

A woman with dark hair and bangs, wearing a light-colored t-shirt, is shown from the chest up. She is holding a small, realistic-looking globe of the Earth in her right hand, with her fingers gently supporting it from below. She is looking up at the globe with a contemplative expression. The background is dark and out of focus, with some blurred lights. The text "Is Google Earth enough?" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

# Is Google Earth enough?

Rog Palmer  
Air Photo Services  
Cambridge

*I think that the availability of GE is the most important development in aerial archaeology since the introduction of computational methods to deal with such pictures in my lab back in 1976, and there will be many more new uses to follow.*

*(Irwin Scollar, email, 24 June 2008)*

Yes... but....

# Google Earth – the good and the bad

## *Advantages*

Freely available

Records modern land use

Records some archaeological sites

Records some natural features

Includes 'Historical' layers .... but .... it is recent 'history'

Can be rotated for optimum viewing

KMZ files are good for 'indexing' and communicating sites to others

Anyone can now 'interpret' aerial pictures

## *Disadvantages*

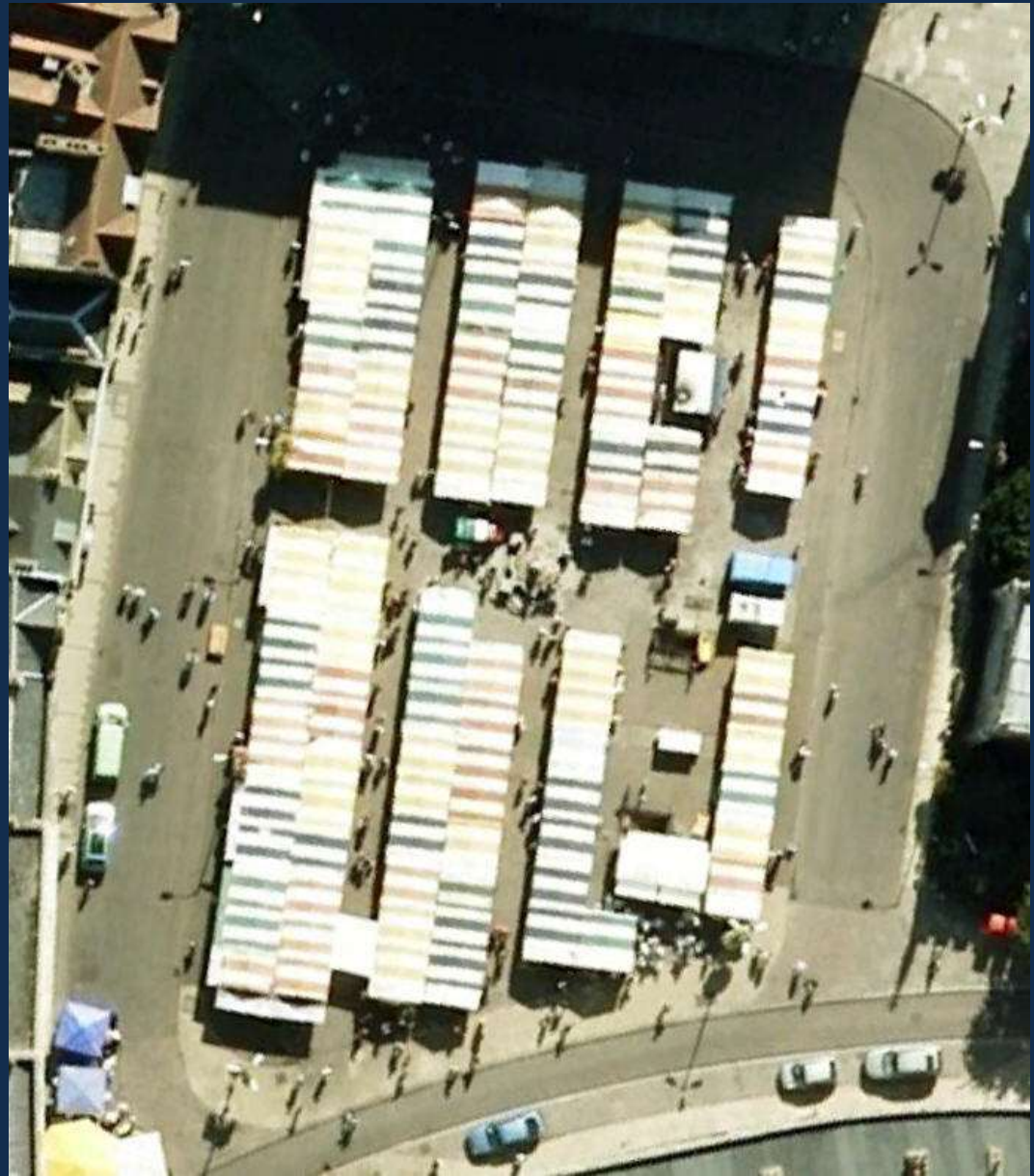
Resolution varies

No stereo viewing possible

Cambridge market, UK

Aerial photograph:

Resolution (in GE)  
may be 50-60cm





Fortress at Sucidava  
(Celeiu)

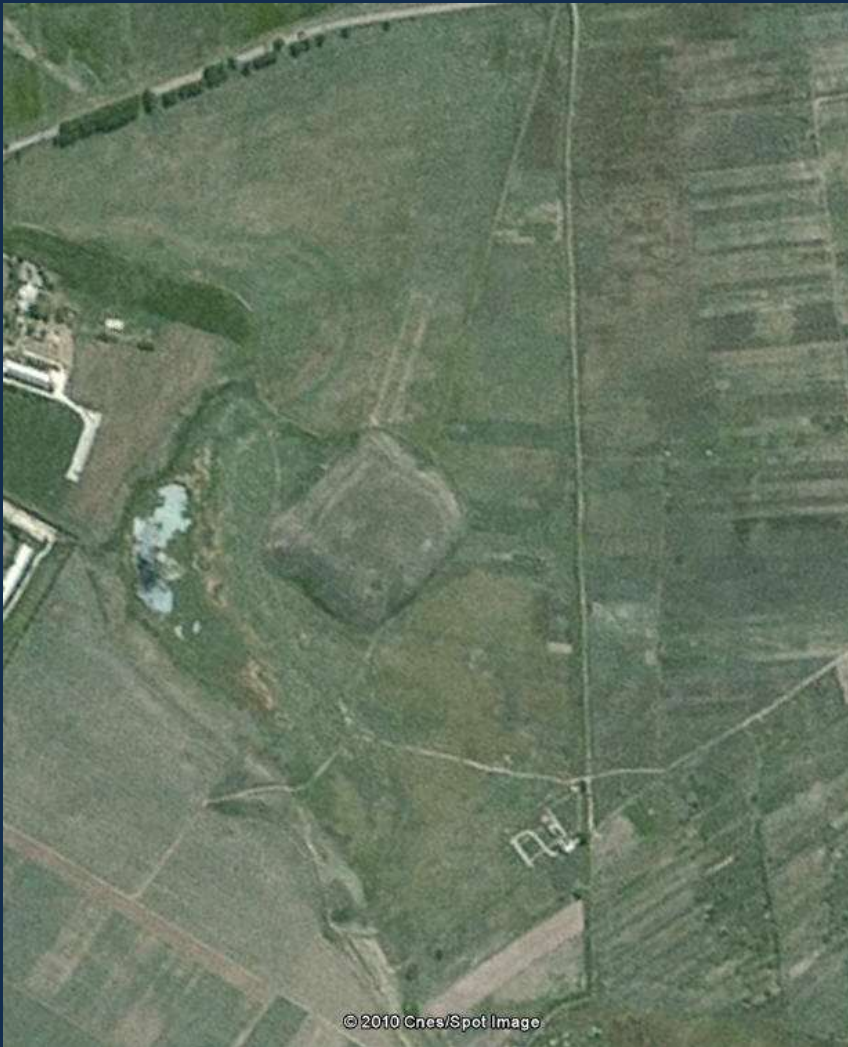
GeoEye satellite

Resolution  
of about 1m





Tell at Gumelnita  
SPOT satellite: resolution 2m(?)



Tell at Magura-Bran  
SPOT satellite: resolution 5m(?)



Seimeni, Romania: suggested to be a huge neolithic ritual site. But...

North to the top



South to the top





... is very similar in appearance to this oil storage depot at Constanta.





Fordham,  
Cambridgeshire:

Suggested to be  
a Roman villa...



Fordham,  
Cambridgeshire:

Suggested to be  
a Roman villa...

...but it is an  
area of crop  
trials



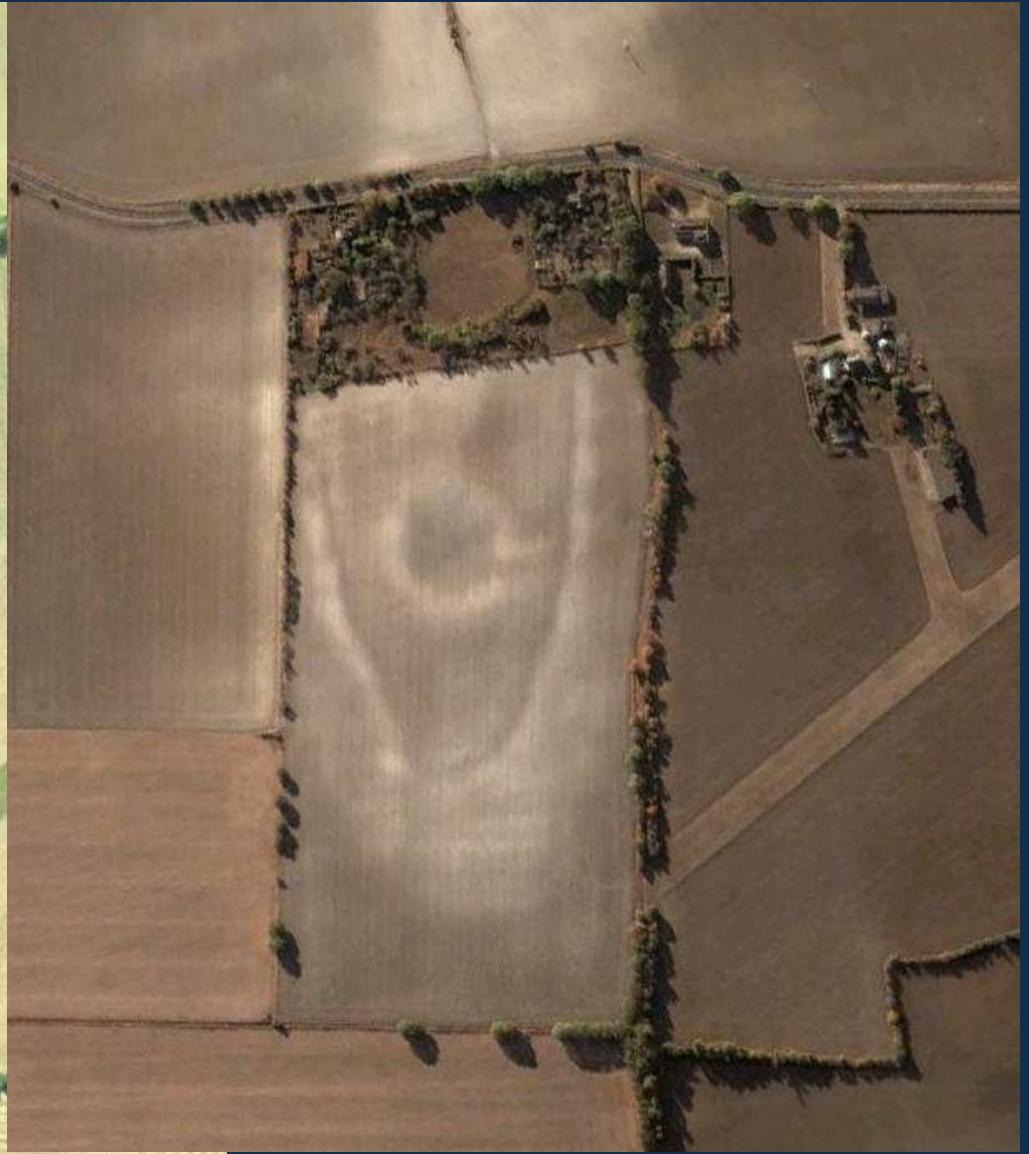


Great Eversden, Cambridgeshire: summer 2003. Suggested to be a hillfort with an internal henge



