

CITATION FOR DR OTTO BRAASCH

Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

Our knowledge and understanding of the pattern, distribution, density and complexity of settlements of all periods has been revolutionised over the last 50 years through the work of aerial archaeologists. Again and again they have challenged the cherished assumptions of terrestrially based archaeologists. They have both challenged our understanding of the past and provided enormous material for continuing archaeological study.

Foremost amongst the aerial archaeologists operating within Europe is Dr Otto Braasch. For over 25 years he has been photographing our common European inheritance from the air. While it may be fair to say that he is most interested in the Roman period, in common with most aerial archaeologists, he covers everything from the Neolithic to the 20th century. He is also happy to fly with anybody in order to either learn from them or pass on his knowledge to others. He has thus flown with the British greats – Kenneth St Joseph, Jim Pickering and Derrick Riley – as well as training new people such as Klaus Leidorf in Germany and others from many European countries including Bob Bewley, Frances Griffiths and Chris Musson from the UK, Martin Gojda from the Czech Republic, Wlodek Raczkowski and Zbigniew Kobylinski from Poland, as well as many other colleagues in Hungary, Estonia and Latvia. Otto Braasch may be self taught, but it is he who is doing the teaching now.

Otto Braasch has worked in 15 European countries and flown with colleagues from all of them. Indeed, he is a great builder, building bridges between European states. He knows no boundaries and accepts no challenge as too great. He has been indefatigable in his search for new sites across our new and expanded Europe in particular taking the opportunities afforded by the end of the Cold War.

Otto Braasch takes the highest quality images. He is very professional in his approach. His equipment is so sophisticated that it can tell him the whereabouts of other aircraft before the air traffic controllers know it is there!

Nor has Otto Braasch neglected publications. He has over 60 publications to his credit, including articles, reports in annual journals and chapters in books. His work has not only helped to transform our understanding of Europe's past but it also aids in other people's efforts to preserve it.

Naturally, Otto Braasch has provided photographs for many exhibitions, including the RAPHAEL project in 1996 exhibited in Prague and Dresden. He is the main driving force behind the Culture 2000, *Conservation through Aerial Archaeology*, which began in November 2000 and will end in November 2001. This project has already had workshops in Poland and London, training schools and workshops in Italy and will end in the workshop in Berlin.

The award of the European Archaeological Heritage Prize for 2001 to Dr Otto Braasch is personal. It acknowledges his contribution to aerial archaeology, to our knowledge of our common European heritage, to the help he has provided through his work to the preservation of that heritage and to his training of many other aerial archaeologists throughout Europe. Bringing him here today will at least provide a little relieve from a punishing schedule of

800 to 900 hours flying which he undertakes every year. However, over and above that I am sure that Otto Braasch will be the first to welcome the presentation of this prize to an aerial archaeologist for it helps to acknowledge the signal importance of aerial archaeology today and the most important contribution it has made to all periods of archaeology. In presenting this prize to Otto Braasch it may not be going too far to say that this demonstrates that aerial archaeology has indeed come of age and is taking its rightful place as an important archaeological technique for the 21st century.