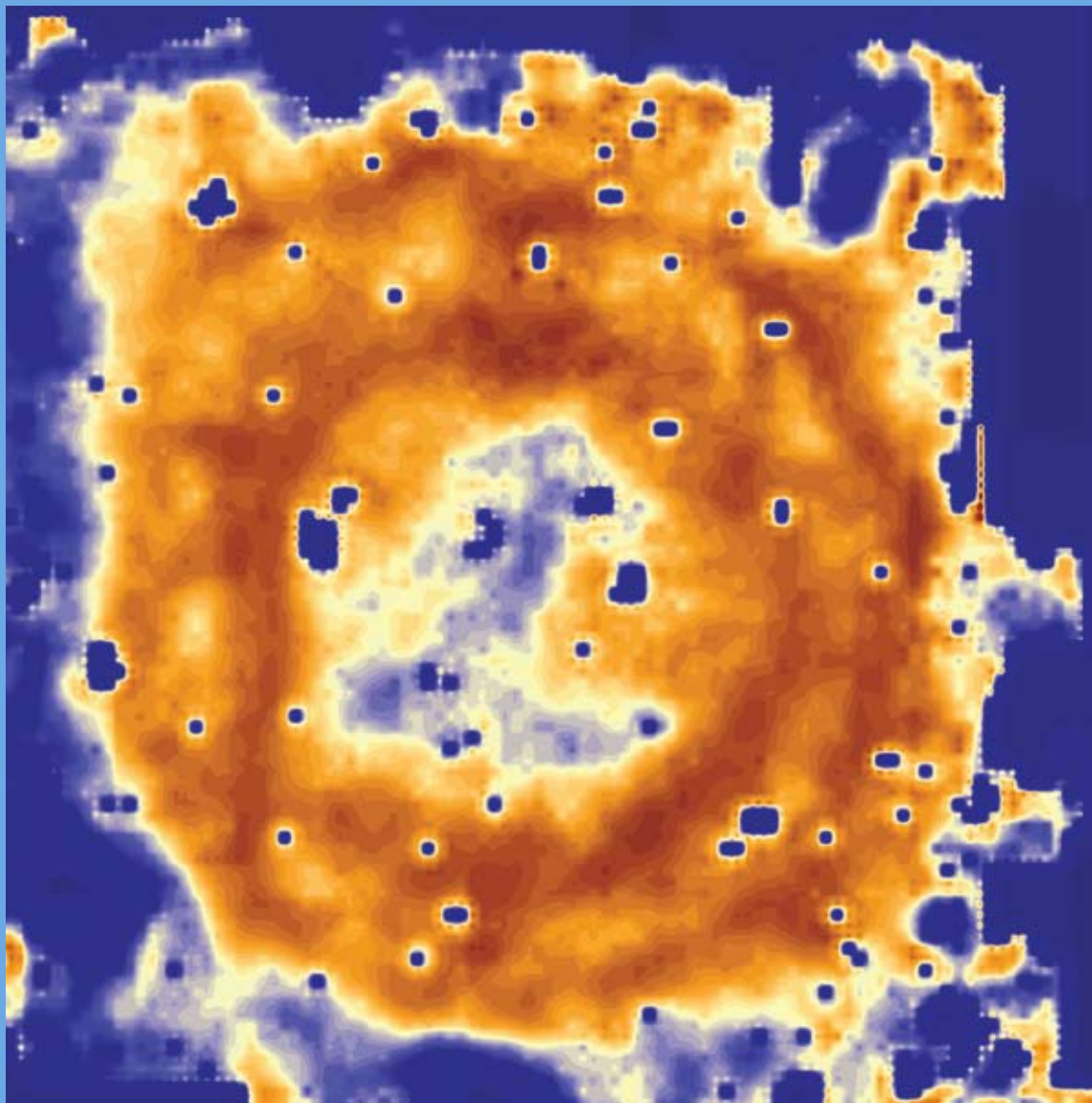


# Trend, Tradition, and Turmoil

What Happened to the Southeastern Archaic?



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*ON THE COVER:* False-color map of the McQueen Shell Ring, one of the two major Late Archaic sites on St. Catherines Island, shows the filtered results of the soil resistivity survey. The subsurface structure of the shell ring is clearly evident in this geophysical survey and archaeological excavations are presently underway to “ground truth” these projections (see chap. 3, this volume).



cover design by Jennifer Steffey

**“There are only a handful of long-term projects that have contributed disproportionately to our understanding of prehistoric and early historic North America, and the St. Catherines Island work ranks right at the top.”**

**George Milner, Professor of Archaeological Anthropology, Pennsylvania State University**

The Late Archaic of the American Southeast is typically described as a time of population growth, innovative developments in subsistence strategies, and increased social complexity. Although it is difficult to generalize, many Early Woodland communities are characterized as relatively small scale, fairly mobile foragers organized into unranked or minimally ranked lineages and clans. Early Woodland groups also seem to be more socially isolated than their Late Archaic predecessors, with a decline in regional exchange networks.

The papers in this volume were presented at a conference entitled “What Happened in the Late Archaic?” co-sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History and the St. Catherines Island Foundation and held on St. Catherines Island, Georgia, May 9–11, 2008. The Third Caldwell Conference invited participants to engage the appropriate archaeological data from the American Southeast, and specifically to address the nature of change during the Late Archaic–Early Woodland transition. This volume consists of a dozen substantive papers, followed by three discussant contributions.

The following researchers contributed to this volume: David Anderson (Professor, University of Tennessee, Knoxville), Chester DePratter (Archaeologist, South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, Columbia), John Gibson (Professor [retired], University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette), Tristram R. Kidder (Professor, Washington University, St. Louis), William H. Marquardt (Curator, Florida Museum of Natural History), Rochelle Marrinan (Professor, Florida State University, Tallahassee), Mike Russo

(Archaeologist, National Park Service, Tallahassee), Matthew C. Sanger (Nels Nelson Laboratory of North American Archaeology, American Museum of Natural History and Columbia University), Kenneth E. Sassaman (Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Florida, Gainesville), Joe Saunders (Professor, Department of Geosciences, University of Louisiana at Monroe), Rebecca Saunders (Curator, Museum of Natural Science, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge), Margo Schwadron (Archaeologist, National Park Service, Tallahassee), David Hurst Thomas (Curator of North American Archaeology, American Museum of Natural History), Victor D. Thompson (Professor, Department of Anthropology, Ohio State University, Columbus).

The title of this volume is a tribute to Joseph Caldwell, for whom this conference series has been named. Broad-scale “trend and tradition” studies are still necessary, but they must be increasingly augmented by fine-grained documentation of specific events in specific places. The papers in this volume embody a wide range of multiscale approaches.

DAVID HURST THOMAS is a Curator in the Division of Anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History. He has conducted archaeological research on St. Catherines Island since 1974.

MATTHEW C. SANGER is a PhD candidate at Columbia University and a long-term researcher at the American Museum of Natural History. His research is focused on the Late Archaic of the coastal Southeast.