Spring-summer 2003

16 October 2003





Context...and reference to a map that names it Claypit Hill = non archaeological



...but sometimes people find genuine archaeological sites

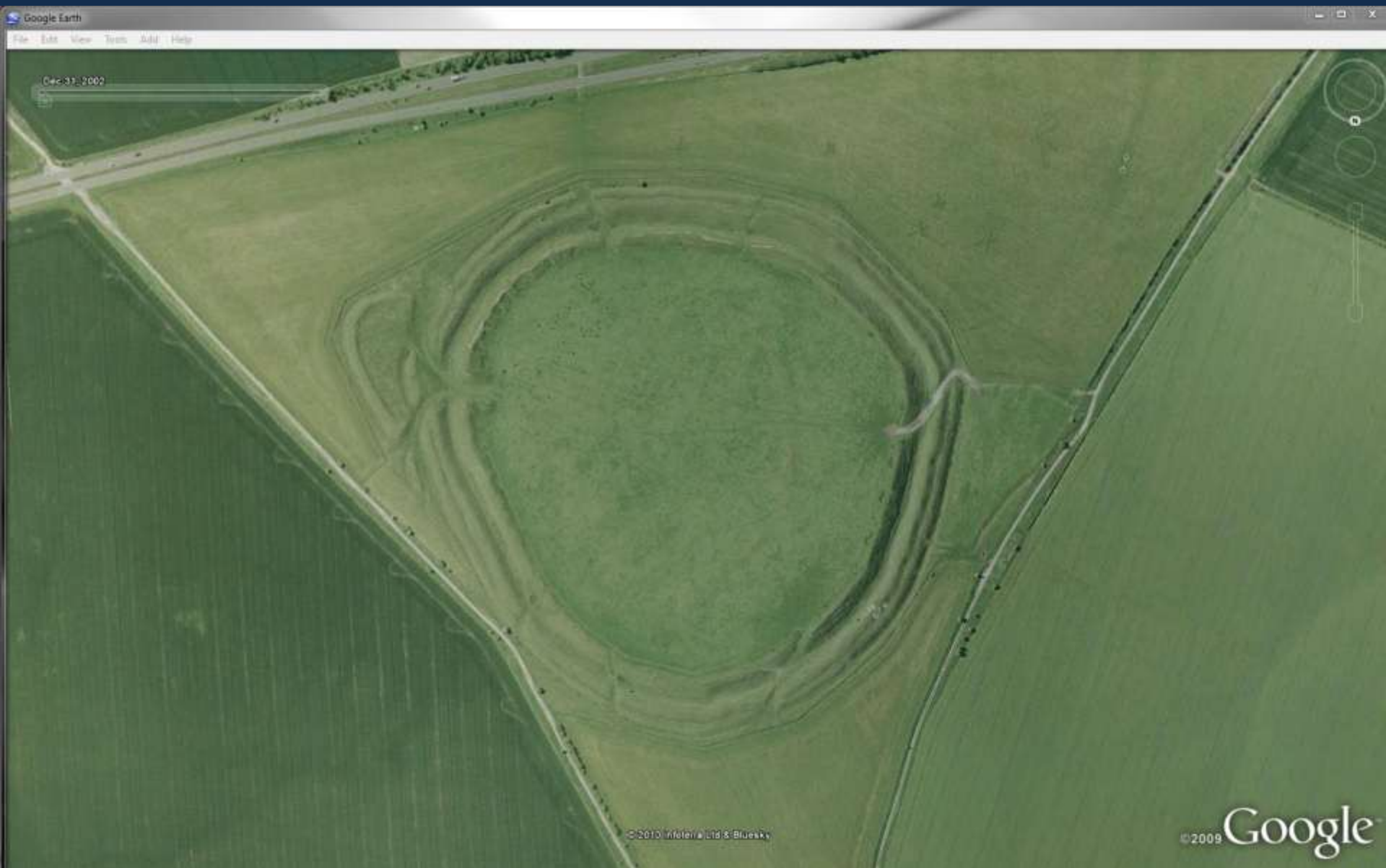




Changes in the appearance of archaeological sites:

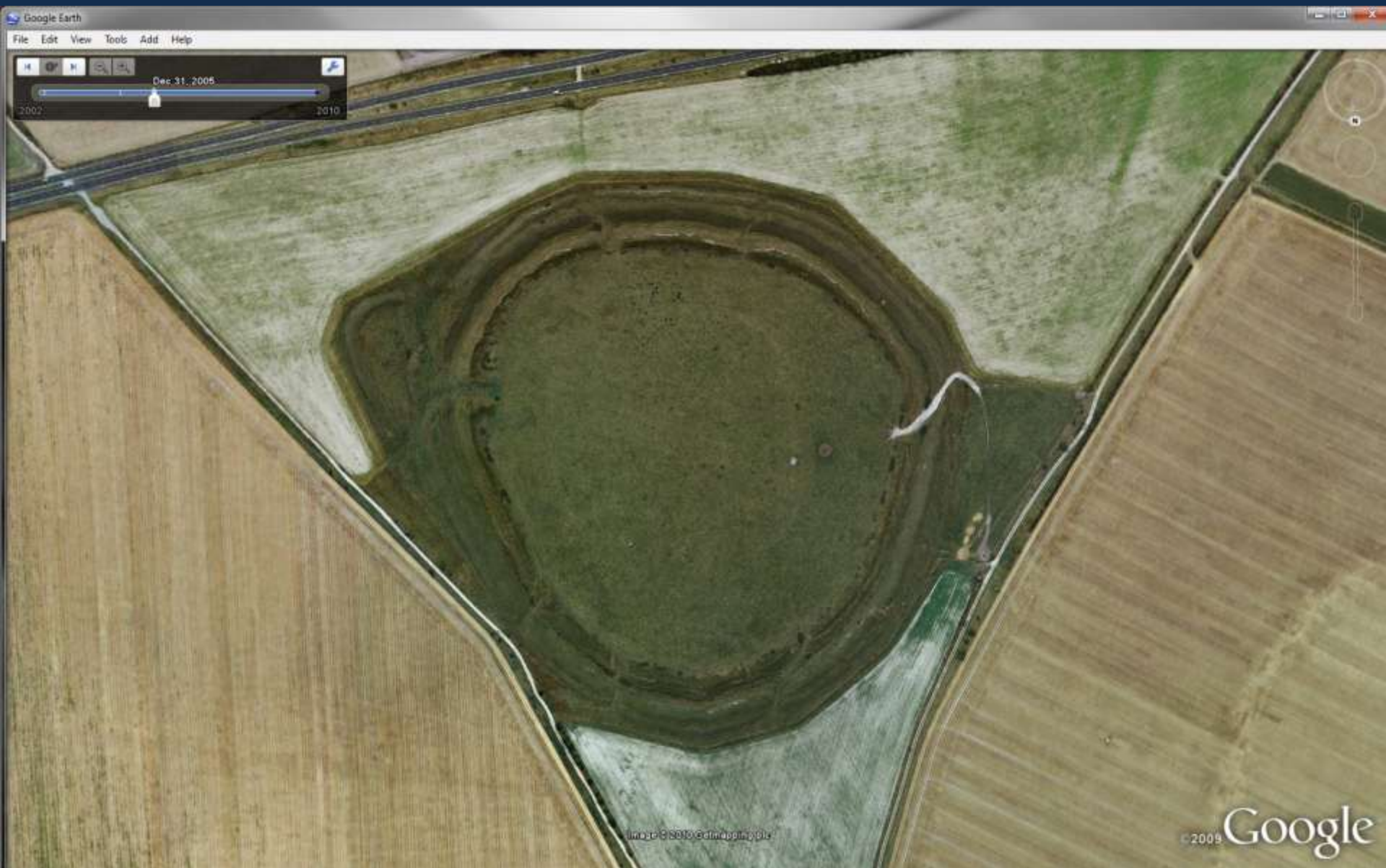
1. Upstanding site. Iron Age hillfort at Yarnbury, Wiltshire, UK

