The foot-in-the-mouth figurine and discourse construction based on material culture

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Abstract

The 'foot in the mouth' figurine is one of the most iconic pieces of Santarém ceramics, dated between the 10th and 16th centuries. This article focuses on the several analyses that have included this object since its discovery at an archaeological site in downtown Santarém in the middle of the 20th century. From the review of nine collection studies, seven news reports, three TV programs, and nine social media accounts, I present a perspective on different discourses, in particular archaeological ones, based on the material culture of pre-colonial Amazonian societies.

Resumo

A estatueta 'pé na boca' é uma das mais icônicas peças da cerâmica Santarém, datada entre os seculos X e XVI. Este artigo se debruça sobre diversas análises que incluiram este objeto desde sua coleta em uma feição arqueológica no centro de Santarém em meados do século XX. A partir da revisão de 9 estudos de coleção, 7 reportagens online, 3 programas de TV e 9 contas em medias sociais, apresento uma perspectiva acerca dos diferentes discursos, em particular os arqueológicos, partindo da cultura material de sociedades pré-coloniais amazônicas.

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> "[...] Maria Moaçara was a princess, after her ancestors, of all the Tapajoz, and her name was Moaçara, meaning great noblewoman because the Indians used to choose a woman of the higher nobility, whom they consulted in everything like an oracle [...]"
>
> Bettendorf 1909 [1661].

Maria Moaçara, Anna, and Luzia are the women named in Father Bettendorf's (1909 [1661]) account of the Tapajós Mission, which took place in what is currently known as the city of Santarem, in the State of Pará , Brazil. It is not by chance that we know these women by their Christian names, as they appear in a passage that deals with the missionary's interference in the marital arrangements of the indigenous villagers. By recording the practices of conversion to Catholicism and describing the customs of the natives of the Tapajós region, Bettendorf's chronicle is a crucial source on the incorporation of this population into the Portuguese Crown represented by the Mission. The accounts from the 16th to 18th centuries provide glimpses into the native Amazonians' lives (in this case, the Lower Tapajós) during the European invasion. Although various chroniclers attributed different names (e.g. Estrapajosos, Topayo, Rapio, Tapajosos, Tapajoses) to the indigenous peoples of this region, both the river and such groups are known as Tapajós.

The two examples of nomenclature demonstrate how the discourses about these populations were limited to the European perspective, commonly inventorying the natural and human resources of the Amazon, which could be beneficial and profitable to the colonizers (Gondim, 1994). In the transition from the 17th to the 19th centuries, naturalistic expeditions imbued with a scientific discourse crossed the Amazonian rivers, mainly interested in cataloguing the Amazonian environment, the Amazonian people being secondary in their reports. Cultural aspects of Amazonian peoples became an interest within the structuring of Anthropology by the second half of 19th century. Archaeological studies integrated this process, focusing on material culture. The archaeological artefacts collected in Amazonia in this context integrate museums and private collections in different parts of the world (Schaan, 2014). Thus, discourses about the indigenous Amazonians also began to be based on their own material culture.

In the Santarém region, richly decorated ceramic and stone objects became the targets of ethnographic expedition collections (Gomes, 2002). Among the ceramic collections,

anthropomorphic figurines stand out for their naturalistic representation of human traits. Researchers found such artefacts in bell-shaped features and Amazonian Dark Earth sites in the region. The highly fertile Amazonian Dark Earth (ADE) soils results from past human activities found in association with archaeological sites throughout Amazonia. In the Santarém area, ADEs are mainly discovered in ancient Tapajó settlements (AD 1000-1600) with copious amounts of ceramics and features from Santarem culture, though observed in some older occupations. Locally known as bolsões, the bell-shaped features consist of refuse pits which in some contexts are exposed as a pocket of black soil within the sterile yellow subsoil (Quinn, 2004, p. 143). Such features are found full of intentionally broken ceramics pertaining to the Santarém culture (Roosevelt, 1999, p. 25). Both the intentional breaking and recovery of these typical Santarém artefacts, such as the globular, caryatid, and neck vessels portraying "mytho-cosmological symbolism"(Gomes, 2016, p. 16), led scholars to interpret them as ceremonial refuse pits (Roosevelt, 1999) associated with shamanic rituals (Gomes, 2016).

The unearthing of these objects by locals to sell to tourists was not unusual. For instance, Barata (1953) recorded this practice while assembling a Tapajó collection, including a figurine known as foot-in-the-mouth (hereafter FITM), found at a site in downtown Santarém. The FITM is the naturalistic representation of a young woman sitting with her left foot supported by her hands at the level of her mouth, while her right leg is bent in the "lotus position". This object's peculiar position attracted both attention from researchers and admiration by the general public. The figurine is 14 cm in height and 6.5 cm in diameter; it was modelled by hand and decorated with incisions and black and red paint over a white slip. The pose indicates movement and the decoration emphasizes it, as well as the beauty of the represented character.

This paper presents a perspective on the multiple discourses built around this figurine through various studies, focusing on the archaeological literature portraying it. However, the impressions of other agents (artisans, consumers, and sellers) are outlined to discuss the commodification of archaeological objects. This outline is based on a compilation of online news reports, TV program interviews, and artisans from Santarém social media activity. That is, a virtual inventory regarding the FITM figurine using the keywords *"replica da estatueta pé na boca Santarém"*, *"artesanato Santarém"*, and *"exposições em Santarém"*. After reviewing seven news reports and three TV programs from 2015 to 2020, the local artisans Isauro do Barro, Elves Costa, Jefferson Paiva, and Vandria Borari were used as keywords, resulting in a review of six commercial and three personal accounts on social media.

