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Archaeology Professor Publishes Archaeology Cross-Cultural Interaction Model Book

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MESA, Arizona – June 7, 2018 – Mesa Community College professor Kirk Costion, Ph.D., is co-editor of a new archaeology book titled Modeling Cross-Cultural Interaction in Ancient Borderlands. The book, published in April, helps researchers graphically demonstrate complex webs of connections among people, landscapes and artifacts. Using the Cross-Cultural Interaction Model (CCIM), archaeologists can visually display and study the exchanges that take place between different cultures in borderland areas or across long distances.



The idea for creating a common visual model that could be used by other researchers originated when Costion and co-editor Ulrike Matthies Green, an Orange Coast College anthropology instructor, first collaborated to present their research on complex culture interactions in Moqegua, Peru, at the 2009 Society for American Archaeology (SAA) annual meeting.

“We kept trying to describe things verbally, but wished we had a way to graphically demonstrate the interactions so we could put it up on a screen,” Costion said. “There was a lot of trial and error, with at least four versions rejected. We finally found the one that was the most successful.”

The model uses circles and arrows and has specific rules to graphically demonstrate interactions.

“We intentionally made it flexible,” Costion said. “We show how we did our drawing and then tell others to change or adapt it to represent their situation.”

They first presented CCIM in 2013 at the SAA annual meetings, where it was well received. Soon they were invited to write a chapter in an archaeology book, *Frontiers of Colonialism*. They organized a symposium based on the new model for the 2014 SSA annual meeting. The University Press of Florida then contacted Costion and Green about publishing their own volume, which occurred in April, 2018.

The response from other archaeologists has been positive. Costion said any archaeologist or anthropologist examining cultural interaction will find it beneficial, particularly in the archaeological subfield of cross-cultural interaction and borderland studies.

"Most people really like it when we demonstrate it," Costion said. "The only drawback is that you can only depict one time period at a time."

Costion and Green recruited several researchers to contribute a chapter to their book. The researchers used the model to present encounters in varied time periods and areas, for example, Roman Europe, Colonial Greenland, ancient Costa Rica and regional interactions in the midwestern United States, among others.

Costion said it's important to study these interactions to gain a better picture of the local perspective.

"It's often assumed that a bigger military society, for example Rome, just dominated and took over an area," Costion said. "We're trying to better understand how people reacted when they were conquered. There often wasn't a simple domination, there was a lot of give and take. Studying this presents a better picture of how the locals reacted."

At MCC, Costion uses graphics from the book to describe how cultures interact in his Buried Cities and Lost Tribes classes (ASB222 and ASB223). In addition to his work as a full-time faculty member, Costion stays active in his field by working on archeological digs, both local and abroad, and by writing about his research. Next summer he plans to return to southern Peru to do more research and yes, there may be another book in the near future.

"Peru is a great place to do archeology," Costion said. "You feel like part of the community. Also, I do think being active in the field helps my teaching. I try to include my field experiences into my lectures to make them more interesting and so I can present the most up to date information to students in the classroom."

For more information on Anthropology at MCC, visit <https://www.mesacc.edu/departments/cultural-science/anthropology/course-descriptions> (<https://www.mesacc.edu/departments/cultural-science/anthropology/course-descriptions>).

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Mesa Community College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association (NCA) <http://www.ncahlc.org> (<http://www.ncahlc.org>).

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