

## The Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer and the collection

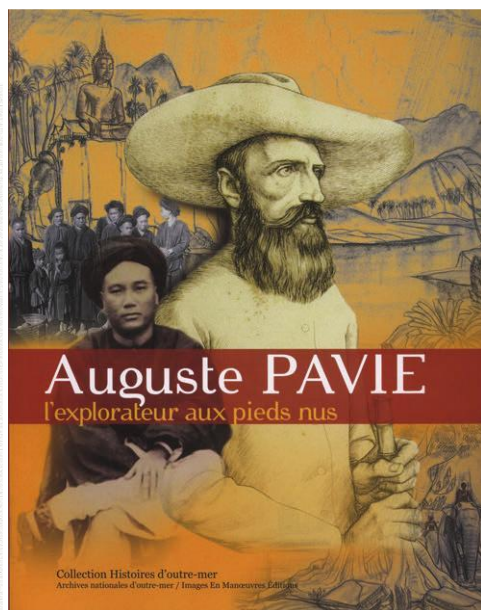
Millions of documents are kept in the heart of the Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer in Aix-en-Provence. They bear witness to French colonisation from the XVIIth Century to the middle of the XXth Century, from the Americas to the countries of Africa and the far-off lands of Asia. Official correspondence, family letters, accounts and newspapers, business papers, maps and plans, posters and photographs provide a wealth of material on which is constructed an adventurous, turbulent history, often full of suffering. The "Histoires d'Outre-Mer" collection was launched in 2007 to introduce some of these pages to the wider general public.

### Histoires d'Outre-Mer Collection: volumes that have already appeared

*Brazza, au coeur du Congo* is devoted to the explorer, Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, and to the Congo he loved so much, but to which he undoubtedly gave so much unhappiness by introducing European rivalries to the African continent.

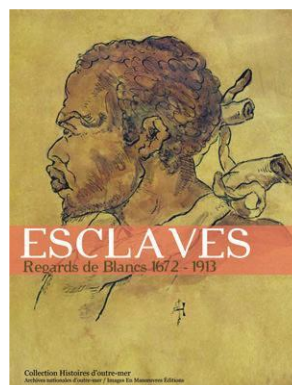
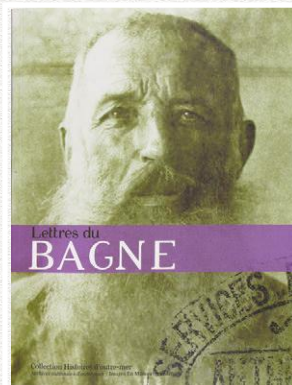
*Lettres du bagne* makes it possible to hear the voices of some of the 145,000 convicts, men and women, outlawed from society and exiled in Guyana and New Caledonia.

*Esclaves. Regards de Blancs, 1672-1913* allows the reader to penetrate the terrible, cruel history of the slave trade, slavery and the difficult paths to abolition.



#### *Auguste Pavie, l'explorateur aux pieds nus, (1847-1925):*

This "great human of Indochina" criss-crossed Cambodia and Laos meeting populations where he was much appreciated.



**Histoires d'Outre-Mer Collection**  
Coediton, Archives nationales d'outre mer Images en Manoeuvre Editions  
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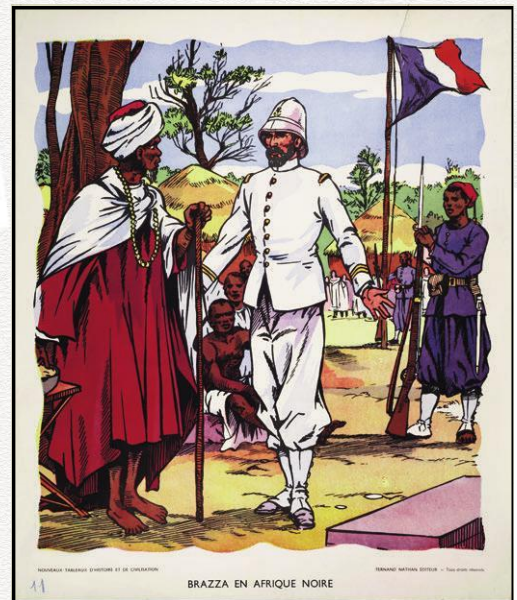
## Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza (1852-1905)

Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, born on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1852 in Rome, was the child of an aristocratic Italian family. When he was very young he was attracted to the large library in the family home, rich in maps and accounts of journeys. He dreamed of being a sailor and with the support of Admiral de Montaignac he joined the Ecole Navale (Naval College) in Brest. He left with the rank of Midshipman of foreign nationality. In 1874 he became naturalised French. He then took his Master's certificate and became a Sub-Lieutenant.

