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[Florida Indians / Hermaphrodites] Hermaphroditorum officia. XVII.

Stock#: 97966
Map Maker: De Bry
Date: 1591
Place: Frankfurt
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 6.5 x 10.5 inches Including Text
Price: On Hold



Description:

Florida Hermaphrodites

The text describes hermaphrodites who are shunned by the natives, but used to carry supplies and victims of warfare, wounded, sick, or dead, either on their backs or on litters made of reed mats. The litters are carried with poles and leather straps which are placed around the head.

The text translates as follows:

FREQVENTES speaks of Hermaphrodites, individuals who possess characteristics of both



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genders. These beings were not only recognized by the Indians but also held in certain regard. However, it is their physical strength and resilience that have rendered them useful for labor-intensive tasks, especially those akin to beasts of burden. When monarchs ventured out to wars, it was the hermaphrodites who were entrusted with the responsibility of transporting provisions. Furthermore, upon the demise of any Indian due to injuries or illnesses, these hermaphrodites employed two robust staffs laid crosswise, atop which a stretcher constructed from slender reeds would be fastened. The deceased would then be positioned on this structure, cushioned with a hide under the head, another bound above the abdomen, the third one above the thigh, and the last one above the calf. The exact rationale behind such a method remains elusive to me, yet I surmise it is possibly for the sake of magnificence. It's noteworthy that not every deceased is adorned thus; at times, only the calf is bound. Following this, they would employ leather belts, spanning three or four fingers in width. The ends of these belts are attached to the aforementioned staffs, and the central part is pressed against their remarkably firm foreheads. Thus equipped, they convey the departed to their final resting place. It is also notable that those who fall prey to contagious ailments are transported on the shoulders of these hermaphrodites to designated locations. Here, they are nursed back to health and provided all essentials until they fully recover.

The engraving was published by Theodor de Bry in his *Grand Voyages* (1591), based upon watercolor illustrations made by Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, are the earliest known European depictions of Native Americans in what is now known as the United States. Le Moyne, a member of the short-lived French colony known as Fort Caroline founded by Huguenot explorer Rene Goulaine de Laudonniere (ca. 1529-1574), based the watercolors on his experiences in Florida in the 1560s.

De Bry later published Le Moyne's work, along with other illustrations of the New World, as part of an effort to encourage European colonization in the Americas. Jacques le Moyne de Morgues, an illustrator and explorer, sailed with René de Laudonnière on the 1564 Huguenot expedition to Florida. Laudonnière set up Fort Caroline on the St. John's River in 1564, but the settlement was destroyed by the Spanish army under Pedro Menendez de Aviles.

Detailed Condition: