

ARCHAEOLOGY, NATIONALISM AND THE MYTHICAL PAST: COMING TO TERMS WITH RECENT ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE SOUTHERN URALS OF RUSSIA

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12:00pm

4217 Posvar Hall



Air photo of Arkaim excavation



Artist's rendering of Arkaim settlement

This presentation focuses on recent trends in hyper-nationalism in the Russian Federation and appropriation of the prehistoric past. The speaker has been leading collaborative field research with several Russian universities at Bronze Age (2100-1700 BCE) sites in the Southern Ural Mountains region. These sites, and the archaeological evidence associated with them from the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, have become important resources in changing socio-political discourse on the prehistoric and mythic past (proto-Slavs, Indo-Aryans, Proto-Indo-European Language). These views contrast strongly with recently obtained archaeological evidence. Yet, such politicized perspectives continue to play a significant role in contemporary cultural heritage and the evolving role of archaeology in territories of the former Soviet Union.

The speaker is an Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology and Associate Director of the Center for Comparative Archaeology at the University of Pittsburgh. He has directed several international projects since 2003 in the Southern Urals region and has been involved in archaeological research in the Russian Federation since 1998. These activities have been financially supported by the University of Pittsburgh, The Center for Russian and East European Studies (Pittsburgh), National Science Foundation, Wenner-Gren Foundation, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK).