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“More Important than all Technical Features Would Appear to Us the *volkliche* Differences”. Gotthard Neumann and the *völkisch* Thought in German Prehistory, 1920s to 1960s

Summary

This paper examines the theoretical and methodological value of combining *Begriffsgeschichte* (conceptual history) with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus and social field by focusing on definitions of the *völkisch* thought in German prehistory. The theoretical perspective in this paper is that concepts on the semantic level are interlinked with historical processes in the social space, or the scientific field in this example. On the one hand, it is evident that *völkisch* elements belonged intrinsically to prehistoric archaeology in its development as an autonomous discipline in the scientific field. On the other hand, racist and *völkisch* thoughts were a result of the heteronomization that was enforced during the Nazi regime, when prehistoric archaeologists tried to use the Nazis to establish their discipline in academia.

Keywords: Habitus- and field-theory; *Begriffsgeschichte*; *völkisch* thought; prehistory; Nazi regime.

In diesem Artikel frage ich nach der theoretischen und methodologischen Tragweite einer Kombination von Begriffsgeschichte und Pierre Bourdieus Habitus- und Feldtheorie. Der Ansatz wird am Beispiel eines Definitionsversuchs völkischen Denkens in der deutschen Prähistorie ausgelotet. In dieser theoretischen Perspektive sind Denkhaltungen auf der semantischen Ebene mit historischen Ereignissen und Prozessen im sozialen Raum, das heißt in diesem Fall im wissenschaftlichen Feld, verknüpft. Auf der einen Seite kann dadurch gezeigt werden, dass völkische Elemente zur Entwicklung der prähistorischen Archäologie als selbständiges Forschungsfeld gehörten. Auf der anderen Seite wird deutlich, dass rassistisches und völkisches Denken das Resultat einer Heteronomisierung der Prähistorie war, die sich während des NS-Regimes massiv verstärkte, als deutsche Prähistoriker versuchten, mit Hilfe einer Zusammenarbeit mit NS-Politikern ihren Forschungsbereich akademisch zu etablieren.

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Keywords: Habitus- und Feldtheorie; Begriffsgeschichte; völkisches Denken; Prähistorie; NS-Regime.

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I Semantic structure and the scientific field

Recent studies in the history of science and the humanities have effectively used approaches of conceptual history and historic semantics for explaining discursive transfers of terms and concepts between scientific communities and between the scientific field and other social fields, such as politics, economics, and the public.¹ Yet, most of these studies lack a theoretical discussion of the ways that concepts were interrelated with the trajectory of the researchers who developed these theories and methodological approaches in their social context. In this paper, I argue that one was closely linked to the other: semantic structure and the development of concepts are interconnected with social processes and historical incidents. To illustrate my theoretical assumption, I will examine the role and function of the *völkisch* thought in German prehistory. I will consider how the usage of this concept was determined by the situation of prehistory in the scientific field as well as by the specific habitus of prehistoric archaeologists, and how this situation, reciprocally, influenced the meaning of *völkisch* thinking during the Nazi regime, taking into account that, in this period, prehistory was established as an academic discipline at German universities. In addition, I will look at the development of *völkisch* thoughts after the fall of the Nazi regime, arguing that these thoughts had to be transformed and adapted to the new political situation of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).

To exemplify the meaning and function of *völkisch* elements in German prehistoric archaeology in the first half of the twentieth century, I will focus particularly on one example, namely, the Thuringian prehistoric archaeologist Gotthard Neumann (1902–1972). Neumann serves as a gauge for my argument because his professional career spans from the 1920s through the Nazi regime to the GDR. Yet, focusing on Neumann as a unique example would define my approach as neo-historicist, which is why I will, with the help of the method of prosopography, relate Neumann's habitus and his

¹ See Eggers and Rothe 2009; E. Müller and Schmieder 2008.

scientific thoughts as well as his social position in the scientific field to those of other German prehistoric archaeologists.

According to Reinhart Koselleck, the use of specific terms in language is dependent on contemporary incidents: there is a structure of historic incidents and a structure of the terms and concepts that interact with one another in a reciprocal manner.² As I said above, most studies of the history of concepts lack theoretical and methodological definitions of the social structure under examination. To conceive the social structure theoretically, I will define it with the help of Pierre Bourdieu's habitus- and field-theory. In Bourdieu's theory, the social space of individuals is the social field, which is specified in several subfields such as the political, the economic, or the scientific field. This differentiation is a main characteristic of every modern Western society.

The field, in this case the scientific field, is a net of objectified relations between the agents' positions, whereupon the analysis of these relations locates the position of an individual in the field.³ The position of a scientist or a scholar in the scientific field is strongly dependent on his specific habitus. Habitus is the expression of lifestyle, transcending individual and collective forms of practice.⁴ Moral and political values as well as scientific thinking form the habitus of a scholar. The scholars are not aware of their habitus, rather their habitus is a result of their specific socialization in family, school, and university, which directs their agency.⁵ Both, habitus and social field, are mutually interrelated with each other.⁶ The scientific field is constituted by the habitus of the scholars and, simultaneously, the field constitutes their habitus. In other words: the scientific field is the radius of operation of the various forms of the scholars' habitus.⁷

There are two main groups of individuals in the scientific field: one group holds the powerful positions (dominants); the other aspires to these positions (dominated). The battle between these groups is the normal condition of the scientific field. In order to attain dominant positions, newcomers, who are always in a dominated position, need to accumulate scientific capital,⁸ which includes scientific and technical knowledge or academic titles and publications: in short, scientific authority. This sort of capital is only significant in the scientific field. Scientific authority can be accumulated by the exchange of types of capital from other fields, for example, economic and social capital from the political field.⁹ Types of capital mobilized from other fields can be used effectively in the scientific field only if researchers transform them completely into scientific authority, because scientific authority is the only kind of capital that really counts in the scientific field. Furthermore, this transformation is possible only if the scientific field has achieved a symbolic autonomy from all other fields, an autonomy which contains rules and values

2 Koselleck 2006 [1986], 56 and 62–63.

3 Bourdieu 1999, 365.

4 Bourdieu 2009 [1976], 179 and 182.

5 Bourdieu 1974, 40; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1996, 102. Also see Raphael 1991, 239.

6 See Bourdieu 1974, 19–20; Bourdieu 1998, 20.

7 Raphael 1991, 241.

8 Bourdieu 1976, 92–93 and 96.

9 Hachtmann 2007, 36.

that matter solely in this field.¹⁰ Within the scientific field, the process toward autonomy is a characteristic of particular disciplines or sub-disciplines as well. For the scientific field, autonomy means only symbolic autonomy, not economic autonomy, which the scientific field can never achieve because it is always economically dependent on other social fields.

After graduation from university, newcomers entering the scientific field have two strategic opportunities: namely, either to follow the dominants and their orthodox opinions, methods, and approaches, or to adopt a revolutionary strategy and struggle against orthodoxy. Of course, these two strategies should be understood as a simplification of social reality. To follow the dominants (orthodox strategy) does not mean that newcomers stubbornly follow the professors in an obsequious way; it allows that younger scholars build upon, expand, or modify existing paradigms, models, or interpretations. However, they don't challenge the paradigms established by their masters. In contrast, the revolutionary strategy, which Bourdieu calls heterodox, encompasses for example the founding of new journals or the establishment of new methods and theories in order to break the *doxa* or scientific paradigm established by the dominant group.¹¹

It is most important that both kinds of dominated scholars, the orthodox and the heterodox, respect the rules of the scientific field and share the goal of accumulating as much scientific authority as possible. They both fight with 'permitted' or 'legitimate weapons.'¹² Permitted weapons are tools or means for accumulating scientific authority considered as 'legitimate' in the scientific field. These rules are defined by the dominating, powerful scholars, but they are also traditionally established over the course of the historical development of the scientific field and of a discipline in particular. I would like to explain this principle with the help of two examples. To found a new journal in which a group of authors challenges the scientific assumptions of older and established scholars is a 'legitimate weapon' (and a heterodox strategy) in the acquisition of scientific authority. To suppress a dominant scholar from his position with the direct help of politicians is an 'illegitimate act,' because the younger scholar is not fighting with scientific means but with political ones. The heterodox strategy becomes illegitimate only with the usage of weapons that are not permitted by the scientific field. This Bourdieu calls a heteronomous strategy. Illegitimate weapons can include political power or economic means that allow researchers and scientists to attain powerful positions in the field that they would never have achieved if they had fought the battle with 'legitimate weapons.'

