



JENSEN, ADOLF ELLEGARD (\*1899; †1965)

Adolf Ellegard Jensen was born in Kiel in 1899. He served as a soldier in World War I. After the war he studied mathematics, natural sciences and philosophy in Kiel and Bonn, finishing his dissertation on Max Planck and Ernst Mach in 1922. In 1923 he became an assistant at the *Institute for Cultural Morphology*, newly founded in Munich by Leo Frobenius. As Frobenius' student, he habilitated in 1933 with a study on circumcision and maturity rites. Before World War I he participated in many of the Frobenius Institute's expeditions to South Africa, Libya, southern Ethiopia and Ceram (Indonesia). In 1936 he became custodian at the Anthropological Museum (today: Museum for

the Cultures of the World) in Frankfurt. After Frobenius' death in 1938, Jensen was supposed to be his successor as the director of both the Institute and the Anthropological Museum. But his appointment was blocked because of his refusal to collaborate with the Nazi regime and the fact that he was married to a Jewish woman; his permission to teach was also later withdrawn and he was again recruited as a soldier in 1939. After the war ended he became director of the Anthropological Museum before finally taking up a full professorship at the Institute for Social Anthropology and the directorship of the Frobenius Institute. Together with the Hamburg anthropologist Franz Termer, he founded the *German Anthropological Association*. Between 1951 and 1955 he led two research expeditions to Ethiopia. In 1952 he married his third wife, his assistant Elisabeth Pauli.

Jensen adapted Frobenius' ideas on cultural morphology and applied them to his research on religion. His attempt at analysing religious beliefs and practices through the different stages defined in cultural morphology opposed the usual theoretical positions of his time. Jensen died shortly after his retirement in 1965.