

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. The image shows a mix of green and brown fields, a winding road, and a small settlement with several buildings on the right side. The text 'Archaeology from aerial (etc) photographs' is overlaid in the upper center.

Archaeology from aerial (etc) photographs

Rog Palmer

Air Photo Services Cambridge

What do we know about the past that may show on aerial photos?





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OVERTON DOWN
Experimental Earthwork

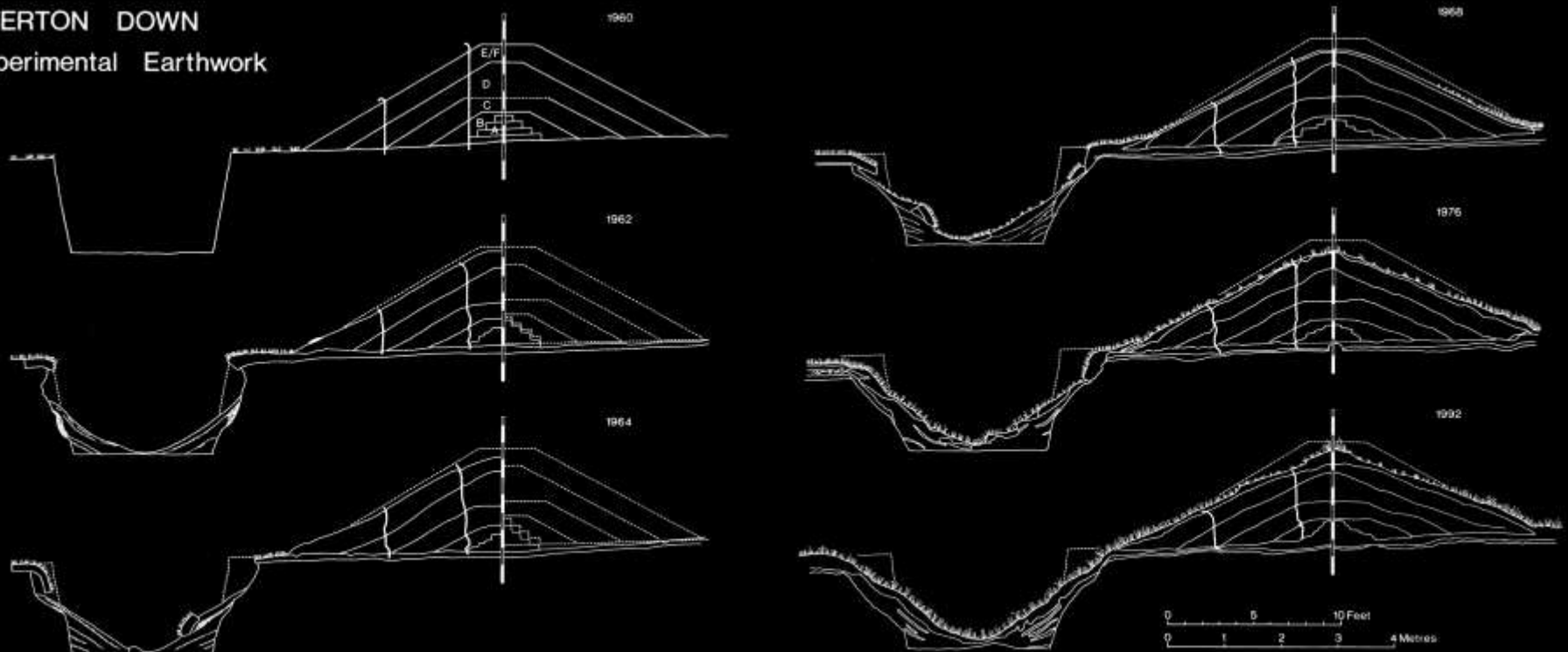


Figure 14.2 The section of Overton Down Experimental Earthwork showing its changing profile between 1960 and 1992.



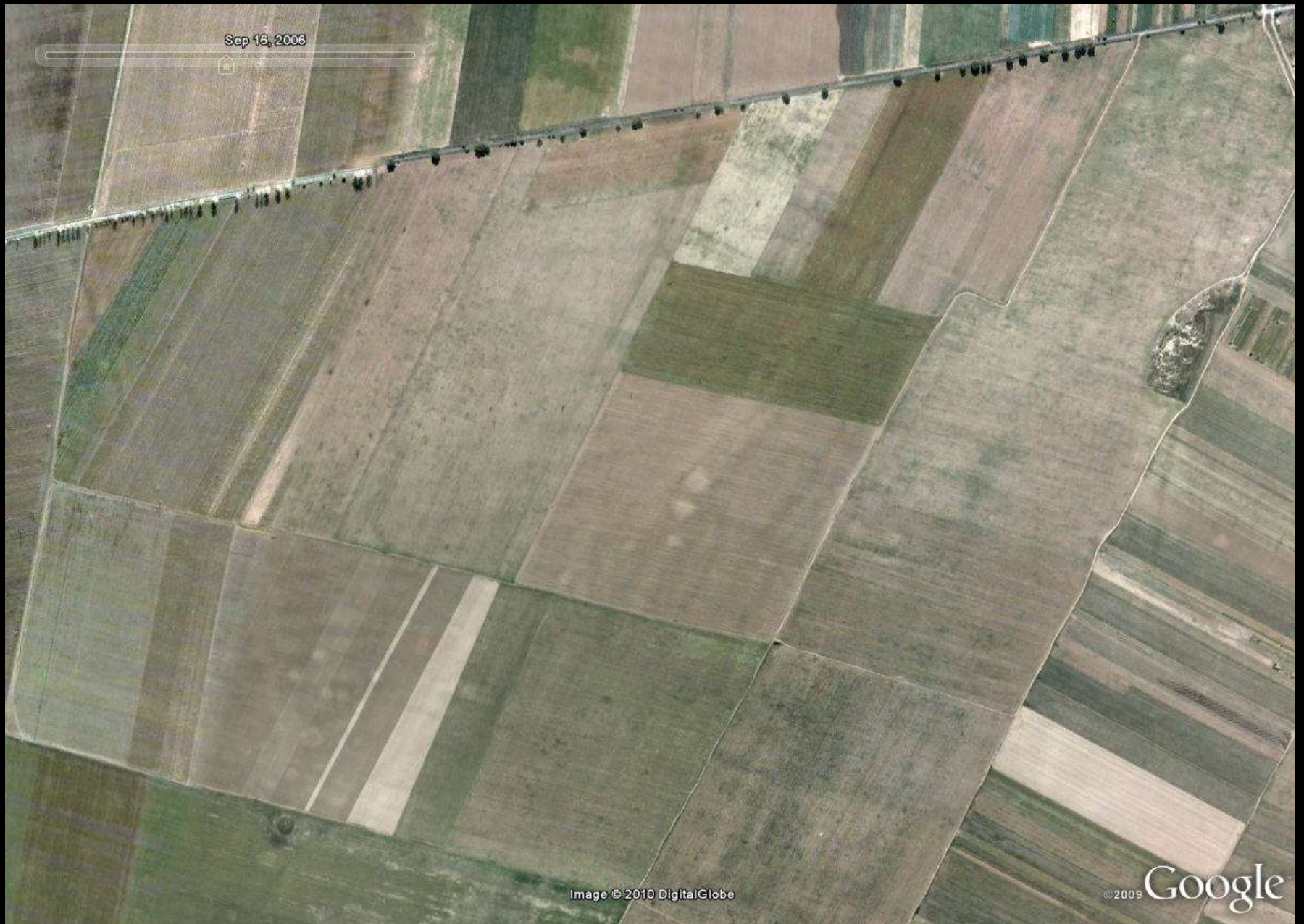
OK so how do I see this stuff?