Using Bourdieu's theory for analyzing the development of German prehistory and the role the *völkisch* thought performed within it, I want first of all to determine whether *völkisch* thoughts entered into prehistory from outside the scientific field, presumably

10 Bourdieu 1998, 120–121.

12 Bourdieu 2001, 51.

11 Weber 1984, 342.

from the political field, or if this concept was from the beginning a part of prehistory, genuinely developed by prehistoric archaeologists.

2 Prehistory and the *völkisch* thought

As Peter Rowley-Conwy demonstrates, the concept of ‘prehistory’ and as chronological term originated in Scandinavia. It was developed by the Danish historian and philologist Christian Molbech in the early 1830s. The emergence of these terms was connected with the aim of eighteenth-century scholars to focus on early myths and legends “to extract the kernel of historical truth” in them and to name the era before 800 AD as ‘prehistoric.’ For the investigation of this period, scholars should examine artifacts, namely the material remnants of ancient people, as C. J. Thomsen proposed.¹³ Since these artifacts did not represent any evidence regarding historical developments, the focusing on culture, religion, and myth was crucial for the development of prehistoric archaeology. This has also to do with the fact that Nordic mythology was very popular among the Scandinavian public, which is why prehistoric archaeologists could make use of this public resonance in order to expand their research field.¹⁴ In addition, the political and intellectual debates between Danish and German claims on Schleswig and Holstein in the 1840s and 1850s proved to be crucial for the further development of prehistoric archaeology. For example, the Danish scholar J. J. A. Worsaae used archaeological evidence to counter the historical argumentation of German philologist Jacob Grimm.¹⁵ The close connection between myth, nationalist thinking and ethnic and racial constructions in the development of prehistoric archaeology established the concept of the existence of an ‘eternal’ and constant *Volksgeist* (folk spirit) of ethnic communities.¹⁶ The role of the *völkisch* thought in prehistoric archaeology, especially in Germany and Austria, has to be seen in the context of this development.

The term *völkisch* is closely related to specific social groups of the life-reform movement and to political groups, as well as to individual advocates summarized in what we call today the *völkisch* movement.¹⁷ These groups originated in the late nineteenth century and gained social relevance and political power in the 1920s.¹⁸ There is no coherent translation of *völkisch* in the English language. *Völkisch* means folkish and ethnic, but it also encompasses the meaning of nationalist and sometimes, but not always, ‘racial’ and racist. *Völkisch* thinking could also relate to culture or cultural phenomena. Significant for this term, however, is the fact that it was from its origins linked to a biological-organic concept of people. The nearest translation in English would be,

13 Rowley-Conwy 2006, 107–109.

14 See Ross 2003.

15 Rowley-Conwy 2006, 112–120.

16 Brather 2004, 29–52 and 77–89.

17 See Breuer 2008.

18 Puschner 2001.

therefore, ethnic-nationalist or ethnic-racial. Although apolitical groups within the life-reform movement as well as some leftist groups used the term *Volk* in their alternative ideas on how German society should be organized, the semantic connection of *Volk* and race, and, related to that, of tribe or league, was mainly found in right-wing German political movements.¹⁹ Only right-wingers labeled their own political group as *völkisch*. These groups not only consisted of politicians but were also comprised of right-wing scholars or public intellectuals, such as Houston Stuart Chamberlain, a member of the *Alldeutscher Verband* (Pan-German League), or the scholars Martin Spahn and Max Wundt, who were members of the *Völkisch Reich-Committee* of the German National Party (*Völkischer Reichsausschuss der Deutschnationalen Partei*).²⁰

In the political philosophy of these thinkers, *Volk* is the starting point and central category.²¹ At the fin de siècle, *Volk* functioned in the political language as a term distinct from the concept of nation and the Wilhelmine constitutional state.²² In Germany, *Volk* characterized a certain group that was constituted through biological criteria, lifestyle, and customs.²³ Based on the geopolitical assumptions of the nineteenth-century geographer Friedrich Ratzel or the cultural historian Karl Lamprecht, German scholars connected the biologically-culturally defined *Volk* with the *Boden* (soil) on which the *Volk* lived and in which it was rooted. During the 1920s, this concept was transformed into the idea of *Raum* (space), in particular a biological-cultural *Volksraum* or *Kulturraum* (people's space or cultural space).²⁴ Soil or space and *Volk* formed an organic entity that became an ethnic group distinguishable from other ethnic groups by its arts and crafts, for example. Such an ethnic group was on the smallest scale a family, on the middle level a tribe, and on the largest scale a *Volk* and a 'race'. In addition, *Volk* had a temporal dimension: by exploring the space and the cultural findings therein, one could examine the ancestry of the contemporary people. Epistemologically, the study of ancient ethnic groups through the examination of the contemporary *Volk* was only possible with the assumption of a stable biological substratum that outlived historical development. Another element that was crucial for these political groups was the German nationalistic aspect. The mindsets of *völkisch* thinkers were determined not only by an ethnic-racial philosophy of history and sociology, but also by the belief that one group was superior to all other ethnic groups in world history. For the majority of those German intellectuals, this group was the *Germanen* (Germanics) and the German *Volk* which developed from the *Germanen*, a notion which they regarded as an objectively given element.²⁵

19 Koselleck 1992b, 390; Müller 1987, 20.

20 BAR, R 8048/315, fol. 5: Letter dated 8 August 1916, Houston Stewart Chamberlain to J. F. Lehmanns (publisher); BAR, R 8048/223, fol. 60: Letter dated 16 October 1924, *Völkischer Reichsausschuss der Deutschnationalen Partei* to the *Alldeutschen*

Verband.

21 Herbert 1996, 59.

22 Koselleck 1992a.

23 Koselleck 1992a, 383.

24 See T. Müller 2009.

25 Koselleck 1992b, 144.

In Germany, prehistoric archaeology became more and more specified at the exact time of the emergence of the first intellectual supporters of the *völkisch* movement. In the late nineteenth century, researchers with various different backgrounds engaged in prehistoric archaeology. Some were architecture historians, philologists, and classical archaeologists who began to shift their focus from antiquity to the remains of the Stone, Bronze, or Iron Ages (in the categories of today), as for example Carl Schuchhardt, the director of the department of prehistory at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin. Others were non-academic archaeologists who organized themselves into historical-cultural associations.²⁶ Gustaf Kossinna, a scholar of German philology who turned to prehistory and received an applied professorship at the University of Berlin in 1902, claimed that there was a direct correlation between ethnicity, language, and archaeological objects. He summarized his approach in the following phrase: “Clearly outlined archaeological cultural provinces always correspond to specific peoples or tribal communities”²⁷. He and his followers believed that the Germanic element was an a priori material as well as immaterial (spiritual) entity.²⁸

To understand the connection between *völkisch* thoughts in prehistory and the development of prehistory from a minor research area in the scientific field to a relatively autonomous and academically established discipline, I have to explain some of prehistory’s structural characteristics around 1900. The development of prehistoric archaeology from a predominantly laymen-practice to a scientific discipline was part of the establishment of the disciplinary structure of the scientific field that happened in the course of the nineteenth century and that proved to be characteristic for science and the humanities until today.²⁹ Disciplines are defined as stable social organizations in the scientific field, in which scientific knowledge is produced.³⁰ Several elements are crucial for such organizations. There must be a community of communication, in which scholars debate about methods, contents and aims of their discipline.³¹ Even though many European prehistoric archaeologists advocated a highly nationalist attitude, they developed an international scientific community. Since the mid-nineteenth century, scholars visited museums abroad and maintained international correspondence about the newest developments in their research field. Books written in other languages were translated and there were also international congresses for prehistoric archaeology.³² Important elements for the development of such a community was the establishment of standardized knowledge one finds in lexica and journals as well as the development of well-defined objects of research and specific methods for investigating these objects.³³ Further, it is

26 See Marchand 1996, 154–156 and 162–180.

27 Cited in Klejn 2008, 317. My translation.

28 Kossinna 1911; see Veit 2000.

29 See Stichweh 1984.

30 Laitko 1999, 31; Morell 1990.

31 See Weingart, Carrier, and Krohn 2007, 41.

32 Kaeser 2008; Rey 2002.

33 Clark 1974; Krohn and Küppers 1989, 105; see also Guntau and Laitko 1987, 22; Reinhardt 2006, 386–388; Weingart, Carrier, and Krohn 2007, 1983–184.

most crucial for scientific disciplines that they have a system of symbolic reputation and institutions that exclude laymen.³⁴ Prehistory had such characteristics and, therefore, it was a scientific community that was not yet completely established at the German universities of the 1920s.