FITM composes a set of archaeological pieces replicated and sold in regional stores and on the internet, which have been the means of contact between a wider public and the artefact (Barreto, 2013). In this arena, the replication process occurs at diverse levels of proximity to the academic discussions (Schaan, 2006; Barreto, 2013; Lima et al. 2018).

Several scholars have analysed FITM and through a variety of frameworks. The resulting archaeological narratives are the main focus of this article, rather than FITM per se. This approach is rooted in the comprehension that these studies belong to particular historical moments of Amazonian Archaeology, in the sense that historically constituted theoretical-methodological orientations influenced the archaeologist's engagement with this figurine. The aim is to excavate through the layers of academic documents (museum reports and research papers) to expose the values entangled in the manner of material culture description. The underlying question follows Tilley's (1990, p. 336): "what linkage is there between this text and its social context of production?" Considering it is outside the scope of this paper, for comprehensive reviews of Amazonian Archaeology, the reader is referred to Neves (1999/2000), Heckenberger and Neves (2009), and Schaan (2014).

Between scientific and commercial value: from the museum to touristic ceramic districts

The discovery of artefacts by researchers has resulted in several museum collections. For example, the Emílio Goeldi Museum (hereafter MPEG) has at least four collections with whole and fragmented figurines, totalling 119 pieces (Guapindaia, 1993). In sync with the archaeological practices from the mid-20th century, collection studies were the first effort to establish a ceramic typology for the assemblages found in Santarém, forming the basis of initial interpretations of the indigenous cultural traditions prior to the European invasion.

FITM (Figure 1) is part of a subset of ceramic human bodies, heads, and torsos, that make up the Barata collection under the custody of MPEG. This subset represents material from Aldeia site in Santarem, excavated by Barata (1953) from a bell-shaped site. Therefore, Barata had the first experience with this figurine being interested in the artistic aspects of objects as an archaeologist, journalist, and artist. His research papers on Santarém pieces provide detailed descriptions of the excavations and refined analyses of the decorative features of ceramics, proposing potential representativeness of decorations and reformulating the way Santarém material culture is read.

Figure 1: Front and back of a foot-in-the-mouth figurine. Adapted from Palmatary 1960.

Barata's description of FITM highlights the left foot "sucked by the mouth", a position that characterises the general posture of the object. The perceived continuity between the figurine's producers and contemporary indigenous folks is an essential aspect of Barata studies. Namely, he interpreted FITM as a representation of an "indigenous woman sitting ... in the usual posture of her kin [...]" (Barata, 1953, p. 6). Drawing attention to the fidelity of the anatomical representation, the nakedness of the piece, the "excessively small" breasts, and braids that "showing in detail the way of combing the Tapajó women" (Barata, 1953, p. 6),[1] and relating the decorative traces to body painting, ornamentation, and indigenous feather art. Therefore, Barata makes an effort in linking the analysed material culture to a Tapajó indigenous identity.

Another compelling aspect is Barata's understanding of the formation process of bell-shaped sites as contexts for collecting Santarém artefacts since he understood these sites as the result of Santarém city's expansion into the "old indigenous village", nowadays the Aldeia district (Barata, 1953, p. 4). He reported the usual hole digging and sweeping inside the ceramics found in the yards during the construction of new homes. This information is crucial to comprehending how colonial discourse about the indigenous peoples persists

[1] Translated from the original in Portuguese.

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through common perceptions about archaeological artefacts. Once again, Barata's (1953, p. 4) report provides insights into these perceptions by registering the locals' nomenclature to the artefacts, the small fragments called "faces", while whole and semi-whole objects are called "indigenous pots" or "remains of old pottery". Such objects were associated with practices of indigenous mortuary rituals and feared by people. For this reason, they were broken and buried in the dug sites. Burial or harvesting rituals of the Tapajós indigenous people throughout colonisation were perceived as diabolical endeavours by European Catholics (Bettendorf 1909 [1661]; Heriarte, 1874) and were recorded as such in documentation and popular imagination.

Notwithstanding, the local population handled these artefacts for commercial purposes. The demand from researchers and tourists for ceramic objects encouraged both the search for archaeological objects and the production of replicas for sale. Barata (1953, p.4) mentions "two old maids who make the character dolls that the tourists like so much", revealing the mutual influence between locals and visitors. At the same time, researchers were locally informed about places of archaeological artefacts for their collections, and the residents quickly adapted to profit from this interest despite popular beliefs about the objects.

Therefore, archaeological objects underwent a process of cultural and economic valorisation. Remarkably, although contact with the ceramic objects provokes fear for their indigenous origin, the constant search for these objects in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, both by tourists and naturalistic researchers, kicked-off the process of the increasing valorisation of archaeological artefacts in the city of Santarém. This commercial interest on archaeological objects in Santarém arises within a broader scenario of transformation within Western societies (Coelho, 2009). In the Amazon, these changes happened at a slower pace and in relation to local dynamics.

A phenomenon accompanied the constitution of National States at the end of the 19th century that Eric Hobsbawm (2008) calls the "mass-production" of traditions. Conceiving "invention" as a process of signification or re-signification of symbols or rituals, in order to answer a need for a given socio-historical background, Hobsbawm explains the intensification of "invented traditions" by the intense social, political and economic changes that characterised the period. In Brazil, the imperial state's effort to create a feeling of patriotism resulted in the "the myth of the Brazilian nation's invention" based on an idyllic take of the indigenous element, upgraded to the category of national ancestor sparked by

the literary productions of the Brazilian Romanticism (Coelho, 2009). The scientific expeditions to Santarém occurred within this framework.