Plough-levelled
ditches visible
through their effect
on crop growth.

Note continuation
of track.

Surviving ditches of a
Roman period settlement
with tracks and fields.



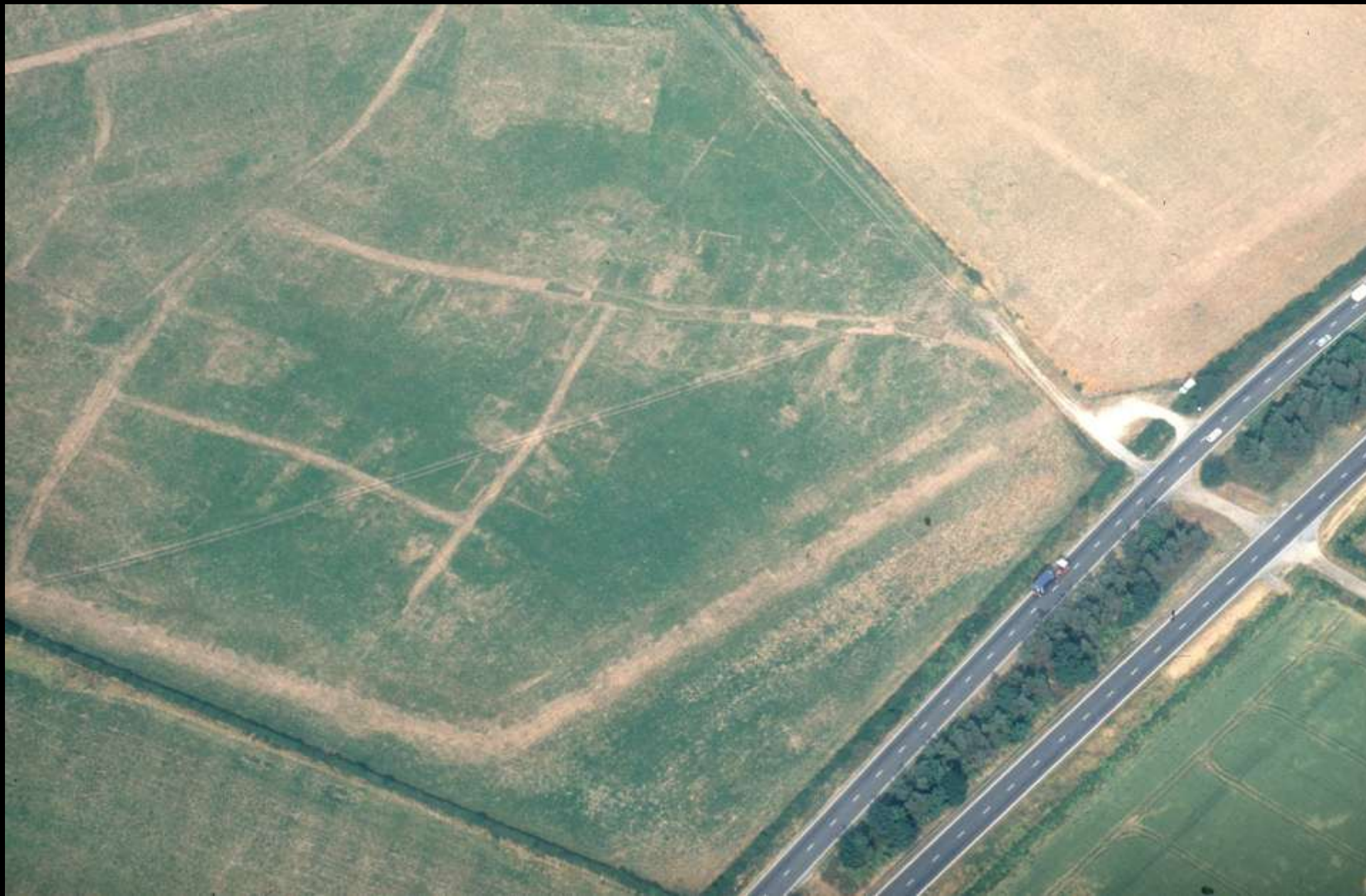


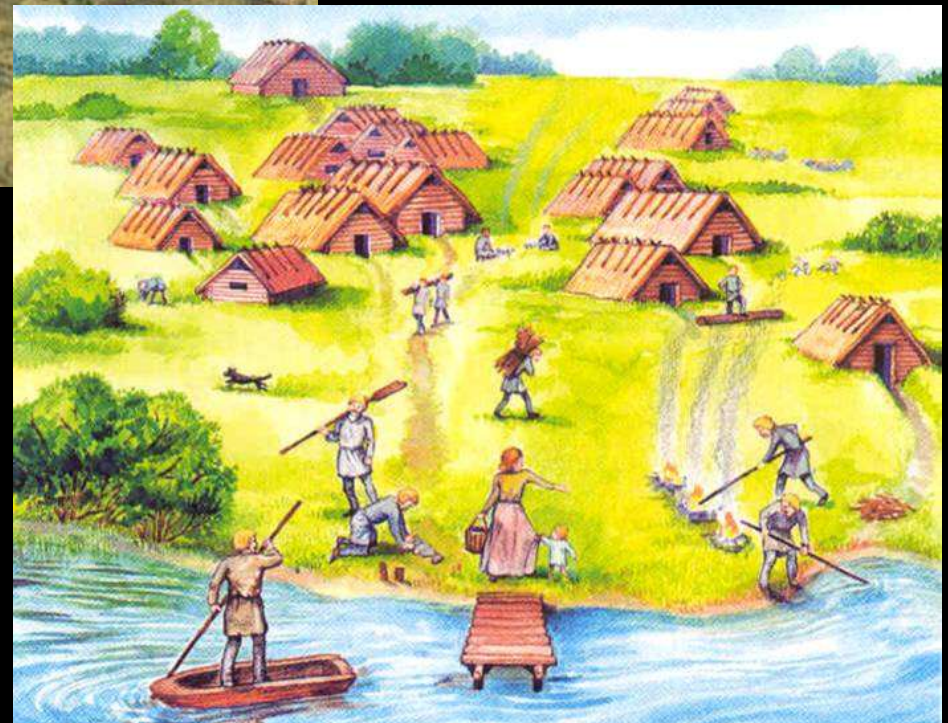
Sep 16, 2006

Image © 2010 DigitalGlobe

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Why use aerial photos?



An aerial photograph of a mountainous landscape. In the foreground, a dark, calm lake is nestled between steep, forested slopes. The middle ground is dominated by a thick layer of white clouds or mist that fills the valleys between the mountains. In the background, several mountain peaks are visible, some shrouded in mist, under a pale, hazy sky. The overall scene is serene and majestic.

