

Basic Detail Report



The Chief, at Sta. Christina and A Principal Woman of Sta. Christina

Date

1784-1786

Primary Maker

Artist Unknown

Medium

engraving

Description

In all three of his voyages, Cook spent much of his time exploring the islands of Polynesia. Throughout the region, he encountered highly stratified societies ruled by hereditary chiefs to whom genealogy was of extreme importance. Native art forms, including costume and body ornamentation, announced and negotiated the social order in Polynesia, mediating between the elite status and power of royals and their subjects. The chief at Santa Christina (Tahuata, Marquesas Islands) is shown with facial tattoos, wearing a feather headdress, an elaborate necklace, and mother-of-pearl ornaments on either side of his face. The naturalist, J.R. Forster (German, 1729-1798), described the chief he encountered during the second voyage: "When dress'd they wear on the fore head as an ornament a curious fillet of shell work decorated with feathers etc, round the neck a kind of Ruff made of wood decorated with small red pease which are stuck on with gum and bunches of human hair fastened to a string and tyed round the legs and arms; in this manner was the chief who came to visit us dress'd." Hogg's version lacks the details of the original engraving by John Hall (English, 1739-1797) after a sketch by Hodges. The ornamentation on the headdress has been simplified, as have the chief's facial tattoos, although Hodges did not depict the facial tattooing he observed as comprehensively as Parkinson had during the first voyage. Hodges also sketched a woman from Santa Christina, which was subsequently engraved by Hall, but Hogg has chosen instead to endow his principal woman of Santa Christina with facial features very similar to those of his chief. The two are presented as mirror images, set apart only by their costumes and ornamentation.

Dimensions

Sheet: 9 3/4 x 13 7/8 in. (24.8 x 35.2 cm)