

**Geophysical Survey at the early Christian complex of Son Peretó (Mallorca, Balearic Islands, Spain)**

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4 **(Mallorca, Balearic Islands, Spain)**  
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**ABSTRACT**

*Rural basilicas are the most important evidence of Christianization of the countryside on the island of Mallorca (Balearic Islands, Spain). Recent investigations of rural landscape transformations suggest that some churches were built along communication routes and linked to pre-existing settlements. To obtain new data that could support this hypothesis, a geophysical survey has been carried out at the early Christian complex of Son Peretó, one of the most emblematic sites for the understanding of Late Antiquity on the island. The objective was to better define the site that is undergoing excavation, and to investigate the possible presence of other constructions further than the Christian complex. The geophysical survey was carried out combining magnetometry and ground-penetrating radar. For the magnetic investigation of large site areas, a 7-probe fluxgate gradiometer array LEA MAX was used. GPR was used to examine the areas nearby the remains already excavated and to better define areas where magnetometry revealed interesting anomalies. GPR was developed by means of the IDS GPR system, which was based on the Fast-Wave module. The results revealed both the presence of architectural remains beneath the soil that help define the early Christian complex, as well as other remains that suggest the church was part of a larger settlement.*

**KEY WORDS:** church, Christianity, landscape, geophysics, magnetometry, GPR

## Geophysical Survey at the early Christian complex of Son Peretó (Mallorca, Balearic Islands, Spain)

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### 1. Introduction

Late Antiquity is traditionally considered to be one of the least known historical time periods of the Balearic Islands. The contribution of Christian archaeology and the investigation of rural basilicas, coupled with several survey projects on the islands (Cau 2009, Cau *et al.* 2015), have provided the first insights into the countryside during this long period (4th to 10th century AD). The Balearics changed from being an independent province within the Western Roman Empire at the end of the 4th century AD to existing under Vandal control in AD 455, Byzantine domination in AD 534, and finally Muslim rule at the beginning of the 10th century AD (Amengual 1991-1992).

Christian rural basilicas were one of the key elements of the late antique Balearic landscape, contributing to the evangelization of rural areas and playing an important role in the spatial, socio-economic, political, and religious structuring of the territory. Thus far, four basilicas have been excavated in Mallorca: Cas Frares (Santa María del Camí), Son Peretó (Manacor), Sa Carrotja (Porto Cristo, Manacor), and Son Fadrinet (Campos) (for a synthesis of the Balearic churches see: Godoy 1995; Alcaide 2011). Most of these sites are only partially excavated, focusing mainly on the architecture and liturgical organization of the religious buildings. There has been less interest in exploring the relationship between these buildings and their surrounding landscapes, although some studies have provided insight into the possible organization of the countryside and the role played by the basilicas (Mas Florit, 2013).

The study of churches is essential to understanding the shaping of Christian landscapes and the Christianization process. Many of these churches were built along communication routes both terrestrial and maritime in nature, or in nodal points on the landscape. As seen throughout the Mediterranean, the basilicas were built in preexisting and populated settlements to ensure their success. In the Balearics, there is no data to indicate whether these island churches were civil or religious initiatives. One of the main problems is the dating of the churches. In most cases, the chronology is not precise due to these buildings having been discovered and excavated at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. However, more recent excavations show that the foundation of Son Fadrinet dates from around the mid-6th century



(Ulbert 2003), and that Son Peretó was well established by the 6th century. Several surveys suggest that at the end of the 5th or in the early 6th century AD, population changes occurred throughout the countryside. The construction of the rural churches could be linked to that process (Mas Florit and Cau 2013).

Some of these churches could be placed in “secondary agglomerations” (Mas Florit and Cau, 2013); this term is used because of the inability to precisely classify the different forms and functions in which agglomerated settlements could have had within the landscape (*vicus, castellum, mansio*,...) (Bertoncello 2002; Fernández Ochoa et al. 2014; Isla 2001; Martínez Melon 2006). Although the information available on secondary agglomerations is extremely scarce, some of these rural basilicas could have been erected in these types of settlements across the countryside. In order to further investigate this possibility, the research agenda has recently introduced geophysical surveys on the rural basilicas. The main aims are to locate new constructions, assess the true extension of these rural sites, and determine whether some of these churches were built in previously inhabited settlements or secondary agglomerations.

Within the broader study of Late Antiquity settlement patterns—including geophysical prospection on rural sites—, some basilicas have been prospected. A geophysical survey of the Es Cap des Port basilica, located in Fornells Bay on the neighboring island of Menorca, showed the possible existence of ceramic kilns and other anomalies. However, no obvious traces of another large construction were found, which could support the hypothesis that this was a monastic complex (Murrieta et al., 2012). More recent yet unpublished investigations of the Son Fadrinet basilica at Campos (Mallorca) show a further complexity of the site with some additional structures apart from those already excavated.

The early Christian complex of Son Peretó in the Eastern part of Mallorca could be an example of religious building in an area of pre-existing inhabitation. In order to evaluate this hypothesis, an investigation concept was developed for the larger surroundings of the basilica. The concept consisted of a combination of field walk surveys, magnetic mapping of all relevant and accessible areas, and detailed investigations by high-resolution GPR. This approach had already proved successful in the investigation of other sites on the Balearic Islands (Mas Florit et al., 2017). In this paper we present the results of the geophysical survey, combining magnetic and GPR measurements.

