PSEUDOARCHAEOLOGY AND NATIONALISM
WHY?
MOTIVATIONS
1. **MONEY**: the public’s interest in archaeology is so great that people are willing to pay.

2. **FAME**: desire to have the oldest site or a previously unknown artifact.

3. **NATIONALISM**: pseudoarchaeology proving or supporting nationalistic claims.

4. **RELIGION**: pseudoarchaeology proving or supporting ideological claims.

5. **ROMANTICIZING THE PAST**: making the past more than it is (was).
PILTDOWN MAN
1. England was the only major European nation that didn’t have a significant human fossil find.

2. Finds didn’t line up with the “brain centered” perspective of human evolution.
NATIONALISM

The Piltdown finds put England “on the map” in terms of human evolution and paleoanthropology.

SCIENTIFIC IDEOLOGY

Supported the “brain centered” paradigm that most scientists believed in.

FAME

brought a great deal of notoriety to Dawson and Woodward.
JOHN TAYLOR
THE GREAT PYRAMID; WHY WAS IT BUILT & WHO BUILT IT?

In *The Great Pyramid* (1859), Taylor argued that the numbers Pi and the golden ratio may have been deliberately incorporated into the design of the Great Pyramid of Khufu at Giza.


Published in 1864, a campaign against the adoption of the metric system in Britain, and relied on results from his earlier book to show a divine origin for the British units of measure.
BOSNIAN PYRAMIDS
THE BOSNIAN PYRAMID

- BUILT IN 12,000 B.C. BY THE ILLYRIAN CULTURE

- LARGEST OF THE “PYRAMIDS” (SO CALLED PYRAMID OF THE SUN) WAS THE “MOTHER OF ALL PYRAMIDS”

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DEFINING NATIONALISM (AT LEAST IN THIS CONTEXT)
NATIONALISM

Ideology shared by an ethnic group or geographic/demographic population as to their uniqueness (compared to other groups) based on cultural traits and practices.
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Larger groups or collectives of people with common characteristics attributed to them - including language, traditions, customs, ethnicity, etc.
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“NAZIS, I HATE THESE GUYS”
DEUTSCHES AHNENERBE – STUDIENGESellschaft FÜR GEISTESURGeschichte
GERMAN ANCESTRY - RESEARCH SOCIETY FOR ANCIENT INTELLECTUAL HISTORY
ANCESTOR HERITAGE SOCIETY
POST WW1 GERMANY
BLOOD AND SOIL

Nazi ideology that focuses on ethnicity based on two factors: descent/blood (of an individual) and territory. Celebrates the relationship of a people to the land they occupy and cultivate.
ANCESTOR HERITAGE SOCIETY
THREE GOALS OF AHNENERBE
TO STUDY THE TERRITORY, IDEAS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

TO BRING THE RESEARCH FINDINGS TO LIFE AND PRESENT THEM TO THE GERMAN PEOPLE

TO ENCOURAGE EVERY GERMAN TO GET INVOLVED IN THE ORGANIZATION
GUIDING PRINCIPALS OF AHNENERBE
The Kulturkreis ("culture circles") “theory” stated that recognition of an ethnic region is based on the material culture excavated from an archeological site.
Social Diffusion, which stated that cultural diffusion occurred by a process whereby influences, ideas and models were passed on by more advanced peoples to the less advanced whom they came into contact with.
Weltanschauungswissenschaften (World View Sciences) - the idea that culture and science were one, and carried certain "race-inherent values"
Deutsche Reinheit (Pure German Man) - Germans were "pure Aryans" who had survived a natural catastrophe and evolved a highly developed culture during their long migration to Germany.
Veteres de ea referunt, ejus tale itum alium non esse dixerim, quâm qui Canariis, Açô-
ribus & Flandricis, cæterisque in Oceano
Atlantico superfìtibus Insulis comprehe-

Sitùs
Insule Atlantidis, a
mari omn obsorptæ ex
mente Egyptianorum et-
Platonis aëscripto.

Africa.

Oceanus

Hispania.

Insula Atlantis.

