

WHERE WOMEN SMOKE & BANANA TREES GROW NO FRUIT



Elisabeth Pauli The Soul of the Expedition



„Pauli drawing“ (Ha 106-5)

Elisabeth Pauli was born in 1906 in Cologne, Germany, to a middle-class family. After an education as a painter, she looked for an opportunity to escape the conventional career path expected of her. In 1933 she joined Leo Frobenius' research institute which, at that time, was called "Institut für Kulturmorphologie". After the Second World War, the institute prepared for its first expedition and Pauli joined as a painter, though she had also gained enough knowledge to participate in ethnographic fieldwork.



Photograph from newspaper column

Pauli was the soul of the expedition. Not only did she keep the different personalities of the team together, she helped to organize the supplies for the expedition in both Germany and Ethiopia.



„Pauli at the typewriter“ (Pa 35-35)

She maintained contact with the Frobenius Institute by writing a report. She sent her mail via the mission station in Gidole and often used merchants as her carriers.



Letter from Pauli to her mother

She also wrote private letters, most of all to her mother to whom she had a very close relationship. From those letters we learn a lot about the expedition.



„Jensen and Pauli“ (Wd 27-7)

Pauli returned to Frankfurt on Christmas Eve in 1951. Few months later she married Prof. A. E. Jensen. Thus, the expedition also benefited her private life.