## 2. Son Peretó: an early Christian complex

The site of Son Peretó (Manacor) is located about 6.5 km northeast of the city of Manacor in eastern Mallorca (Figure 1). Discovered in 1912, it is one of the most remarkable examples of an early Christian complex and is essential to understanding Late Antiquity in Mallorca. The site has been the subject of archaeological excavations since the beginning of the 20th century (Aguiló 1923). Excavations uncovered a church with three naves, the baptistery and an associated necropolis (Palol 1967; Palol et al. 1967) (Figure 1). Since 2005, within the framework of a new project of re-excavation, restoration, and public display of the site, several new stratigraphical sequences have aided in interpreting the site’s evolution. The precise date of the church’s foundation is still unknown, but it is possible that it could date to the 5th

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3 century or early 6th century. By the 6th century, the church was consolidated with a  
4 baptistery in place, which was later re-structured in the 7th century when the large font  
5 from the first phase was replaced by a smaller baptismal font (Cau *et al.* 2012;  
6 Miriello *et al.* 2013). The entire area was a necropolis with graves linked to the  
7 church, the baptistery and adjacent areas. It is also possible that the necropolis pre-  
8 dates the religious buildings. A series of domestic spaces developed during the 7th  
9 century were found located in the West Sector, attached to the baptistery. The image  
10 created is that of a small village that grew attached to the religious buildings. The  
11 entire area was destroyed by a fire at the beginning of the 8th century AD (Cau *et al.*  
12 2012).  
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16 It is worth noting, for the purpose of this paper, that there are signs of a large  
17 necropolis in the area. At the beginning of the 20th century, casual finds showed the  
18 existence of a large variety of graves, including early imperial inhumations as well as  
19 typologies that could be dated from the 3rd century to Late Antiquity. In the church  
20 and the annexed buildings there are large quantities of inhumation graves. These  
21 graves show a variety of typologies but consist primarily in graves excavated in the  
22 soil and covered with flagstones. These would be covered by opus signinum or  
23 occasionally with mosaics, as the example of the *lauda* of Balearia indicates. The  
24 magnitude of the necropolis coupled with the presence of the baptistery and other  
25 architectural aspects (such as the capacity of the church, the largest known in the  
26 Balearics so far), may indicate that this was an important religious centre. Field walk  
27 surveys of the area in the 1980s helped to locate minor settlements not far from the  
28 basilica, which provide evidence of occupation during the Roman and the late antique  
29 periods (Mas Florit, 2006). All this information suggests that the Christian complex of  
30 Son Peretó was built on a preexisting important nucleus that corresponded to some  
31 form of rural settlement.  
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### 3. Areas of investigation and Methods

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#### 3.1. Areas of investigation

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40 The geophysical survey was carried out using a combination of magnetic and GPR  
41 measurements. A larger extension of the fields was investigated by means of magnetic  
42 prospection. These fields surround the already excavated remains of the site enclosed by  
43 a metallic fence. A small portion of the field inside the fence was also explored with  
44 magnetometry. The magnetic measurements were executed on larger areas in the open  
45 fields to the north, northwest, northeast, southwest and west of the basilica.  
46 Additionally, a minor area inside the fenced zone to the north of the basilica was  
47 investigated (Figure 2). The terrain to the north and to the west of the basilica is even,  
48 and further to the west and the east it continues in gentle slopes. The fields' surface is  
49 characterized by grassland and harvested crops, with a few trees and bushes resulting in  
50 minor data gaps. The main sources of disturbance to the magnetic data were the wire  
51 fences around the archaeological protection zone, some power poles and the crash  
52 barriers of the Ma-15 highway passing the site. Since the measurements were carried  
53 out in the summer season, the weather during the fieldwork was hot and dry.  
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57 In a second step, GPR measurements were carried out to examine selected areas of  
58 interest in detail according to the magnetic data. Furthermore, GPR was used to  
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3 explore other areas close to visible archaeological remains enclosed in the metallic  
4 fence, therefore rendering more difficult a magnetic survey. GPR survey also covered  
5 accessible areas inside the fence surrounding the excavated remains of the early  
6 Christian complex. The objective of these measurements was to detect possible  
7 building remains nearby that could be connected to the main complex. The  
8 archaeological record additionally includes features such as graves or pits excavated in  
9 the bedrock. The GPR parameters were modified reducing the time window (depth of  
10 investigation) to obtain a better vertical resolution in the shallow stratigraphical  
11 context of the site. GPR measurements were carried out inside the basilica of Son  
12 Peretó. The objective was to evaluate the contents of the subsoil, with the aim of  
13 locating the known features (mainly individual burials) and evaluating possible deeper  
14 elements not described during the excavation.  
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18 The slightly undulating landscape around the basilica offered predominantly favorable  
19 conditions for geophysical investigations of large areas. The area is intensively used  
20 for agriculture, which led to the expectation of a strong mixing of the uppermost soil  
21 layers. The geological base is formed by the Son Verdera Limestone Formation. It is  
22 composed of Middle Miocene limestones and fine-grained siliciclastic rocks with  
23 variable amounts of organic matter (Ramos-Guerrero et al., 2000). The soils that have  
24 developed as a weathering product of these rocks are predominantly silty to clayey.  
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27 A total surface of 7.75 ha was covered with magnetometry, while GPR was used in  
28 selected areas up to 2 ha. The nomenclature of the areas for the survey grids can be  
29 observed in Figure 2.  
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32 The GPR measurements focused on different areas of the site (Figure 2). The first group  
33 of dataset corresponds to the known fenced site. The prospection aimed to recognize the  
34 projection of known structures through the subsoil and to explore the immediate  
35 surroundings of the Basilica, considered the nucleus of the settlement. This survey  
36 region included three separate data acquisitions: Grid 0, Grid G2 and Grid G3. Grid 9  
37 covered a field outside the fence, aiming to describe possible remains in the nearer  
38 limits of the known site. The surveys in this first region covered a total extension of  
39 5052 m<sup>2</sup>.  
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42 Second and third survey regions were carried out in cultivation fields at the south-west  
43 of the Basilica in order to offer additional information on the hypothesized building  
44 areas documented by the previous magnetic results. The second region covered an area  
45 of 7765 m<sup>2</sup> in three new acquisitions, called Grid 5, Grid G1 and Grid 8.  
46