*Merry Christmas / Nadolig Llawen
2005*

...from RCAHMW aerial survey





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Taking aerial photos





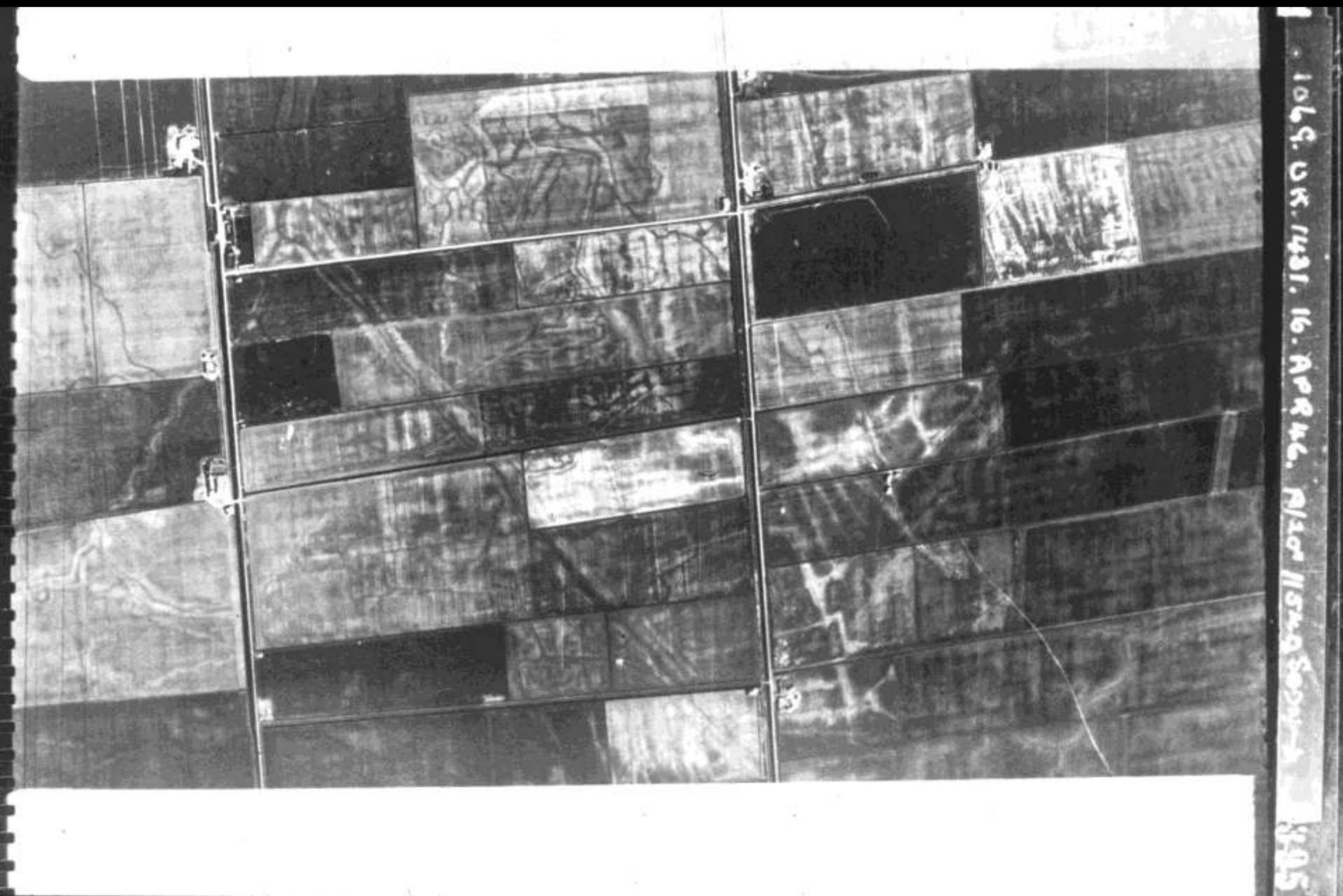




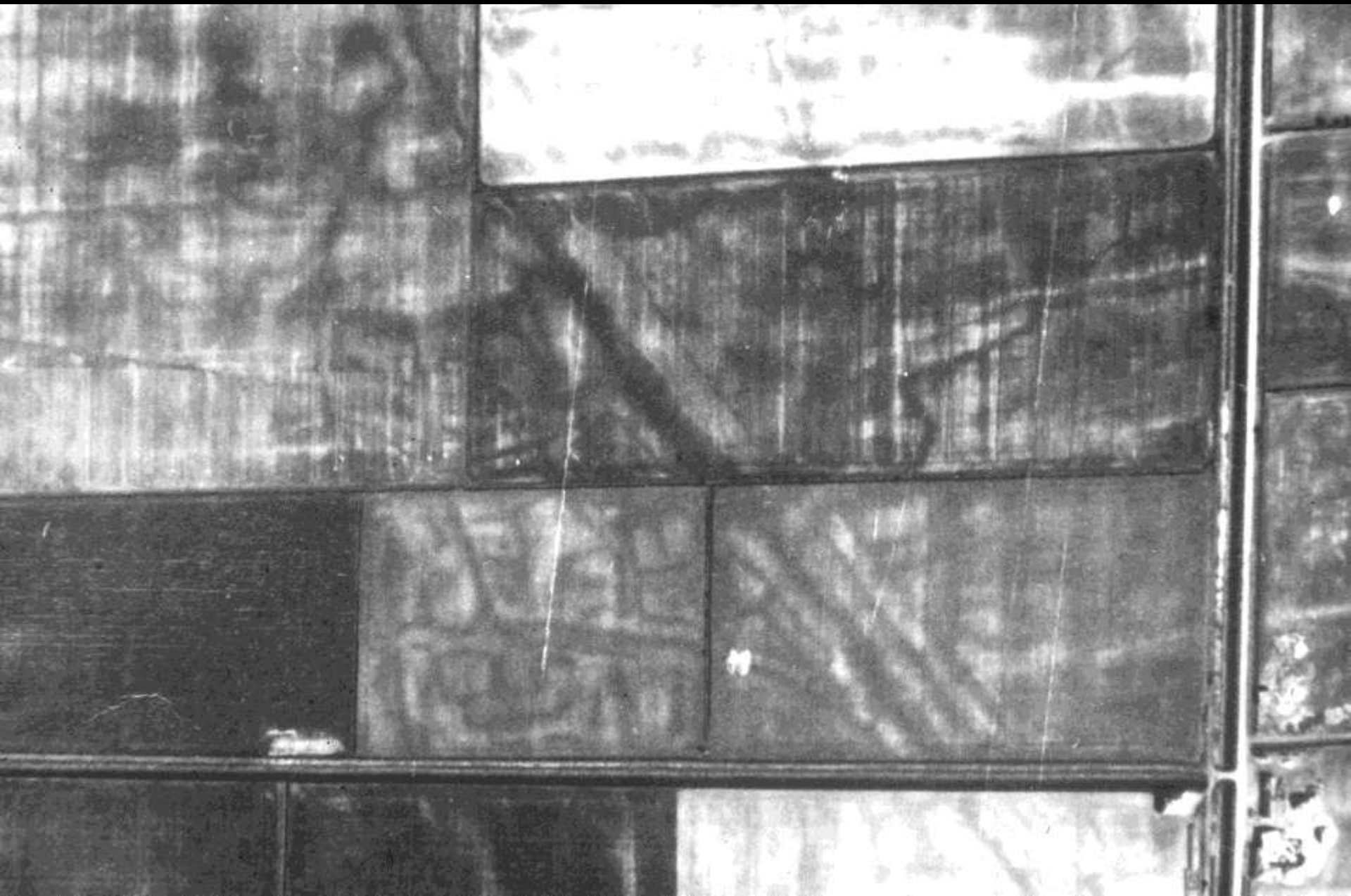
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Corona 1971. Bronze Age fortress and field system



Corona 1971



QuickBird 2004