2002

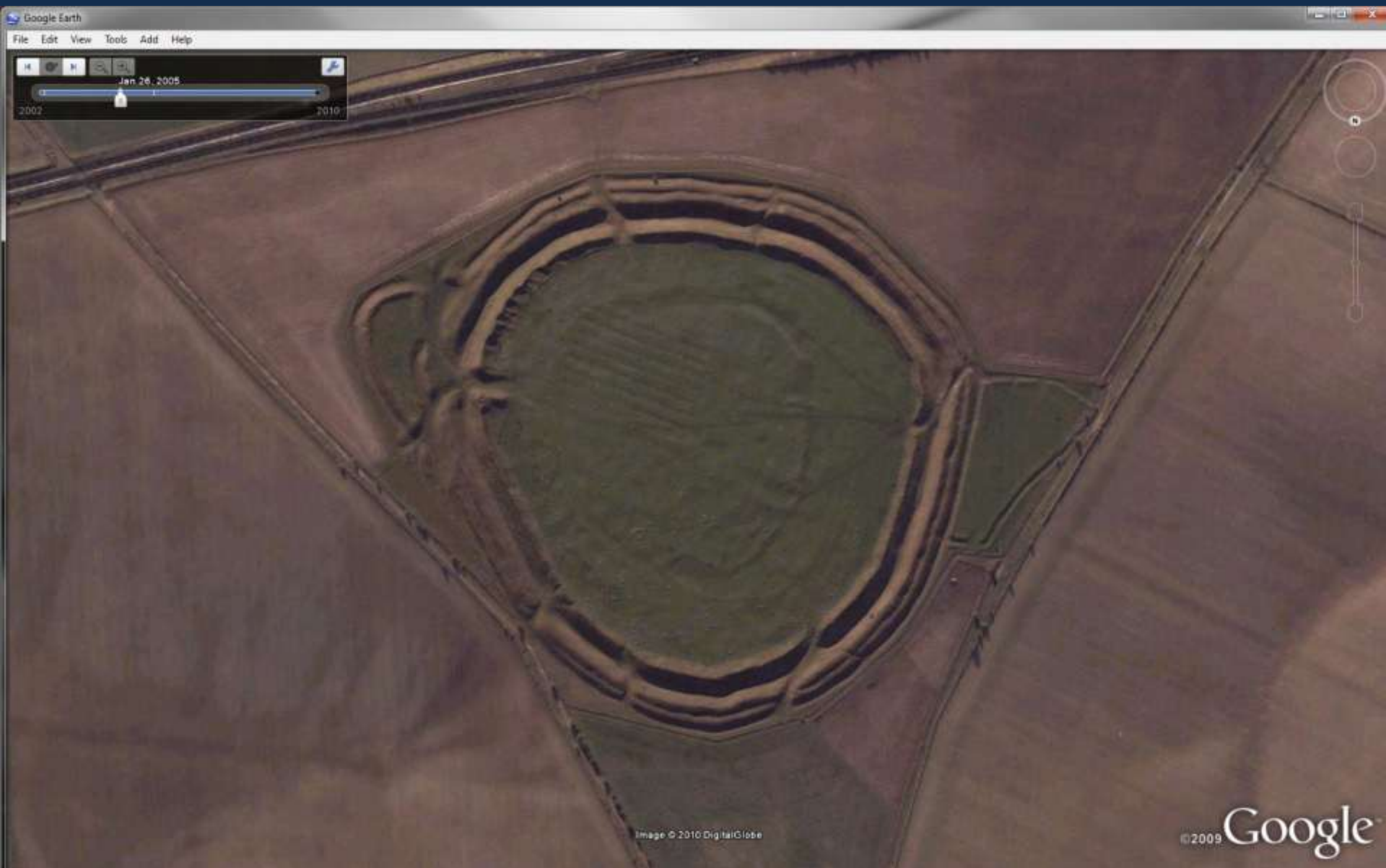




2005

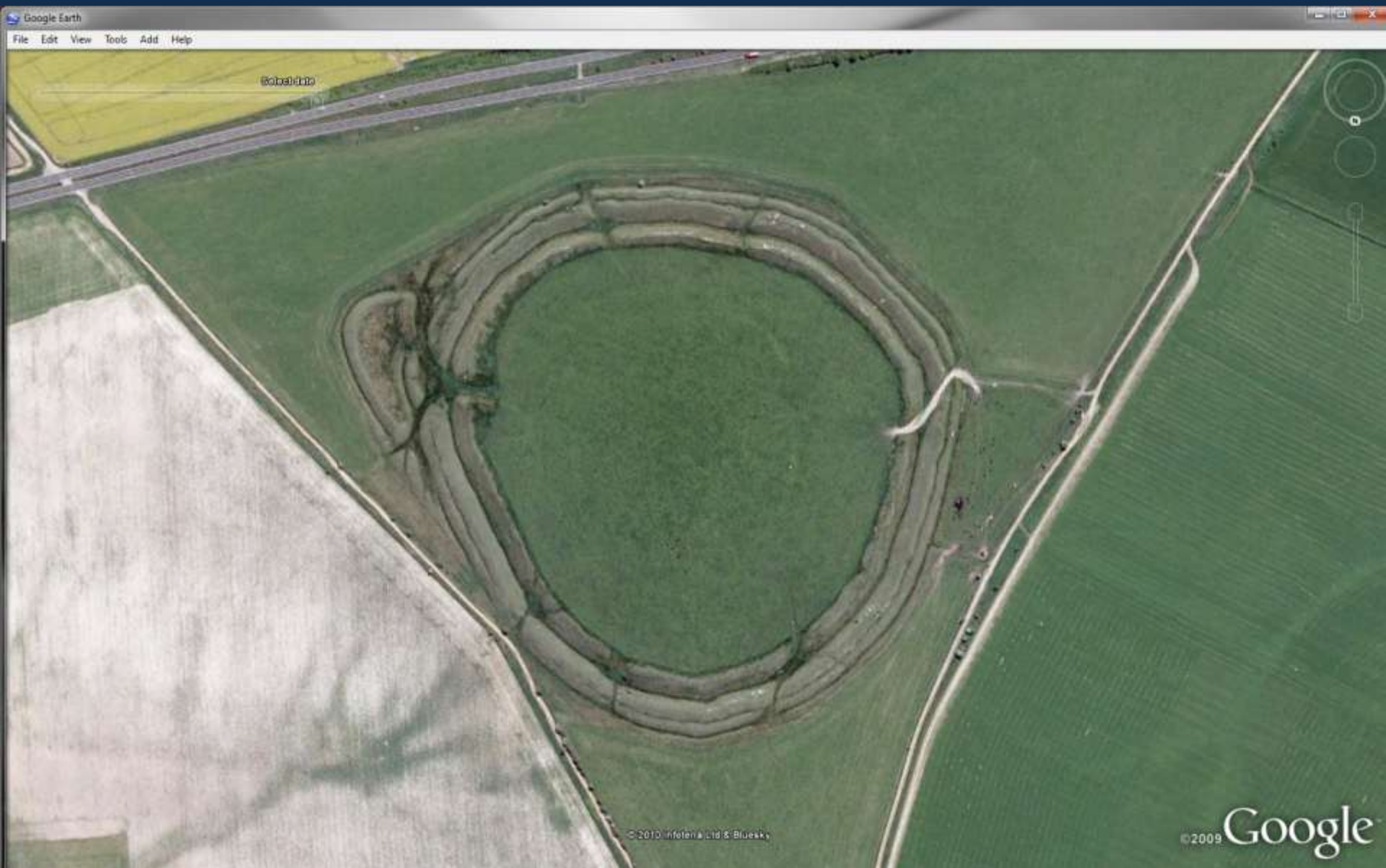


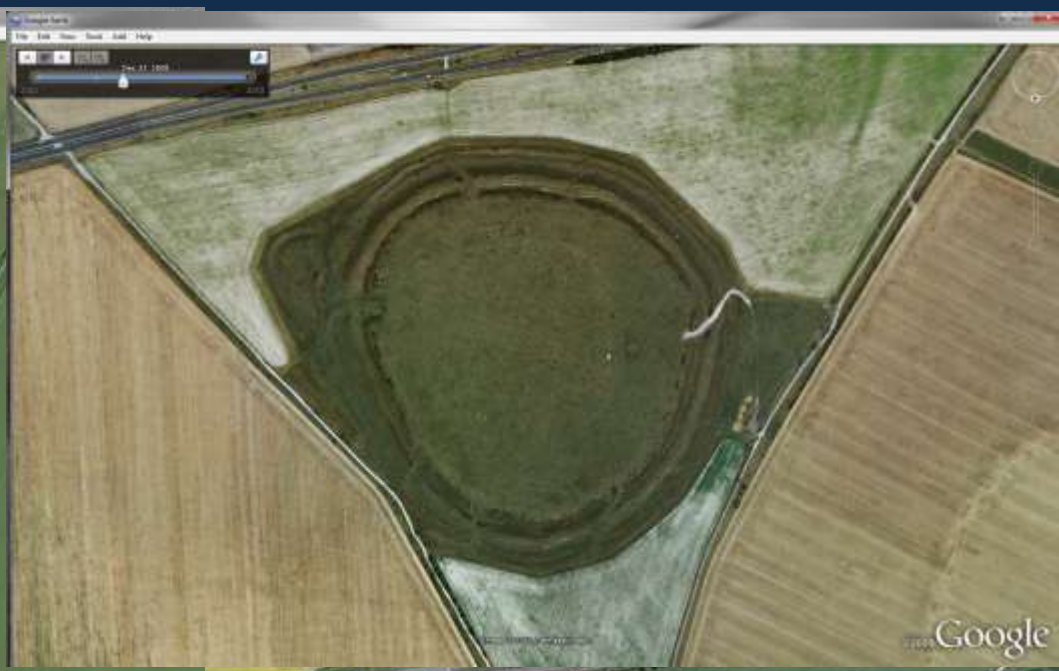
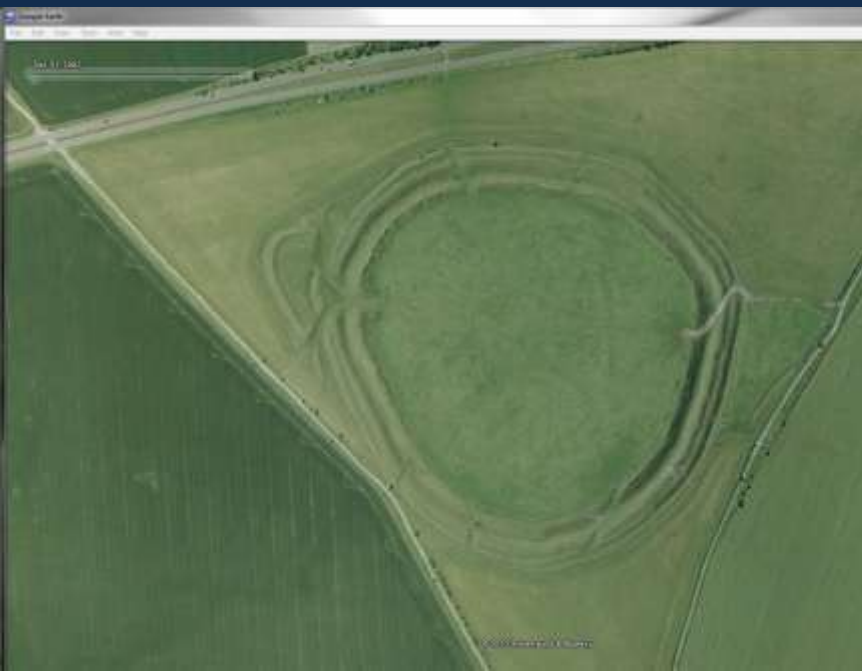
26-01-2005





