development is due to Mertens's aggressive exchange program, to the numerous collections donated by correspondents, and above all to his own field work. Even during the darkest days of World War II, German soldiers would send him reptiles captured in occupied lands, using the army's field postal system. For safekeeping during that war, Mertens evacuated most of the collections to rural towns; the most important specimens were set up in a dance hall in Oberlais (Hess), where they could still be actively used despite war-time conditions. Fortunately, only a third of the collection remained at Senckenberg, for the museum was badly damaged in the Allied bombing of Frankurt early in 1944. When he became director in 1947, Mertens's main task was to reconstruct the collections and the building from war damage.

Mertens greatly enjoyed field work and, beginning with a trip to Tunisia in 1913, he travelled to about 30 countries in search of specimens. His major expeditions were to the Indoaustralian Archipelago, the Cameroons and Southwest Africa, Hispaniola, El Salvador, Pakistan, and Australia. In most instances major monographs on each country's herpetofauna followed, and for some of them semi-popular books were also published. These collections led to some of his most important works, including "Die Insel-Reptilien" (1934), a study of island biogeography and evolution, his well-known monograph on varanid lizards (in three parts, all 1943), and numerous revisions of genera and descriptions of new species. In addition, Mertens initiated a series of checklists of the European herpetofauna (three editions: 1928 and 1940, both co-authored with Lorenz Müller; 1960, with Heinz Wermuth), designed along the lines of the American lists by Leonhard Stejneger and Thomas Barbour, which served to standardize nomenclature. Mertens also had a special interest in turtles, crocodiles, and the tuatara, and published important checklists of them with Wermuth in 1955, 1961, and 1977.

Besides his interest in the systematics and distribution of amphibians and reptiles, from boyhood Mertens studied living animals, particularly their behavior. He kept large menageries at the museum and at his home in which he made useful observations and published noteworthy studies, the most important of which was "Die Warn- und Droh-Reaktionen der Reptilien" (1946), the first major review of warning and threatening behaviors. He also made several contributions to the coral snake mimicry problem.

Because of his interest in living animals, Mertens contributed regularly to German terrarium journals, and he strongly encouraged amateurs. Accordingly, he also published several semi-popular books on the subject, most notably "Die Lurche und Kriechtiere des Rhein-Main-Gebietes" (1947), "Kriechtiere und Lurche: Welches Tier ist das?" (1952, later editions 1960, 1964, 1968), and the beautifully illustrated "La Vie des Amphibiens et Reptiles" (1959, later editions in English, Italian, and Spanish), all of which demonstrate his extensive knowledge of the biology of these animals and their lives in nature.

Mertens also contributed numerous articles on biography, including a book on Eduard Rüppell (1949), Senckenberg's first herpetologist. Mertens continued active research into his 81st year. On 5 August 1975 he was bitten by a specimen of *Thelotornis*, an African rear-fanged snake, which had been a longtime pet at his home. Unfortunately, no antivenin existed for this species, and after 18 painful days, Mertens died in Frankfurt. Throughout this ordeal he kept a diary of each day's events, in which he wrote, with black humor, "für einen Herpetologen einzig angemessene Ende," or in translation, "a singularly appropriate end for a herpetologist."

• *References*: Mertens, 1967 (pp. 17-34); "Prof. Dr. Robert Mertens †," by H. Wermuth, Aquar. Terrar. Zeitschr. (DATZ), 28: 430-432, 1975; "Prof. Robert Mertens," by W. D. Haacke, Jour. Herpetol. Assn. Africa, 14: 35-36, 1975; "Robert Mertens (1894-1975)," by K. Klemmer, Natur und Mus., 106: 252-255, 1976; "Robert Mertens, 1894-1975," by C. Gans, Copeia, 1976: 420, 1976; "Die Wissenchaft und das lebende Tier," by H. Wermuth, Natur und Mus., 108: 245-248, 1976; "Robert Mertens, sein Leben und Werk," by K. Klemmer, and other articles. Cour. Forsch.-Inst. Senckenberg, 20: 1-104, 1977; "Erinnerung an Prof. Dr. Robert Mertens (1894-1975)," by O. G. Dely, Vertebr. Hungar., 18: 3-6, 1978. • *Portrait* (1951): By M. Graham Netting, courtesy Carnegie Museum. • *Signatures* (on left, dated 1912): From Klemmer, 1976; (on right, 1972): Adler collection.

KOPSTEIN, Felix (1893-1939).

Felix Kopstein, Austrian physician and naturalist, was born in Vienna on 4 June 1893. Even as a student Kopstein was interested in herpetology, and in 1914 he made a collecting trip to Albania. The specimens thus obtained were donated to the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna, where he was associated informally with Otto von Wettstein, and formed the basis for his first paper (1914). He studied medicine and biology in Vienna (1913-1920).

In January 1921, Kopstein moved to the East Indies as a medical doctor in the Dutch government service and during the first three years he worked in Ambon (today called Amboina, in what is now eastern Indonesia), from which base he travelled extensively in the Moluccas and to New Guinea. These trips and others in Indonesia were summarized in his book "Een Zoölogische Reis Door de Tropen" (published in about 1930). Soon after arriving in Ambon, Kopstein contacted the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie in Leiden and offered to donate specimens. He sent large collections of vertebrates, including amphibians and reptiles, as well as invertebrates, from Ambon and other parts of Indonesia. His ultimate goal, to obtain a position at the Rijksmuseum, was never achieved, although he worked at the museum during his European furloughs in 1927 and 1929-1930 and from 1938 on.

In 1924 Kopstein was transferred to Java where, among other duties, he was employed by the Institut Pasteur in Bandoeng (now Bandung). At different times he worked in various parts of the island. In the meantime he began to study his own collections of lizards and snakes, which resulted in a large number of papers, including a series entitled "Herpetologische Notizen" (in 18 numbered parts,