During a stay in a port of call Brazza discovered the mouth of the Ogooue River, a vision which was determinant in his desire to explore the unknown lands of the interior of Africa. Due to diverse support, Brazza was allowed to lead an exploration mission. During his first mission (1875-1879) he went up the Ogooue River with a handful of men but discovered that the river was not a route to the interior.

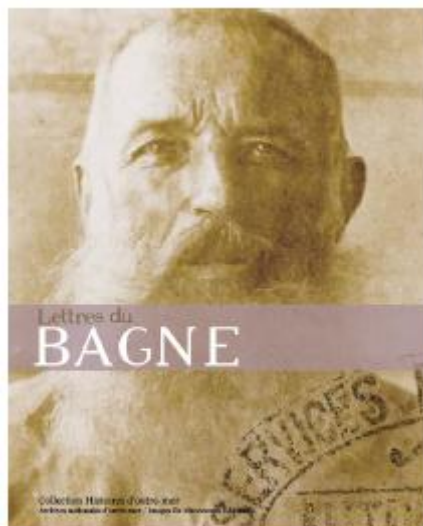
During his second voyage (1879-1882) he reached the River Congo and on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1880 he signed a treaty providing for the establishment of a Protectorate and the cession of territory with the King of the Batéké Tio, Makoko Iloo. On the return journey Brazza met his great rival, Stanley, who was working for the King of the Belgians, Leopold II.

The Makoko treaty was the first treaty with an African chief ratified by the Chambre des Députés. Credits were then voted for a new, bigger expedition, which carried the name of the West Africa mission and was to provide the bases for future French Equatorial Africa. The French possessions were recognised in 1885 by the Berlin Conference. Brazza was appointed Commissioner General of the Government. The task was then to form a new colony. This era was also one of large exploration missions to the Oubangui, Sangha, Chad and the Nile. Criticised in his role of administrator, accused of being hostile to the settlers and preventing the economic development of the Congo, Brazza was granted leave of absence in 1898. He would be recalled in 1905 at the head of a mission responsible for shedding light on the brutalities committed by some officials and the misdoings of the statutory companies in the Congo. He died on the way home on 14th September 1905 in Dakar.



Brazza, a humanitarian explorer and somewhat Utopian, contributed to France becoming committed to a new policy of expansion and to the introduction of the European policy in the Congo. Until the period when independence was being granted, Brazza was to remain a great figure in French history where he appeared as a peaceful conqueror, the Father of the slaves and the knight of civilisation.



**Lettres du Bagne**

Hélène Taillemite (texts)

From 1852 to 1953, more than 100,000 convicts served their sentences in the penal colonies of Guyana and New Caledonia. For the first time the Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer, which keeps their individual dossiers established by the colonial penitentiary administration, is publishing correspondence from these men and women banned from society and exiled thousands of miles from mainland France.

This collection entitled **Lettres du Bagne (Letters from the penal colony)** allows us to hear the voices of innumerable unknown people, who describe their new surroundings, tell of their suffering, request a reduction in their sentence or quite simply news of their families. In this way it enables us to penetrate the mythical world of the penal colony, so badly understood in its daily reality.

>> Like *Brazza, au cœur du Congo*, the first opus in the Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer collection, *Lettres du Bagne* stands out through the quality and diversity of its illustrations (letters, drawings, photographs, press cuttings, etc.). Disturbing witness accounts of a historical reality that is quite close to us since it was experienced by our parents and grandparents, *Lettres du Bagne* will find its place on the **History**, **Ethnology** and **Coffee Table Books** shelves. It will charm both the general public and specialists, due to the relevance of its texts.

Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer Collection

Coedition Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer

22 Euros

20 cm x 25 cm

168 pages

70 photographs

Soft cover

ISBN: 978-2-8499-5105-7

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>> Hélène Taillemite is the Curator of the Archives Nationales d'Outre Mer.

