

Máté Szabó

ARCHAEOLOGY FROM ABOVE

**Episodes from the History
of the Aerial Archaeological Archive of Pécs**



BUDAPEST 2016

The publication of this volume was generously funded by
the National Cultural Fund of Hungary



The present volume is dedicated to the 650th anniversary
of the foundation of the University of Pécs, Hungary

Front Cover

Before or instead of excavation? The double concentric ditch and the inner row of post-holes are outlined in remarkable detail in the colourful cereal field near Sárvár (Vas County)

Back Cover

Pécs, a city with a uniquely Mediterranean atmosphere, has been and still is home to many ethnic minorities. The Turkish occupation left its mark on the city. The former djami, now a Catholic church, and the symbolic outline of the church that stood there before the Ottoman period can be seen at the end of the main square

ISBN 978-963-9911-87-1

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Archaeolingua Foundation

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2016

ARCHAEOLOGIA ALAPÍTVÁNY
H-1250 Budapest, Úri u. 49

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Printed in Hungary by AduPrint Kft

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Foreword and Acknowledgements

As a discipline with an over century-long history, aerial archaeology developed along different trajectories in various countries. Although the many twists and turns in Hungary's twentieth-century history left its imprint on the discipline, the aerial survey of archaeological sites could finally take off in the 1990s. The foundations of the Aerial Archaeological Archive of Pécs were laid down through Zsolt Visy's interest in the discipline's methodology, as well as through the fruitful collaboration with Otto Braasch, a German aerial archaeologist. In the wake of this collaboration and various research projects conducted under the auspices of the University of Pécs, the collection was enriched by roughly fifty thousand aerial archaeological photos, while the institution's importance extended well beyond Hungary's borders.

The twentieth anniversary of the Aerial Archaeological Archive of Pécs is not merely a jubilee marking the Archive's "coming of age", which inspired this book, but also a turning point in its history. Secure in the knowledge that the research projects determining the Archive's life are safely on track, Zsolt Visy resigned from his post and, passing the torch to the younger generation, now watches his "bird's flight" – not unlike Otto Braasch, whose findings, made in the course of his exciting and successful flights, are today preserved in the Archive's collection.

This book presents the history of the past twenty years through photos and by evoking various episodes of our research. It simultaneously offers an insight into the collection, much of which was only accessible to specialists working with the material.

A familiarity with the Archive's collection and with one particular slice of its history was my main springboard for this book, which could not have been written without the many people who generously contributed their time and knowledge during its preparation. The chapter on the aerial archaeological training week of 1996 is filled with life through the photos made by Michael Doneus, Pete Horne and Rog Palmer, while the section on drones and image-based 3D modelling would be incomplete without András Balogh and his enthusiastic team. I am grateful to Máté Stibrányi for his help in identifying uncertain sites and to Szilamér Péter Pánczél for his insightful comments on the chapters covering Transylvania. Many thanks go to András Szabó for the translation of the text into English and to the editors of Archaeolingua for seeing the manuscript through to publication. Finally, I wish to thank my family for their unfailing support and patience.

Máté Szabó