47 The third region, placed nearly 200 m south from the basilica, covered three different  
48 areas in active cultivation fields. These areas were called G7, G4 and G6, measuring a  
49 total area of 8174 m<sup>2</sup>.  
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## 52 3.2. Methods

### 53 54 55 56 Magnetic prospection 57 58 59 60

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3 For the magnetic investigation, an array of seven Förster fluxgate gradiometer probes  
4 mounted on a light and foldable cart was used. This gradiometer array is a component  
5 of the convertible LEA MAX system (Zöllner et al, 2011).  
6

7 The Förster FEREX CON650 fluxgate gradiometer probes register the vertical gradient  
8 of the vertical component of the Earth's magnetic field with an accuracy of 0.1 nT. The  
9 measured gradient (the difference between two vertically arranged sensors in a  
10 gradiometer probe) is insensitive to the typical large fluctuations of the Earth's magnetic  
11 field and is determined only by the magnetization of local anomalies in the ground  
12 (Schmidt, 2009). The sensor separation and thus the profile distance was 0.5 m. The  
13 measurements were carried out on all accessible fields of interest surrounding the  
14 basilica of Son Peretó. The total area covered is about 7.75 hectares.  
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17 The data positioning for the magnetic survey was realized by means of differential GPS,  
18 using two GNSS receivers NovAtel SMART V1 in RTK mode (Real-Time Kinematic)  
19 to achieve a relative accuracy of 2 cm. The coordinate system in use during the  
20 magnetic measurements was WGS84 / UTM 31 North (EPSG: 32631). The coordinates  
21 of fixed points, located in the surroundings of the excavations of the basilica de Son  
22 Peretó, were used to correct the position of the base, resulting in the absolute accuracy  
23 of the positioning reaching a level of  $\pm 2$  cm. After data acquisition and processing, the  
24 results were re-projected into the project coordinate system ETRS89 /UTM zone  
25 31North (EPSG: 25831) by means of the open-source Cartographic Projections library  
26 GDAL.  
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29 After data registration, the binary magnetic data was decoded and merged with the GPS  
30 data using a script-based decoding routine (ealdec). The actual data processing was  
31 comprised of an offset and a drift correction of each channel's data sets. Applying  
32 another script in a UNIX shell (ealmat), spike values were excluded from the correction.  
33 The maximum order of polygon fitting was set to the value of 2. All decoded and  
34 corrected profiles were subsequently summed up into one single file. This file was  
35 subjected to a gridding routine, producing a Surfer7-compatible grid with an equidistant  
36 mesh of 0.25 m. This grid file was then used to generate a GeoTIFF image that can be  
37 projected in a GIS project and served as base for the archaeological interpretation.  
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#### 41 Interpretation base for the magnetic data 42 43 44