This lack of academic acceptance rooted in the epistemological and methodological characteristics of prehistoric archaeology. Prehistory belonged to the humanities but was one of the newer cultural research areas such as *Volkskunde* (folklore studies), relying on material, empirical evidence and using methods from the natural and technical sciences, such as those from physical anthropology. While the classics could refer to high-end aesthetics that corresponded to the tastes of the upper bourgeoisie, prehistoric archaeologists principally researched small, broken fragments of brown or black colored pots or holes in the ground.³⁵ Prehistory scholars did not research the classical world; rather, they studied the history of ‘barbarians’ such as the Germans or the Celts. This was one of the reasons why prehistory had problems in gaining credibility in the scientific field. Prehistory was therefore in a dominated position in the scientific field of the early 1930s, although a relatively large community of researchers existed. Prehistoric archaeologists did not possess enough scientific authority in the scientific field to establish academic institutes to a significant extent, even though they held some strong positions in museums or worked in antiquities and monuments offices in several regions in Germany. Thus, although prehistoric archaeology in Germany was clearly a scientific community in the 1920s, academia was still dominated by the classics and by philology.³⁶

Finding themselves in dominated positions in the scientific field, Kossinna and others tried to import forms of capital from other social fields to reinforce prehistory. Kossinna was not the only archaeologist who championed *völkisch* interpretation, but he was one of those researchers that chose a heteronomous strategy because he used politics as a means to gain a powerful position in the scientific field. For him, *völkisch*-nationalist, neo-conservative, and imperialistic cultural-political organizations such as the Pan-German League (*Alldeutscher Verband*), the German League (*Deutscherbund*), the Nordic Ring (*Nordischer Ring*), or the Gobineau Society (*Gobineau-Gesellschaft*) offered promising resources.³⁷ Already in 1925, Kossinna collaborated with the German-*Völkisch* Freedom Party (*Deutschvölkische Freiheitspartei*), the NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers’ Party), and the Economic Association (*Wirtschaftliche Vereinigung*) in proposing that the Prussian State Diet (*Preußischer Landtag*) encourage prehistory in public schools, teacher training, and universities.³⁸ Kossinna offered scientific expertise to these groups, which were constructing a *völkisch* identity based on the ‘glorious history’ of the Germans and

34 Guntau and Laitko 1987, 40.

35 See Eberhardt 2011, 151–188.

36 See Wiwiorra 2002.

37 Grünert 2002, 310, 312–315.

38 Page 2002, 167.

were therefore optimally served by the theory that Europe's high culture originated in the 'Germanic race' that had come from Scandinavia and the northern German regions. This relationship produced an intermingling of political-philosophical ideas with scientific problems,³⁹ a sort of scientization of politics and, mutually, a politicization of prehistory.

Yet, to portray the *völkisch* thought solely as an element taken from outside the scientific field and adapted by those prehistory scholars who held dominated positions in the field and intended to bolster their positions with the resources of right-wing politicians is to tell only one part of the story. It is dangerous to argue that the *völkisch* element in prehistory was not scientific or that it was divided from 'real research,' because this line of argument separates Nazi and *völkisch* ideology from scientific principles. This separation was created by prehistory scholars after World War II in order to legitimize their work and allow them to continue it after the fall of the Nazi regime.

In prehistory, there existed a genuine scientific theory, namely, an ethnic epistemology of material culture. The central assumption of this particular theory was the supposed connection between cultural phenomena and material biological entities, which were the *Völker* (peoples). From the perspective of habitus- and field-theory, the difference between constructions we call *völkisch* and this scientific ethnic-historic principle was the degree of credibility. Whereas *völkisch* assumptions were usually Germanocentric, taking the 'high culture' of the *Germanen* and their origin from the north (Nordic theory) as a given fact, the Germanics in the genuinely scientific approach were not the core figures but only one of several *Völker*, besides the Celts or the Slavs. Kossinna was a representative of the Germanocentric version owing from his heteronomous strategy. Representatives of the more credible approach were the well-known archaeologist Carl Schuchhardt or his student Wilhelm Unverzagt. Although they worked together with so-called *völkisch* researchers around the network of German *Ostforschung* (Eastern Studies),⁴⁰ which attempted to legitimize German claims after 1918 on lost territories in Eastern Europe, Schuchhardt's assumptions, theories, and methods had more credibility in the scientific field and above all in prehistory than those of Kossinna. In this case, *völkisch*-ethnic thoughts were part of prehistory's development as an autonomous scientific discipline. It marked prehistory as symbolically distinct from other disciplines such as the classics.

In summary, *völkisch* concepts originated in two ways in German prehistory: first, they were a result of the import of radical right-wing ideas from the political field; second, there was a genuinely scientific *völkisch*-ethnic epistemology that served as a social distinction between prehistoric and classical archaeologists. Whether *völkisch* elements in prehistory were regarded as scientifically legitimate depends very much on the

39 See Bourdieu 1998, 19 and 59–60.

40 See Burleigh 1988, 56 and 66; Grunewald 2009.

amount of scientific credibility these concepts had in the scientific field. Direct imports of racial or *völkisch* ideology from the political field without a complete transformation of them into the language and scientific values of prehistory did not have much credibility.

3 Habitus, concepts, and social structure: Gotthard Neumann's trajectory

3.1 Gotthard Neumann's habitus

Gotthard Arno Ernst Neumann was born in Schwabsdorf in the administrative district of Weimar in Thuringia. He was socialized in a milieu that can be characterized as a mixture between petit bourgeois and educated middle-class, for which a national-conservative mindset and evangelical-Lutheran religious values were significant. Neumann's father was first a pastor, but turned to be a teacher around 1900. He later became a senior teacher and principal of the *Realgymnasium* (high school with a focus on sciences) in Weimar and was a representative of the *Landtag* (state diet) for the German People's Party (*Deutsche Volkspartei*) from 1920 to 1924. His father was an intellectually active man, who was particularly interested in science. Thus, Gotthard Neumann's family was closely connected to the region of Weimar and the state of Thuringia.

Already during his high school years, Neumann was interested in archaeology and went to the privately held lectures of the archaeologist Wilhelm Dörpfeld in Jena, whose excavations in Olympia and Troy became very famous.⁴¹ Neumann studied prehistory, history, auxiliary science of history, and German philology in Jena, Munich, and Marburg. Besides of that he was also interested in classical archaeology, art history, diluvia geology, physical anthropology, philosophy, religious studies, and ecclesiastical history. Neumann studied with scholars who predominantly advocated a positivistic scientific practice in terms of collecting and categorizing artifacts and human remnants, such as Gustav Eichhorn in Jena, the geologist Ferdinand Birkner, and the physical anthropologist Rudolf Martin in Munich. Particularly Eichhorn, who was the head of the prehistoric institute at Jena University, was very influential on Neumann,⁴² and from the prehistoric archaeologist Walter Bremer in Marburg, Neumann learned to connect academic and applied science, archaeology and conservation.⁴³

41 UAJ, D 3194: Personal file Prof. Dr. phil. Neumann, Gotthard, Curriculum vitae Gotthard Neumann, dated 1 October 1938, fol. 2–4; Gotthard, Curriculum vitae Gotthard Neumann, dated 29 August 1953; BAR, R 4901/13272, fol. 147, no. 6919.

