

THIRTY YEARS OF SYRO–GERMAN / AUSTRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AT PALMYRA

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In 1980 a new branch of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) was installed in Damascus with the kind support of the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums in Syria (DGAM). In the same year, a Syro–German joint archaeological mission was created, based on a cooperation agreement between the DAI and DGAM.¹ The aim of the mission was to start archaeological investigations in Palmyra following up on the research of Theodor Wiegand and his colleagues (Wiegand [ed.] 1932). One year later, in 1981, the mission – directed by the authors – started its work in Palmyra.²

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2 From the beginning the mission was directed by the respective directors of antiquities and museums of Palmyra, Khaled al-As'ad (until 2002) and his successor Waleed al-As'ad (since 2003), as well as by Andreas Schmidt-Colinet, vice director of the DAI branch in Damascus (from 1980), subsequently assistant professor at the University of Berne, Switzerland (from 1984) and professor for archaeology at the University of Vienna, Austria (from 1996). Fieldwork was supported by the vice directors and technical attachés of the Museum of Palmyra, Ahmed and Ali Taha. The authors would like to thank the DGAM and the DAI for administrative, logistic and financial support. Furthermore, we thank the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Fritz-Thyssen Foundation, the Austrian Research Foundation (FWF) and the University of Vienna for having financed the principal work of the mission. Our thanks go also to the institutions working with us: Catholic University Leuven, Marmara University Istanbul, National Institute for Conservation of Monuments Munich, National Museum Damascus, University of Applied Sciences Cologne, University of California Los Angeles, University of Damascus, Technical University of Clausthal-Zellerfeld, Technical University of Munich.