Humans, like plants and animals, were considered part of the natural world. While the boundaries between the various groupings of nature were clearly defined in early modern Europe, the different categories converged in the context of nutrition. Eating and drinking are of supreme importance in the daily life of any society, and the connected human habits were prime criteria for judging other cultures. These were therefore regularly described and depicted by European travellers abroad. Other elements which invariably drew their attention when examining the overseas population were clothing—and nakedness, posture, and more generally the ways in which the indigenous people nurtured their bodies. The De Brys followed the interests of the chroniclers, yet not without adding their own flavour.

6.1. Eating and drinking in the overseas world

When Richard Hakluyt presented Theodore de Bry with John White’s watercolours in the late 1580s, his hopes were that the Frankfurt publisher would achieve two goals. Firstly, Theodore and his sons were supposed to inform Europeans of the Tudor claims to Virginia. Secondly, *India Occidentalis* I was meant to convince English readers of the attractiveness of the New World for settling. Several of the selected engravings sung the praise of the fertility of the American province.¹ The second volume of the series displayed a similar tendency, albeit to a lesser extent, portraying life in Florida as an appealing alternative to life in the Old World. The illustrations devoted to promising harvests in particular must have struck a chord in the early 1590s. Not only were harvest failures and famines uncomfortably regular, the later sixteenth century also saw a renewed emphasis on the representations

¹ *Ind.Occ.* I, ills. xiii–xvi, xx.
of traditional seasonal tasks, including farming work, which was conceptualised as a classical value, and a useful step towards Christian salvation.2

The Algonquians in Virginia and the Timucuans around Fort Caroline combined the merits of agricultural labour with the virtue of frugality. Throughout the first two volumes of the De Bry collection, the captions to the relevant engravings were truly admiring of the eating customs of the native inhabitants the English and the French encountered. This combination of topics must have been closely related to consecutive crop failures in Europe in the early 1590s, as a result of adverse climatic conditions.3 A single De Bry paraphrase that could be seen in this light, not traceable to the French reports on Florida, fervently endorsed the moderation of the New World natives:

…Christians [...] therefore, in fairness, deserve to be trained by these barbarous foreign people, yes even by the ignorant animals, to learn temperance from them.4

*America* I and II both mocked Old World decadence in a way that left little room for misunderstanding; such attitudes have traditionally been associated with the Protestant beliefs of either Richard Hakluyt or Theodore de Bry. While Hakluyt’s programmatic objectives may have influenced the first, and possibly some of the contents of the second volume, the interpretation should probably largely be ascribed to Theodore de Bry himself. He emphasised the province’s unspoilt nature through captions written in Frankfurt, where any pressure exerted by Hakluyt was minimal.5

Yet the emphasis on moderation as a virtue was by no means exclusively reserved for Calvinists in the late sixteenth century. Humanists like Montaigne had stressed self-discipline as an ethical notion to be shared by Christians of all confessions, in line with medieval condemnations

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4 *Ind.Occ.* II, ill. xxviii (Ger): “Die Christen [...] solten derhalben billich, unter diesen Barbarischen auffländischen Leuthen, zur Schule gehen, und von inen, ja von den unvermündigen Thieren, Masugkeyt lehren” / (Lat): “Christianis [...] merito deberent tradiri in disciplinam his barbaris hominibus & animantibus bruitis ad ediscendam sobrietatem”.

5 Miller (1998) 126–44, although she rightly stresses that the De Bry modifications are more complex.