Levelled sites are not always visible. This is a small Roman town



In a different year it was visible



Photos show much more than only archaeological features – such as the location of this settlement in bend of a former river



Quarries



Soil movement that has damaged or destroyed terraces



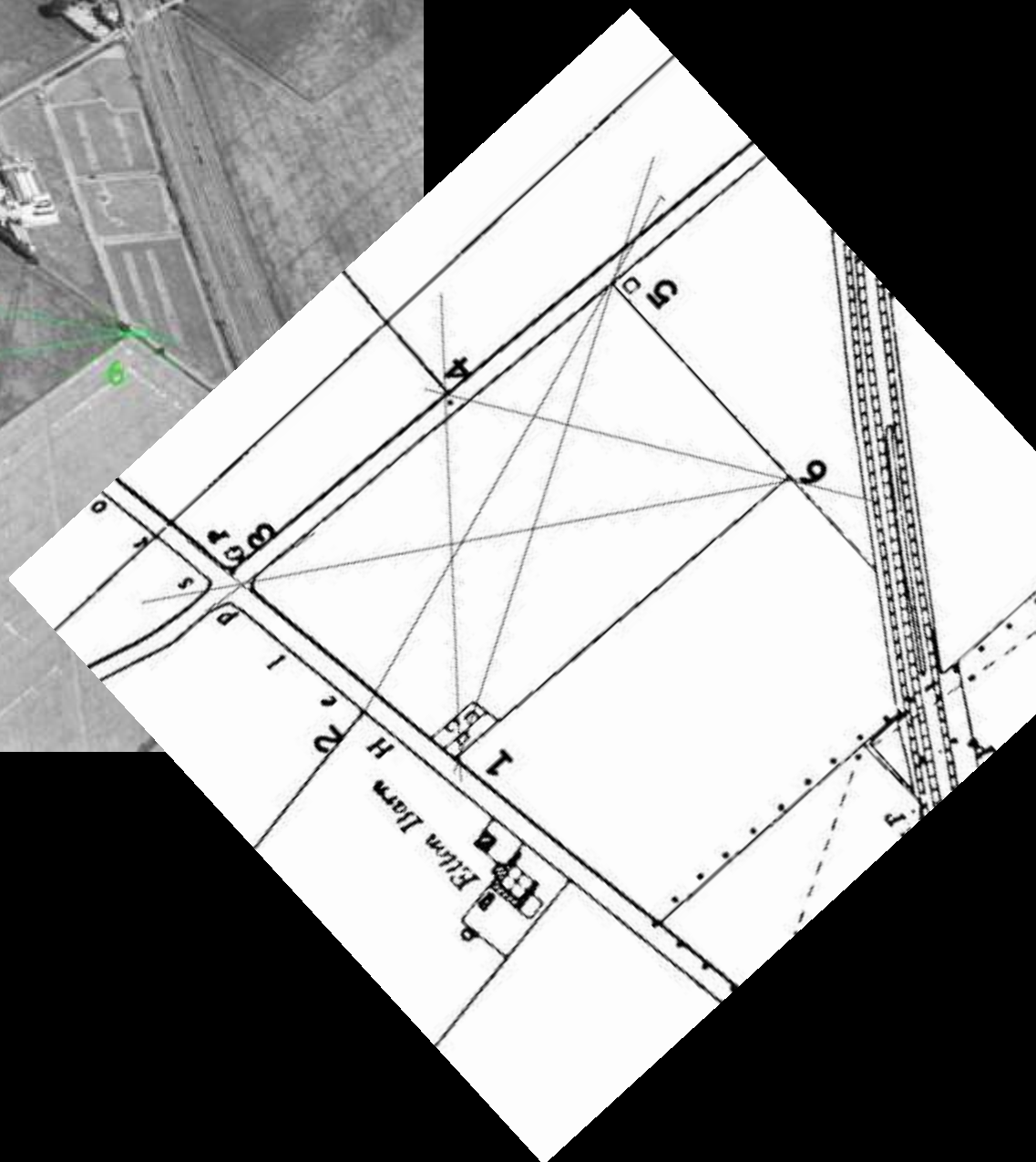
Houses in the modern gipsy village of Buzescu,

