



STEINEN, HELMUT VON DEN (*1890; †1956)

Helmut von den Steinen grew up in Marburg and was the son of the medical doctor, anthropologist and Americanist Karl von den Steinen. After school he studied sociology and German philology at the University of Heidelberg, where he received his PhD with a thesis on book history. While spending some time in Frankfurt am Main, he met Leo Frobenius and started working as his assistant in 1928. In 1933 he co-published with Heinrich Wieschoff the book entitled *Leo Frobenius: Kulturgeschichte Afrikas. Prolegomena zu einer historischen Gestaltlehre* [Leo Frobenius: *Cultural history of Africa. Prolegomena to a historical morphology*]. In 1934–35, he took the chance to participate in the

Frobenius Institute's first expedition to Ethiopia, accompanying Adolf Ellegard Jensen, Hellmut Wohlenberg and Alf Bayrle. While the rest of the group carried out research in the south of Ethiopia, von den Steinen went to the north of the country. When he returned to Germany in 1935 his Jewish ancestry meant that it was impossible for him to be employed as a research assistant. He left Germany and stayed abroad in different countries (Italy, Greece, Palestine, Egypt and Uganda). Unfortunately, he was never able to publish his findings. However, his 170 photographs of Gondar and its surroundings were left in the photo archive of the Institute. In his later professional career, von den Steinen focused mainly on writing, journalism and publishing with a particular interest in Ancient and Modern Greek literature. He died in 1956.