Undated





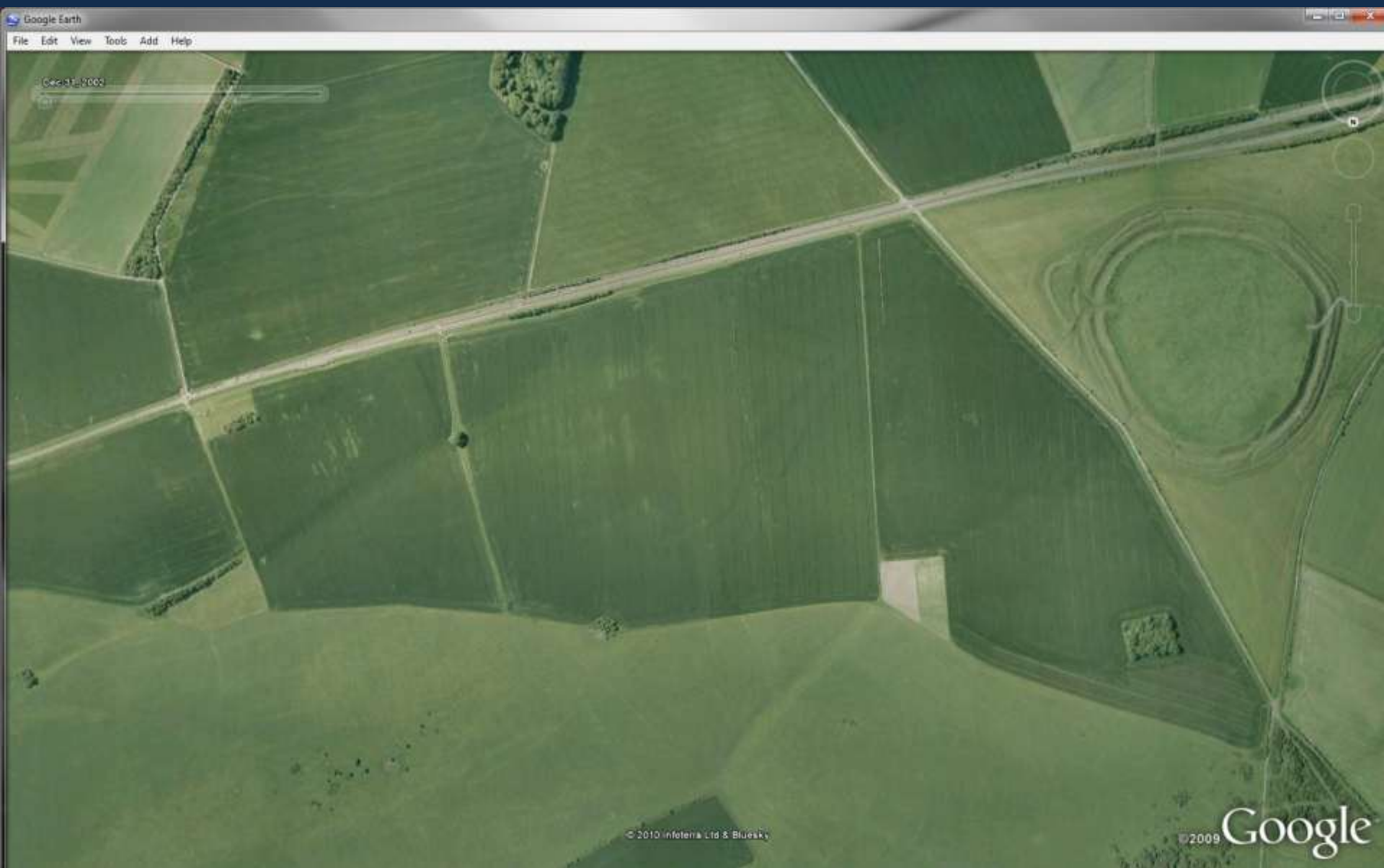


Changes in the appearance of archaeological sites:

2. Iron Age field system east of the hillfort at Yarnbury, Wiltshire, UK

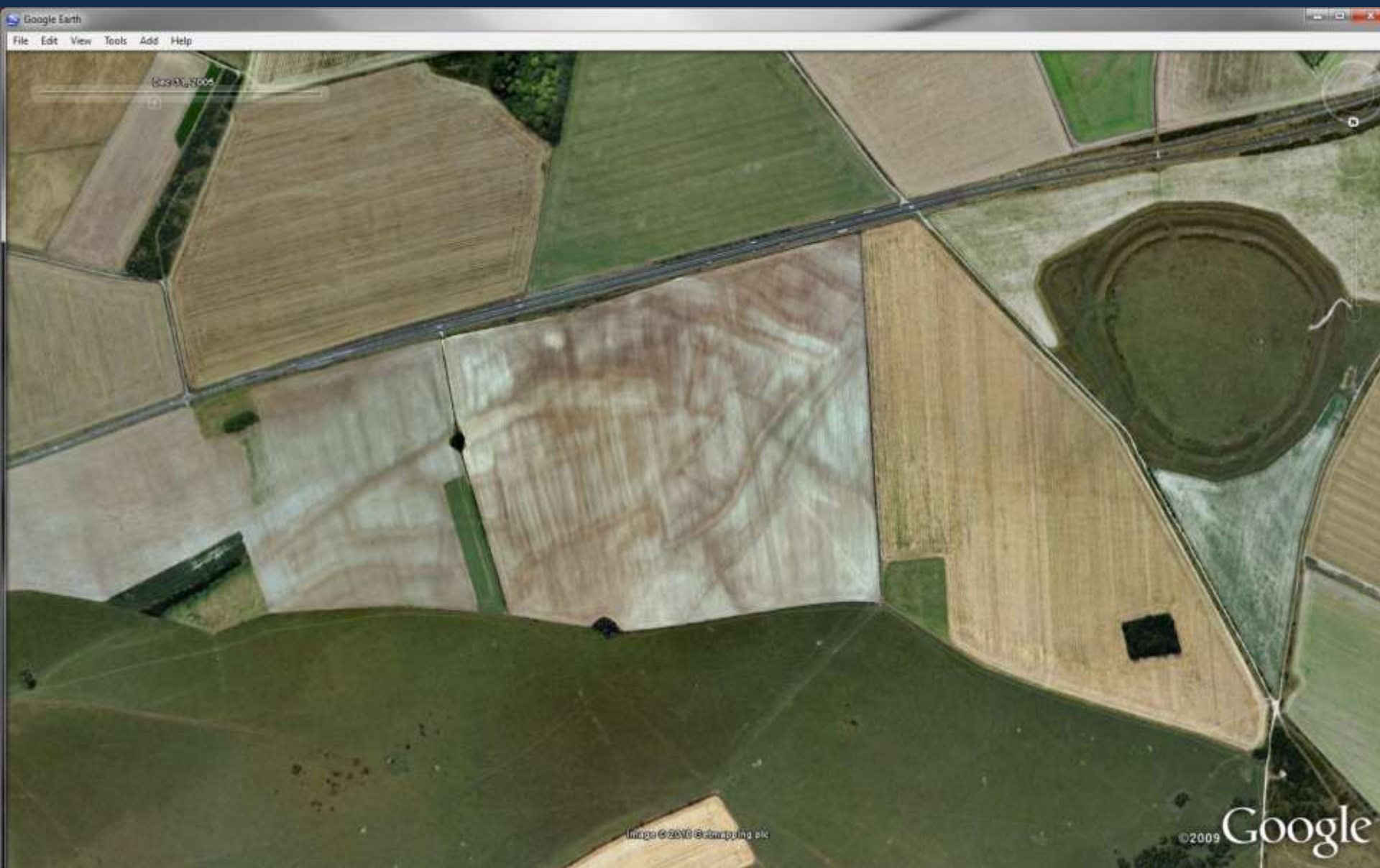
(these are upstanding and levelled)