A further note on scientific expeditions' role in the organisation of museums and archaeological objects' commerce is warranted. Although the 'exotic' aspect of artefacts have also affected their commodification, this seems to have been a gradual process. As discussed above, around a century after the beginning of scientific journeys to Santarém, mid-20th century archaeological objects were associated with indigenous elements and comprehended as direct links between their producers and their contemporary indigenous inhabitants. As a result, such objects were imbued with both a negative and positive sense. Negative because the contradictory image of indigenous people formed during the colonial period remained, despite the best efforts of romanticism. On the other hand, the positive value attributed to these objects derived from their exoticism and growing commercial value driven by researchers and tourist demands.

In the 1960s, two collection studies included FITM analysis under the auspices of historical ecology (Heckenberger and Neves, 2009). The first is Palmatary's (1960) in-depth review of ethnohistoric sources and detailed classification of Tapajó pottery, although not specifically describing FITM, which is used only as an illustration of figurines. The second is Conceição Corrêa's (1965) typology of the figurines found in four collections at the MPEG. Both scholars communicated directly with Barata. Corrêa repeated Barata's' information about the context of his findings across sites and ADE patches, as well as the local commerce of "faces, fragments or whole pieces of pottery" (1965).

In her analysis, Corrêa highlighted the realism in the figurines' modelling, interpreting these objects as characters represented in ceramics in various gestures and postures. This notion of characters enacted in ceramic figurines pervades her narrative on the Tapajó material culture. Even though the FITM character is still at the beginning of her description, Corrêa (1965) gives an increased feeling of the object's movement. Defining this represented character, she describes the techniques applied to outline the physical features and portray the objects adorning it (a disc in the ear and headdress with neck-cover), not simple ornaments in her reading, but identity markers of the character so significant as to being reproduced in ceramics. The elements described allowed an indigenous woman to be seen, understanding the figurine through the objects she carries.

After FITM's character is defined, Corrêa details the production technique (incised and modelled) to narrate the movement of flexed arms away from the body, "holding the left foot that the figure is bringing to the mouth" (1965) – the verb conjugated in the present

continuous recognises the movement of the object. Between one movement and another, bracelets, garters, and anklets surface in the story. The scene goes on, and creates an image of the seated figurine with the right leg bent forward supporting the left leg; in Corrêas' conception, the curves of the buttocks, the navel, and the identification of the sex suggest a pushing action by the character.

Few decades separate these first academic studies of FITM and its successors, meaning a rupture in the investigationwas intrinsically tied to specific historical contexts. Before exploring the perspective changes below, a note on the relationship between archaeologists and agents outside the academic community. Currently, there is a public understanding of FITM as a child, given that the act of putting one's foot in the mouth invokes a child's image (Denise Schaan, personal communication). This playful way of representing an archaeological object is exciting, especially considering that a century ago, its interpretation involved either demeaning association with contemporary indigenous practices or cultural value for tourists. The cultural value attributed to archaeological objects imbues both the objects and their replicas with economic value (Frade, 2003). As a result, the marketing of replicas of archaeological artefacts is boosted even on internet sale sites - including replicas of the FITM figurine (Figure 2). According to Holtorf, the replicas' effects can vary "in different circumstances and for different people" (2002, p. 55). Below, some aspects and discourses surrounding the replication process in Amazonia are outlined.

Figure 2: replica of FITM advertised as 'Tapajonic figurine foot-in-the-mouth' at the cost of 264 BRL. Source: Anísio Artesanato.

The making of ceramic objects for commerce has occurred in Amazonia since the mid-18th century (Ferreira, 1971), but the culmination in mass production of ceramic artefact replicas in the 1970s resulted from a gradual increase in cultural and economic value to archaeological objects. For instance, among the efforts mentioned above to forge a national identity during the last quarter of the 19th century's last were valuation strategies of artefacts from the Marajoara culture, such as museum exhibitions, reproduction of graphism and replicas (Linhares 2020). According to Linhares (2020, p. 4), the Marajoara graphism used as an "indigenous symbolism" supported the idea of a "civilized indigenous ancestry", only long gone. This ideal ancestor described from scientific to newspaper reports and depicted on postcards and even coins pervaded the social imaginary from the 19th century through to the 20th, to the point that "being Brazilian meant being Marajoara"(Linhares 2020, p. 11).

As the story goes, the massive regional production of replicas started during the mid-1960s in the Icoaraci Ceramic District, Belém Pará. The district used to produce utilitarian paraphernalia, but in that decade, the artisans incorporated 'indigenous' traits into the ceramics, mainly inspired by the Marajoara style (Lima *et al*., 2018, p. 155). Such traits were materialised both as replicas and geometric graphism (Sales, 2020, p. 39) creating a local handicraft style named Paracuri. Afterwards, other archaeological references were included, such as Santarém, Maracá, and rock art, developing into a hybridisation process with regional themes (e.g. the toucan, sundown, river landscapes) and variations, as well (Barreto, 2013, p. 116-117).