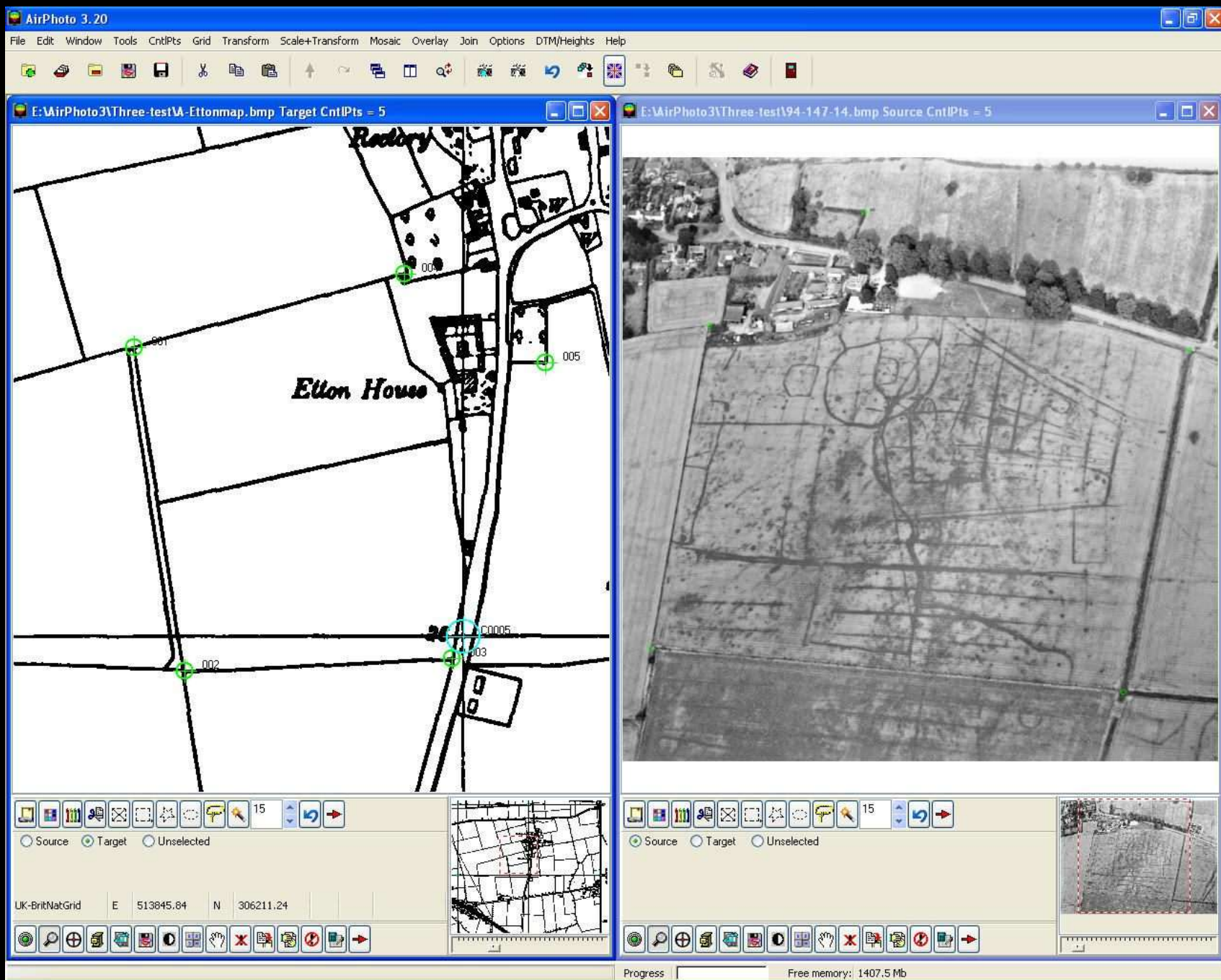


From photos, *via* interpretation, to a map



TF1305A
95.109/5





AirPhoto 3.20

File Edit Window Tools CntlPts Grid Transform Scale+Transform Mosaic Overlay Join Options DTM/Heights Help

E:\AirPhoto3\Three-test\A-Eltonmap.bmp Target CntlPts = 5

E:\AirPhoto3\Three-test\94-147-14.bmp Source CntlPts = 5

Mismatches

SaveAs Save

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002	1.704
003	2.007
004	3.559
005	3.213