42 See Grabolle, Hoßfeld, and Schmidt 2003, 871 and 877–878; Peschel 2010, 70. See Birkner 1913; Proctor 1988, 142.

43 Schuchhardt, Jacobsthal, and Macalister 1926, 283. Also see Klüssendorf 1999.

In December 1926, Neumann graduated at the University of Marburg in prehistoric archaeology with Gustav Behrens and Paul Jacobsthal who rated his dissertation as “very good” and “excellent.”⁴⁴ Shortly after graduation he became first a volunteer, then assistant at the State Museum of Mineralogy, Geology, and Prehistory (*Staatliches Museum für Mineralogie, Geologie und Vorgeschichte*) in Dresden.⁴⁵ This trajectory shows that Neumann was interested in the development of a purely scientific approach to analyze prehistoric artifacts and that he was a practitioner who preferred applied science to theory. This kind of scientific practice was very common in prehistoric archaeology. Due to the lack of academic institutes, scholars such as Martin Jahn and Walther Schulz had to prove the relevance of their research field for the public by working on excavations, in museums, and monuments offices, proving that archaeological research mattered for society.⁴⁶

The majority of Neumann’s professors in history and philology represented the type of the ‘German mandarin’ (Fritz K. Ringer). They usually advocated a national-conservative attitude, rejected the political system and the culture of Weimar Republic, and welcomed the authoritarian order the Nazis propagated. *Geist* (spirit) and *Kultur* (culture) were the most important elements of their habitus.⁴⁷ Yet, some of Neumann’s teachers were more than national-conservative. For example, the Marburg historian Edmund Ernst Stengel advocated an anti-Semitic mindset and later supported the Nazis,⁴⁸ and the philosophers Bruno Bauch and Max Wundt propagated strongly *völkisch*-nationalist and anti-Semitic ideas. For them, the Jews were *fremdvölkisch* (belonging to a different *Volk*) and could never be considered as German.⁴⁹ For others, such as Karl Helm, who taught *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte* (history of the old-Germanic religion), and the philologist Hans Naumann, *völkisch* ideas such as the ‘Germanic spiritual world’ (*germanische Geisteswelt*) were at the core of their intellectual agenda.⁵⁰ This mixture between a positivistic epistemic practice in archaeology applying ‘objective’ methods and a conservative, *völkisch* and anti-Semitic mindset was crucial for Neumann’s scientific habitus.

Neumann, as many other prehistoric archaeologists, such as Herbert Jankuhn or Hans Reinerth, belonged to a generation that was “too young of having been drafted into the German military, and too old of having experienced the Great War as a distanced event.”⁵¹ He belonged to the ‘war youth generation,’ whose members were born between 1900–1910. The members of this generation often advocated right-radical or neo-conservative ideas, because they had lost confidence into the bourgeois values of their fathers and often experienced material poverty as a result of World War I.⁵² This

44 UAJ, D 3 194: Personal file Prof. Dr. phil. Neumann, Gotthard, Curriculum vitae Gotthard Neumann, dated 1 October 1938, fol. 2–4.

45 Grabolle, Hoßfeld, and Schmidt 2003, 877.

46 Mehrrens 2006, 317.

47 See Gottwald 2003, 913–914; Pöthe 2003.

48 See Grundmann 1968; Klee 2005, 601.

49 Sluga 1993, 84, 94 and 112–118.

50 Pöthe 2003, 851.

51 Wildt 2005, 172.

52 Herbert 1996, 43; Wildt 2002, 46–52.

was also a reason why Neumann concentrated on practical archaeology; he had to work on excavations and in the monuments office in Hesse as preservationist when he studied in Marburg in order to finance his studies.⁵³ One of the main characteristics of this generation was the longing for a spiritual interpretation and experience “of the big picture, of the *völkisch* and social problems”⁵⁴. For Neumann, this aspect was crucial, and he interpreted and experienced the “big picture” by researching the culture of the past in his *Heimat* (habitat) Thuringia. The first article Neumann published during his last year as a student demonstrates this mindset. In this article, he discussed the influences of modern technology on the German people in the manner of German *Kulturkritik*. He thought that one should find counterweights to technology and velocity of life which dominated Weimar Republic. People should “bethink themselves of the particular elements of our being and how we came to be as that, they should collect and herd these elements as a holy legacy of simpler but richer times.” According to Neumann, this was the only way to “ground the own emotional life on the basis of a real insight into the *Volk*”, which one could attain by a “yearlong examination of the landscape of the *Heimat*, nature, prehistory, history, custom and art, in short, of our complete *Heimat*-culture”⁵⁵. Thus, Neumann both welcomed modern technology and modern scientific methods and advocated *völkisch* and anti-modern ideas at the same time.⁵⁶

3.2 Neumann’s ethnic-*völkisch* concept

The first extended scientific article based on his dissertation Neumann published in 1929 in the *Præhistorische Zeitschrift* (Journal for Prehistory) on the *The Classification of the Bell Beaker Culture*.⁵⁷ In this article, Neumann proposed a reordering of the cultural-chronological system of Thuringian prehistoric findings. The main concept in his publications from 1928–1932 was *Kultur* (culture). *Kultur* meant foremost material culture, but from the beginning this concept implied an ethnic idea: material culture always derived from and thus referred to a certain ethnic group. Neumann presented himself as a scholar in the tradition of Kossinna. Nonetheless, he was trying to modify Kossinna’s Nordic interpretation.⁵⁸ Thus, he agreed with Kossinna’s ethnic approach in general but disagreed with the assumption that European high culture must have originated in northern Europe in prehistoric times. In contrast to Kossinna, Neumann did not deduce his theoretical assumptions from linguistic methods;⁵⁹ rather, he concentrated only on material culture. Advocating the assumption of an inherent connection between

53 UAJ, D 3194: Personal file Prof. Dr. phil. Neumann, Gotthard, Curriculum vitae Gotthard Neumann, dated 1 October 1938, fol. 2–4.

54 Herbert 1991, 116–117. My translation.

55 Neumann 1926. My translation.

56 For this kind of mindset see Herf 1984.

57 Neumann 1929; see Neumann 1930b.

58 Neumann 1930b, 45; see Neumann 1928.

59 Andresen 2004, 99.

ethnic groups and material objects, Neumann viewed *Kultur* as the link between material culture and ethnicity. Neumann, following Kossinna, called the particular human-biological entity *Gruppe* (group), *Volk*, or *Volksgruppe*.⁶⁰ The connection between an ethnic *Gruppe* and archaeological objects led to the characterization of peoples through an analysis of types of objects, and vice versa. To these two elements Neumann added a third aspect, which he did not explicitly use as a term: namely, space, which is very obvious in his usage of techniques such as cartography. This relates to Kossinna's approach of so-called settlement archaeology, the core concept of which was that the history of ancient tribes or *völkisch* groups was a sequence of migrations.⁶¹ Therein, maps were an important tool to show the migrations of the *Völker*. Thus, for Neumann, a certain material *Kultur* referred to a *Gruppe* that could be examined by researching archaeological objects in a specific space. This space was the settlement area of the group, which could be limited by the characteristics of archaeological objects; differences between the forms of those objects and other ones correlated to different ethnic groups. Therefore, the diffusion of material objects enabled Neumann to analyze the migration of those groups.

The core concept in Neumann's approach was ethnicity. He defined ethnicity not only by material objects, but also by time: "Some centuries later, probably in Slavic time, the mound was broken up and the precious part of its content was robbed"⁶². In this example, a certain ancient period is ethnicized by referring to the term *slawisch* (Slavic). But Neumann took a critical approach to the ethnic concept in prehistory. For example, he rejected his colleague Werner Radig's simplistic associations of archaeological things with ethnic categorizations. According to Neumann, Radig neglected the fact that Slavic ceramics could also have been used by German settlers, and, therefore, the connection between archaeological artifact and ethnicity was problematic for him.⁶³ Indeed, Neumann wanted to use only "streng wissenschaftliche" (strictly scientific) criteria for his ethnic constructions. And, in contrast to colleagues such as Hans Reinerth or Herbert Jankuhn,⁶⁴ Neumann did not apply the Nordic idea.

