



In Memoriam:
Hanna Bremer (1928-2012).



1973-1992 Chief Editor
Zeitschrift für Geomorphologie

Hanna Bremer was one of the most influential geomorphologists of her generation. Her influence was both national and international and reached across linguistic barriers between German, English and French. Her education at the University of Göttingen in Geography, Geology and Physics served her profoundly well as an intellectual, a field scientist and a critic of popular trends in her discipline of Geomorphology. All the questions and the answers in Geomorphology were to be found (for Hanna) in the field, in the laboratory and in theory (and in that order). Her doctorate in fluvial geomorphology from Göttingen (1958), followed by her habilitation on central Australian geomorphology in 1966 from Heidelberg to the core of her life's work directed from her Chair at the University of Köln (1972-93) on tropical geomorphology and soils represent a major contribution to our science.

Hanna conducted field work in Australia, Nigeria, Amazonia, Mali, Kenya, India and Sri Lanka and together with her close collaborators Achim Schnütgen and the late Heinz Späth she wrote the definitive "Morphogenesis in the Wet Tropics" with an emphasis on weathering and relief development in Sri Lanka. Her single authored books on "The Tropics", "Relief and Soils" and "Inselbergs" stand as monuments to her originality and massive field experience.

I got to know Hanna on a first name basis during the field meeting of the IGU Commission on Field Experiments in Geomorphology held in the Ukraine in the summer of 1976. As the only German participant on that field trip, it fell to her to protest vigorously and seemingly continuously at the overemphasis on stopping at war

memorials to the apparent neglect of field geomorphology! I learned at that time to respect her fierce independence of mind and dedication to her discipline.

The premature death of Heinz Späth in 1989 had serious consequences for Hanna's last two decades of writing and research. It had been Hanna's intention that Heinz would take over her laboratory after her retirement. The depth of Hanna's mourning reflected not only their close working relationship but also her anticipation of the eventual demise of her laboratory in the absence of an obvious successor.

In the 1980s, Hanna played a seminal role in the planning and conceptualizing of the International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG). The First International Conference on Geomorphology was held in Manchester in 1985 and the formal initiation of the IAG followed in Frankfurt in 1989 at the Second International Conference on Geomorphology. In 1993, Hanna Bremer was named to an Honorary Senior Fellowship of the IAG in recognition not only of her scholarship but also of the way in which she had been instrumental (together with Ian Douglas, Denys Brunsten and Dietrich Barsch) in bringing the British and German geomorphological research groups together with a single objective of fostering international geomorphology.

Hanna's role as Editor of *Zeitschrift für Geomorphologie* and her active support for the Supplementary Volume Series represents another singular and important contribution to her discipline. Hanna received many honours and continued to write until the last few years of her life. A year or so ago, at her home in Wilhelmsfeld, I last saw her painstakingly cataloguing her vast collection of tropical soil micromorphology slides and requesting assistance with English terminology.

It was a privilege to know Hanna the scientist and Hanna the friend. She overcame enormous prejudice against women scientists in the geomorphological establishment and succeeded by outperforming most and outlasting many of her strident critics. Her legacy will speak in her favour. She was a genuinely global geomorphologist who thought deeply at the "landschaftsgürtel" scale and relied heavily on microscale evidence from the laboratory.

We will miss your commanding and humane presence, Hanna. With thanks for each memory.

Olav Slaymaker,
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The University of British Columbia.

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