

## Dr. Ilse Seibold, née Usbeck, 1925–2021

### Considered by many as a consecutive memory of major geoscientists

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### Summary of Ilse Seibold's vita

Ilse Seibold, née Usbeck, was born May 8, 1925 in Breslau, Silesia, and went to school in Halle/Saale during WW2. She started her studies of geology and paleontology at the University of Halle and at the Humboldt University in Berlin, and later at the University of Tübingen, where she received her doctorate as micropaleontologist in 1951 with Otto Schindewolf as her supervisor. She remained active as productive scientist over many decades. In 1952, she married Dr. Eugen Seibold, who in 1958 became professor at Kiel University, founded one of Europe's most important institutes for marine geology, and later became president of the German Science Foundation (DFG), and subsequently of the European Science Foundation (ESF). Being a scientist herself Ilse Seibold soon evolved to a deeply reflective insider of geological sciences. She followed her husband during his scientific career from his appointments in Tübingen, Bonn, Karlsruhe, Kiel, to Bonn and Strasbourg/Freiburg i.Br. She accompanied Eugen on his sabbatical leave at Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, CA. She participated in countless international scientific meetings. Together with Eugen she published many papers that document her independence and autonomy as scientist. She gained deep insights into the origins of the geosciences and their historical evolution, up to the ideas of fine arts. We are happy that

she documented in her publications a broad range of her scientific and distinguished-humane impressions.

### Ilse Seibold's merits in geoscience

During the decades she spent in Tübingen and Kiel she published studies on planktic and benthic shallow-water foraminifera and their environment in the Lower and Upper Jurassic ('Malm'). Later on, with Eugen Seibold, she described modern tropical shallow-water species, a result of their joint stay in Cochin, India.

Starting from the mid 1980s—on an honorary position—she took on responsibility for the "Geologen Archiv" which had been initiated by professors Erich Haarmann and Max Pfannenstiel for the Geologische Vereinigung at the University of Freiburg i.Br. Besides enlargement and digitization of the archive over more than 20 years, she evaluated this wealth of information with presentations of the vita of colleagues and the emergence of major scientific concepts. Many were coauthored by her husband Eugen, and most were in German, and published in the *Geologische Rundschau*, which later became the *International Journal of Earth Sciences*. Her work was concerned with many earlier colleagues and topics:

• Johannes Walther—'Der Weg zur Biogeologie' (1992; as book, 1993 as article) • Alfred Wegener and Otto Ampferer (1992) • Hermann Credner (1995) • Otto H. Schindewolf (1997) • Johannes Weigelt (1998) • Heinrich von Dechen (2000) • 'Erratische Blöcke' (Leopold von Buch) (2003) • Milutin Milankovitch (2005) • Hermann Wilhelm Abich (2006) • Curt Teichert (2008) • (religious convictions as support of,,,) Hermann Abich and Heinrich Barth (2009) • Gustav Steinmann (2010); moreover, on • History of Harmony and Hostility (2010) • Questions of Scandinavian sea-level change (2012) (electronic supplement).

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**Fig. 1** Visit to Kiel on the occasion of launching 'EUGEN SEIBOLD' at 11 May 2018. Ilse Seibold in the center, to the left side professor Gerald Haug (MPI Mainz and president of the LEOPOLDINA), to the right: daughter Dr. Ursula Seibold-Bultmann



During her year-long stay at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla CA (1976) she made a German translation of H.W. Menard's article on "Geologie und Geschichte von Land im Meer" (1987).

She was an amiable wife and important counselor of her husband, and served as 'doctor mother' of about 45 of his PhD students, however, never standing in the front row. She demonstrated great humanity when forming the large 'family group' of PhD students and scientific associates. She organized countless, in part very informal dinners and other social events such as over the Christmas season in their apartment and helped to strengthen Eugen Seibold's school of students, setting an example for future generations. In this context she took the camouflage fate and evolution of many students of her husband over the times of radical change of the late 1960s and 1970s as basis for a great book on "Studenten-Muffel. Ratschläge für den Umgang mit einer traurigen Generation" (published under her maiden name, I. Usbeck, in 1982).

Ilse and Eugen Seibold's hospitality was cosmopolitan. Eugen Seibold (as president of IUGS, SCOR, Co-chief of DSDP) got the chance to invite guests from all over the

world for dinner at his private apartment. Decades later they still remembered Seibold's warm and "gemütliche" hospitality. This continued, when Eugen Seibold was president of the German Science Foundation (DFG) at Bonn, where the Seibolds became neighbor of foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, moreover, after the Seibolds moved to Freiburg im Breisgau.

Ilse Seibold became an Honorary Member of the Geologische Vereinigung and was awarded the Abraham-Gottlob-Werner Medal of the German Geological Society. She contributed to the endowment of two scientific prizes, the "Georg-Uschmann-Prize" for History of Science; and the "Eugen-und-Ilse-Seibold-Prize" for German-Japanese cooperation (funded by the Japanese "Blue Planet Prize" of Eugen Seibold).

On 11. May 2018 she greatly enjoyed as 'sponsor' the launch of the research sailing ship "Eugen Seibold" (initiated by Gerald Haug, MPI Mainz) on the occasion of celebrating the hundredth birthday of her husband in Kiel (Fig. 1). In February 2020, her last major journey led her to Halle/S. to join the inauguration of Gerald Haug, a sort of scientific grandson of Eugen Seibold, as president of the Leopoldina,

German National Academy of Sciences.<sup>1</sup> During the last winter she communicated with great interest on phone calls with former PhD students of E. Seibold. We express our deepest sympathy to her daughter, Dr. Ursula Seibold-Bultmann, in Erfurt. All of us who had the chance to meet her would not ever forget Ilse Seibold.

**Supplementary Information** The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00531-021-02052-6>.

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<sup>1</sup> Electronic supplement Nr. 2 presents an obituary in German.