



Painter in a Savage Land: The Strange Saga of the First European Artist in North America

Miles Harvey

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In this vibrantly told, meticulously researched book, Miles Harvey reveals one of the most fascinating and overlooked lives in American history. Like *The Island of Lost Maps*, his bestselling book about a legendary map thief, *Painter in a Savage Land* is a compelling search into the mysteries of the past. This is the thrilling story of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, the first European artist to journey to what is now the continental United States with the express purpose of recording its wonders in pencil and paint. Le Moyne's images, which survive today in a series of spectacular engravings, provide a rare glimpse of Native American life at the pivotal time of first contact with the Europeans—most of whom arrived with the preconceived notion that the New World was an almost mythical place in which anything was possible.

In 1564 Le Moyne and three hundred other French Protestants landed off the coast of Florida, hoping to establish the first permanent European settlement in the sprawling territory that would become the United States. Their quest ended in gruesome violence, but Le Moyne was one of the few colonists to escape, returning across the Atlantic to create dozens of illustrations of the local Native Americans—works of lasting importance to scholars. Today, he is also recognized as an influential early painter of flowers and plants. A Zelig-like persona, Le Moyne worked for some of the most prominent figures of his time, including Sir Walter Raleigh. Harvey's research, moreover, suggests a fascinating link to the notorious Mary Queen of Scots. Largely forgotten until the twentieth century, Le Moyne's pieces have become increasingly sought after in the art world—at a 2005 auction, a previously unknown book of his botanical drawings sold for a million dollars.

In re-creating the life and legacy of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, Miles Harvey weaves a tale of both intellectual intrigue and swashbuckling drama. Replete with shipwrecks, mutinies, religious wars, pirate raids, and Indian attacks, *Painter in a Savage Land* is truly a tour de force of narrative nonfiction.

Praise for *Painter in a Savage Land*

"Inspired, beautiful, and wholly original. Miles Harvey is an archeologist of forgotten stories, a master of finding astounding characters folded into the crevices of withered documents. In *Painter in a Savage Land*, he has breathed life into a thrilling and unlikely tale that, in the end, connects us all." --Robert Kurson, author of *Shadow Divers* and *Crashing Through*

"Like some lovable sleuth of the esoteric--a sort of scholarly Columbo--Miles Harvey has a way of stumbling onto intriguing historical tales entirely missed by others. With equal parts rigor and wonder, he has transported us to a surprising dawn-world when a bewildered Europe was making its first contacts with a bizarre and vulnerable continent." --Hampton Sides, author of *Blood and Thunder* and *Ghost Soldiers*

"A fantastic brew of art, exploration and exploitation. Miles Harvey's story bristles with surprises on every page." --Laurence Bergreen, author of *Marco Polo: From Venice to Xanadu* and *Over the Edge of the World: Magellan's Terrifying Circumnavigation of the Globe*

"Miles Harvey has outdone himself with this absorbing account of the life and work of a mysterious French artist who was the first European to record visual impressions of North America. Harvey's investigation into the curious life, swashbuckling adventures and enduring legacy of Jacques Le

Moyne de Morgues is appealing on a number of compelling levels, adeptly done with style, elegance and a sure sense of story." --Nicholas A. Basbanes, author of *A Gentle Madness, Among the Gently Mad* and *A Splendor of Letters*

"Insatiable curiosity and fierce pursuit of fact combine to create a graceful exploration of worlds old and new." --*Kirkus Reviews*

"A fascinating exploration of the obscure life and violent times of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues. ... Harvey's volume hits the sweet spot for both adventure buffs and history fans." --*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

"One astonishing discovery after another ... Harvey's groundbreaking, fun-to-read biography blows dust off significant swathes of history and makes for a rousing read." --*Booklist* (starred review)

"[A] rip-roaring account of Le Moyne's adventures. ... It's a testament to Harvey's research and style that he can powerfully evoke a man about whom so few documentary traces remain." --*Entertainment Weekly*

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