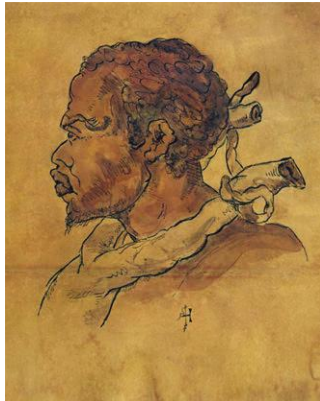
>> Already published by Images En Manœuvres Éditions in the same collection: *Brazza, au cœur du Congo*, Isabelle Dion (texts), Collection Archives d'outre-mer, 2007.

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DIFFUSION





Slave ship captains, owners and clerks, governors and quartermasters, civil and military officers, magistrates and men of the Law, great plantation owners and poor whites, owners and plantation managers, so many actors and witnesses who, depending on their economic interests or their humanitarian sentiments, told the story of slavery from the XVIIth to the XXth Century.

Their accounts and memories and their correspondence provide the historical material for this publication. They speak to us from beyond the seas, the coasts of Africa, Guyana, Louisiana, Reunion, and particularly the sugar islands of the Caribbean,

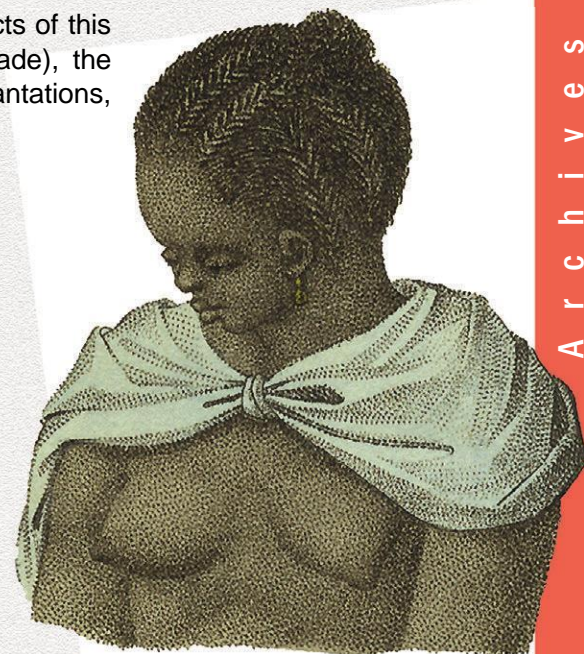
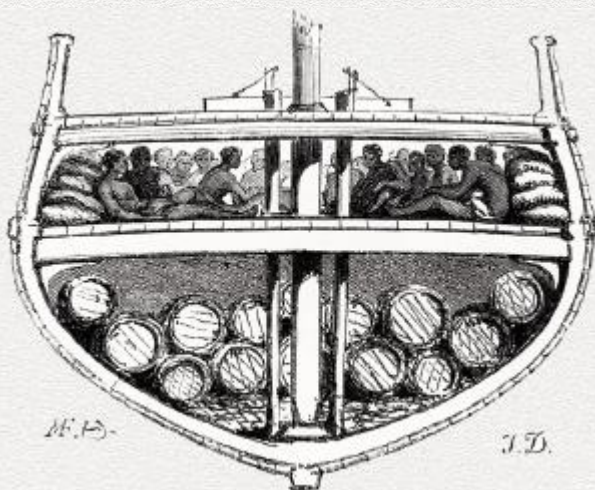
Martinique, Guadeloupe, Grenada and Saint Domingue. They tell of things seen, situations experienced.



Little by little, in their writing through cruel or compassionate words the silhouette of the slave, whether new or born Creole, is drawn. Men, women and children appear to remind us that beyond the estimates and counts they existed, lived, worked, suffered and resisted.

All these texts are linked to the trade in humans, the slave traffic which would deport millions of Africans to the French colonies and cause millions of deaths. The influx of a labour force from Africa was to allow considerable, profitable economic expansion for Europe in the Century of Light but also create a cohort of crimes and bloody revolts caused by misery and despair. All these legitimate rebellions were repressed by summary justice and extreme brutality. They stirred up colour prejudice and racism. However they also gave birth to independence for the French part of the island of Saint Domingue (which then became Haiti) and the march towards abolition.