Id meters

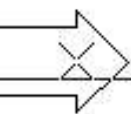
Elton House

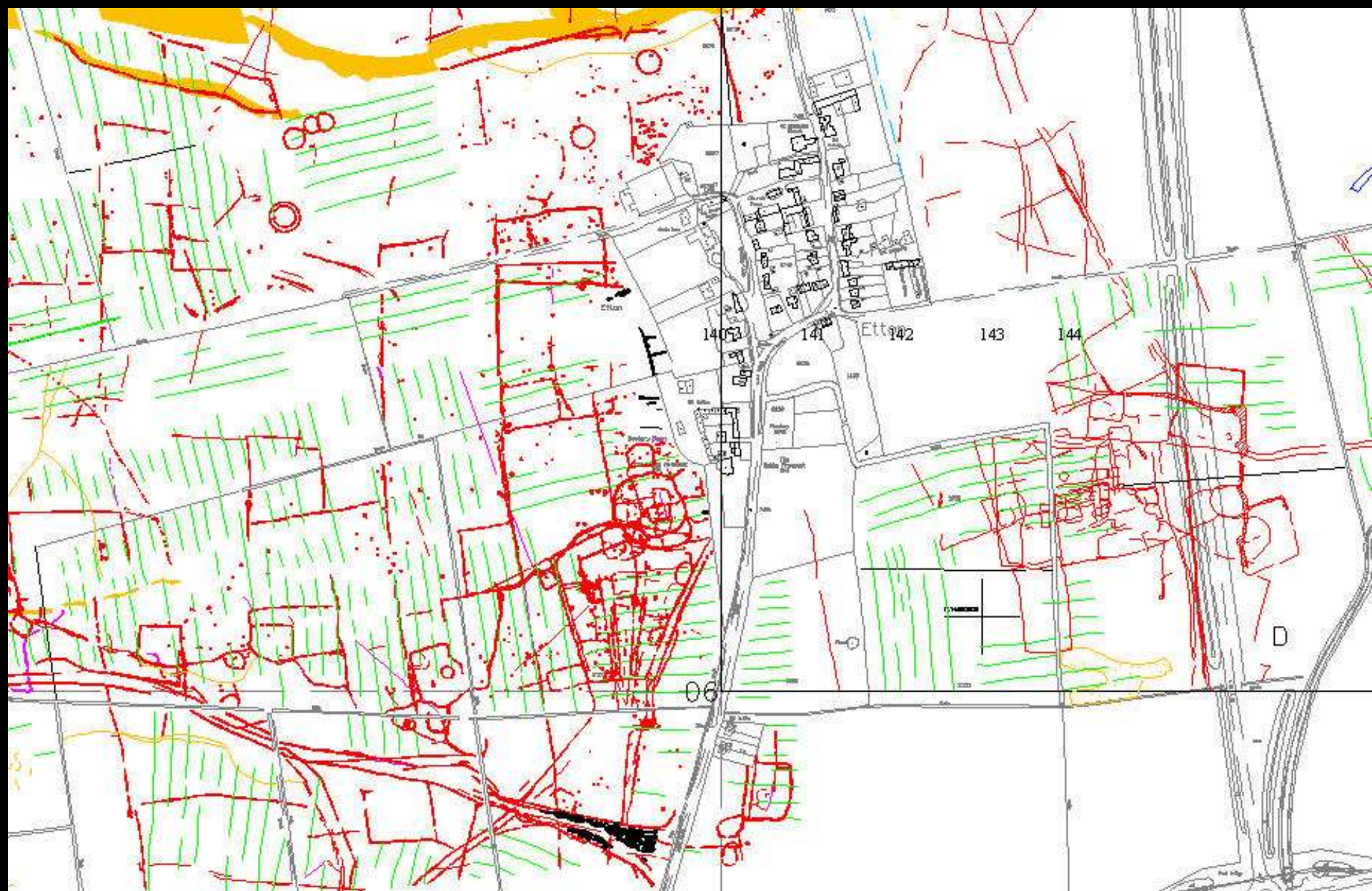
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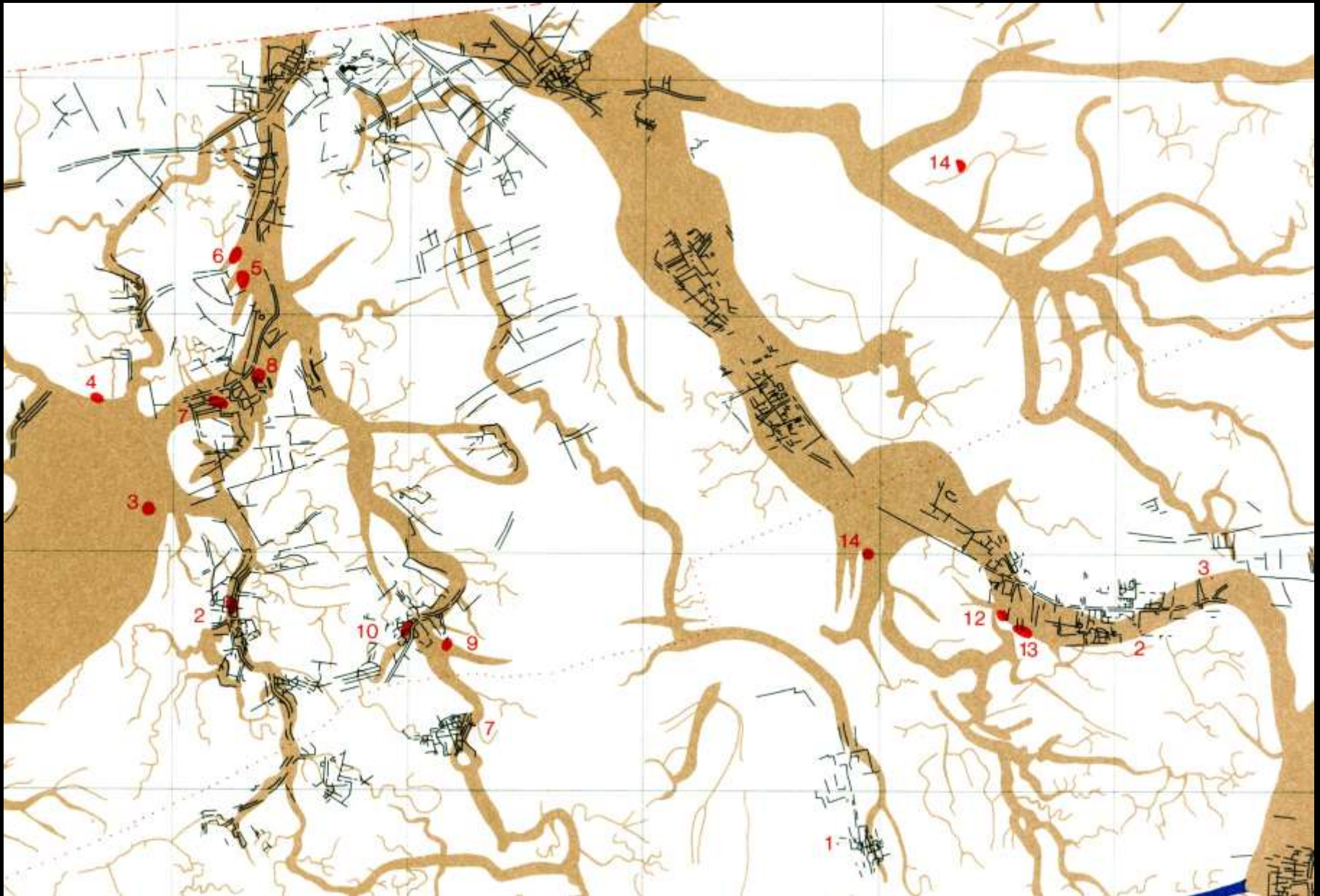