2002

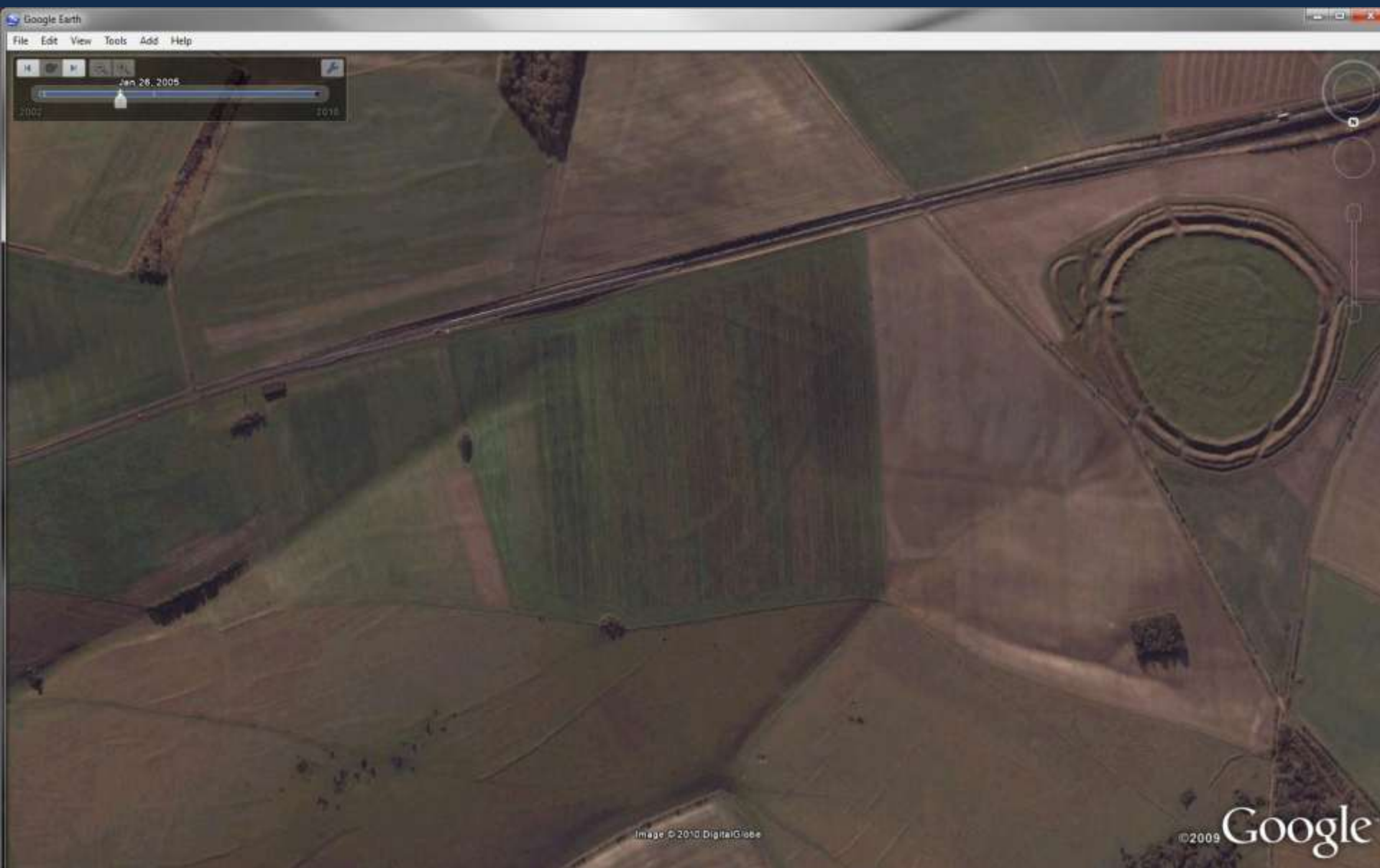




2005



26-01-2005





# Undated

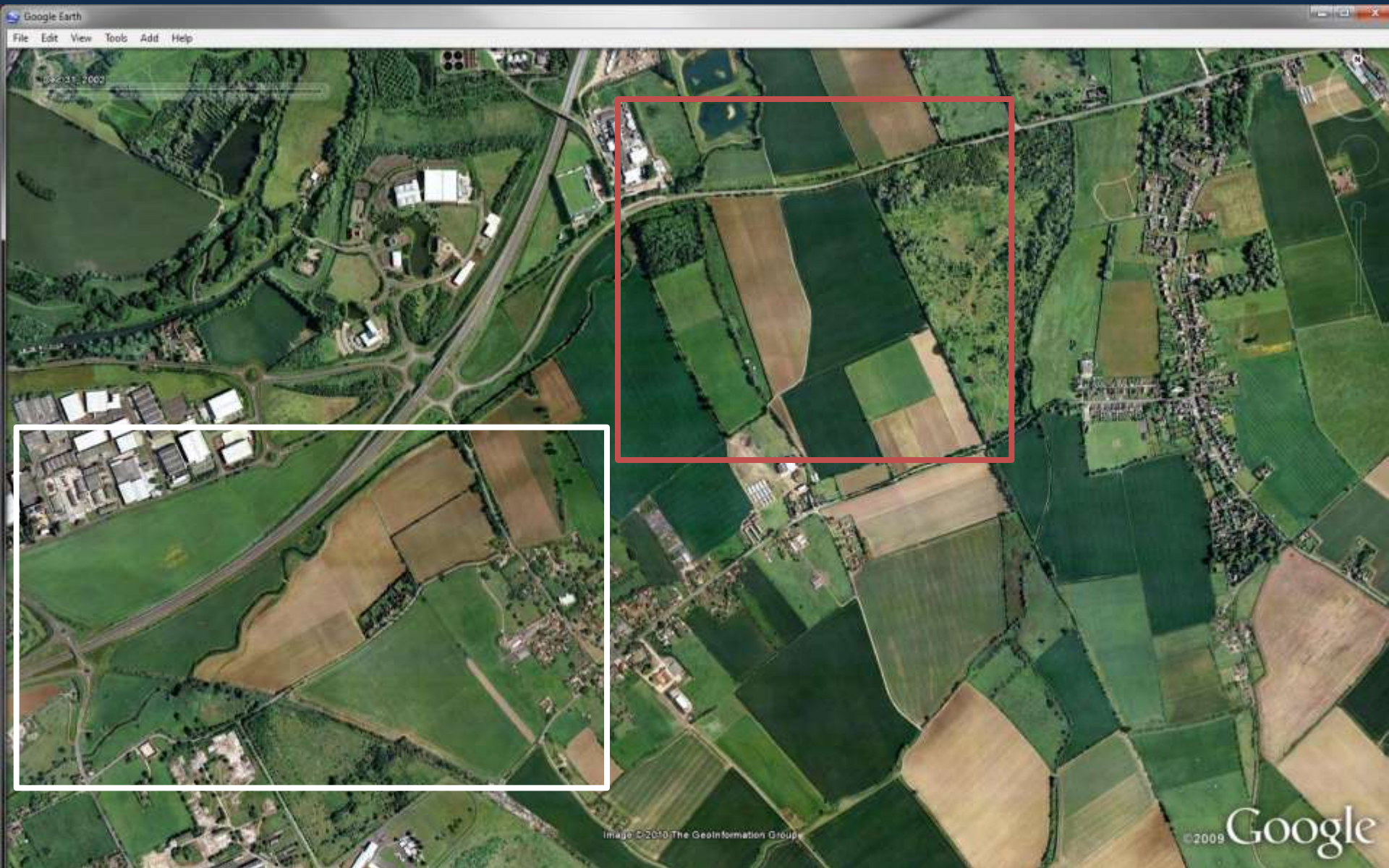




Changes in the appearance of archaeological sites:

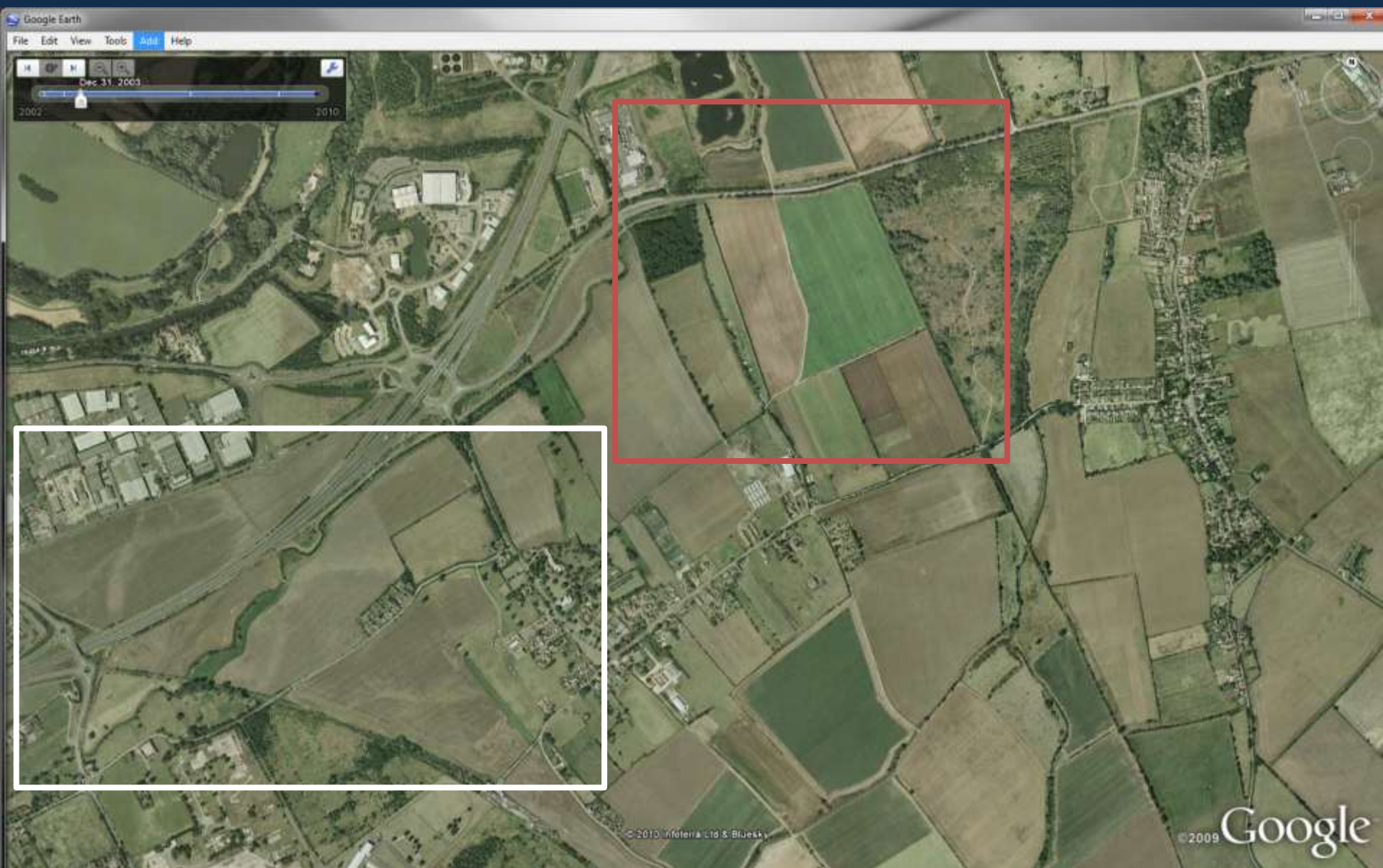
3. An arable landscape at Cardington,  
Bedfordshire, UK