Written documents presented here come from all the Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer. They illustrate the most important aspects of this terrible history, the slave trade (the sadly famous triangular trade), the setting up of the slave economy, the life of the slaves on the plantations, the difficult paths to abolition and the persistence of slavery.





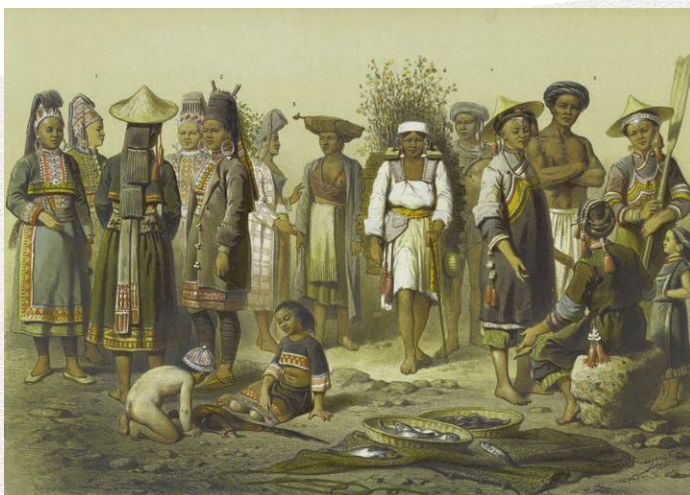
## Auguste Pavie, l'explorateur aux pieds nus, (1847-1925)



Auguste Jean Marie Pavie was born in Dinan on 31 May 1847 to modest family from the Dordogne which had settled in Brittany. Pavie joined the Army in 1864 but rapidly abandoned his military career to enter the Indochina Telegraph Service as a trainee auxiliary agent. His first post at Kampot in Cambodia enabled him to develop his qualities as an explorer and to show his aptitude of becoming accepted into the local civilisation. He was noticed by Le Myre de Vilers, the first civil governor of Indochina.

Pavie learnt Cambodian, and was entrusted with small exploration missions which he accomplished superbly drawing up accurate itineraries. During these years Pavie established a discipline. He walked for 20 to 25 km per day for 10 to 12 hours, never complained and was close to dying several times. Very early on he adopted the huge felt hat which sheltered him from sun and rain, a walking stick, and a short jacket in white canvas, and the Khmer sampot, wide short trousers that stopped at the knees, leaving the legs and feet bare, and a long beard.

In November 1885, Pavie was appointed Vice-Consul in Luang Prabang, which at that time was a dependency of Siam (Thailand). Siam, trapped between the British expansion and that of France, was attempting to extend its sovereignty. Pavie did not hesitate to endanger his life to save the King of Luang Prabang, who was threatened by the Black Flags who had invaded the town. From 1888 he became the head of a true scientific, geographic and political mission. This would then be spoken of as the "Pavie mission". Pavie and his companions were to report more than 35,000 km of accurate itineraries covering a surface area of 675,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Faced with the Siamese, Pavie showed his ability to negotiate with patience but obstinacy, even though in 1893 the war between Siam and France was narrowly avoided. Pavie's dream was to make Laos an independent province, part of Indochina. The treaty of 3 October 1893 fulfilled part of his dream by allocating the territories on the left bank of the Mekong to France. Pavie left Indochina for good in 1895. He was to devote the last thirty years of his life writing the ten volumes of *La Mission Pavie*.



Pavie was a man of the IIIrd French Republic. A free thinker and Freemason, he was the embodiment of Republican ideals. He was a traveller not a conqueror. The Pavie "method" was above all a policy of remarkable penetration for the period, by becoming part of the country and its peoples, and refusing to employ the force he saw used in Cambodia with the military pacification columns. He also reacted against the spirit of assimilation, suggested re-establishing the traditional organisation and relied on the natural chiefs. "Barefoot explorer" and "great human of Indochina", Pavie never lost his modesty. A contemporary of Brazza, crowned by a prestigious legend, Pavie preferred to be anonymous. Even though he disagreed with the way in which Laos was administered after his departure, he never said so. He was quickly forgotten and even today his work is not well known. However few explorers can write as he did, "I have known the joy of being loved by the people I have met along the way."