The ceramist Raimundo Cardoso (hereafter Master Cardoso) played an important role in intensifying the archaeological references in the ceramic handicrafts (Lima *et al.*, 2018; Schaan, 2006; Sales, 2020). Master Cardoso consulted researchers from the MPEG about archaeological collections and their studies and created replicas based on the artefacts. His skilfully crafted replicas gained national and international prominence, as did he. By training ceramists to manufacture replicas of archaeological objects or inspiring their peers to adopt the same styles, Master Cardoso transformed the Paracuri ceramic district. In the following decades, other ceramic districts appeared in the states of Pará (Santarém and Marajó Island) and Amapá (Schaan, 2006). Although occurring in different processes, these ceramic districts' development had support from institutions such as MPEG, SEBRAE, and the State Governments of Pará and Amapá (Sales, 2020, p. 41-46). The academic discourse about regional archaeology was then incorporated inasmuch to claim a regional identity,

part of a marketing strategy, and archaeologists' efforts to communicate with a broader audience through ceramic replicas (Lima *et al.*, 2018; Sales, 2020, p. 46).

For a short period in the early 2000s, this institutional influence on replica manufacturing weakened as the academic discourses changed and the ceramists started creating objects loosely inspired on artefacts, only correlating them with the archaeological knowledge in order to value them by association with a supposed cultural heritage (Schaan, 2006). This strategy to authenticate and imbue the replicas with cultural meaning is part of the artefacts' commodification (Schaan, 2006) and an act of inheriting the past (Furuya, 2014). Nevertheless, it is also representative of the power relations amid these agents, archaeology having the authority to make "serious speeches" (Tilley, 1990, p. 299) about the past and material culture and ceramists reproducing archaeological narratives to legitimate their products, only reaching a broader public.

Articulating the idea of invented traditions (Hobsbawm, 2008) to the process of reinventing the meanings of objects for marketing purposes, Schaan (2006) identified in this process the appropriation of discourses now considered outdated within the academy, but widespread by the end of the 20th century. Then, the replicas received new meanings, gaining authenticity and antiquity based on this knowledge crystallised in popular memory. From a cultural heritage perspective on replica commerce, Barreto pondered on the archaeologist's roles in dialoguing with the several agents involved in the process, considering that the modifications and abandonment of archaeological knowledge in the mass-production of replicas represent an overall disinterest in the past that archaeological artefacts represent (2013, p. 119). Barreto suggests that the 'agentive capabilities' of anthropomorphic figurines could be used by archaeologists to communicate how archaeological knowledge is constructed to a broader audience, given their extensive replication in mass handicrafts.

Currently, archaeologists and artisans have re-engaged in dialogue and partnerships for replica production. For instance, an ongoing collaboration between MPEG curators and a group of artisans from the Icoaraci District consists of a replicating project, which originated from both stakeholders' shared interests in socialising the museum's collections and revitalising the ceramic handicrafts from Paracuri via the manufacture of the ceramic replica (Lima *et al.*, 2018, p. 155). Within the framework of public archaeology, the "Replicating the past" project aims to value indigenous cultural heritage while aggregating cultural value to the replicas by rooting their making in archaeological knowledge and artisans skills. As a result, the project authenticates its pieces by applying a stamp combined

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with the artisans' narratives - based on archaeological discourse - in exhibitions and selling points (Lima et al. 2018, p. 156-158). A similar process of institutionalised replica production and the creation of ceramic districts have been documented in Amapá where the replica productions are somewhat detached from archaeological inspirations, but aligned to an institutional effort to create a regional identity linked to an indigenous past (Sales, 2020).

The replica production in Santarem is significant for this paper since the FITM replica appears across various exhibitions and street fairs in the area (*Bom dia Tapajós*, 2018; *G1 Santarém*, 2018a and 2018b). Handicraft production in Santarém goes back to colonial times when it was carried out by indigenous women (Ferreira, 2008, p. 197-198) including “coarse pottery and cooking utensils” (Bates, 1979 [1869], p. 198). Through the 20th century, local ceramists kept producing ceramic handicrafts of utilitarian and decorative “Tapajó art” (Amorim 2000, p. 246). Master Isauro do Barro was a notorious ceramist who reproduced archaeological artefacts belonging to the Tapajó peoples, who proudly received national and international replica orders (Amorim 2000, p. 246). Despite his international reputation, Mr. Isauro lacked institutional support and at one point in his career faced financial difficulties in accessing raw materials (Amorim 2000, p. 246). Nevertheless, he trained generations of ceramists and defended ceramist activity as "the earliest human profession" (*G1 Santarém*, 2017). Many of his apprentices carry the Tapajó replica tradition and lead the region's handicraft activities, among them are Elves Costa, Lucivaldo Silva, Ronaldo Marques, and Mr Isauro’s grandson, Jefferson Paiva.Following the introduction of Law Nº. 13,180 on October 22, 2015, which established artisanship as a profession in Brazil, Pará state government initiatives focused on registering and organizing artisans and instructing them on marketing strategies to advertise their products. In such events, archaeological artefacts were exhibited as references to the institutionally aspired regional culture. Ceramists perceived this as an opportunity to increase profit and notability, “after all, people buy what they know and what they like” according to ceramist Elson Almeida (Agência Pará, 2015). At the local level, collaborations between ceramists and the João Fona Cultural Center (CCJF) promoted workshops that resulted in the production and exhibition of miniature replicas of the CCJF’s archaeological artefacts collection (*G1 Santarém*, 2018a; *Bom dia Tapajós* 2018a and 2018b). Santarém’s secretary of culture (*Bom dia Tapajós* 2018a) and the National Historic and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN) supported access to original archaeological artefacts and instructions on the traditional ways of Tapajó pottery making “a strategy to value local culture” (*Bom dia Tapajós* 2018c).

