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A 16th CENTURY FRENCH "MUG BOOK" BRINGS TO LIGHT INTERESTING COMMENTS ON FLORIDA HISTORY - SATURIBA BEING FEATURED

Translated and annotated by CHARLES E. BENNETT

In 1584 Andre Thevet published in Paris a 16th century counterpart of the type of thing we call today a "mug book," a book containing portraits and biographies of leading citizens of the time and place involved. He titled his book "Les Vrais Portraits et Vies des Hommes" and it was printed by Keruert. It deals with the important French leaders of the 16th century - 150 of them. One of them was Charles IX, for whom Fort Caroline was named. The last article in the book is about Saturiba, the well known Indian chief who befriended the Fort Caroline settlement in 1564-65.

When the Library of Congress informed me that this work had never been translated into English, I decided to undertake the translation myself, with the help of an old French dictionary that once belonged to my grandfather and which Dad and I had used in successive generations of studying French at college. I have used it in other Fort Caroline translations; and, too, the Library of Congress advised me that they did not have a better one for the old fashioned French of this text.

There is one notable historical inaccuracy in the writing; that is, stating that the Florida discovery was in 1512. In 1512 Juan Ponce de Leon secured a royal grant, with the title of adelantado, to conquer the island of Bimini to the north of Cuba, on the assumption that thereon lay the Fountain of Youth; but he did not set sail from Puerto Rico until March 3, 1513, and did not land on the Florida mainland until April 2, 1513. So, Florida was not discovered by him until 1513, although his charter or legal right to make the discovery was in 1512. *

In the museum at Fort Caroline National Memorial is an original sketch of Saturiba, which has been attributed by some authorities to the artist Jacques Le Moyne, a colonist in the Fort Caroline settlement. Also in the museum is a 16th century map

* *Dictionary of American History*, 5 Vols. (New York: Scribners, 1940), IV, 305.

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reproduced from Le Moyne's original draft; this map shows the location of Saturiba's forces and other sites mentioned in the French text. Some of the most interesting Indian artifacts in the museum, including a Timuquan man effigy, were found on an island in Lake Kerr, clearly shown in the Le Moyne map as the location of Utina, another Indian chief mentioned in this article about Saturiba. These artifacts at the museum may well be objects used in the burial of Chief Utina.

CHIEF SATOURIONA, KING OF FLORIDA *

*Name and Discovery of Florida,
and Where It Is Situated*

Florida is fully acclaimed by the historians who have described its unusual qualities, holding the view that the flowers which she wears in her brow, always fresh and blooming, acquired for this country the name of Florida. It was discovered in the year 1512 by a Spaniard named Ponce de Leon who, seeking a fountain of youth, discovered the mainland of Florida, which is a point of land, similar to Italy, projecting into the sea more than 100 leagues; and the tip of it is 25 degrees of latitude from the Arctic pole.

The River May

This land teems with islands and rivers, among which the River May is the most renowned, not only because it was discovered by Captain Jean Ribault on the first day of May, which was why it kept the name of May, but also because of its unusual characteristics of which it has many. The impious and cruel acts which the Spaniards visited upon this *Norman* captain were so numerous that an account thereof could neither lessen nor remedy that bloody score; although Captain Gourgues afterwards well revenged this massacre, retaking from the Spanish Fort Caroline, which had been built and named by him for his King Charles IX.

* Andre Thevet, *Les Vrais Pourtraits et vies des Hommes* (Paris: 1584), Chapter 150, pages 663 ff.

Saturiona Welcomes the French

Rather than dwell further on this River May, I should introduce here Chief Saturiona who is called by others Satiroa, a man of great courage who had to cope with many and powerful adversaries and who was highly commended because of his open hospitality extended to Captain Gourgues and his company.

He felt such affection for anything French that, having discovered the fleet of Gourgues suddenly among them, he called out from a distance "Antipola, Antipola." With all the kindnesses he could show he made them the best welcome possible together with two of his children, as handsome and strong individuals as one could find anywhere. The older child was named Atore, a perfect man in handsomeness, prudence and honest countenance, one of the most gentle, humane and affable Princes who were in all this country.

Some Kings of Florida

After they had gone away together to exchange gifts and friendly pleasantries, this King disclosed to the French captain what enemies he had, namely Thimagoa and Olata Ouae Outina, two very powerful Kings, to whom several others were pledged for assistance: Even Olata had vassals under him called Cadecha, Chilaly, Esclauou, Eucappe, Calany, Onachaquara, Onittaqua, Moquoso, and Aquera, besides Molona and more than forty others who were their allies and friends.