Some uses of these maps



Provide context (natural and archaeological) for field walked sites

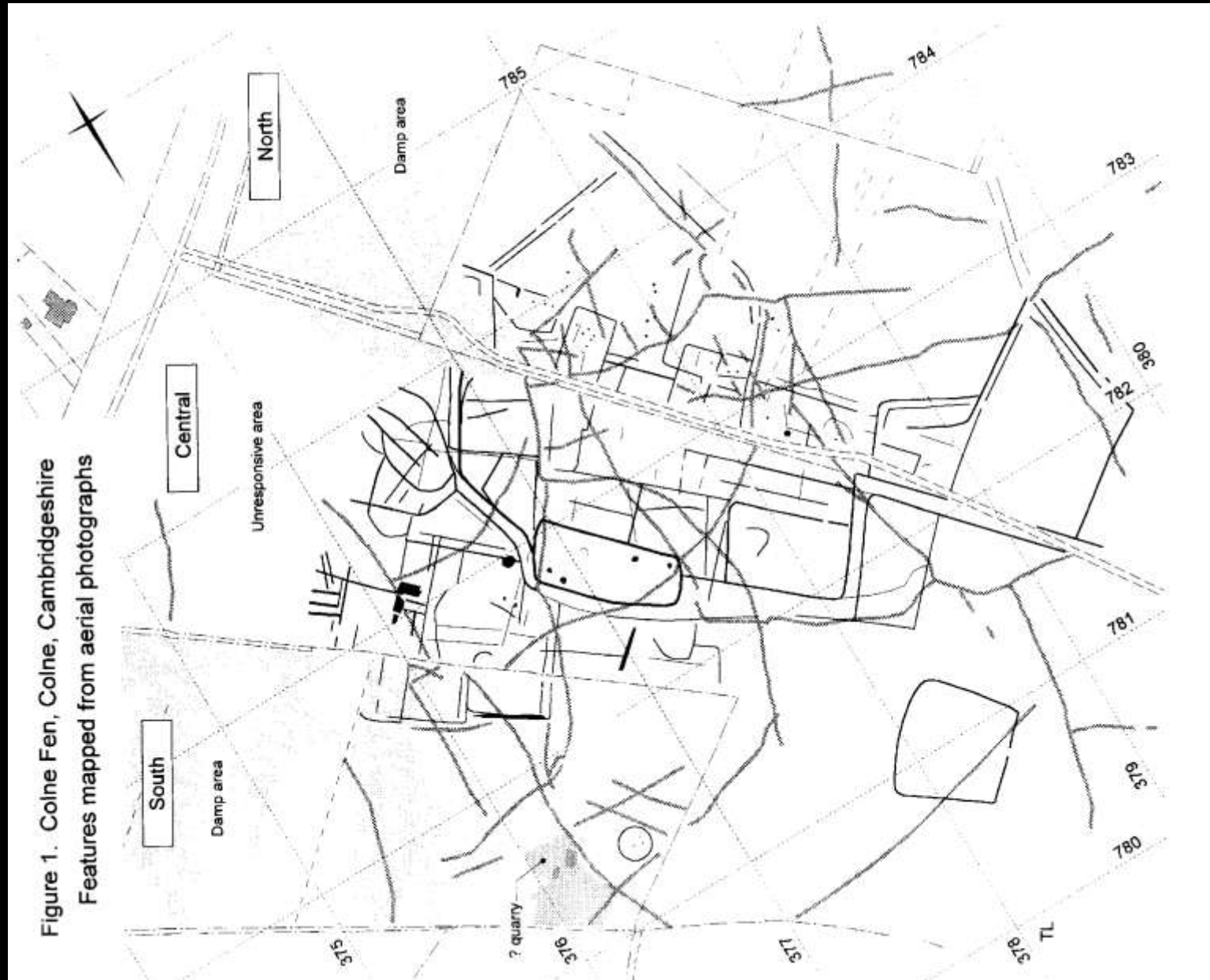


Provide context and structure for small areas of geophysical survey



(stolen from English Heritage)