In media reports of these events, the discourse to rescue Santarém's history and encourage regional culture preservation is pervasive (*G1 Santarém*, 2018b; *Bom dia Tapajós* 2018a, 2018b and 2018c). For instance, Elves Costa regularly repeats his commitment to transmitting knowledge to "those interested in keeping the tradition of handicraft alive and valuing the regional ceramic art and culture", with the aim of valuing culture, qualifying new artisans, and generating income for the artisans in Santarém (Bom dia Tapajós 2018b). Mr Costa's reasoning meets the criteria for using archaeological objects as references for artworks, constituting an act of "inheriting the past artistically" (Furuya, 2014, p. 6). A recent article (Bezerra, 2020) applied Furuya's notion in the discussion on handicrafts production in Marajó as dialogues with the past.

As aforementioned, Santarém inhabitants are no strangers to the archaeological sites and ceramic artefacts within the region, and have a strong sense of its indigenous origins, particularly the Tapajó. The ancientness attributed to the artefacts ordinarily found in backyards warrants a continuous becoming of pre-colonial pieces into "material culture meaningfully constituted – in the present" (Holtorf, 2002, p. 55), a renewal of references for replication and of the ceramists' "acts of artistically inheriting the prehistoric past" (Furuya, 2014, p. 2). The ceramists were in contact with archaeological artefacts and replicas since childhood, learning to make handicrafts at an early age (*Bom dia Tapajós* 2018c). During interviews in workshops and street fairs, all the artisans recall the ancestry of this Tapajó art, and identify themselves as its inheritors. Vandria Borari argues that "the artisan ceramists continue the tradition of their skillful Tapajó ancestors" (*Bom dia Tapajós* 2018c). Members of the Borari territory in Alter do Chão are involved in handicraft production and also adapt the Tapajó graphism into new media as bio-jewelry, creating new material identities invoking "their ancestors' splendid legacy" (Furuya, 2014, p. 8).

Social media has been a means to publicise Santarém ceramic production, workshops, and street fairs through pages curated to portray a regional identity. The Tapajó identity is invoked from the pages' names to the profile and cover pictures on commercial accounts (Figure 3). Photographs of artefacts and replicas, pottery making, and exhibitions and posts about the Tapajó and their distinct material culture reinforce this virtual projection of valuing the past and to attract the public (Miller 2000, p. 16). These pages are filled with biographical information about the ceramists, short bios about their micro-enterprises and missions, basic information such as phone numbers and email addresses, links to external websites, the commercial address of their shops and ateliers in Santarém, posts about events, links to TV programs and news reports of their activities.

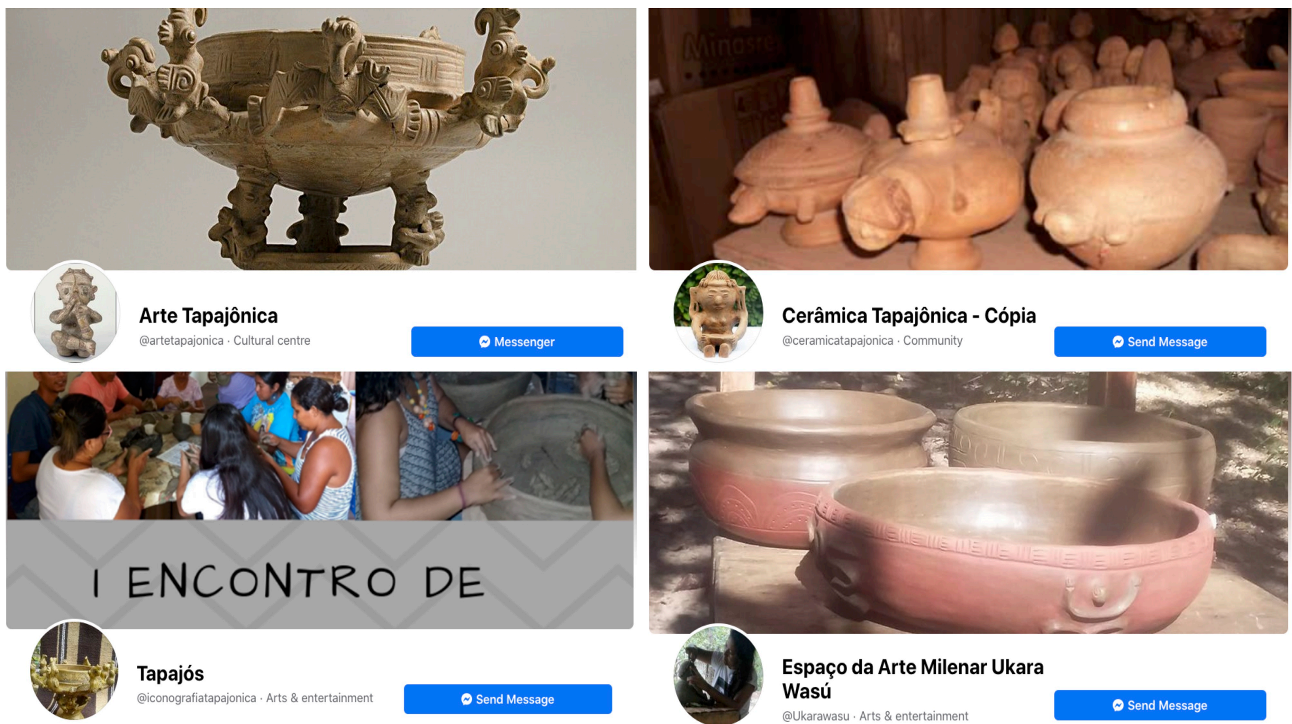

Figure 3: Facebook pages of four commercial accounts from Santarem portraying a regional identities. Top left – Arte Tapajônica page with FITM as a profile picture; Bottom left - Tapajós page; Top right - Cerâmica Tapajônica-Cópias page; Bottom left – Espaço da Arte Milenar Ukara Wasú page. Source: Facebook.

