

Letter to Paula Girshick Ben-Amos, author of “Art, Innovation, and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Benin.”

Your book, “*Art Innovation, and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Benin*”, is superb. I’m not a reviewer so the much I can see is that you lead us, the reader, easy and firmly across the ancient history of a Kingdom with her obas, uzamas, ezomos, iyases, chiefs -- and give us a handy list of the obas from Ehengbuda to Akengbuda, and teach us how they were, through the art they left behind. You make ease to understand the Civil War and different behave of various obas and chiefs. As well their relation with the spiritual world.

When you refer to Father Monteleone, and the cloths "made in five or, at the most, six months" on pg. 41, using Ryder, you touch in a subject that has connection with Brazil. In the book “*A enxada e a lança*”, (The Hoe and the Spear), the Brazilian writer Alberto da Costa e Silva depicts a panel of Africa, before the Portuguese’s arrival (he starts his book on Africa's prehistory), and refers (pg. 526) to *Pano da Costa* (Cloth from the Coast - *Ijebu*), largely exported from Benin to Brazil on the first half of Eighteenth Century. It seems, later on, when the slave traffic has ended, and commerce between Bahia (Brazil) and West Coast was very strong, industrialized *Pano da Costa*, produced in Brazil has turned itself into a largely disputed merchandise all over the Coast, including in Benin .

And moreover, in your book you teach us how to see and comprehend the bronzes, plaques, heads, in metal, ivory, clay and wood. Is all absolutely perfect. If one want to have a spotless ideas, in 177 pages, about the Kingdom of Benin, in your book one will find it. So, I indeed have enjoyed your book.

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