Map prepared in advance of excavation and quarrying



The excavation soon after topsoil was removed and the surface cleaned



Map used to position sample excavation trenches



Figure 2: Trench location superimposed on aerial photographic survey

516430/3420

Dating from excavation applied to mapped information



Figure 23: Prehistoric archaeology

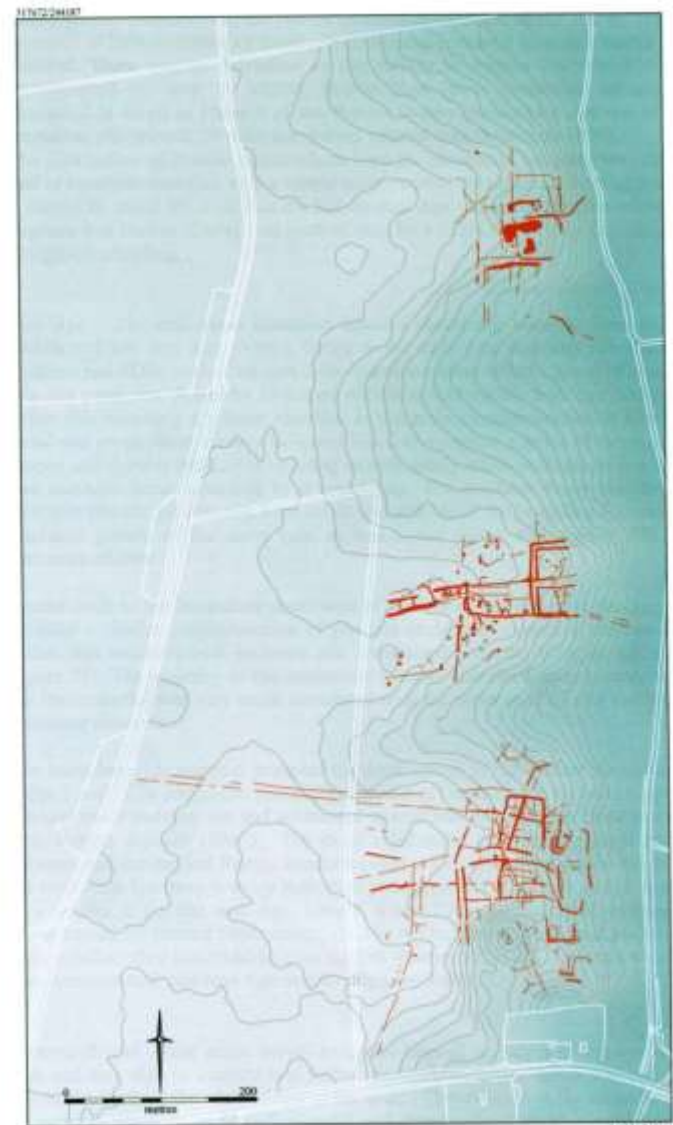
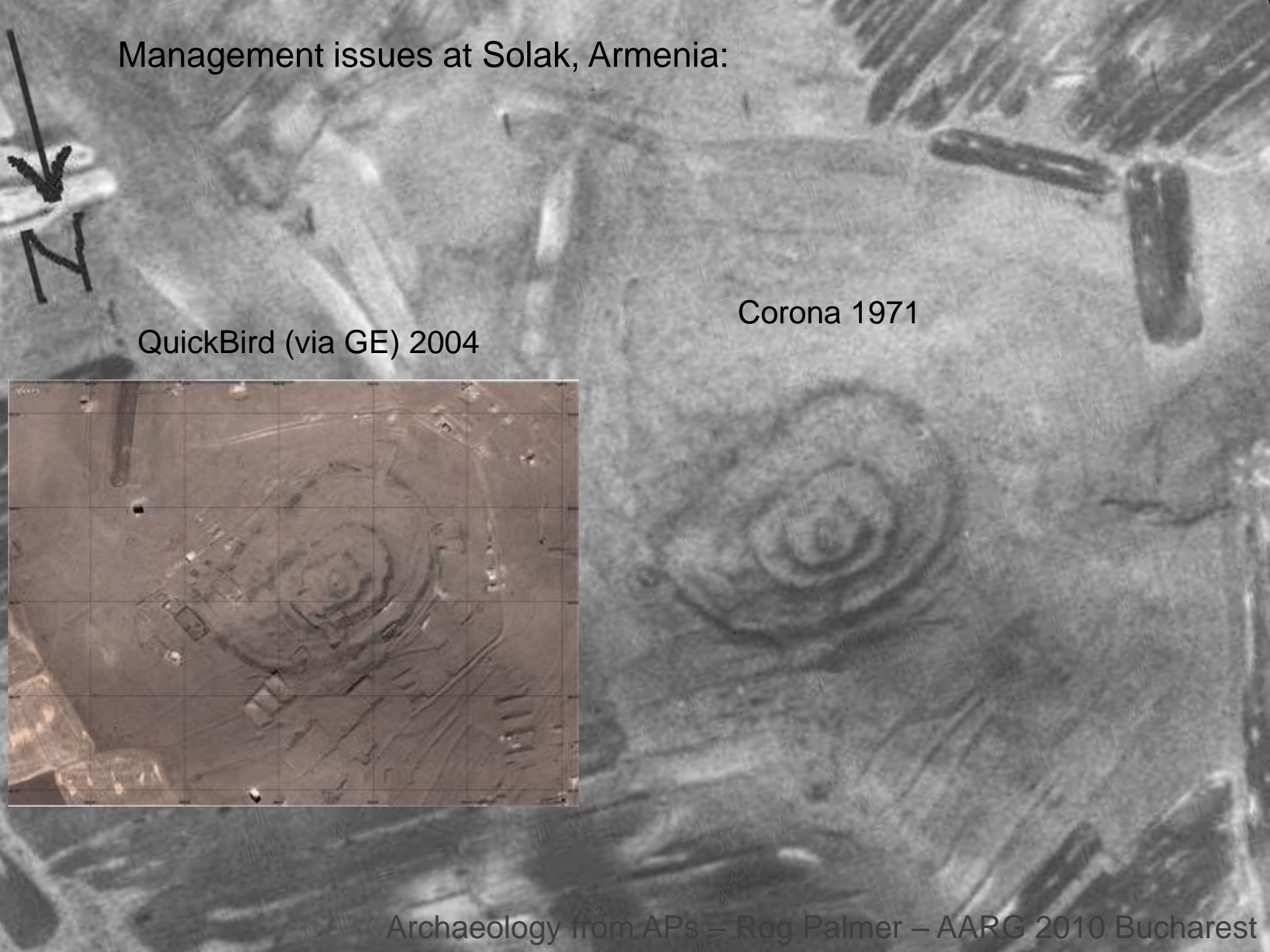


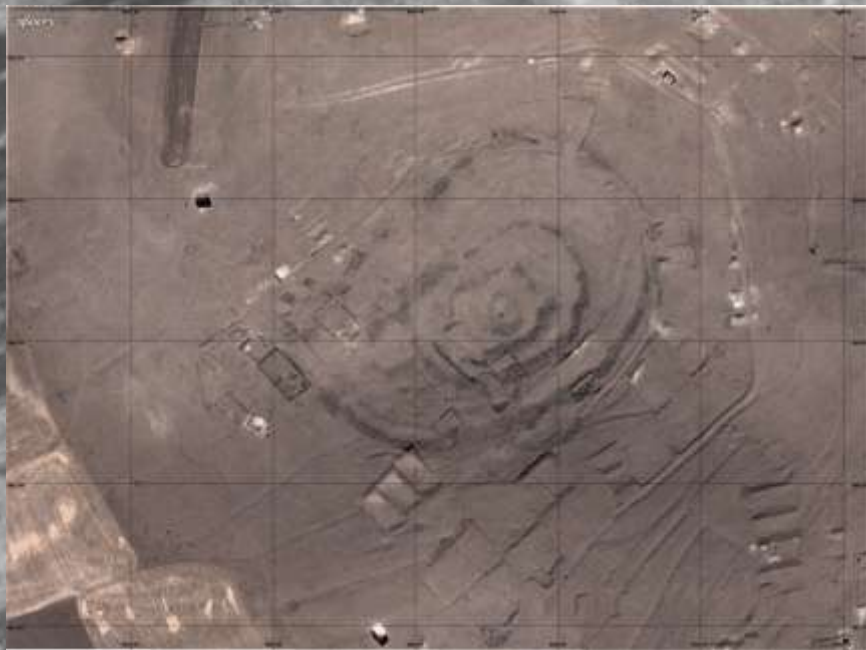
Figure 24: Romano-British and Saxon archaeology

Management issues at Solak, Armenia:



QuickBird (via GE) 2004

Corona 1971





Expect the unexpected

and

question all you see