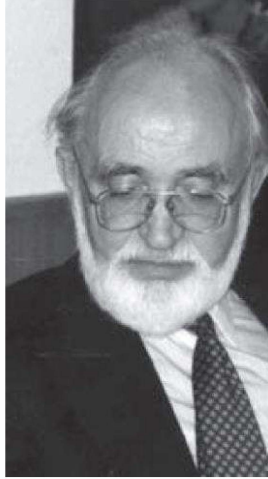


Obituary: Wilfried Krutzsch (1928–2022)



Wilfried Krutzsch, 1998

(photo: archive Harald Walter, Freiberg/Sa., Germany)

Almost unnoticed by the palaeontological community, the German palaeo-palynologist Wilfried Krutzsch passed away in Berlin on 17 April 2022 at the ripe old age of 94. With this short obituary, we would like to remember him especially from the perspective of scientists researching in Cenozoic units in central and eastern Germany.

Wilfried Krutzsch will be remembered by the professional community in palaeo-palynology as an excellent expert on the central and eastern German palynofloras from the mid-

Cretaceous to the Pliocene and as a leading author of Paleogene and Neogene palynomorph zonation for this region. He leaves behind an immense knowledge, documented in numerous publications, and an extensive collection of palynomorph slides, which were the basis of all knowledge and which, stored in the archives, can also be used for future investigations and revisions. As a former employee at the Central Geological Institute of the GDR in Berlin, he was bound to secrecy, especially with regard to all data relating to lignite deposits, which was - *de facto* - equivalent to a partial publication ban on his research results. Therefore, after the political change in East Germany in 1989, he endeavoured to publish his results and stratigraphic interpretations in monographs and overview papers. Tables with many columns and several pages testify to his endeavour to include all available geoscientific data in his considerations and concepts in a summarised form.

Wilfried Krutzsch was a scientist who sometimes found it difficult to acknowledge that the results of others also critically questioned his stratigraphic concepts in certain respects, especially when other opinions and interpretations came from results of new geological mapping and lithostratigraphic classifications. His sometimes dogmatic stance and polemical contributions in publications have unnecessarily polarised and unfortunately obscured his undisputed scientific expertise. For example, his biostratigraphic classification of the type section of the Niederschöna Formation in the Saxon Cretaceous Basin as upper lower Cenomanian, which dates back to the 1960s and has since been almost forgotten, was independently confirmed in 2023, ruling out the middle Cenomanian age that was believed to be certain.

In the last decade of his life, Wilfried Krutzsch endeavoured to secure his scientific legacy for the generations that followed him. Unfortunately, there is currently no other person with such comprehensive knowledge as him, who can help to professionally support the challenges we face in preparing for the future by providing reliable palynostratigraphic classifications of Cenozoic sediments in central and eastern Germany. Here, we are called upon to specifically train young scientists and thus utilise Krutzsch's scientific legacy in a productive way.

Detailed biographical data can be found in the commemorative publication issued by the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin in 1993 on the occasion of his 65th birthday.

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