45 The magnetic data was interpreted qualitatively as the survey was strictly non-invasive,  
46 meaning that neither test excavations nor material sampling for laboratory testing was  
47 done. Thus, the interpretation drawings display the result of an approach that combines  
48 the knowledge of soil magnetic properties with the descriptive and comparative  
49 methods of archaeological interpretation (Neubauer and Eder-Hinterleitner; 1997,  
50 Meyer, 2013). Needless to say, the precarious character of any qualitative and  
51 comparative interpretation has to be taken into account since the reading of magnetic  
52 results can be subject to new or evolving hypotheses and knowledge.  
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55 The general approach to classifying the magnetic anomalies is to distinguish them by  
56 means of amplitude, polarization and shape. Secondly, the spatial distribution,  
57 geometric patterns and spatial interrelationships of anomalies and anomaly clusters were  
58 taken into account in the interpretation. Of course, comparative observations of similar  
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3 archaeological sites and their magnetic data were of crucial importance to checking the  
4 archaeological plausibility of the interpretation (Mas Florit et al., 2018).  
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8 As part of the first step, anomalies of unambiguously modern origin —indicating  
9 ferromagnetic objects— were separated and marked. Magnetic anomalies of modern  
10 ferromagnetic objects usually show high amplitudes of the Z component of the vertical  
11 gradient. Depending on size, distance from the sensor and magnetization, they can reach  
12 several hundred Nanotesla. Moreover, these anomalies mostly have a clear dipole  
13 character. Wire fences and crash barriers along the field borders especially cause  
14 anomaly patterns of strong amplitudes and alternating polarization. Additionally, linear  
15 anomalies with both positive and negative polarization that could be associated with  
16 traces of agricultural processing such as ploughing were identified by comparison with  
17 field observations.  
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21 The second step was to sort the remaining anomalies that were assumed to have an  
22 archaeological or geomorphological background. In order to structure these anomalies,  
23 several classes were introduced with corresponding causal physical structures.  
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27 It is assumed that the local limestone of the Son Verdera Formation has diamagnetic  
28 properties. Since the predominant construction material is of local origin, linear  
29 anomaly patterns with negative amplitudes are supposed to be related to foundations  
30 and other construction remains. However, it is also expected that the actual limestone  
31 with its accompanying minerals shows a superposition of diamagnetic, paramagnetic  
32 and ferromagnetic effects, resulting in diffuse anomaly patterns with very weak negative  
33 amplitudes. This may explain the difficulty of identifying ancient construction remains  
34 in the magnetic data, and also provides justification for using the GPR as a  
35 complementary method.  
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40 Besides the limestone constructions, other archaeological features can be identified in  
41 the magnetic data. Firstly, circular and rectangular positive anomalies with low  
42 amplitudes and extensions between 1 and 4 meters are attributed to pit fillings. These  
43 structures can reflect construction pits in relation to the building remains, working and  
44 storage pits, and burials in the surroundings of the basilica. An archaeological  
45 interpretation of these types of anomalies is only possible with consideration of their  
46 spatial context. The weak positive values of the magnetic gradient originate in an  
47 increased magnetization, where both induced and remanent magnetization occur. The  
48 induced magnetization is caused by an increased content of ferrimagnetic iron oxides in  
49 the pit fillings, which is in turn caused by the conversion of low magnetized iron oxides  
50 into ferrimagnetic oxides (such as maghaemite and magnetite in combustion processes)  
51 and by microbiotic influence (Fassbinder, 2017). Secondly, anomaly patterns showing  
52 similar amplitude and polarization characteristics with a linear geometry are associated  
53 with ditch fillings.  
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58 Furthermore, numerous magnetic dipole anomalies with medium amplitudes and north-  
59 south orientation of the dipole were observed. Since these anomalies occur in clusters  
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3 and are found inside the assumed ancient buildings and their surroundings, they were  
4 considered accumulations of predominantly thermoremanent material, indicating  
5 remains of furnaces, hearths or other human-made fireplaces. Features of this type were  
6 observed and described at numerous Roman and other archaeological sites (Neubauer  
7 and Eder-Hinterleitner, 1997; Linford and Canti, 2001).  
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11 Eventually, magnetic anomalies reflecting natural structures and features were  
12 identified. Elongated or extensive zones with apparent irregular order of strong positive  
13 and dipole anomalies were compared with terrain steps and bedrock outcrops at the  
14 surface. In several cases a spatial correlation was found, so these zones can be  
15 connected with the outcropping bedrock. The cause of the complex anomaly patterns  
16 remains unclear. It is assumed that the high amplitudes of the magnetic anomalies are  
17 related to magnetized material found in veins of the weathered limestone.  
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21 A second class of natural effects are magnetic anomalies coming from lightning strikes.  
22 Amplitude and polarization are often similar to magnetic anomalies from remains of  
23 ovens, however they lack context within an archaeological site and are found at highly  
24 exposed sites. Depending on the geological conditions, these anomalies have a dipole or  
25 multi-pole character and very variable shapes, including long curved lines or butterfly  
26 shapes (Jones and Maki, 2005).  
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30 All anomaly classes described are presented in different shades of grey and hatchings in  
31 the interpretation drawings (see legends). For reasons of clarity, the anomalies of  
32 modern origin are not displayed on the interpretation maps.  
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### 35 36 Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR)

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38 The areas were surveyed using an IDS GPR custom system based on the Fast-Wave  
39 module that collects data simultaneously from five 600 MHz antennas, placed parallel  
40 on a survey cart. The spatial resolution was established on 0.2 m between profiles, at an  
41 in-line resolution of 27 scans per meter. The time-window was fixed on 60  
42 nanoseconds, resulting in an effective depth range that varied from 1,2 m to 1,5 m, at an  
43 estimated velocity of 0,1 m per nanosecond. This approximate velocity range has been  
44 estimated by measuring hyperbola shapes on single profiles.  
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48 The GPR data was collected using local coordinates and orthogonal grids adapted to the  
49 geometry of each survey site. Afterwards, control points were taken by a GPS Leica  
50 GG02/Zeno 5 to re-project the grids to absolute coordinates.  
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52  
53 The data processing was made using GPR-Slice software to produce sequences of time-  
54 slices at increasing depths as well as vectorial maps of reflective anomalies. These  
55 views are used as the base outputs to create the final interpretation diagrams in the GIS  
56 project.  
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59 The data treatment consisted of two phases: correction of 2D profiles and generation of  
60 time-slice sequences. Raw data profiles have been processed by applying a band-pass

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3 filter to correct the phase-drift and low-frequency noises, and a gain function to  
4 compensate for amplitude decay with depth. A further background removal was applied  
5 to correct constant noises produced by the system and to enhance the detection of short-  
6 scale anomalies (Conyers and Goodman, 1997).  
7

