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To

University of Pennsylvania

African Studies Center

Prof. Tukufu Zuberi, Director

Dear Sir,

I am working in a private research that requires some details about the takeover by the British of Benin Empire, in 1897.

I've indeed one intriguing question that I had until now no chance to solve: Ovonramwen (sometime Ovonramwen) was exiled to where? And how many members of his entourage went along with him. The Encyclopedia Britannica says:

. . . a full-scale military expedition, which captured Benin City in February 1897. Ovonramwen surrendered to the British in August and died in exile.

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Since the history of Benin, as the history from many people of Africa, relays in oral tradition, I have an old story:

In the early years of 20th century an African came to live in my city, Porto Alegre, that is the capital city of Rio Grande do Sul State, in Brazil, gentleman that used to say that he was the Oba of Benin, overthrown by the British. He died here, in Porto Alegre, in May 28th, 1935 at the age of 105 years. He used to say that he came to Brazil in 1899, but before being settled here, he was in others parts of Brazil, as Bahia and Rio de Janeiro.

So, the question is:

Is there any chance that the oba Ovonramwen being this person called here by the Brazilian (Portuguese) name of Custódio Joaquim de Almeida?

His picture is:

I will be grateful if you may answer my request, by giving me the exactly place to where Ovonramwen was placed in exile.



By the way, another information: The gentleman above used to receive a pension, what was recollected, time to time, at the local branch of Bank of London.

My name is: José Luiz Pereira da Costa, and I'm a retired professor and lawyer

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Faithfully,

JOSE LUIZ PEREIRA DA COSTA