Pictures of the original FITM and replicas figure on these commercial accounts due to its appeaeling properties. For example, the Puxirum Cooperative page features FITM replicas in many pictures of their participation in street fairs and events (Figure 4). Another page, "Cerâmica Tapajônica-Cópias" advertises the sale of FITM replicas "with a discount to teachers and students" in one post, while another shows a FITM replica in pictures of the "Ancestral sonority" exhibition, produced to receive tourist from 24 transatlantic cruises (*G1 Santarém*, 2019).

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Figure 4: Posts portraying and/or advertising FITM replicas on commercial accounts on Facebook. Left – replica for sale on Puxirum cooperative page; Center – replicas for sale on a street fair from Puxirum cooperative page; Right – replicas for sale on Cerâmica Tapajônica-Cópias. Source: Facebook.

Among all these skilled ceramists, Jefferson Paiva displays a strong connection to the FITM. Mr Paiva promotes his work in his personal and business social media both on Instagram and Facebook, reinforcing his practice's indigenous ancestry and the discourse of valuing the regional culture and the Tapajó ceramic art. He also takes workshops to improve his techniques and learn new ones, including attending the "Replicating the Past" project activities and training for micro-entrepreneurs to export their merchandise (Frazão, 2020). These events' importance for this study's aims resides in the access Mr Paiva had to the original FITM at MPEG, having a unique opportunity to reproduce it. Afterwards, FITM replicas began to appear across many of his promotion materials, including those selected for export (Frazão, 2020), as well as on the profile pictures of his business pages (Figure 5).

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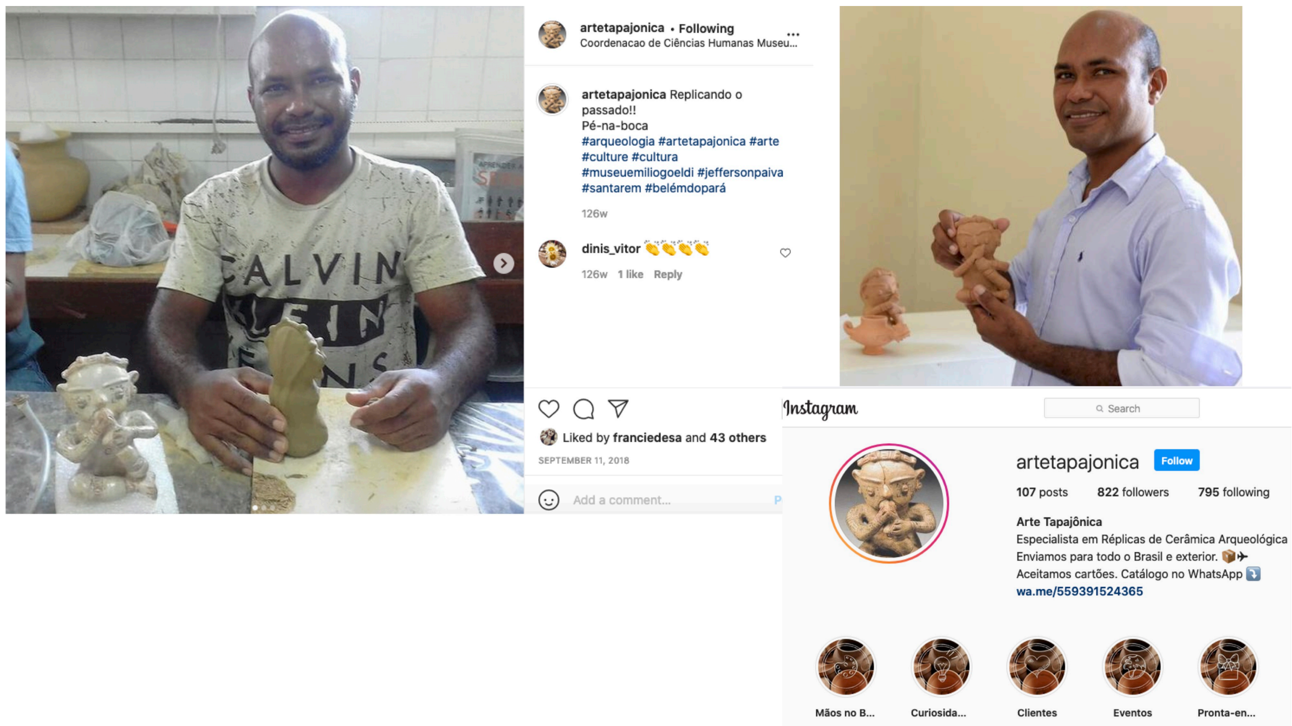

Figure 5: Mr. Paiva promoting pictures: Top left - Mr. Paiva with FITM original and replica on MPEG's replicating the past activity (Arte Tapajônica Instagram); Top right - Agência Pará promoting material; Bottom left - Arte Tapajônica Instagram page cover.