At the same time, Neumann used methods from physical anthropology and racial theory. According to him, the *mitteldeutschen Kulturgruppen* (middle German culture groups) belonged to branches of the *kurzköpfigen Glockenbechervolkes* (short-capped bell beaker people).⁶⁵ As many scholars of the Kossinna group,⁶⁶ Neumann connected racial categories with his semantic net of *Gruppe*, *Kultur*, and archaeological objects. It is important for understanding this early period of Neumann's trajectory that he – contrary

60 See Brather 2004, 65.

61 See Andresen 2004, 95–99.

62 Neumann 1930c.

63 Neumann 1930a.

64 See Reinerth 1925, 19; see Jankuhn 1941/42.

65 Neumann 1929, 36.

66 See Kossinna 1936.

to Kossinna – hardly used the term ‘race’ concerning physical anthropology, but preferred *Gruppe* and *Volk*. In addition, Neumann used only strictly scientific language and terminology in his publications and avoided any nationalistic-chauvinistic terms. Neumann’s and Kossinna’s works differ not only in their use of language, but also in their understanding of certain concepts. For Neumann, ‘race’ was a genuinely scientific sort of umbrella category which had to be differentiated by *Völker* and *Gruppen*. For Kossinna, ‘race’ was equivalent to the Indo-Germanics, who were for him the bearers of biological and cultural superiority. In Kossinna’s scientific thinking ‘race’ appears as a key concept.⁶⁷

In summary, there were five major differences between Neumann’s ethnic-*völkisch* concepts and those of Kossinna and his school. First, for Neumann, the Nordic theory was not central to his research. Second, ethnic constructions were only valuable if he could prove them by a critical examination of the connection between people and material culture and not by a priori assumptions. Third, Neumann had a genuine material culture-based approach and was not influenced by linguistic methods. Fourth, even though Neumann used the term race, he used it not as a major concept but as a category among many others. Fifth, he did not link *Volk* and race with nationalistic thoughts.

3.3 Neumann’s trajectory and the institutional situation of prehistory at the University of Jena

In the late 1920s, Neumann decided to vote for *völkisch* political groups and, around 1930, for the NSDAP.⁶⁸ It is difficult to state whether his voting choice resulted from a radicalization of his political mindset during his student years – in the early 1920s, he preferred the *Deutsche Volkspartei* (German People’s Party), in which his father had been active – or a strategic or opportunistic one. Whichever the case, it is necessary to emphasize two circumstances that contextualize this shift. First, the NSDAP in Thuringia constituted the first Nazi government in Germany in the early 1930s;⁶⁹ second, Neumann, being a native Thuringian, was very much attached to the native soil as his *Heimat*.⁷⁰ Neumann had negotiated with government officials in Thuringia before 1930 to get a position at the Germanic museum in Jena. Since the museum’s director Gustav Eichhorn had died in 1929,⁷¹ Neumann’s decision to vote for the Nazi party appeared to be profitable: with the help of the Nazi minister of Thuringia, Wilhelm Frick, Neumann, at the age of twenty-eight, was appointed the head of the Germanic Museum in Jena and assistant professor in the Department of History at the University of Jena in

67 Andresen 2004, 103.

68 Grabolle, Hoßfeld, and Schmidt 2003, 879.

69 Fleischhauer 2010, 63–67.

70 Peschel 2010, 71.

71 See Peschel 2010, 69–71.

November 1930.⁷² Neumann's first career step was, therefore, at least partly the result of a heteronomous strategy.

This heteronomous strategy becomes more obvious later. After 1930, Neumann accumulated more and more social capital due to his interaction with the Nazi party. He became a member in Alfred Rosenberg's Battle League for German Culture (*Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur*)⁷³ and in its sub-organization, the Reich League for German Prehistory (*Reichsbund für deutsche Vorgeschichte*),⁷⁴ in which he took a position as a regional leader of Thuringia.⁷⁵ With the support of Fritz Sauckel, the later *Reichsstatthalter* (governor of the *Reich* in Thuringia), Neumann was able to establish the first supra-regional excavation law in Thuringia in 1932.⁷⁶ In Neumann's case, couplings between science and politics were particularly promising before the so-called seizure of power by the Nazis. However, enforcing one's position in the scientific field with the help of politicians was equal to fighting for power in the field with 'illegitimate weapons.'

Neumann was thereby only one example of many German prehistoric archaeologists: similar cases include his East German colleagues Martin Jahn and Walther Schulz, or Hans Reinerth, Herbert Jankuhn, Kurt Tackenberg, and Bolko von Richthofen, all of whom also engaged in Nazi politics. Most of them were Kossinna scholars. Kossinna and his disciple Reinerth, for example, were more extreme than Neumann because they engaged more actively in Nazi cultural politics; Kossinna became one of the founding members of Alfred Rosenberg's Battle League.⁷⁷ German prehistory scholars considered Nazi politicians, such as Rosenberg or Heinrich Himmler, and their worldviews as a resource for advancing the academic establishment of prehistory. For Nazi-ideologists, reciprocally, prehistory offered scientific authority to their racist and *völkisch* ideology. As mentioned above, prehistory around 1933 was still in the process of achieving scientific autonomy; its scholars had to fight for acceptance and authority in the scientific field, which was dominated by the canonical disciplines.⁷⁸ Although university institutes, museums, and journals in prehistory were being developed, they had not yet been completely established. In 1929, only six ordinary and extraordinary chairs of prehistory

72 UAJ, D 3194: Personal file Prof. Dr. phil. Neumann, Gotthard, Curriculum vitae Gotthard Neumann, dated 1 October 1938; ThHStAW, Thüringisches Volksbildungsministerium, no. 21858, fol. 3: Letter dated 22 October 1930, Thüringisches Volksbildungsministerium to Gotthard Neumann. Also see BAR, R 4901/13272, p. 147.

73 Since 1934: *NS-Kulturgemeinde* (Nazi Culture Community).

74 UAJ, D 3194: Personalfragebogen Gotthard Neumann, dated 31 July 1934; APM/Akten Reichsbund: Fragebogen Deutsche Vorgeschichtsforscher u. Vorgeschichtsfreunde, dated 16 September 1935.

75 ThHStAW, Der Reichsstatthalter in Thüringen, no. 440, fol. 78–79: Letter dated 4 August 1937, NSDAP-Gauleitung Thüringen to Reichsstatthalter in Thüringen. Also see APM/Korrespondenz Reinerth: Letter dated 24 March 1933, Hans Reinerth to Gotthard Neumann; NL Neumann, file "Kyffhäuser – Grabungen und Werk": Letter dated 3 July 1933, Hans Reinerth to Gotthard Neumann.

76 Neumann 1932, 192.

77 Grünert 2002, 308–309 and 317–318; see Bollmus 2002.

78 Wiwjorra 2002, 82.

at German and Austrian universities had been founded. The most important institutions for archaeology, such as the Institute of Archaeology of the German *Reich* (*Archäologisches Institut des Deutschen Reichs*)⁷⁹ or the Roman-Germanic Commission (*Römisch-Germanische Kommission*), were predominantly managed by scholars of the classics who occupied the powerful positions in the archaeological disciplines.⁸⁰ Prehistory's situation would change profoundly after 1933/34. By 1942, prehistory was well established at German universities. In the early 1940s, twenty-five chairs at universities existed, of which seventeen were full professorships.⁸¹ This extraordinary success was only possible through the exchange of sorts of capital between prehistoric archaeologists and Nazi politicians.⁸²

On a micro-scale, this development becomes obvious regarding Gotthard Neumann's career, which took off after 1933. In 1934, he became the *Staatliche Vertrauensmann für vor- und frühgeschichtliche Bodenaltertümer* (State Representative of Prehistoric Relics)⁸³ under the sponsorship of Fritz Sauckel. Although he had done this job since 1932 voluntarily, he now received a salary. In 1935, Neumann received the position of the first curator of the Museum of Prehistory in Weimar.⁸⁴ The preliminary peak of Neumann's career was marked by the offer of the official extraordinary professorship at Jena University in the same year,⁸⁵ even without having finished his second thesis (*Habilitationsschrift*), and the establishment of the prehistory journal *Der Spatenforscher* (The Spade Researcher) in 1936 with the support of Wilhelm Frick⁸⁶ as well as of a new scientific monographic series called *Irmin* in 1939.⁸⁷ These instances of the consecration of archaeological knowledge were important steps toward the status of prehistory as an academic discipline at Jena University.

