

"This represents a monumental work in the field, and will undoubtedly become a benchmark for long-term and interdisciplinary studies of this nature."

John E. Worth, Department of Anthropology, University of West Florida

St. Catherines Island lies ten miles off the Georgia coast, blanketed with dense forests, briar patches, and impenetrable palmetto thicket. For five thousand years aboriginal people have made St. Catherines Island 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 for the inquiry, 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 describes the specific models employed in

the research, addresses the assumptions of each approach, and summarizes the on-going optimal foraging experiments conducted across the diverse habitats of St. Catherines Island. This first volume concludes with a series of specific testable hypotheses regarding the subsistence and settlement practices of these aboriginal foragers and farmers, framing an operational archaeological research design to test these hypotheses.

PART II presents the empirical archaeological data now available 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 *Mercuraria mercenaria*. We also evaluate the extensive mortuary and bioarchaeological evidence from St. Catherines Island and summarize our 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, then concludes with a reconsideration of the "Guale problem" in light of the new data available on economic intensification, residential mobility, and paleoclimatic fluctuations.

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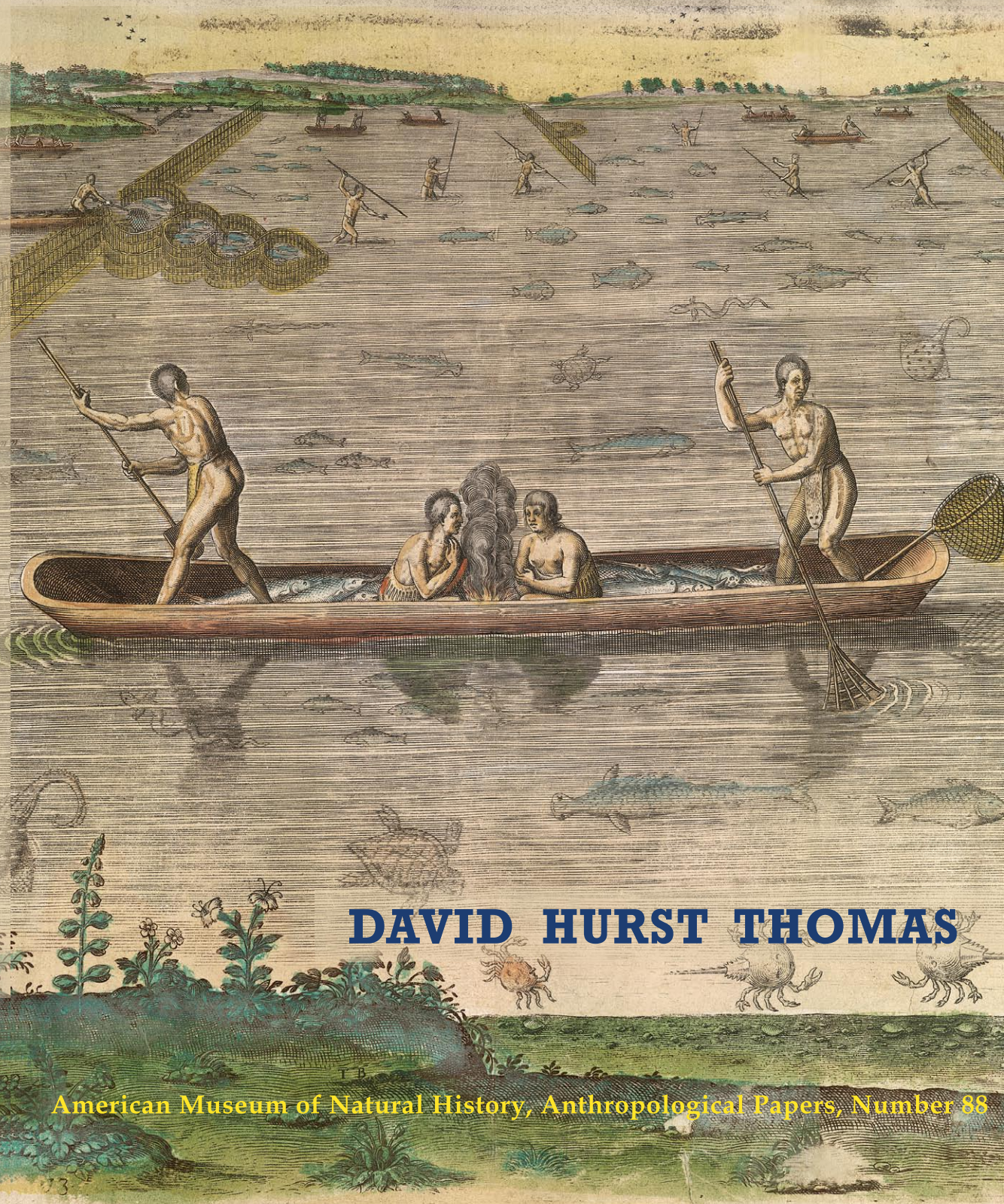
PART I

THOMAS

NATIVE AMERICAN LANDSCAPES
OF ST. CATHERINES ISLAND, GEORGIA

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NATIVE AMERICAN LANDSCAPES OF ST. CATHERINES ISLAND, GEORGIA I. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



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