2002



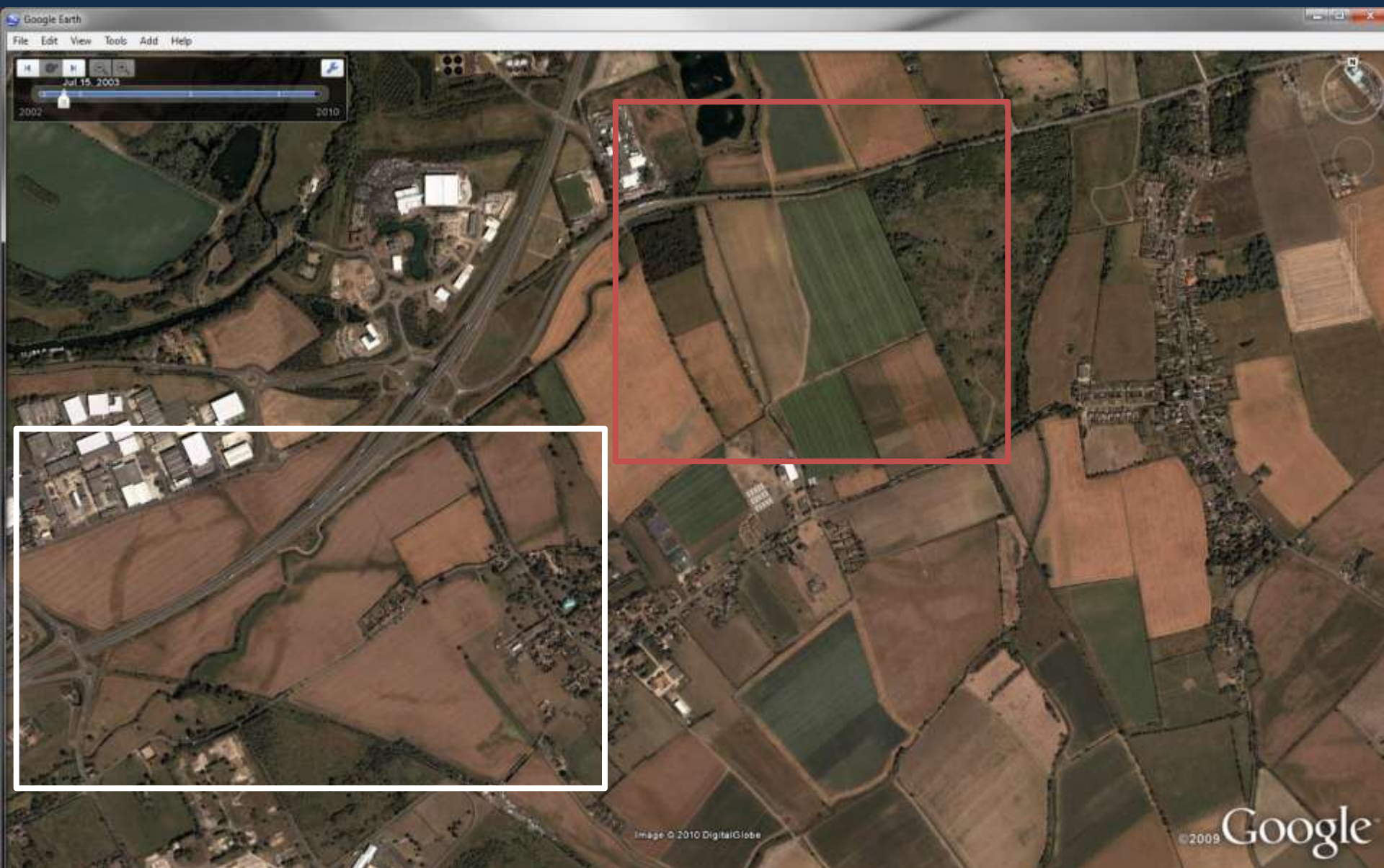


2003



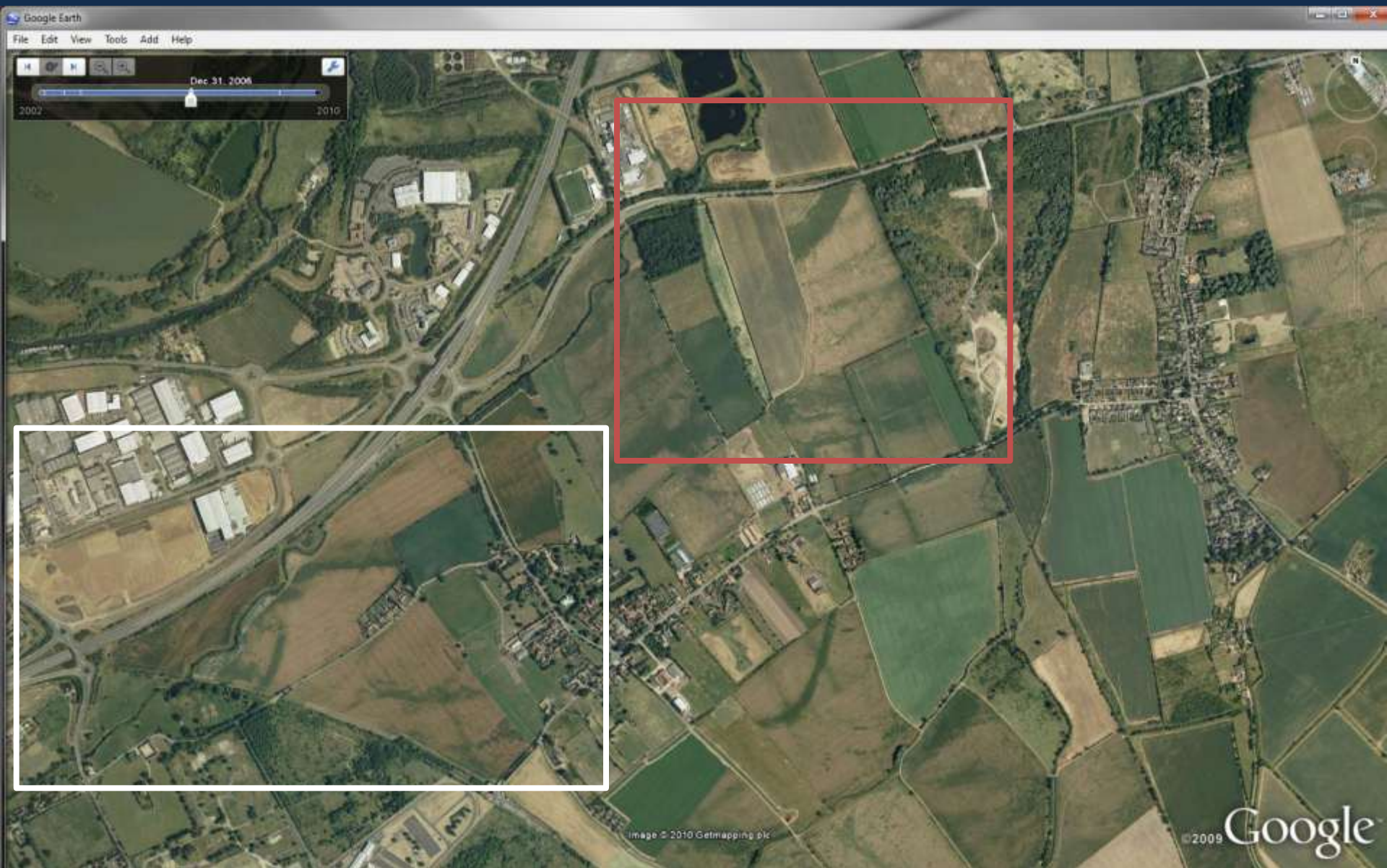


15-07-2003



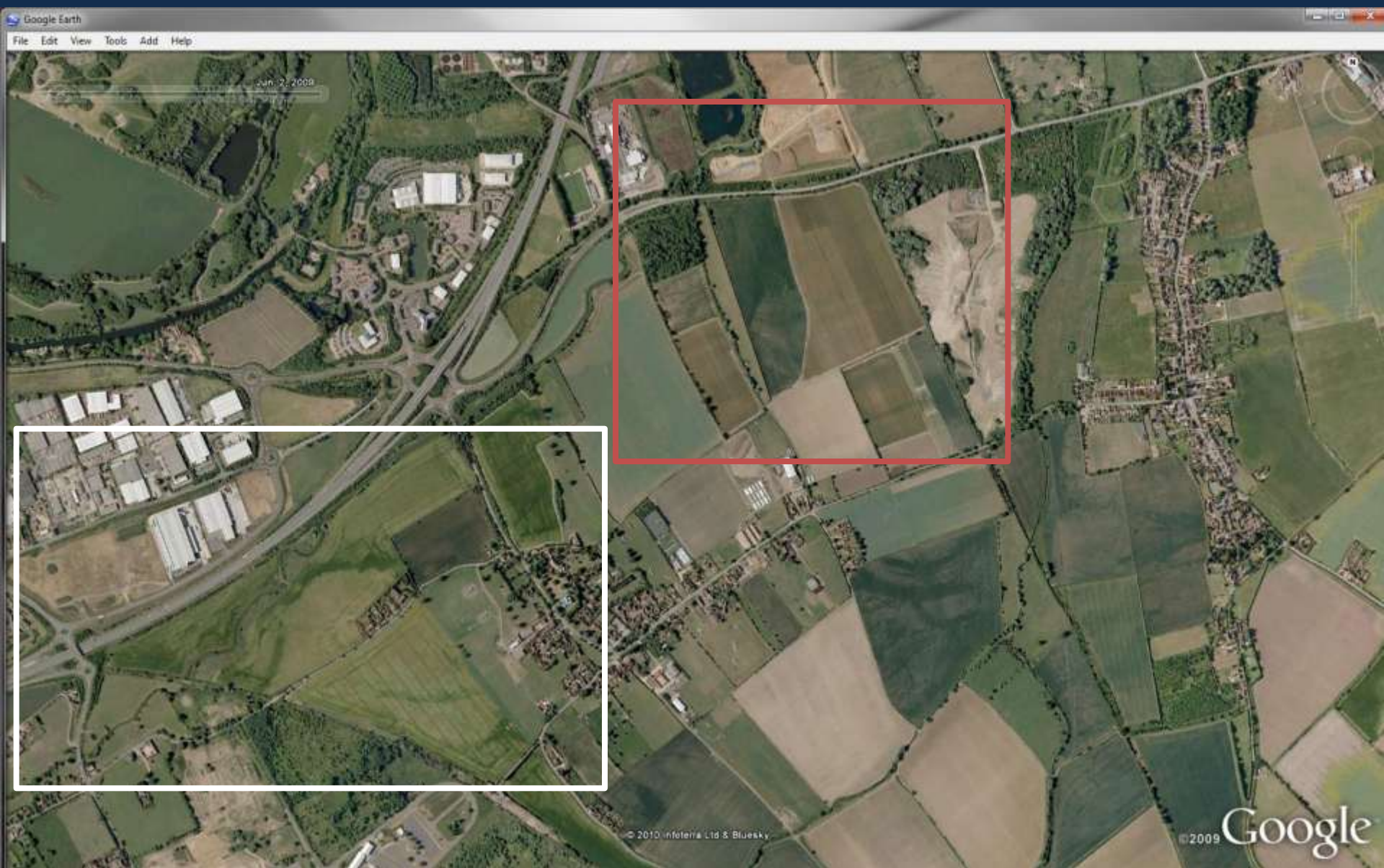


2006



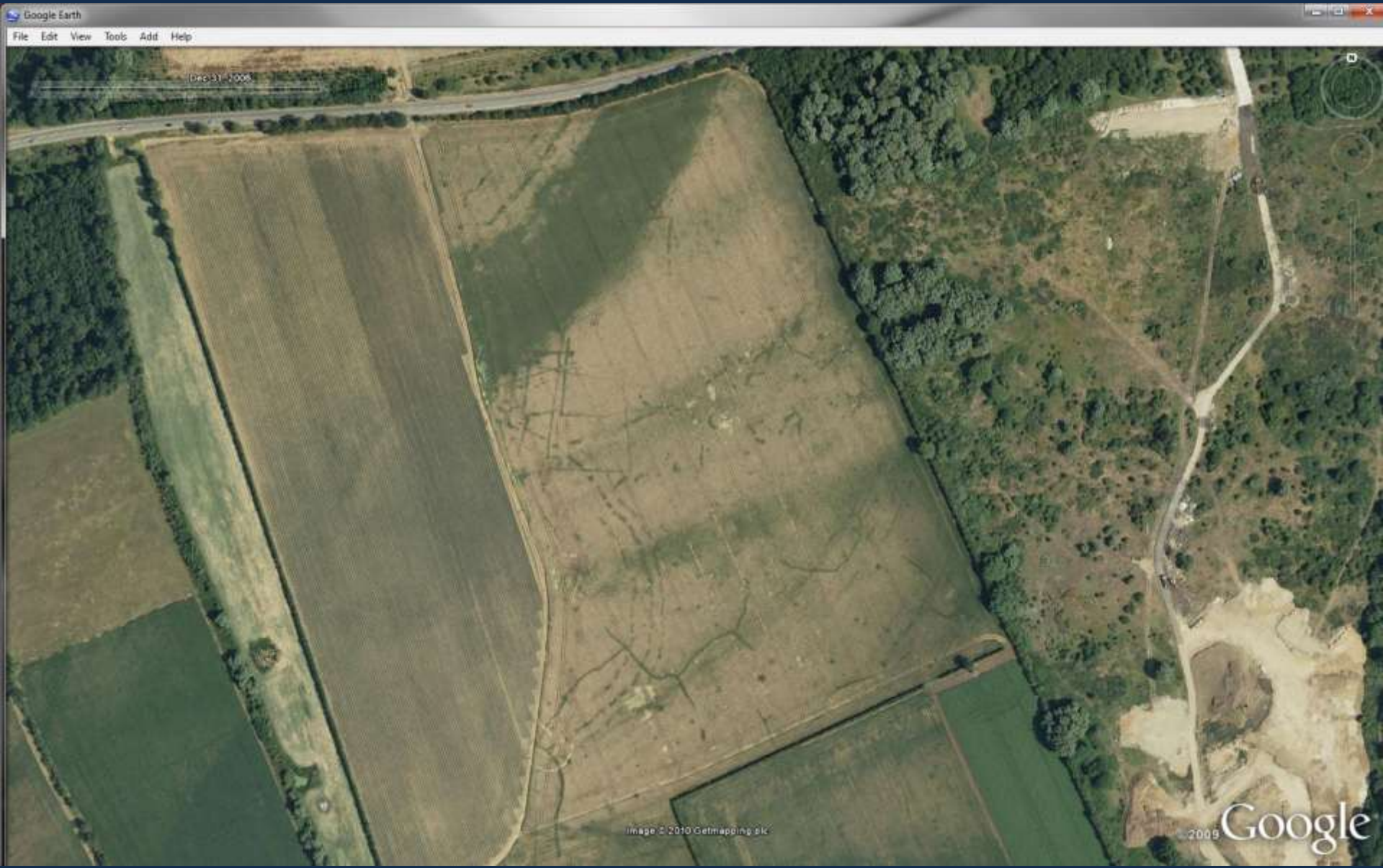


02-06-2009





2006



Changes in the appearance of archaeological sites:

4. Upstanding features in Dobrugia, Romania



09-01-2005 (all with north to the top)