One detail concerning this development is very important: in the early 1930s, when prehistory was not yet fully institutionalized at German universities and scholars de-

79 Later *Deutsches Archäologisches Institut* (German Archaeological Institute).

80 Altekamp 2008; Junker 2001, 505–506.

81 Grabolle, Hofsfeld, and Schmidt 2003, 868.

82 See Bollmus 2002, 37; Pape 2002, 168.

83 BAR, R 4901/13272, fol. 6919.

84 ThHStAW, Thüringisches Volksbildungsministerium, No. 21858, fol. 6: Letter dated 19 September 1932, Thüringisches Volksbildungsministerium to Gotthard Neumann. Also see UAJ, D, 3194: Letter dated 23 May 1935, Thüringisches Ministerium für Volksbildung to Gotthard Neumann; ThHStAW, Thüringisches Volksbildungsministerium, no. 21858, fol. 35: Letter dated 18 February 1935, G. Neumann to Thüringischer Volksbildungsminister; UAJ, D 3194: Personal file Prof. Dr. phil. Neumann, Gotthard, Curriculum vitae Gotthard Neumann, dated 1 October 1938, 2–4; BAR, R 4901/13272, fol.

6919.

85 ThHStAW, Thüringisches Volksbildungsministerium, no. 21858, fol. 16: Beschluss des Thüringischen Staatsministeriums, dated 10. April 1934; fol. 35: Letter dated 18 February 1935, Gotthard Neumann to the Thüringischen Volksbildungsministerium; UAJ, D 3194: Letter dated 12 June 1934, Fritz Sauckel, Der Reichsstatthalter in Thüringen; ThHStAW, Der Reichsstatthalter in Thüringen, no. 440, fol. 94: Letter dated 2 February 1937, Fritz Sauckel to Gotthard Neumann.

86 UAJ, C, 799, fol. 152: Letter dated 24 February 1939, Gotthard Neumann to the Thüringische Minister für Volksbildung, F. Stier.

87 UAJ, D 3194: Personal file Prof. Dr. phil. Neumann, Gotthard, Curriculum vitae Gotthard Neumann, dated 1 October 1938, 2–4.

cided to implement a heteronomous strategy to obtain more authority in the scientific field, prehistory had not yet attained an entirely symbolic autonomy. Thus, when scholars imported sorts of capital from the Nazis, they could not transform it completely into the specific scientific language and rules of prehistory, because these components did not yet exist. This circumstance led to a more or less direct import of elements from Nazi ideology into the scientific concepts of German prehistoric archaeologists.⁸⁸

3.4 Conceptual developments and semantic changes, 1933–1945

After 1933, there was, first, a change concerning the place of Neumann's publications. Whereas he had published his first articles in journals with high credibility in the scientific field, he now started to publish in popular cultural and in Nazi journals.⁸⁹ He followed exactly the demand that Nazi science and culture politicians imposed upon the scientific field: namely, that scientific research should be addressed more to ordinary Germans than to academics.⁹⁰ Prehistoric archaeologists such as Neumann considered this demand as a chance to popularize the contents of prehistory in order to create social relevance. This stance was another heteronomous element in the strategy of Neumann and his fellow colleagues, because they did not follow the rules of the scientific field but those of the field of power.

As the Nazis preferred the racial and Germanocentric idea of German prehistory, Neumann began to treat the *Germanenfrage* (Germanic question) more frequently than he had before 1933⁹¹ and thereby imported more and more ideas and concepts from the political field into prehistory. In 1934, he spoke about the “politische Karte Thüringens” (political map of Thuringia) in prehistoric times.⁹² He created an analogy between the prehistoric periods and the contemporary Third Reich. A new term in Neumann's constructions was *Stamm* (clan, tribe),⁹³ which was an ethnic category between the terms *Gruppe* and *Volk*. In the same context, he wrote about “das gute germanische Blut” (the good Germanic blood), which was used together with the term *deutsches Reich* (German Reich).⁹⁴ Thus, Neumann changed his categories from *Kultur* and *Gruppe* to the semantic net of *Blut*, *germanisch*, *deutsch*, *Reich*, *Stamm*, *Volk*. *Blut*, *germanisch*, *deutsch*, *Stamm*, and *Volk* were ethnic attributions; the terms *Reich* and in addition *Boden* were spatial representations of these ethnic categories. Combining both referred to the blood-and-soil-ideology of Nazi ideologues like Richard Walter Darré. This development does not mean that Neumann abandoned the terms *Kultur* and *Kulturgeschichte* (cultural history); rather, they had become more and more interchangeable with more biological terms.⁹⁵

88 See Bourdieu 1998, 19.

89 Neumann 1933a; Neumann 1933c; Neumann 1934b; Neumann 1934a; Neumann 1935c.

90 Grüttner 2000, 565.

91 See Neumann 1933b, 1.

92 Neumann 1934c, 12.

93 Neumann 1934c, 1.

94 Neumann 1934c, 2.

95 Neumann 1933a, 10.

This process of a biologization of cultural history was linked to an intensified use of racial concepts that had become virulent since the establishment of the Nazi regime, which was another demand Nazi science politicians placed on the scientific field: namely, to focus more on the ‘racial question.’ The semantic change here was that Neumann now combined the term *Rasse* with *nordisch* (Nordic) and *indogermanisch* (Indo-Germanic), which became synonymous with Aryan. From an ethnically unspecified focus, Neumann started to concentrate more on the ‘Nordic race,’ which was the *Germanen*.⁹⁶ It was exactly for this concept that Neumann had criticized Kossinna some years before.

It is noteworthy that Neumann was unable to create a very consistent scientific theory in the sense of a Nordic ‘racial’ conceptualization. He remained biased in this respect. Yet, in 1935, he gave a speech on the occasion of the celebration of Jena University, in which he praised Nazi rule and took a stance against the Germanocentric prehistoric archaeologists at the same time.⁹⁷ The problem of the Celts, for example, who many prehistoric archaeologists considered to be non-Germanic, Neumann solved by integrating them into the category of Indo-Germanic *Volk*.⁹⁸ This assumption differed from the knowledge constructions of other prehistoric archaeologists. In contrast to researchers such as Jankuhn, von Richthofen, or Reinerth, Neumann did not want to elevate the Germans above than the Celts; rather, he intended to develop a scientific concept for a *völkisch* categorization of ethnicity in prehistory beyond a Germanocentric classification.⁹⁹ He treated the Slavs slightly differently than the Celts. According to Neumann’s argumentation, the Slavs were also originally an Indo-German people, but their *Volkstum* (nationhood, folklore) degenerated and became inferior to that of the early *Germanen* and the Germans in a later period of ethnic differentiation. In the course of the 1930s, Neumann increasingly considered the Slavs to be an inferior *Volk* by characterizing their archaeological remnants as the products of their inferior culture.¹⁰⁰ According to him, only German influence could bring a higher developed material culture to the Eastern regions.¹⁰¹ The evaluation of certain ethnic groups as superior or inferior was definitely a new element in Neumann’s publications.

Whereas Neumann retained more or less stringent *völkisch*-ethnic concepts for the analysis of ancient cultures during the Nazi regime, the exchange of sorts of capital with the Nazi politicians led to the import of more and more political problems into the research questions of prehistory, because Neumann was unable to transform his mobilized kinds of capital from the political field completely into scientific authority and credibility. Both thought structures intertwined as time went on. As a result, Neumann treated political questions by scientific means: “the clarification of all questions relating to the recovery of the Germanic East after the Slavic flood from the seventh until the

96 Neumann 1934b, 14.

97 Neumann 1935b, 5–9.

98 Neumann 1934b, 22.

99 Neumann 1935a, 143.

100 Neumann 1935b, 141.

101 Neumann 1935d, 142.

ninth century A.D. is the foremost purpose of German historic and prehistoric research for national political reasons.”¹⁰²