America.

ad apicem planitiæ confìcúm, ex qua
ad insulam præstitit, ut secundum Tì-

nus.
CHALAMAGNE

King of the Franks. He united most of Western Europe during the early Middle Ages and laid the foundations for modern France and Germany. He took the Frankish throne in 768 and became King of Italy in 774. In 800 he became the first Holy Roman Emperor.
MASSACRE OF VERDEN
NAZI NEO-PAGAN STATE IDEOLOGY

Party ideologues stressed the association between the introduction of Christianity to the Germanic tribes and the battles against the pagan Saxons waged by Charlemagne.
EXTERNSTEINE
ACTIVITIES OF AHNENERBE
TIWANAKU

Late 1920s, Edmund Kiss made a journey to the ruins at Tiwanaku in Bolivia. Suggested that the builders of Tiwanaku were far older than the traditional accepted date of 200 AD. Suggested that the ruins were built by prehistoric Nordic Thulians more than 17,000 years ago.
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Vetores de ea referunt, ejus talem notum non esse dixerim, quam qui Canarit, Afsoribus & Flandricis, coterisque in Oceano Atlantico superstitibus Insulis comprehen-

norum montium, variam, plantarumque profundioribus locis, motu terræ abscrtptis, atque in eor um locum Oceano succenturiato.

Sunt nonnulli, qui hanc terræ Continen-
ad apicem planitie conficiun, ex qua

Africa.

Oceanus

Hispania.

America.

Insula Atlantis.
Franz Altheim and his research partner Erika Trautmann were funded by the Ahnenerbe to travel to the Middle East to study an internal power struggle of the Roman Empire, which they believed was fought between the Nordic and Semitic peoples.
RÜGEN

In 1936 an Ahnenerbe expedition visited the (then) Swedish island of Rügen, with the objective of examining rock-art which they concluded was 'proto-Germanic'.
TIBET

In 1938 the Ahnenerbe sent an expedition to Tibet with the intention of proving Aryan superiority by confirming the Vril theory, which was based on Edward Bulwer-Lytton's book *Vril, the Power of the Coming Race*. 
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The city was large in proportion to the territory round it, which was of no greater extent than many an English or Hungarian nobleman’s estate; but the whole of it, to the verge of the rocks which constituted its boundary, was cultivated to the nicest degree, except where certain allotments of mountain and pasture were humanely left free to the sustenance of the harmless animals they had tamed, though not for domestic use. So great is their kindness towards these humbler creatures, that a sum is devoted from the public treasury for the purpose of deporting them to other Vril-ya communities willing to receive them (chiefly new colonies), whenever they become too numerous for the pastures allotted to them in their native place. They do not, however, multiply to an extent comparable to the ratio at which, with us, animals bred for slaughter, increase. It seems a law of nature that animals not useful to man gradually recede from the domains he occupies, or even become extinct. It is an old custom of the various sovereign states amidst which the race of the Vril-ya are distributed, to leave between each state a neutral and uncultivated border-land. In the instance of the community I speak of, this tract, being a ridge of savage rocks, was impassable by foot, but was easily surmounted, whether by the wings of the inhabitants or the air-boats, of which I shall speak hereafter. Roads through it were also cut for the transit of vehicles impelled by vril. These intercommunicating tracts were always kept lighted, and the expense thereof defrayed by a special tax, to which all the communities comprehended in the denomination of Vril-ya contribute in settled proportions. By these means a considerable commercial traffic with other states, both near and distant, was carried on. The surplus wealth of this special community was chiefly agricultural. The community was also eminent for skill in constructing implements connected with the arts of husbandry. In exchange for such merchandise it obtained articles more of luxury than necessity. There were few things imported on which they set a higher price than birds taught to pipe artful tunes in concert. These were brought from a great distance, and
THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY (1875)

FOUNDED BY HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY (1831–1891), HENRY STEEL OLcott (1832–1907), AND WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE (1851–1896)

There is no religion higher than truth.
SERIOUSLY

SO WHAT
1. RACIST/ETHNOCENTRIC
2. ANTI-ARCHAEOLOGICAL
3. STATE/ETHNIC VIOLENCE
1. Racist/Ethnocentric
2. Anti-Archeological
3. State/Ethnic Violence
THE END