8 The time-slice sequences were produced by resampling the processed 2D profiles in 16  
9 slices of 3,75 nanoseconds, representing an estimate lapse of 0,19 m each, in a total  
10 depth range from 0 m to 1,52 m. The overlap thickness between slices was set at 50%.  
11 The resulting plots have been resampled to a resolution of 0.1 m x 0.1 m, and finally  
12 filtered using a Gaussian low-pass filter of 3X3 cells (30 cm). The resulting maps were  
13 imported to the GIS project, where further interpretation steps have been done. The  
14 vectorial maps of reflective anomalies by depth were generated using the depth-  
15 threshold function by GPR-slice software. The function consists in alternative, binary  
16 output plots of time-slice sequences, which include only anomalies up to a given  
17 amplitude value (Goodman and Piro, 2013; Schmidt and Tsetskhladze, 2013). These  
18 plots are converted to vectorial polygons using Qgis software and merged in a single  
19 shape file. The resulting maps were expressed as a classed diagram by assigning a range  
20 from light to dark colors to anomalies detected from shallow to deep features.  
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24 Since the data quality and contrast varied substantially in the different acquisitions of  
25 the GPR surveys, the threshold values used to create the vectorial maps of anomalies  
26 were established using a general value of 1.5 standard deviation plus/minus the mean of  
27 each time-slice. Afterwards they were corrected manually, especially in the case of grids  
28 that include high reflective bedrock outcrops (Grids 5, 6, 8 or 9).  
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## 32 Data quality and interpretation parameters for GPR

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36 The original GPR data showed quality flaws because of two main factors. Firstly, the  
37 local geology formed by clayey soils and limestone offered a good contrast between  
38 sediments and bedrock, but a limited penetration even in very dry conditions  
39 (Verdonck, 2012). However, all data was collected at high temperatures and dry  
40 conditions, which probably limited the detection of subtler stratigraphical features yet  
41 produced high-contrast anomalies for building structures made by local stone. The  
42 second factor that conditioned the data quality is the ground contact of the antennae in  
43 Grids G1, G2 and 5, where the resulting data sets show frequent anomalies produced by  
44 miscontacts and a poorer geometrical definition of building remains in the final time-  
45 slice views. Taking into account these factors, the interpretation of the GPR results  
46 summarized in the synthetic interpretation diagrams include five categories: bedrock,  
47 debris/ heterogeneous fillings, building features, not identified and burials. Some of  
48 these cases are illustrated in Figure 3, showing a time-slice of the southern region of the  
49 site and radargrams crossing a debris layer (radargram D), a group of walls (radargram  
50 E), and a limestone outcrop (radargram F), as well as an example of single profiles over  
51 a burial that will be illustrated in the GPR results section.  
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## 56 4. Results and discussion

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### 60 4.1. Magnetic prospection and its results

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5 The results of the magnetic survey are displayed on a map as greyscale images with  
6 dynamics of  $\pm 6\text{nT}$  (Figure 4), and the interpretation can be found on Figure 5.  
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10 The immediate surroundings of the basilica were not surveyed due to the presence of  
11 excavation trenches and wire fences. Inside the fence and to the northeast of the  
12 church's remains, an area of only  $3,000\text{ m}^2$  could be investigated. Trees and bushes  
13 caused several gaps in the data set. The results show a considerably higher  
14 contamination of modern elements and only a few indications of construction remains  
15 in the ground. Negative linear anomalies suggesting the existence of foundations made  
16 of local limestone are only visible in the western part of the area, close to the basilica.  
17 The eastern part is characterized by positive oval to circular anomalies, indicating  
18 fillings of pits. One structure—a distinct dipole anomaly of moderate amplitudes  
19 located at the northern edge of the area—may be connected to the remains of an oven  
20 or hearth.  
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24 The results obtained from the field southwest of the basilica distinguish features  
25 unequivocally related to archaeological remains. A set of negative linear anomalies in  
26 the data has been interpreted as a complex of walls; the foundations seem to form the  
27 remains of a rectangular building almost perfectly matching the orientation of the  
28 basilica. Around and inside the presumed buildings, irregularly shaped positive  
29 anomalies indicate ditches or fillings. In addition, circular positive anomalies indicating  
30 pits occur in and around the buildings. Both groups of anomalies may also point to the  
31 remains of burials.  
32  
33

34  
35 Further southwest, negative linear anomalies of circular or rectangular shape indicate  
36 the remains of other building structures. These anomalies are again associated with  
37 positive anomalies indicating pits and ditches. Some circular anomalies are likely to be  
38 associated with economic activities of some kind, possibly reflecting reused deposits. In  
39 addition, positive oval-shaped anomalies with an average length of  $2\text{ m}$  occur in  
40 concentrations around the building structures and are linked to burial activity. Further to  
41 the southwest, at a distance of  $150$  to  $200\text{ m}$  from the basilica, the magnetic anomalies  
42 caused by foundations of buildings fade out. The character of the magnetic anomalies  
43 changes to groups of circular anomalies, both positive and dipole, originating in pit  
44 fillings and remains of hearths or ovens. These structures are scattered over an area of  
45 approximately  $3,400\text{ m}^2$ , possibly revealing an ancient production area.  
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50  
51 The most conspicuous structures formed by the magnetic anomalies are found even  
52 further southwest, at a distance of more than  $200\text{ m}$  from the basilica. At the northern  
53 edge of this area, a regular pattern of strong dipole anomalies covering an almost  
54 rectangular area of  $150\text{ m}^2$  suggests the existence of a great volume of burnt, i.e.  
55 thermoremanently magnetized, material. In its surroundings, further rectangular positive  
56 anomalies and linear negative anomalies are unmistakable signs of the existence of a  
57 larger ancient building complex with dimensions of at least  $50\text{ m}$  by  $35\text{ m}$ . In order to  
58 prove this assumption and obtain more detailed information, GPR measurements were  
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3 carried out in this zone (see below). The strong thermoremanent anomalies and their  
4 regular shape can be explained by the existence of remains of a large oven complex,  
5 probably used to supply a hypocaust heating.  
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8

