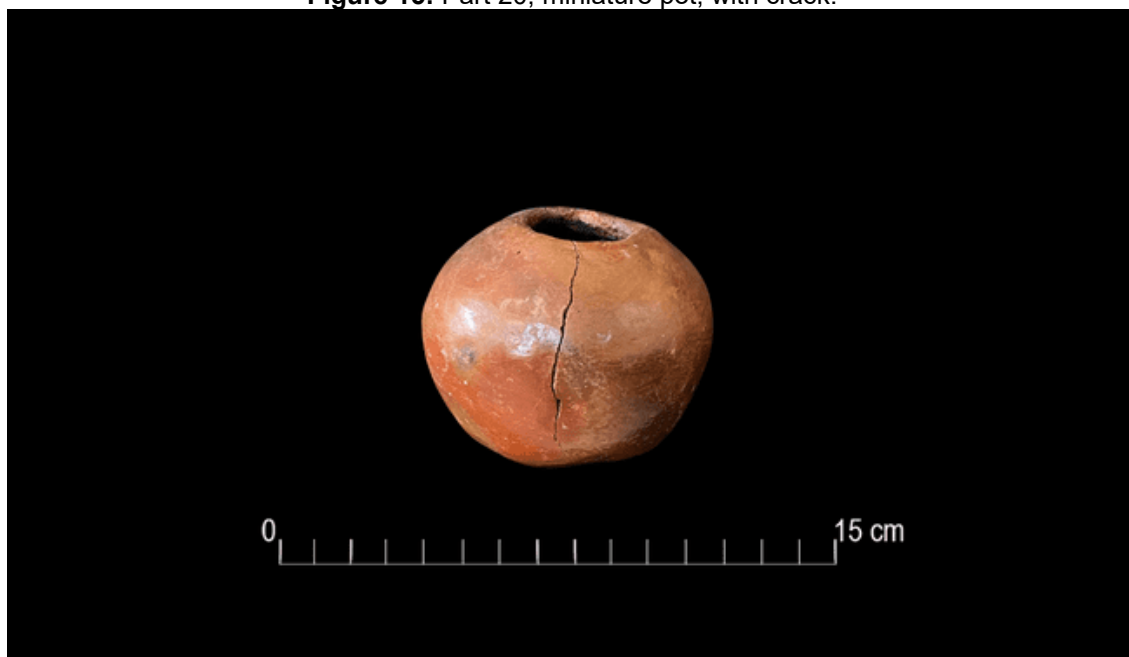
The pieces presented in Figures 8 to 13 have a finish with white paint treated with a transparent base, probably jatoba resin. The thickness of the sparks in the drawings is similar in all parts, ranging from 0.4 to 0.6 centimeters in thickness. The state of conservation of the pieces is good, only four pieces (23, 10, 7 and 5) (**Figure 14**) present some type of breakage and only one piece (20) (**Figure 15**) presents a crack.

Figure 14: Parts 23, 10, 7 and 5 with fractures.



Source: The authors (2024).

Figure 15: Part 20, miniature pot, with crack.



Source: The authors (2024).

CONCLUSION

The ceramics of the Terena People show the resistance and cultural continuity throughout History and also the interferences of the colonizer. The preservation of modeling techniques and the preservation of traditional knowledge.

The 26 pieces analyzed presented the same accordion and finishing technique as the ceramics, evidencing a continuous transmission of artisanal knowledge and cultural resistance of the Terena People in the face of changes throughout history. The pieces are predominantly composed of domestic utensils and show the centrality of the daily practices of the Terena People.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) for supporting the development of this research.

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