At the same time that Neumann imported ideas from the political field, he conceptually consolidated his earlier approaches for the analysis of archaeological findings through ethnicity. In 1936, Neumann published a short programmatic article, in which he presented the future order of archaeological findings in the Jena Museum. Neither typological nor chronological criteria were conducive anymore; a “biological and historical key” was central now. Archaeological objects in the collections were to be ordered along the following categories: “1. The cultures of the Neanderthal and *Loess*-races (Paleolithic Age). 2. The cultures of pre-Indo-Germanics (*[Indogermanen]* Middle Stone Age). [...] 7. The cultures of the Celts (Bronze, Iron, Latène Age: Southern culture circle). The cultures of the Germanics [...]”¹⁰³ Neumann’s reordering of the archaeological knowledge system suggested that there was a teleological line from the primeval *Volk*, the Indo-Germanic *Urvolk* (primeval people), to the *germanisch-deutsche* (Germanic-German) ethnic group that was thought to have developed in the twelfth century A.D.¹⁰⁴ Neumann established a biologization of cultures and historic periods. He substantiated this new order by arguing that the old chronological ordering of archaeological objects was wrong because it implied the same kind of cultural development for every ancient culture in Europe and the Near East, an idea which was rooted in Enlightenment thought. According to Neumann, this meant a generalization of the cultural development of all archaeological cultures, which signified for him a kind of internationalism of scientific knowledge.¹⁰⁵ Rather, he assumed that every culture or ethnic group should be analyzed from the standpoint of its own specificities and spatial origins.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, right-wing scholars, such as the philosopher and sociologist Hans Freyer or the legal scholar Carl Schmitt, assumed that knowledge had no validity on an international level. Rather, they claimed that ‘particular norms’ were significant only for particular peoples, because these norms developed from the particular space in which these peoples were living. Thus, for Germans, only German law was valuable and not the principles of Roman law. Likewise, for Germans in the contemporary Third Reich, only the norms coming from German soil should count, such as the supposedly genuine German form of social organization, the *Volksgemeinschaft*; liberal values, universal ethics, or human rights were illegitimate ideas for the ordering of German society, because they had originated in French and English Enlightenment culture.¹⁰⁷ Like Neumann’s assumption, this theory found its equivalents in Nazi ideology such as Rosenberg’s idea that there was no law

102 Neumann 1935d, 140. My translation.

103 Neumann 1936, 44. My translation.

104 Neumann 1934a.

105 Neumann 1939, 134.

106 Neumann 1939, 135.

107 Muller 1987, 29–30.

as such, but only laws that had originated from a ‘particular *völkisch* order.’ The ideological principles of National Socialism, such as the creation of an ethnocracy by ‘racial’ categorizations and imperial nationalism, could be such ‘particular laws.’¹⁰⁸

In January 1941, Neumann had to serve in the Wehrmacht in Ukraine. During this time, he radicalized his concepts toward open anti-Semitic racism. As a soldier in the signal corps, he found the time to do some small excavations¹⁰⁹ and cooperated with archaeologists who ‘saved’ (i.e., stole) cultural artifacts on Rosenberg’s order.¹¹⁰ Neumann reported his scientific discoveries in two articles. There he characterized the local people as ‘racially’ inferior to the Germans in the sense of an underdeveloped culture. He linked this construction with an anti-Semitism that had not been of interest to him until that moment. Expressions such as *jüdisches Unwesen* (Jewish shallowness)¹¹¹ were linked with *fremd* (strange), whereas the contradictory semantic bundle was *organisch* (organic) and *Boden*. Accordingly, he characterized Jews as inorganic and not rooted in the soil; they were a threat to the local people and to the Germans. In Neumann’s eyes, Jews were not represented in archaeological cultures because they had been strangers to East European soil from the beginning of their settlement in those regions.¹¹² This anti-Semitic semantic became highly virulent regarding the war of extermination in the East, directed by the SS and the Wehrmacht. Neumann’s scientific and political constructions were crucial for the question about which kind of “order semantic,”¹¹³ and *völkisch*-racist thinking was the discursive core of the mindsets of German intellectuals and academics toward genocide and the legitimization of the Holocaust, even though Neumann had never been involved in any genocide activities.¹¹⁴ There is no doubt that Neumann was not alone in this mindset, but there is also no doubt that other intellectuals who were involved in the war in the East and who had a mentality and a position in the Wehrmacht similar to Neumann’s recovered their sense of human rights during the war of extermination in the East,¹¹⁵ whereas Neumann radicalized his ‘racial’ and political categories.

3.5 Neumann’s career until 1945

Let me summarize briefly what has been said so far. From the beginning of his career, Neumann subscribed to an ethnic concept for the analysis of archaeological objects. This was a *völkisch*-ethnic epistemology, in which the terms group and *Volk* were central. By exchanging kinds of capital with Nazi politicians in Thuringia, Neumann added elements

108 See Paxton 2005, 84.

109 Neumann 1941, 35–39.

110 Neumann 1942, 18; see Heuß 2000.

111 Neumann 1941, 39.

112 Neumann 1942, 18.

113 Raphael 2001; Raphael 2004.

114 Fritzsche and Hellbeck 2009, 337–339.

115 See Jarausch 2008, 36–42.

from *völkisch* and Nazi ideology to his thinking, a union which resulted from the non-autonomous situation of prehistory in the scientific field. This situation meant that Neumann's *völkisch*-ethnic approach adhered to a *völkisch*-ethnic-racial-Germanocentric concept, which he transformed into open racism during his service in the Wehrmacht. At the same time, Neumann still differed in his ideas from the hardliner Germanocentrics and from Nazi ideologues: for him, the Celts were originally an Indo-Germanic people, as were the Slavs, even though he believed that the latter had degenerated in the following centuries.

It is difficult to say to what extent this difference of semantics caused Neumann's career to come to a standstill in the late 1930s. Unlike other prehistoric archaeologists, he did not obtain a full professorship until 1945, when his position was finally converted into a full chair after several trials by the principals of Jena University, Abraham Esau and Karl Astel.¹¹⁶ As Neumann was serving in the military on the Eastern Front at that moment,¹¹⁷ the conversion did not take effect. Altogether, one may also ask why Neumann had to perform military service from 1941 until the end of World War II and remained at the rank of a constable,¹¹⁸ a military career that was not very common for university professors, who usually reached higher ranks.¹¹⁹

There were two reasons for Neumann's failure to accumulate successfully more social capital. First, concerning Neumann's engagement with Nazi organizations, one notices that there was a certain lack of enthusiasm on Neumann's part. To be sure, Neumann was a member of the Nazi League of Old Fellows (*NS-Altberrenbund*) and the Nazi League of Teachers (*Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund*),¹²⁰ and he was also a Patronizing Member of the SS (*Förderndes Mitglied der SS*).¹²¹ However, he did not engage actively in more important Nazi organizations that would have provided him with a certain amount of social capital, which for academics were primarily the SS and, in the first years of the regime, the Nazi League of University Teachers (*Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Dozentenbund*). Today, it is not possible to determine whether Neumann had become a

116 ThHStAW, Thüringisches Volksbildungsministerium, no. 21858, fol. 47: Letter dated 11 February 1939, Prof. Porzig, dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, to Thüringischer Minister für Volksbildung. Also see Vorschlag zur Ernennung des planmässigen ao. Professors Dr. phil. Gotthard Neumann zum ordentlichen Professor in der Reichsbesoldungsgruppe H1b oder der ihre entsprechenden Landesbesoldungsgruppe. An den Herrn Staatsminister und Chef der Reichskanzlei des Führers und Reichskanzlers/an die Ministerialgeschäftsstelle bei der Universität Jena, gez. Knopp, dated 24 June 1944. Also see Letter, dated 10 August 1944, the prin-

cipal of the Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena to Thüringischer Minister für Volksbildung.

117 UAJ, D 3194: Personal file G. Neumann, Personalakte, no. 1100.

118 Grabolle, Hofffeld, and Schmidt 2003, 881.

119 See K. J. Arnold 2008, 57–59.

120 APM/Akten Reichsbund: Fragebogen Deutsche Vorgeschichtsforscher u. Vorgeschichtsfreunde, dated 16 September 1935.

121 ThHStAW, Der Reichsstatthalter in Thüringen, no. 440, fol. 78–79: Letter dated 4 August 1937, NSDAP-Gauleitung Thüringen to Reichsstatthalter in Thüringen.

member of the NSDAP or not; we only know that he applied for membership.¹²² Contrary to Neumann, more ingrained Nazi-scholars such as the East German prehistoric archaeologist Walther Schulz became members of the SA and the NSDAP.¹²³ Furthermore, Neumann had some conflicts with important Nazi politicians, such as Robert Ley, who wanted to create a student hostel out of Neumann's institute in 1941,¹²⁴ and Wilhelm Reinhard, the chief of the veteran league Nazi Soldiers' League 'Kyffhäuser', with whom Neumann had to cooperate because Reinhard financed a huge excavation project in Thuringia.¹²⁵

Second, there was a change in Nazi science policy in the late 1930s, which was related to the establishment of Hermann Göring's 'Four Year Plan' in 1936. While Nazis politicians after 1933 initially encouraged professors and junior scholars who were confirmed Nazis or young researchers who focused on the *Germanenfrage*, the direct preparation for war after 1936 demanded different kinds of expertise, namely, that of the 'hard sciences,' such as armament technology or agronomics.¹²⁶ Prehistory undoubtedly worked as part of the cultural war policy of the Nazis by rescuing, stealing, and researching archaeological objects in occupied countries. But prehistoric archaeologists did not produce any goods that could be directly used for warfare. Neumann probably found himself in a similar situation; his research was not considered important enough to be boosted during the war.