9 These structures related to this large building complex possibly continue to the west.  
10 Indications of foundations and walls can be found in the data up to a distance of 175 m  
11 to the west of the basilica. At the northern limit of the surveyed area, some circular  
12 magnetic anomalies indicate the existence of burnt material originating from remains of  
13 ovens, kilns, or other fireplaces in the ground. Since the building structures in the west  
14 lack of clarity, it can be assumed that the degree of preservation decreases from the  
15 center to the western margins. Furthermore, magnetic data shows that this building  
16 complex continues to the north. Negative magnetic anomalies suggest the existence of a  
17 rectangular building, closing the main building to the north. Inside the foundations,  
18 some circular and oval anomalies of higher amplitudes point to remains of combustion  
19 from ovens, kilns, or hearths.  
20  
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23

24 The area west of the agglomeration of buildings and north of the large building complex  
25 is largely free of clear structures. Outcropping bedrock can be traced at the western end  
26 and in the center of the surveyed area. Some linear structures may refer to water  
27 pipelines or enclosure walls of unknown dates. In the centre of this apparently empty  
28 area, a high-amplitude magnetic anomaly of butterfly shape likely shows the  
29 thermoremanent effect of a lightning strike.  
30  
31  
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33 The results of the measurements to the north of the basilica show areas with dense  
34 clusters of mainly positive magnetic anomalies. However, they cannot be connected  
35 with ancient building structures. These large and irregular patterns can also reflect  
36 quarries used for the extraction of building material. The center of the northern area is  
37 still occupied by the ruins of a farmstead, presumably of the 19th or 20th century. The  
38 high concentration of circular positive magnetic anomalies located around these ruins  
39 can be related either to this farmstead or to an earlier construction phase. To the north-  
40 northwest of the basilica, the results of the magnetic data do not allow for a satisfactory  
41 interpretation. In contrast to the area in the southwest, archaeological remains are less  
42 distinguishable with only a few positive anomalies reflecting pits and ditches. The data  
43 obtained from the area further to the basilica's northeast gives no insight into the  
44 archaeological situation due to dominant modern disturbances and assumed absence of  
45 archaeological features, possibly due to their destruction in recent times.  
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#### 50 4.2. GPR measurements and its interpretation

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##### 54 The basilica and its surroundings

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57 The magnetic survey coverage was partial, as the presence of several metal displays and  
58 the metallic perimeter fence produced a magnetic disturbance on the signal. Thus, the  
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3 GPR datasets obtained in this region lack the support of other geophysical data to refine  
4 the interpretation of GPR results.  
5

6 The excavations revealed a group of buildings disposed according to the orientation of  
7 the basilica as the nucleus of the settlement. The stratigraphic record has shown a  
8 variable vertical dimension in the whole area, as bedrock outcrops and even structures  
9 cut in the bedrock have been documented. The GPR data obtained in this area shows a  
10 response consistent with this subsoil disposition, detecting highly reflective and  
11 extensive anomalies identified as limestone bedrock outcrops that alternate with slightly  
12 less reflective features identified as building remains.  
13

14 Grid G3 covered the area inside the basilica (Figure 6), showing buried graves and  
15 pavements. It also showed the bedrock horizons in the southeastern corner and in the  
16 center of the explored area (Groups 72 and 76). Vectorial maps by depth show how  
17 groups of burials are clearly detected (Groups 78, 79, 80, 81 and 82), as well as  
18 pavement remains near the southeastern apse (75). In the same depth range and in the  
19 northwest corner of the basilica, another group of burials (84) was detected. Below  
20 those burial levels, several features were identified but with no clear correlation to  
21 excavation information. In the northern corner of the grid, Group 73 shows high  
22 reflection amplitudes, probably indicating an altered bedrock rise. Parallel to the  
23 southern wall of the basilica, two anomaly groups (77 and 83) show high reflection  
24 amplitudes at depths of more than 0,6 m (GPR profiles in Figure 6). Although the shape  
25 of anomalies change with depth, their high amplitudes indicate that they may be a  
26 product of heterogeneous fillings or even building remains. Similarly, the anomaly  
27 Group 72 increases in extension with depth.  
28  
29

30  
31 Grids 0 and G2 covered the accessible areas around the excavated remains of the  
32 settlement (Figure 7). The resulting time-slice sequence from Grid 0 offered a similar  
33 quality as the data obtained inside the basilica building. A topographical slight  
34 descending slope to the south-west and multiple local changes in elevation produced  
35 both by the excavations and the previous cultivation works resulted in the depth of  
36 detected features not showing a regular trend in the two grids (where shallow bedrock  
37 outcrops and building remains could be found at variable depths).  
38  
39

40 Two main groups of linear anomalies are described to the west and north of the known  
41 remains. The Groups 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 are identified as possible wall remains.  
42 Although the detection of these features looks consistent in the time-slice sequence,  
43 only Groups 15, 18 and 19 seem to match with the geometry of surrounding excavated  
44 buildings. Groups 16, 17 or 21 show no evident connection to other structures.  
45

46 In connection with Group 15, an extensive anomaly called Group 14 is interpreted as a  
47 bedrock rise. It also contains internal variations that have been interpreted as a group of  
48 three independent burials (Group 13).  
49

50 To the north of the main building complex, the results show a region where no clear  
51 features are identified. Groups of reflective anomalies with no clear geometrical  
52 definition such as 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 or 31 are alternatively interpreted as regions of  
53 heterogeneous fillings or non-identified structures. To the north of this fringe with no  
54 clear structures, the Groups 32 and 35 were detected and identified as two burial  
55 concentrations.  
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3 Although trees and bushes in the survey area did not allow a total coverage of the  
4 northern limits of known buildings, the data points to a new region at the north of the  
5 basilica containing building remains and unidentified features.  
6