Combining his replica manufacturing experience with being an archaeology student, Mr Paiva circulates from archaeological conferences to handicraft fairs, all the while developing an ability to communicate with several stakeholders in past material culture. Paiva proficiently explains the archaeological origin of the artefacts he replicates (Bom dia Tapajós 2018c), fulfilling the expectations of using replicas as a didactic approach to socialise archaeological knowledge (Lima *et al*. 2018, p. 159). In his perspective, "the replication of this art keeps the memory, way of life and culture of our ancestors alive" (*Bom dia Tapajós* 2018c). As for the use of social media, the subtitles to his pictures reveal a strategy to live up to his grandfather's dream of creating a museum to exhibit regional artwork, finding in the virtual media a locus to share his work with a broader audience. A similar reason seems to be behind the unified approach of the Puxirum cooperative and independent ceramists' use of social media.

Furuya's comparative study of Marajoara and Jomon culture highlights the different connections contemporary residents of Japan and Marajó Island have with the ancient people that produced the material culture used as references for artworks. The Japanese claim ancestral connections while the Marajoara do not, which he argues do not prevent

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either being "cases of artistically inheriting the past" (Furuya, 2014). A comparison between handicraft makers in Marajó and Santarém finds distinct scenarios, as well. Whereas people making handicrafts using Marajoara ceramics, either on Marajó Island or the Icoaraci district, can be interpreted as an artistic inheritance from the past (Furuya, 2014; Bezerra, 2020) or as appropriation in order to create a national identity (Linhares, 2020), inventing traditions in Icoaraci District (Schaan, 2006). In Santarém, the long tradition of Tapajó art replication, the perception of belonging to the Tapajó culture through the replication process, and institutional incentives are intensely intermingled and make up the fabric of the regional identity. Further studies are necessary to explore this aspect on replicas production, which are beyond the scope of this paper.

Power relations

Whereas previous research was concerned with the stylistic and technological characteristics of the figurines, the 1990s introduced a different representation of the figurines: that of power relations (Roosevelt, 1993). Interpreting these objects as representations of female deities, Roosevelt established the possibility of intersecting gender and religious relations. Based on Bettendorf's account, Roosevelt (1993) explored the topic of social stratification among the Tapajó by presuming the existence of a noble class, exemplified in the figure of Maria Moaçara. Roosevelt suggested that Moaçara's role as a noble Tapajó was probably legitimised by her speciality in rituals - as an oracle. In this way, the scholar argued that the figurines could reinforce religious ideologies of the position of elites, including offerings to deified female ancestors. As for gender relations, she considered the section in which Bettendorf describes the restricted participation of women in some rituals as an indicator of gender differences.

In another study, Roosevelt (1998) interpreted the representation of the female sexual organ in the figurines as a possible link to the reproductive function suggesting that the worship of these objects related to a context of social, political and subsistence system (agricultural production) changes. In Roosevelts' narrative (1998), women acquired social importance through their connection with fertility, both in soil and for human reproduction, necessary for a society in transformation. However, once the chiefdoms stabilised, the worship to figurines disappeared. Therefore, Roosevelt (1999) associated the shape and iconography of the figurines with stratified societies and interpreted them as evidence of hierarchy with political and religious centralisation. Even though Roosevelt did not specifically analyse FITM, her research shifted the focus of collection studies, especially

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figurines. For instance, the gender approach predominated in the following investigations of the FITM figurine.

The first FITM analysis in this new archaeological scenario approached the Barata collection and its ethnographic and ethnohistoric sources with the aim of characterising the culture of Tapajó society (Guapindaia, 1993). Guapindaia classified the objects as belonging to two periods: before and after the European invasion. By this definition, the figurines belonged to the pre-contact era. Her detailed classification became a reference for Lower Amazon studies by characterising the Santarém ceramic industry for its technology, manufacturing techniques and tools, and raw materials, besides relating these data to archaeological theories about the use of objects. Both the concern with the objects' technological aspects and the constant effort to dialogue with written sources mark Guapindaias' descriptions. Indeed, she interpreted the distinct faces represented, evident by the details of the facial features, in light of historical reports, as evidence of Tapajó multiethnicity, as well as emphasising the persistent suggestion of movement by the standard representation of the arm.

The description of the FITM figurine is no exception. Beginning with the movement: the right leg, preparing to sit in the 'lotus position', the left leg raised with the foot to the mouth supported by the hands. In that first moment, the image suggested is that of a yogi. Then, Guapindaia (1993) describes the manufacturing technique that gives shape to the body, the matter becoming the object and the tools creating the body traces. The object adornments taking on colour bear the identification of the indigenous element since portrayed in their fashion over the figurine body. The objects are also highlighted by the painting that marks the adornments of the arms and legs (Guapindaia, 1993). Given that the decoration of FITM shows an individual dressed for a special occasion, Guapindaia resumes her dialogue with historical sources and points out the possible representation of gender and power relations. Evoking Maria Moaçara, she suggested that FITM could be a woman belonging to an elite with a leading role among the Tapajó.

Emphasising that most of the realistic figurines are feminine, Gomes (2001) concurred the figurines' interpretation as representations of female deities (Roosevelt, 1993), worshipped by farming societies for female fertility and population growth. In Gomes' description, FITM is almost static, and the ornaments invisible - only the anklets and body painting appear. Reading the figurines' position as strange compared to others either sitting or squatting, she reported it as a "sitting woman, holding the foot to mouth", as if the object's *raison d'être* is to keep this position (Gomes, 2001). Unlike other scholars, she did not identify

the performance that the position involves. As a possible female deity, FITM is just a seated woman, adorned with body paintings identifying her to a clan; neither she nor the objects she carries have agency.