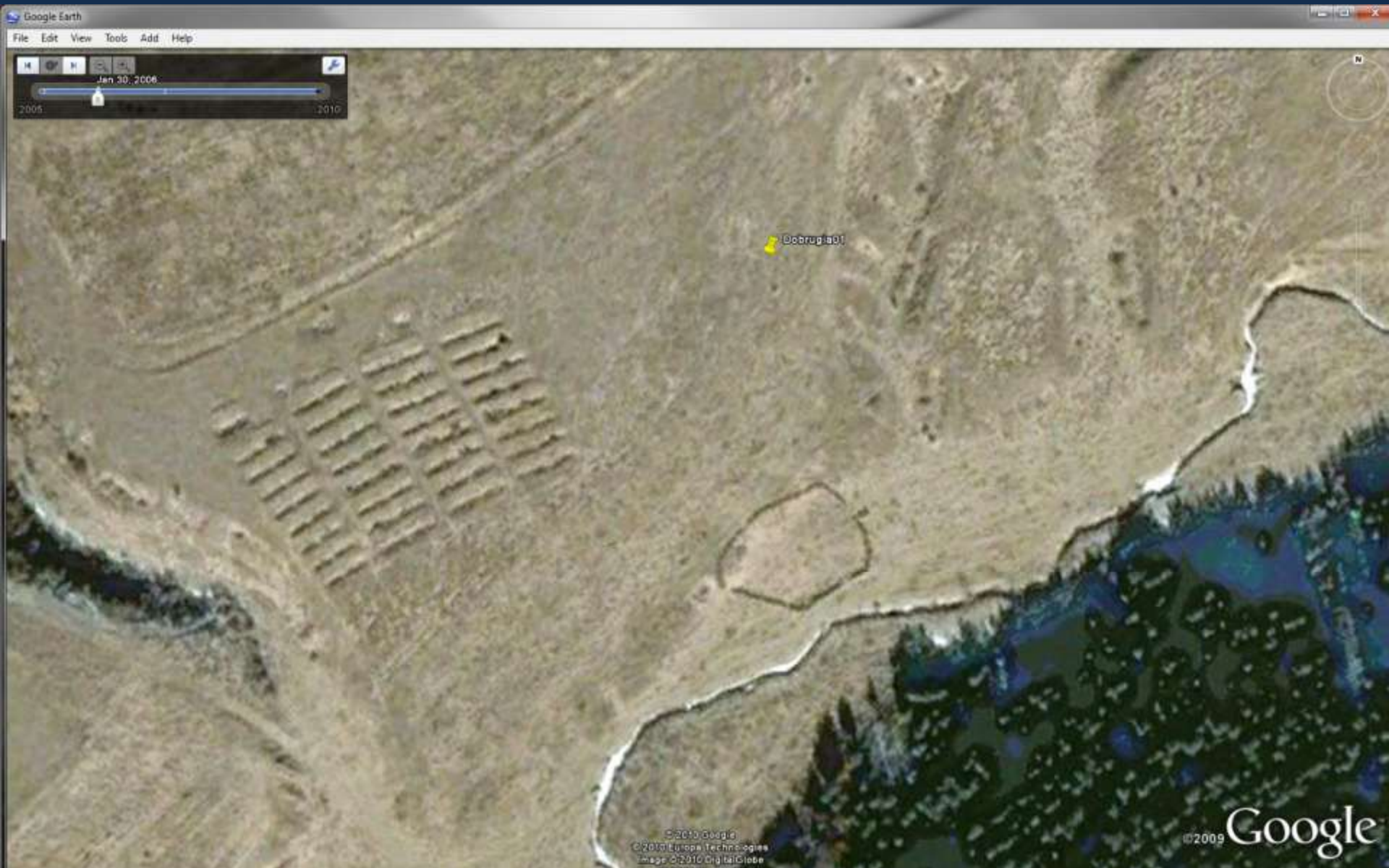




09-01-2005

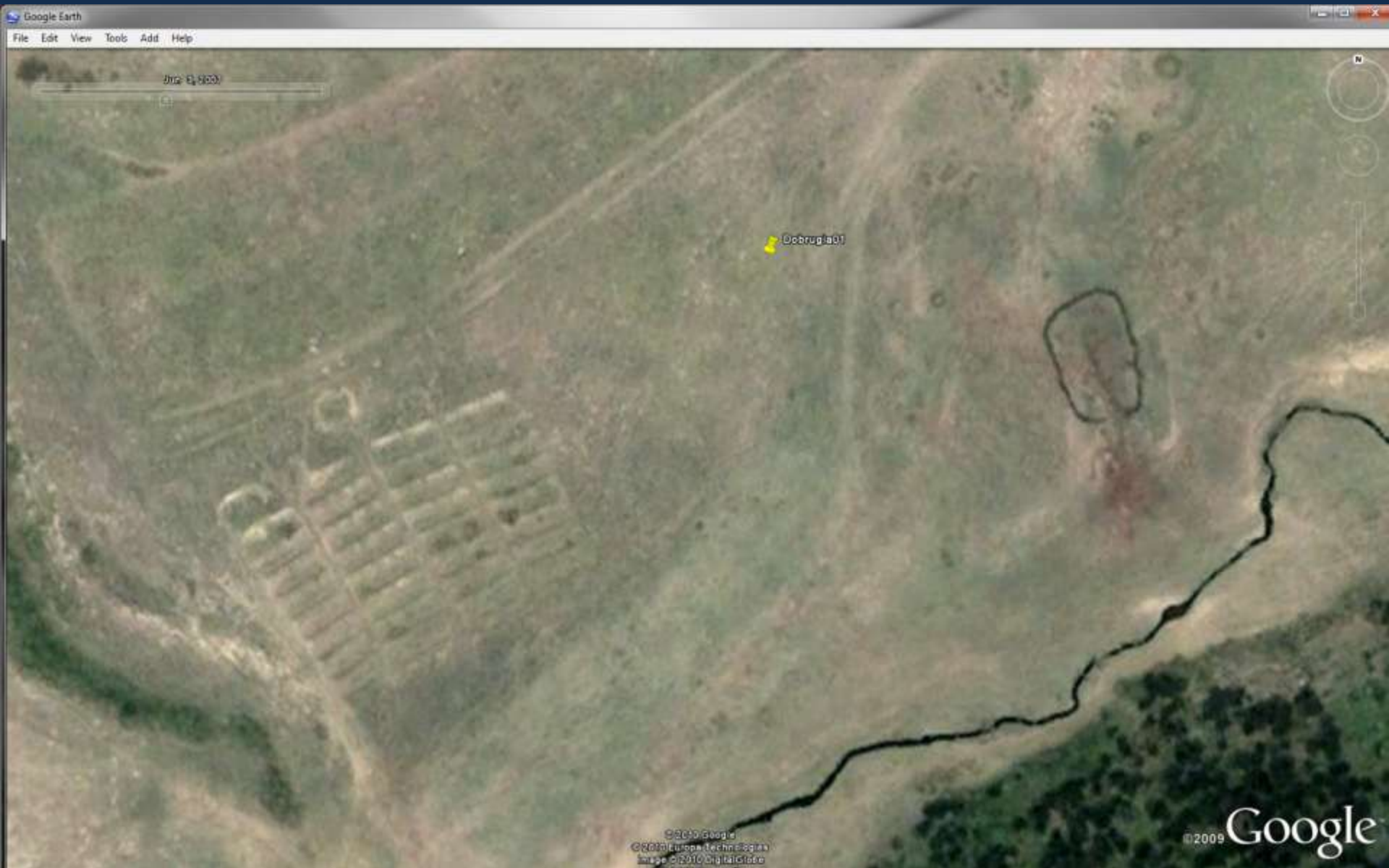


30-01-2006





03-06-2007

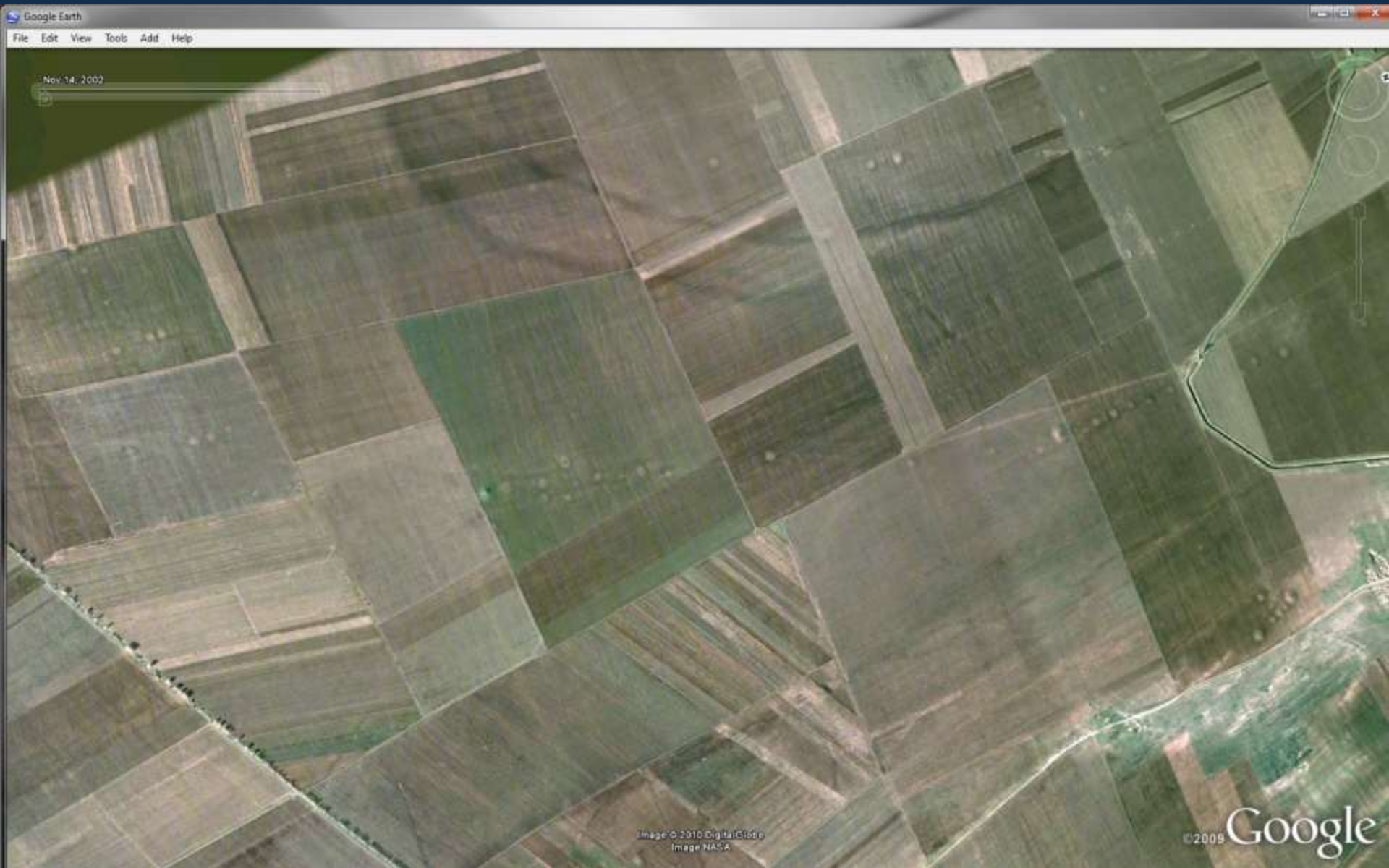


Changes in the appearance of archaeological sites:

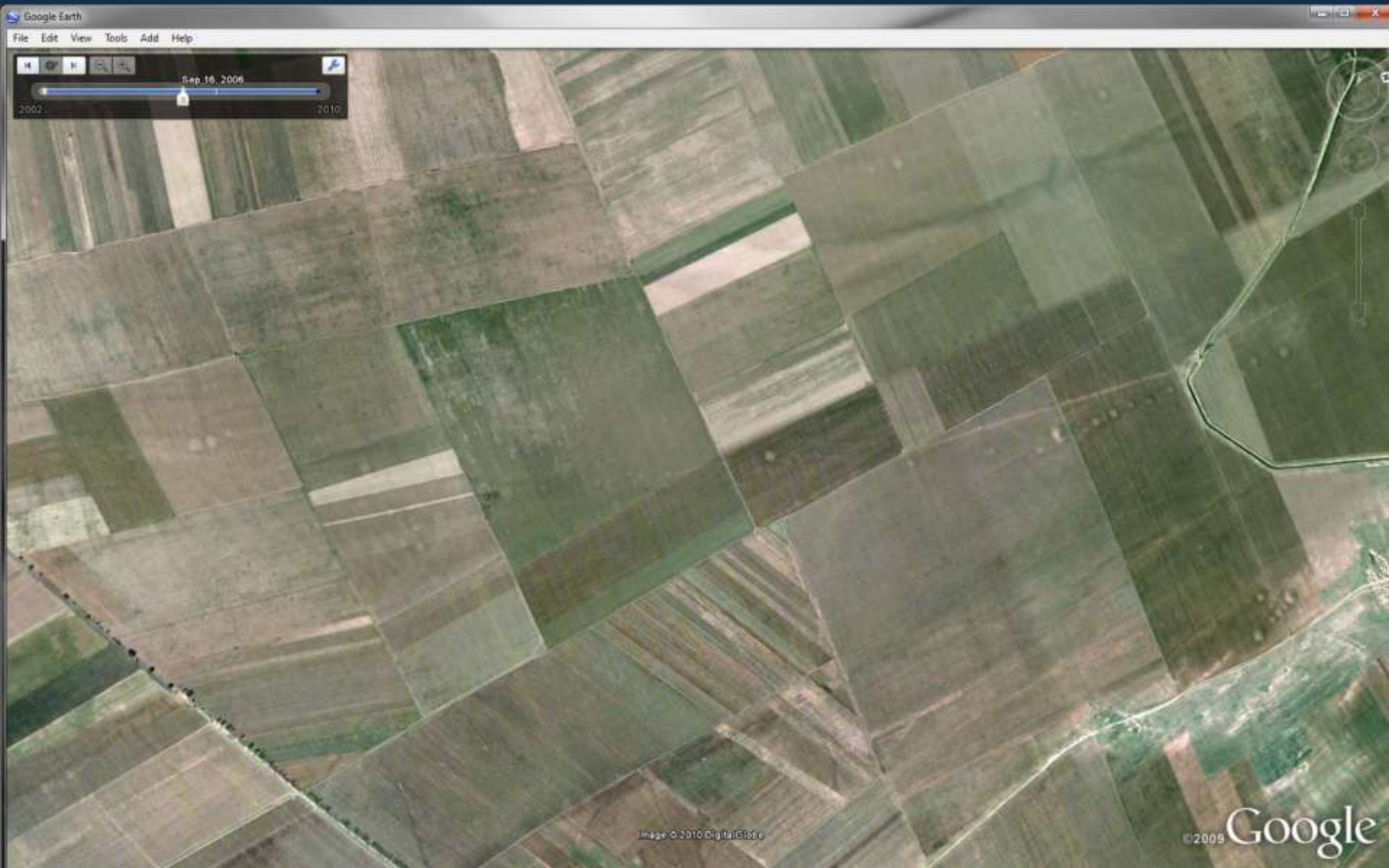
5. Arable landscape with burial mounds  
in Dobrugia, Romania



2002

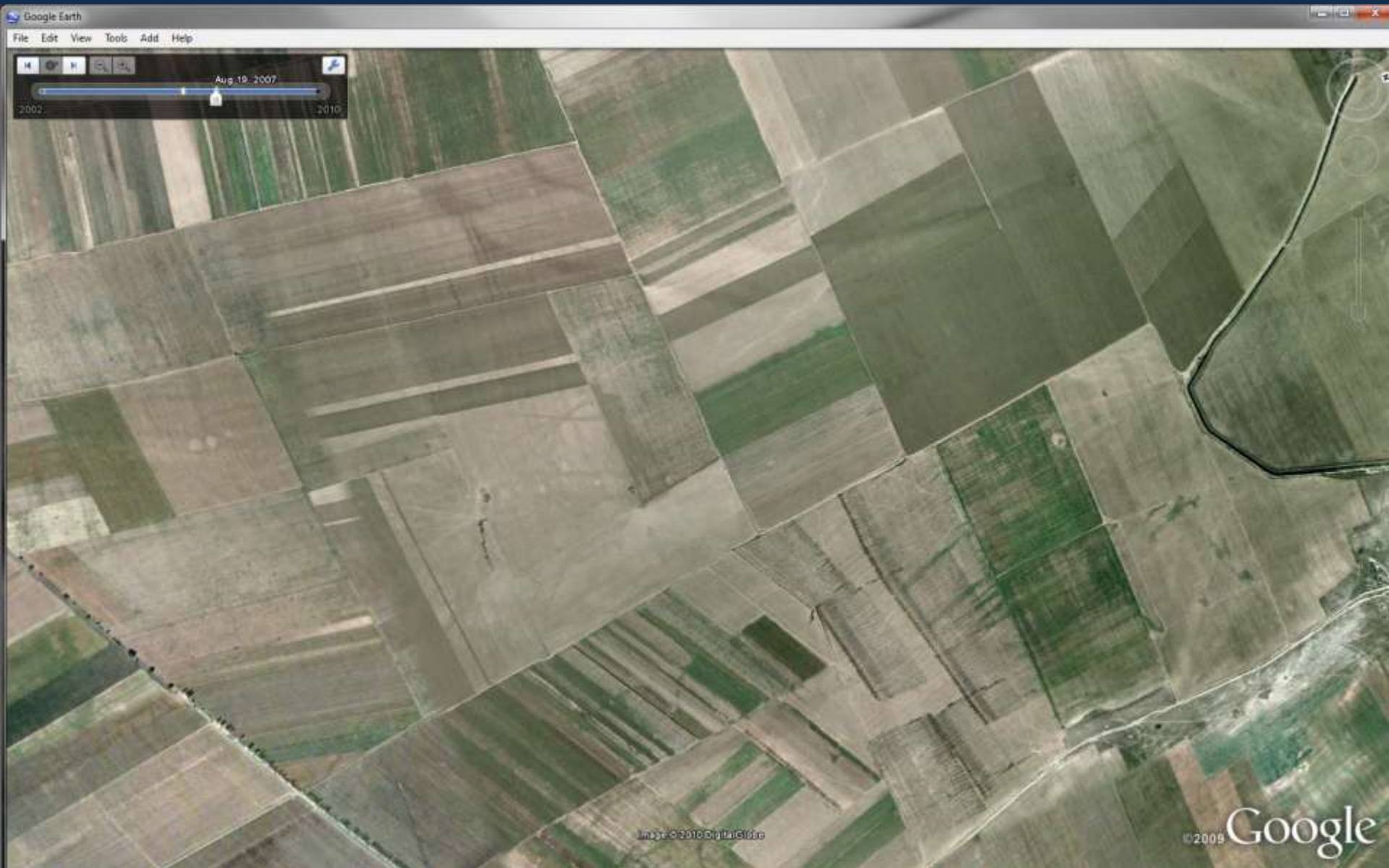


2006





2007



... but how might these look on other photographs? Will other photographs provide different views and perhaps more information?

Photographs covering (parts of) Romania include:

- vertical photographs (at least WW2 - now )

- CORONA cold war satellite photographs (1960s – 1970s)

- public-domain ortho-photos (dates?)

- recent satellite images (eg DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, ?SPOT)

- targeted oblique photographs in some areas (1970s - now)

.... these (and any others) should also be examined



## Conclusion:

Google Earth is a wonderful free tool

but

A photo interpreter will want to examine  
*all* available photographs

therefore

Google Earth is one of many sources  
of aerial photographs