PALMYRA 1992
by Michał Gawlikowski

After four seasons devoted to the excavation, and partly restoration of a large house in downtown Palmyra, as well as of a 2nd century basilica converted into a church in the same neighbourhood, it would only be natural to continue this undertaking, especially as both buildings are not yet entirely cleared. However, local developments persuaded me, after a discussion with Mr. Khaled As'ad, to postpone these plans until next year, in spite of the promise they hold, other more urgent business requiring now our assistance.

There are indeed serious reasons to suppose that the building of a dam at the far end of the Valley of Tombs and the eventual forming of a lake behind it will present an imminent risk to the tombs and their contents. As it is well known, the extraordinary preservation in the tower tombs of Palmyra of perishable materials such as textiles, but also wood and even papyri, as found during our recent work in the Kitot tower, is due to the extremely stable and dry conditions prevailing so far inside these monuments. These conditions may soon be drastically altered as a result of filling of a lake nearby, to say nothing of the expected increase of the general public.

Bearing these circumstances in mind, and in close cooperation with the Palmyra Museum, we have turned our full attention to the Valley.[1]

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[1] The mission included this year, beside the present writer, Dr. Maria Krogulska, Mssrs. Janusz Byliński and Zbigniew Godziejewski, as well as two students, Miss Anna Witecka and Mr. Sławomir Kowalski. This 32nd

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