Quinn (2004) made a brief description of FITM in her comparative study between the archaeological material and the museum collections from Santarém. Considering FITM one of the best ceramic pieces, Quinn highlights the techniques used to reproduce its ornamentation and refers to the figurine as a young girl with her foot in her mouth relating the sitting position showing the genitalia to indicate sexuality. Regarding gender relations, Quinn follows Roosevelt in associating female prominence characterised by her reproductive power with the initial period of the chiefdoms. The preponderance of female figurines over male ones is interpreted as evidence of such prominence.

Certain scholars of material culture attribute agency to objects, considering their role in social relations and the symmetry of relationships between people and things (Fernando Santos-Granero, 2009). According to this reasoning, the FITM figurine is a social agent, given that it would have symbolic value and ritual function within the society in which it was produced and used. Moreover, the objects that adorn the figurine play a relevant role in its identification and, therefore, also act as agents that produce ideas (Velthem, 2003). Basing their interpretations on ethnological knowledge, Barreto and Oliveira (2016) proposed an alternative approach to figurine studies. Drawing their arguments from analysis of Marajoara anthropomorphic figurines, they highlight three attributes that increase the objects agentivity or "embodiment of sensitive qualities": morphology, sonority, capacity, and intentional fragmentation (Barreto and Oliveira, 2016, p. 60). In their interpretation, the symbiotic male/female of the Marajoara figurines and their morphologic variability represent the physical transformation of the male genitalia. Approaching ceramics as identity indices and associating the Marajoara figurines to shamanic ritual practices of constant body transformation, they propose a "change of focus from what the figurines represent to how they represent" (Barreto and Oliveira, 2016, p. 53). From this perspective, FITM's position could represent a transformative act and character agentivity as part of its enchantment technology.

Discussion and Conclusions

Although three women were nominated in the Bettendorf chronicle, Maria Moaçara was the only one mentioned in studies dealing with gender and power relations among the Tapajó. Anonymous are the women who are "unable to attend rituals" (Bettendorf, 1909),

caryatids that support the namesake vases (Gomes, 2001), Santarém female "faces" and "Tapajó potters" (Barata, 1953). Moaçara continued to lead her people even after being incorporated into the Portuguese Mission. For this reason, her authority was documented, and she became the ultimate representation of her peers: Moaçara, the Tapajó woman. Representative also of the feminine power among her group, materialised by the skilful hands of the potters that bequeathed us countless female figurines. All these anonymous representatives and represented in Santarém ceramics give us clues as to how their world worked. However, the reading of these clues varied according to the "dominant norms and rules of academic discourses" (Holtorf, 2002, p. 56).

Anonymous is the FITM figurine. However, it raised diverse representations by different researchers, these being closely linked to professional trajectories and to the moment in which material culture studies were taking place. Thus, in recent years, the discussion has focused on power and gender relations being mediated by material culture, as well as their symbolic representation. This has been the usual approach, although some studies have recognised the agency of objects.

The search for archaeological artefacts for scientific purposes boosted their appraisal. In the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, the demand for archaeological objects led to their commercial valorisation resulting in the destruction of archaeological sites and intense commercialisation of archaeological pieces. Adding to this scene, the collection methods used by researchers who strove for the simple removal of objects, resulted in museum collections without contextualised information. Therefore, collection studies focused on iconographic analysis related to ethnohistorical and archaeological information that were not always compatible. The focus on some aspects depended on the context in which the research was developed. Thus, Barata's studies had more artistic interest while Corrêa was concerned with discussions about the archaeological classifications of the mid-20th century. Based on Anna Roosevelt's studies, the discussion shifted to a focus on gender and power relations, as well as on transformations within the societies that produced ceramic objects. The dialogue with ethnohistorical and ethnographic sources strengthened the interpretations presented by archaeologists.

The replication of archaeological objects generalise some conceptions about human development in the Amazon region and crystallise them in popular memory. This process also reflects the diverse relationships between archaeologists and other agents involved with material culture, especially artisans. Itr was not long ago that the mass production of artworks inspired by pre-colonial pieces invented traditions (legends, myths, and stories)

by associating products to a crystalised academic discourse (Schaan, 2006). Recent approaches encourage replica-making, developing methods that combine the pieces' materiality and artisan signatures (Lima *et al.*, 2018). Archaeological discourses are not and should not be the only ones capable of dealing with past material culture. Notwithstanding, the very development of archaeological research in the region has imbued artefacts with a touristic and commercial value; after all, within the Amazonian logic, the researcher is also a foreigner/tourist.

Against the strength of the European discourses that defined the popular conception of indigenous peoples and are still pervasive in the regional mentality, the archaeological artefacts remain as the materialisation of the identities dissolved and destroyed by the colonial world. The multiple approaches and representations of the FITM figurine as an artefact demonstrate how archaeological knowledge is cumulative and historically constructed. The replication process and non-academic discourses have extended FITM's life beyond academia's physical and figurative walls. Through the replicas, FITM’s “agentive capabilities” (Barreto and Oliveira, 2016) reach numerous black mirrors on social media, creating multiple effects on people and communicating fragments of its past: a figurine is a replica is a figurine.

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[2] The idea of this paper emerged out of a conversation I had with the late Denise P. Schaan when I started my research in Santarém many years ago. Early drafts benefited from reading and suggestions from Marcia Bezerra.

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