

ANDREAS GESTRICH

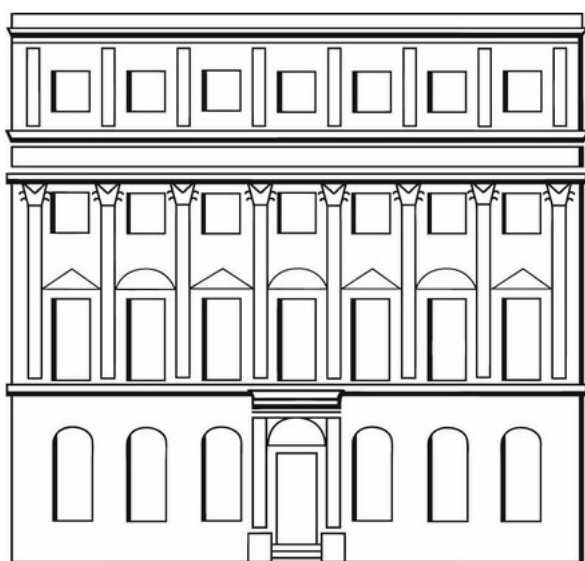
Foreword

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Foreword

The global rise in armed conflicts and political upheavals, together with the increasing frequency of natural disasters, has established the problems of cross-border humanitarian aid as one of the key topics of recent national and international political debates. Cross-border humanitarian aid touches on many sensitive and controversial issues, such as national sovereignty, if this help is provided against the wishes of governments or regimes. The tension between felt moral obligations to intervene with aid and the social and economic limits on doing so effectively frequently results in major political controversies at national as well as international level. The effectiveness of humanitarian aid is also debated in contexts such as its tendency to create new dependencies, or to feed corruption rather than hungry children.

This timely volume discusses many aspects of these problems and ambiguities of humanitarian aid in a global perspective. It also highlights a specific interest the German Historical Institute London takes in all aspects of Solidarity and Care, one of the Institute's three main research areas. It examines the various forms and models of support as well as different actors in this field—states, organizations, individuals. The GHIL research group also engages actively with debates and methodologies in conceptual and discourse history. It is interesting, for example, to observe that the term 'care', which used to stand for more paternalistic aid structures, has gained increasing prominence over recent years, also in the discourse of international aid.

The volume results from a conference which was organized by Johannes Paulmann at the German Historical Institute London in 2011, when he was the first Gerda Henkel Visiting Professor, a position jointly offered by the German Historical Institute London and the London School of Economics. Our combined and very special thanks go to the Gerda Henkel Foundation, whose generous support for this wonderful and prestigious programme has made all this possible. The conference and Johannes Paulmann's work in the context of his Visiting Professorship have both enhanced the

German Historical Institute's research and resulted in continuing co-operation. I am very grateful to Johannes Paulmann for his continuing interest in and support of the Institute's research agenda.

An edited volume such as this depends on the co-operation and help of many people. I would like to thank all the authors for their wonderful papers and their co-operation and patience in the process of turning conference results into a book, and Johannes Paulmann for his careful work as the volume's editor. At Oxford University Press I should like to thank Sarah Holmes and the Delegates for accepting the volume for publication, and the anonymous reviewers for their careful reading of the manuscript and valuable comments and suggestions. Finally, special thanks also go to two members of the German Historical Institute staff. The organizational skills of Carole Sterckx ensured the smooth running of the conference, and Angela Davies took great care in editing the texts and preparing this volume for publication. The main credit for conceiving and preparing the conference and editing the volume must, however, go to Johannes Paulman. I should like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to him.

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