7 The anomaly Groups 36, 40, 41 and 43, detected between depths of 0,3 m to 0,8 m,  
8 have been identified as possible walls, apparently following the orientation of the  
9 basilica. But, other linear features detected in the same zone as 37 and 39 show no clear  
10 connection with other structures. At the north of the basilica, the anomaly Groups as 42  
11 and 38 are interpreted as new groups of graves.  
12

13 The Grid 0 also included a part of the path that runs by the south-west with the site  
14 fence. Here, two highly reflective anomalies called 23 and 24 have been identified as  
15 possible remains of the path's gravel pavement. Group 22, composed of three weaker  
16 linear anomalies, has been interpreted as part of a new building structure and maintains  
17 a similar orientation of closer excavated buildings.  
18  
19

20 The northern area of the site enclosure was explored in a new data acquisition called  
21 Grid G2. This region was partially cleared from vegetation a few days before the  
22 survey, leaving an uneven surface with frequent stumps and shallow roots.  
23 Consequently, the datasets obtained from the GPR survey show a poorer quality than  
24 Grids 0 and G3, mostly because of the irregular contact of antennae with the ground.  
25 The vectorial map of anomalies by depth (Figure 7) shows a spread of small reflective  
26 features produced by the transitory contact faults of the antenna stack, and only few  
27 anomalies have been considered as possible archaeological remains or old cultivation  
28 tracks. Groups as 55, 56 or 52 have been identified as possible building features due to  
29 their apparent linear shapes, but their poor definition in the time-slices in a noisy  
30 context introduced doubts regarding that attribution. In a similar context, the anomaly  
31 Groups 46, 47, 48, 50, 51 and 52 have also been interpreted as possible walls or  
32 agricultural structures of short vertical dimension.  
33  
34

35 Grid 9 partially covered up an almond-tree field placed at the south-east of the basilica,  
36 outside the fenced site (Figure 8). The resulting time-slice sequence shows three high  
37 reflective areas from 0,25 m depth, labeled as 121, 110 and 111. These regions are  
38 interpreted as limestone basement. However, some internal variations in the response  
39 suggest possible structures cut in the bedrock or connected to it. Groups 120 and 122  
40 have been identified as possible archaeological features at up to 0,7m depth, although  
41 the poor definition of their geometries and the lack of other information on the area  
42 resulted in their consideration as nonconclusive.  
43  
44

45 A similar case was described for the anomaly Groups 110 and 111. They consist in two  
46 fringes giving a reflective response, crossing the field from north-east to south-west.  
47 The time-slice sequence demonstrates that these reflections are not parallel to the  
48 surface, showing a descending slope to the north-east. According to these  
49 characteristics, both groups have been interpreted as new bedrock outcrops. But again, a  
50 number of weak reflection anomalies in its surroundings or connected to them (Groups  
51 112, 113, 114, 117) suggest that the bedrock outcrops could have been used as a base  
52 for anthropogenic structures, as limits of cultivation terraces, or other building  
53 structures.  
54  
55

56 In the central region of the Grid 9, some other weak anomalies were detected. However,  
57 they offer no clear evidences of a consistent group of buildings. Alterations like 115,  
58 116, 119 or 124 show subtle changes in reflection and short vertical projections, but  
59 evident linear trajectories. These factors suggest they could correspond to agricultural  
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3 structures. Only Group 118 has been identified as a possible building remain, containing  
4 some possible walls and a reflective area identified as a deposit of heterogeneous  
5 fillings.  
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9 The second region explored using GPR covered the survey Grids G1, 5 and 8 at the  
10 south of the path leading the site. In this case, the objective of the GPR measurements  
11 was to broaden the information brought by the previous magnetic surveys in selected  
12 parts of these fields. As it has been exposed in the previous section, the magnetic maps  
13 of this region show a highly disturbed magnetic response where multiple focus  
14 anomalies and linear features of negative magnetic values are visible.  
15

16 The Grids G1 (1573 m<sup>2</sup>) and 5 (2563 m<sup>2</sup>) were placed in order to cover the main  
17 concentration of magnetic anomalies interpreted as being related to archaeological  
18 features. Grid 8 (1640 m<sup>2</sup>) at north-west of Grid 1 aimed to offer alternative data on an  
19 area where subtle linear features have been detected in the magnetic survey.  
20

21 In Grids G1 and 5, the rugged surface produced a noisy dataset, but the time-slice  
22 sequence allows the recognition of new zones of archaeological interest. A minimum of  
23 two building groups have been identified in the area of Grid G1, and a new group of  
24 possible burials appears in the north corner of Grid 5. In the southern half of Grid 5, a  
25 new bedrock rise produced a very complex response.  
26  
27

28 As shown in Figure 9, these building remains can be easily identified below the  
29 cultivation layers. The main anomaly groups can be defined at a depth of 0,4 m, but  
30 time-slices of deeper layers show that the features located in the north disappear  
31 (Groups 69, 70 and 71) and indicate poorer conservation. In the western corner of the  
32 grid, a fringe showing high reflection amplitudes can be explained by the existence of a  
33 shallow bedrock layer.  
34

