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Assunto: Re: ART, INNOVATION BENIN (3)

Data: Sábado, 04 Março, 2000 18:15

Dear Jose Luiz,

That is a fascinating story! I have never heard about a member of the royal family going to Brazil, but then it was a huge family (each Oba had several hundred wives), so it would be difficult to track down. The part that puzzles me is his receipt of a monthly pension in pounds sterling (and his command of English). It's hard to imagine how a Benin person, even a royal, would have that so early in the century. I will pass the story on to others who are now working in Benin to see if they have learned anything in this regard. Thank you for sharing that intriguing story with me.

The question of the cavalry is a difficult one. Of course there are artistic images in the form of warfare plaques. But there is very little in the written record. The only European visitor to mention that issue is Sir Richard Burton, who visited Benin in 1862 and mentioned that 10,000 men and all the horses in the city were away at war*. In any case, that is the time period you are asking about. Horses are mentioned as riding animals in many of the visitors' accounts, but that is a different

usage. There is quite a bit written about cavalry generally in West Africa and specifically in the Kingdom of Oyo. If you would like, I can send you these references.

If it is not impolite to ask, how did you get interested in Benin?

Best wishes,

Paula

*Burton, R.F. "My Wanderings in West Africa, by a F.R.G.S, Part II. The Renowned City of Benin," FRASER'S MAGAZINE, LXVII, March 1865, April 1865.