



WOHLENBERG, HELLMUT (*1892; †1939)

Hellmut Wohlenberg was born in Hannover in 1892. After graduating from high school he studied modern languages and philosophy at the universities of Grenoble, Munich, Leipzig and Göttingen. In 1914 his studies were interrupted by World War I, during which he was injured twice. In 1919 he took up his studies in Göttingen and two years later finished with first and second state examinations for teaching. He then became a teacher in Paderborn and Hannover.

From 1923 onwards Wohlenberg maintained a close intellectual friendship with Leo Frobenius, whom he had met in Munich.

Frobenius continuously tried to engage Wohlenberg as a collaborator and this intense relationship continued throughout the time that Frobenius moved his *Institute for Cultural Morphology* to Frankfurt am Main. In 1934, Frobenius invited Wohlenberg to work at his institute in Frankfurt and was offered him the chance to combine teaching with ethnological research. Subsequently in 1934–35 he travelled to southern Ethiopia with Adolf Ellegard Jensen, the painter Alf Bayrle and Helmut von den Steinen. During their trip they discovered the stone steles that were later transferred to the anthropological museum in Frankfurt am Main. Wohlenberg was the one who discovered *Tutto Fela*, where the steles were found. The results of the research trip were published in a book edited by Jensen in 1936, *Im Lande des Gada Wanderungen zwischen Volkstrümmern Südabessiniens*. [*In the land of Gada. Walking between the ethnic ruins of southern Abyssinia*]. The chapters including the travel reports from October 1934 to May 1935 and those on prehistoric megaliths in south Abyssinia were mainly written by Wohlenberg. Many of his reports and articles on the expedition were published in various newspapers. In 1939, shortly after the expedition to Ethiopia, Wohlenberg died at the age of just forty-six. His main studies on megalithic culture and tattoos remained unfinished.