For his part it was not much trouble depending on this show of such a formidable force, not only for what he could do with them, but also for the help of thirty other chiefs which were under his command and of whom he was as sure as of his own people, due to the duty of alliance, confirming their loyalty, and also due to the hatred that the majority of them held against Olata Ouae Outina; and among others, Onatehaqua and Houstagna, powerful and wealthy lords, and principally Onatehaqua, who ruled over lands fertile and abounding in several crops. Above all others he made sure of de Potanou, a man cruel in war who had one thing particularly over the great Olata, namely the bargages of the hard stones with which he armed his arrows; and

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he could not overcome his lands and dominions. As to his ten brothers, injury to Satouriona did not faze them, both because of this subjugation which bound them to stand behind any wrong done to their master and because of their family connection holding them together so closely that the plight of one became that of all the others. All his forces, as strong and as frightening as they were when unified, could not assure Satouriona of the victory that he wished to gain over his enemies, who were well united to put him down.

Lightning Strikes Out of the Blue
Attributed to Burst of Naval Gunfire

Nevertheless, having observed this French fleet he considered opposing the power of Olata more for the natural prowess of a nation experienced in battle than because of the arquebuses they carried. These were so impressive for the poor barbarians that the Chief Allycamany, having seen the marvelous havoc that lightning had made coming from the skies on August 29, he sent to Captain Gourgues six Indians who after they had presented some baskets of honey, pumpkins and grapes made known the desire which their Lord Allycamany [had] to establish friendship and alliance with him; though finding it strange in view of the obedience that bound him to the French, that they had set off against their abode the gunfire which had burned a great quantity of green prairies even up to the water line, approaching so close to his shelter that he thought he could see the fire in his own home. However this may be, the pagans were not more terrified of the lightning of Jupiter, than were these poor Floridians of the terrible explosion of the guns which belched forth fire; and I cannot believe that Satouriona cherished and prized the assistance of the French on account of these pieces of ordnance in view of the hate that he later fancied against them, not only because of these thundering pieces but also for the refusal made by Captain Gourgues to escort them against Thimogoa, as he had promised him.

Captain Gourgues Refuses Aid to King Satouriona

But he did not consider that Captain Vasseur, Lord d'Ottigny and a few other Frenchmen were so greedy for the treasures which were in those parts, from which they had brought beautiful presents, and assurances of great wealth if they would be employed to aid a minor chief subject to the great Olata. This tied the hands of the French to such an extent that after holding out a long time their hand was forced in the end by Satouriona's discovery that they did not feel inclined to aid him. For this he was indignant. Finally he decided to go with the ten other chiefs against Thimogoa.

*Ceremonies Held by Satouriona
Before Going to War Against Thimogoa*

Before doing anything he had water brought to him. This done, he set out to discuss many things and looked to the heavens, showing nothing in himself but a furious temper. Having done this for the space of a half hour he poured with his hands on the heads of the ten chieftains some of the water which he was holding in a vessel and threw the rest as in fury and spite on the fire, which had been quickly built there. After several other ceremonies he embarked and proceeded with such good speed with his fleet that the next day two hours before the sun set he arrived at the territory of Thimogoa, where he made a terrible massacre. His men carried away the heads of the enemies and cut off all the hair of their heads with a part of the scalp.

Satouriona Wins Victory Over Thimogoa

They took twenty-four prisoners of which Satouriona took thirteen for his body guard. No sooner had Captain Gourgues heard of this than he sent a soldier requesting the sending of two of the prisoners to himself.

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Captain Gourgues' Defiance of Satouriona

Satouriona refused this very arrogantly, which was the reason why he entered into the house of Satouriona with twenty soldiers without proper announcement, where he refused for a half hour to speak, then ordered the prisoners brought forward. After several delays Atore, son of Satouriona, went out to get them and brought them to Captain Gourgues who took them away in an off-handed way. Satouriona, very disturbed by this, sought means to avenge himself concealing his ill feeling; but he sent messengers to the French with two full baskets of very large pumpkins. Among the Indians the French leader made it understood that he wished for means of accord between the people of Thimogoa and Chief Satouriona, which might turn out to be a great advantage to him, considering that by being allied with the kings of those areas it would make possible a passage to oppose Onathagua, his ancient enemy, whom he could not otherwise combat. In addition, the great Olate was so powerful that Satouriona could not break up his forces and undermine him, if he wished to be obstinate, but with the state of accord between the two they could easily ruin all of their enemies and push their boundaries to distant Southern Rivers. To carry out his promise he dispatched Captain Vasseur, Lord d'Arlac and seven other soldiers to Olate Ouae Outina, to whom they returned their prisoners. This made him very happy, and also that they were to give a hand to Chief Ponano with a sailboat, which had loaded up at reville in such quick fashion with two hundred of his men and our French riflemen in the lead that the victory was his.