

"...an absolutely magnificent study, one that I am certain will profoundly influence the way in which archaeology is done in the southeastern United States for years to come."

David G. Anderson, Department of Anthropology, University of Tennessee

St. Catherines Island lies ten miles off the Georgia coast and for five thousand years, aboriginal people called this place their home. Mission Santa Catalina de Guale, founded in the late 16th century, was the northernmost Spanish settlement along the Atlantic seaboard for a century. Through the foresight of the Edward John Noble and St. Catherines Island foundations, St. Catherines Island is today preserved as a center for science, education, and conservation.

Native American Landscapes of St. Catherines Island describes the long-term archaeological program conducted by the American Museum of Natural History. Four deceptively simple questions have guided this research:

1. How and why did the human landscape (settlement patterns and land use) change through time?
2. To what extent were subsistence and settlement patterns shaped by human population increase, intensification, and competition for resources?
3. What factors can account for the emergence of social inequality in Georgia's Sea Islands?
4. Can systematically collected archaeological evidence resolve the conflicting ethnohistoric interpretations of the aboriginal Georgia coast (the so-called "Guale problem")?

The three parts of this monograph, written by more than two dozen collaborators, summarize three decades of archaeological research on St. Catherines Island.

PART I provides a contextual and theoretical perspective, describes the current thinking about the nature of Guale Indian society, and reconstructs the changing coastal environments in which these aboriginal people lived. Part I discussed the research models employed, addresses the assumptions of each approach, and summarizes the on-going optimal foraging experiments conducted on St. Catherines Island. This first volume proposes a series of specific testable hypotheses regarding the subsistence and settlement

practices of these aboriginal foragers and farmers and frames an operational archaeological research design to test these hypotheses.

PART II presents the empirical archaeological data from St. Catherines Island, including a database of 254 radiocarbon dates, a newly-defined reservoir correction for calibrating these ^{14}C determinations, information from 122 archaeological sites, detailed analysis of the vertebrate bones recovered from these sites, and seasonality estimates grounded in incremental growth sequencing of *Mercenaria mercenaria*. We also evaluate the mortuary and bioarchaeological evidence and summarize excavations at the Meeting House Field and Fallen Tree sites.

PART III synthesizes the diverse lines of evidence, combining the geomorphological and archaeological findings to reconstruct, in some detail, the changing configuration of St. Catherines Island over the past five millennia. Part III also evaluates the various hypotheses derived from central place foraging theory, patch choice modeling, and diet-breadth considerations. We synthesize and critically evaluate the changing aboriginal landscape of St. Catherines Island by dissecting the now-available evidence on chronology, settlement pattern, subsistence, seasonality, bioarchaeology, and ritual activity from the Late Archaic through Spanish mission periods. We likewise evaluate long-term trends in demography, occupational periodicity, resource intensification, and the emergence of social inequality along the aboriginal Georgia coast. The last chapter returns to the "Guale problem," examining whether the new data available on economic intensification, residential mobility, and paleoclimatic fluctuations clarify our understanding of aboriginal people at the dawn of European contact on the Georgia coastline.

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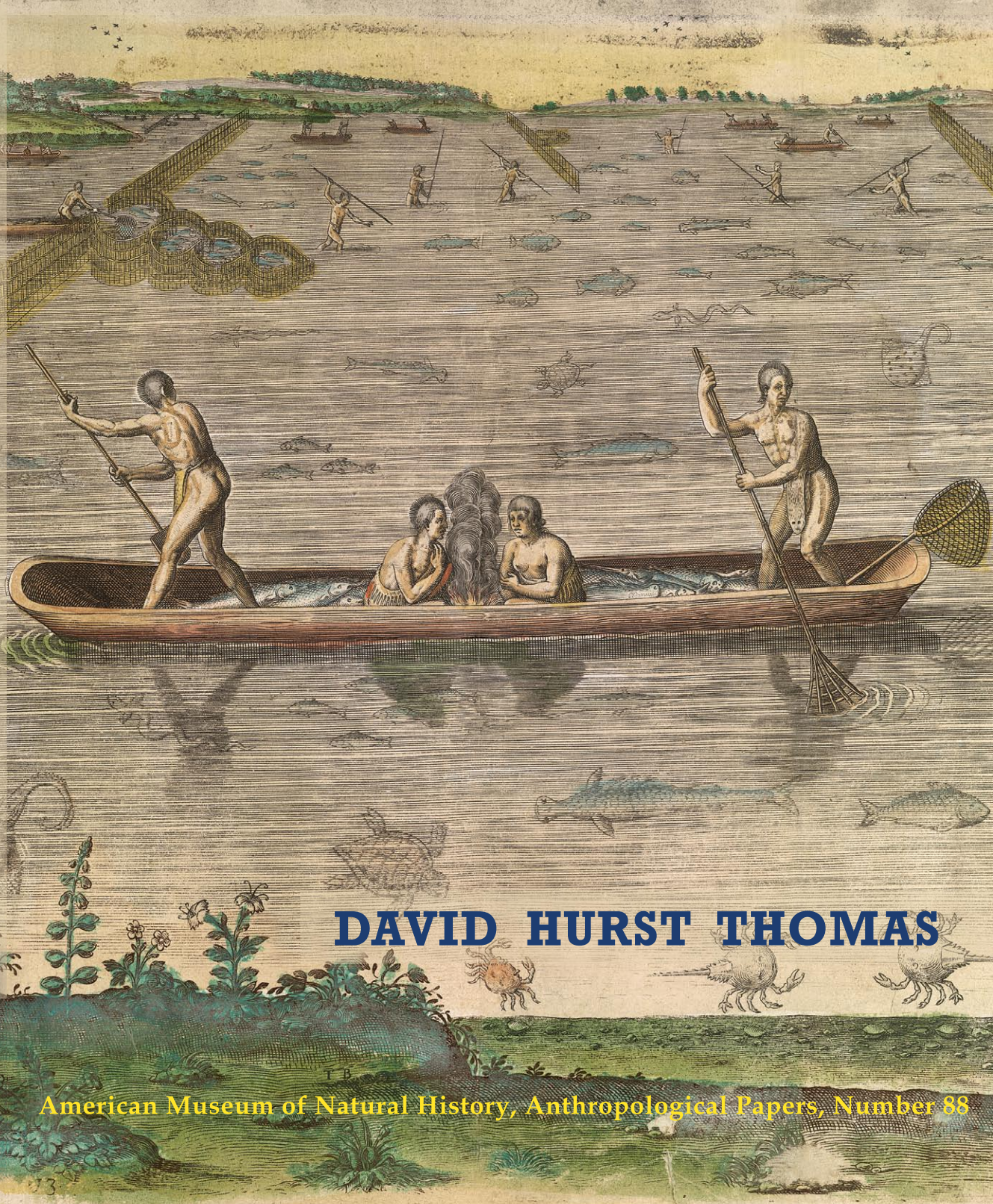
PART III

THOMAS

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