3.6 Neumann's trajectory and semantic transitions, 1945–1972

Neumann was released from Jena University in late 1945.¹²⁷ His minor position and lack of support in the scientific field were important reasons for his release. In addition, he had relations to the social group surrounding Hans Reinerth, Kossinna's most famous acolyte, whom the scientific community after 1945 characterized as *the* Nazi archaeologist.¹²⁸ Of course, finding a scapegoat was a post-1945 strategy of those archaeologists who held more powerful positions in the field than Reinerth and others. After some years of exclusion from the scientific field, Neumann again became an assistant professor at the Institute for Prehistory in Jena and, finally, received a full professorship in 1953.¹²⁹ Neumann's trajectory was very similar to that of his older colleague in the GDR Walther Schulz, who received a position at the University of Halle in the same

122 Grabolle, Hoßfeld, and Schmidt 2003, 879; for another opinion see R. Müller 2001, 95.

123 See Eberle 2002, 38–39, 98, 117.

124 Grabolle, Hoßfeld, and Schmidt 2003, 879; for another opinion see R. Müller 2001, 95.

125 NL Neumann, file "Kyffhäuser – Grabungen und Werk": Letter dated 17 January 1943, Gotthard Neu-

mann to Captain a. D. von Schlick. See Aly and Heim 1991, 50–68.

126 Flachowsky 2008, 232.

127 UAJ, D 3194: Friedrich-Schiller-Universität (Prof. Dr. Zucker, Dr. Bense) to G. Neumann (not dated).

128 See Halle 2002, 22–36.

129 R. Müller 2001, 95.

year, after he had been disqualified from academia.¹³⁰ In the end, Neumann received exactly the position he wanted to achieve since his student years, even though he was excluded from academia a couple of years. In the GDR, he became a member of the *Liberal-Demokratischen Partei Deutschlands* (Liberal-Democratic Party of German) and engaged in the evangelical church of Thuringia.¹³¹ It was very common for scholars and scientists in East, but even more so in West Germany, to appeal supposedly Christian-humanistic and non-political values after 1945.¹³²

This repositioning in academia in the then established GDR required specific semantic and epistemic transitions of the former *völkisch* and ‘racial’ knowledge order. Neumann continued to publish scientific articles in the early 1950s. Phrases such as “das landfremde Volk der Glockenbecherleute” (the bell beaker people being foreign to the soil) or the continual usage of the term *Gruppe* indicated a re-combination of older terms and the addition of new ones.¹³³ Whereas soil, ethnicity, and archaeological objects still shaped a semantic bundle, ‘racial’ concepts, above all the Nordic theory, or methods from physical anthropology were not in use anymore. This becomes most obvious in the usage of the word *Leute* (people, without racial connotation), which Neumann added to *Volk* and *Gruppe*. It was possible for Neumann to combine terms such as *Volk* and *Volksgemeinschaft* with the doctrine of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), whereas ‘racial’ categories were unacceptable. Thus, he removed biological and racial elements from his prehistoric scholarship through a reinvention of the term *Kultur* in the period after 1945, and – parallel to that – through an enforced shift of his focus from Germanics to Celts and Slavs. This shift does not mean that Neumann only revitalized his terminology and conceptualization from the 1920s. Instead, the ethnic categories in Neumann’s concept of prehistory were transformed after 1945; the term combination *deutschmittelalterliche Scherben* (German-medieval ceramics)¹³⁴ shows that the ethnic term *deutsch* was still semantically linked with *mittelalterlich* (medieval) as a historic period. Therefore, the linkage between ethnic and material culture and historic periodization that could be converted into a materialistic-Marxist approach endured beyond the end of the Nazi regime. Exactly the same conceptual transitions and transformations are to find in works of other East German scholars who had made career during the Nazi regime and continued their academic trajectory in the GDR, such as Martin Jahn, who focused on the concept of *Kulturgruppen* (culture groups) in the 1950s.¹³⁵

130 Eberle 2002, 390.

131 Vgl. R. Müller 2001, 106.

132 See Rabinbach 2003.

133 Neumann 1954, 8.

134 Neumann 1957, 32.

135 Jahn 1952.

4 Conclusion: The *völkisch* thought and the establishment of German prehistory

The *völkisch*-ethnic concept in German prehistoric archaeology, originating in the second half of the nineteenth century, cannot be considered as “pseudo-science,” as Bettina Arnold proposed.¹³⁶ Instead it had the following functions in German prehistory: First, in the period from the late nineteenth century to the 1920s, it served as a tool of distinction. The *völkisch*-ethnic concept – the linkage of the ethnic terms *Volk*, *Gruppe*, and *Rasse* with geographical and temporal categories – was an element of the identity of this emerging discipline, drawing boundaries between it and others such as the classics. Ethnicity in prehistory appeared as an important element in achieving an autonomous position as a discipline in the scientific field. This does not mean that ethnicity did not play any role in the classics. After 1933 in particular, many scholars turned to the Nordic theory and connected the classic Greek culture with the *Germanenkultur* in middle Europe. Sparta, too, served as a model for legitimating historically the bellicose and racist social model of Nazi Germany.¹³⁷ But, in contrast to prehistory, ethnicity in terms of a biological ‘racial’ interpretation has never been a tool of symbolical distinction in the scientific field.

Second, the *völkisch* concept was closely related to political right-wing groups, with which the archaeologists surrounding Kossinna had close relationships. In the early 1930s, above all in Thuringia, the most promising of these parties was the NSDAP. Neumann chose from the beginning of his career a heteronomous strategy, using the right-wingers to attain a strong position in the scientific field that he could not achieve by fighting with the ‘permitted weapons’ of the scientific field. Because prehistory was not yet a symbolically autonomous and fully established discipline, prehistoric archaeologists such as Gotthard Neumann imported political problems, semantics, and terms into the language and the concepts of prehistory.

Third, for prehistory as a discipline, the exchange of kinds of capital between archaeologists and Nazi politicians was a success story. Through the predominantly heteronomous strategy adopted by scholars, prehistory was established in the 1930s and 1940s and held onto this position even after 1945 in the GDR and the FRG. This was only possible because prehistoric archaeologists developed their main epistemological principles, such as the ethnic concept, before the Nazis came to power. Therefore, they were able to adapt the main elements of the Nazi ideology as easily as they renounced Germanocentric and ‘racial’ categories after 1945. Even though Neumann lost his job as a professor at Jena University, he regained his position in 1953, having abandoned

136 See B. Arnold 2006.

137 See Altekamp 2008, 167–191.

völkisch-Germanocentric and ‘racial’ thoughts but having re-combined and transformed the *völkisch*-ethnic concept.

5 Archival Records and Abbreviations

APM

Archiv des Pfahlbaumuseums Unteruhldingen/Bodensee: files “Korrespondenz Reinerth”, “Akten Reichsbund”.

BAR

Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, Bundesarchiv, Koblenz: files “R 26/III 1, R 490/13272, R 8048/223, R 8048/315, R 4901/13272”.

NL Neumann

Nachlass von Gotthard Neumann (personal papers of Gotthard Neumann), verwaltet von Karl Peschel: file “Kyffhäuser – Grabungen und Werk”.

ThHStAW

Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar: files “Thüringisches Volksbildungsministerium, no. 21858”, “Der Reichsstatthalter in Thüringen, no. 440”.

UAJ

Universitätsarchiv Jena: files “BA 2055, D 3194”.

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