35 The anomaly Groups 63 and 108 are considered to be the main parts of buildings,  
36 defining a possible patio or open space in between structures (Group 109). A third  
37 feature called Group 64 seems to constitute another building clearly connected with the  
38 main Groups 63 and 108, despite showing a different orientation and possibly indicating  
39 a different construction phase.  
40

41 To the west of these buildings, a group of diffuse and reflective anomalies show areas  
42 interpreted as debris deposits or other not determinable building remains. The southern  
43 and eastern perimeters of the building Group 108 show other linear features (Groups 62,  
44 65, 66) which can also be ascribed to building remains or partially conserved rooms.  
45  
46

47 The anomaly Groups 69 and 70 show new linear alterations interpreted as building  
48 remains. The time-slices between the depths of 0.25 and 0.7 m allow for the recognition  
49 of a rectangular room measuring nearly 9 m x 4 m and following an east-west  
50 orientation. Although the western part of the room seems to be destroyed, the eastern  
51 limit is clearly visible in addition to other less defined features to the south (Group 69).  
52

53 The Group 68, located in the south of Grid 1, shows an area containing diffuse and  
54 reflective anomalies, interpreted as heterogeneous fillings or a debris layer. In this case,  
55 the depth of these structures suggest that the assumed building remains were partially  
56 destroyed by agriculture activity.  
57

58 By chance, a cavity was discovered during the survey works. The data obtained above  
59 this cavity shows a weak contrast, but the hyperbola produced by the cavity is clearly  
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3 visible in the profile raw data. A similar response was detected 9 m to the southeast of  
4 this location, possibly revealing another cavity (Figure 10). The origin of this feature is  
5 uncertain.  
6

7 In Grid 5, reflective features appear to be concentrated in the southern half of the grid  
8 from 0.1 m to 0.4 m depth. The images obtained from these features are interpreted as a  
9 heterogeneous layer in contact with bedrock outcrops, also containing debris levels and  
10 some subtle linear features which are interpreted as possible building remains.  
11

12 Anomaly Groups 129, 130, and 134 are larger areas of high reflection amplitudes.  
13 However, these reflective areas show a spread of some weak linear anomalies which  
14 could be remains of walls or cuts in the bedrock. Anomaly Groups 131 and 132 show  
15 similar responses until depths of 0.70 m to 0.90 m.  
16

17 Group 125 designates a new area in the center of the grid where almost no reflective  
18 features were identified, except for a subtle linear limit at its north (Group 126).  
19 According to this response, Group 125 has no conclusive interpretation as it could  
20 correspond to a lower bedrock area filled with regular sediments or be representative of  
21 other anthropogenic features.  
22

23 The anomaly Group 127 shows similar characteristics as defined for the southern  
24 groups (131, 132). Indeed, a number of weak linear and extensive features are detected,  
25 but the images and data are not conclusive enough to relate them to building remains.  
26

27 In the northeast corner of the grid, a new group of features (123) is detected from 0.6 m  
28 depth. It consists of a sum of reflective linear features pointing southeast. According to  
29 the characteristics of the response, similar to other burial groups described around the  
30 Basilica, the Group 123 is interpreted as a burial area containing at least 10 burials.  
31

32 In Grid 8, a new shallow outcrop of bedrock occupies the north-east half of the explored  
33 area, producing a highly reflective response from 0.35 m depth (Group 139). In the  
34 shallower slices, some local and weaker features such as Group 140 suggest possible  
35 building remains or cuts in the bedrock, but a relation of these features to the actual  
36 building a few meters to the north cannot be discarded.  
37

38 The most remarkable groups are 143 and 144 as they show a linear geometry and a  
39 response compatible with wall remains. Although their reflectivity values are weaker,  
40 Groups 145, 142 and 146 could also be interpreted as building remains.  
41

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45 A third region was explored nearly 200 m to the south-west of the basilica, where the  
46 magnetic maps revealed two concentrations of strong magnetic anomalies interpreted as  
47 a possible group of building features. These areas were explored with GPR in three new  
48 survey areas: Grid G4 (3170 m<sup>2</sup>), Grid 6 (3773 m<sup>2</sup>), and Grid 7 (1088 m<sup>2</sup>).  
49

50 The time-slice sequence produced from the Grid 4 GPR survey reveals a significant  
51 group of linear and extensive anomalies, detected immediately beneath the cultivation  
52 layers that have been interpreted as remains of a main building group (Figure 11). The  
53 data shows that the shallowest features connected to the building are located at a depth  
54 of 0,25 m here. Several linear features appear surrounded by diffuse and highly  
55 reflective structures, presumably debris accumulations and heterogeneous fillings  
56 caused by plough works.  
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3 At a depth range of 0.35 m to 0.45 m, the building complex appears to the full extent,  
4 revealing a structure with at least three building sections. A large section includes the  
5 anomaly Groups 86, 87, 88 and 89, forming a rectangular perimeter of 22 m x 18 m  
6 inside it. Groups 88 and 89 show almost no internal subdivisions, while Groups 86 and  
7 87 present well defined rooms and internal walls. Group 87, which consist of two  
8 elongated rooms of approximately 12 m x 2.5 m each, is defined by high reflection  
9 amplitudes over its entire extension between 0.25 m and 0.6 m depth.

10  
11 This pattern of anomalies can be explained with the occurrence of a debris layer  
12 covering those rooms. Another adjacent room (95) is detected at the southwestern  
13 corner of this building section. Further to the south, an open area probably defines some  
14 sort of a patio, limited at the east by a clearly visible wall (85).

15  
16 A second building section is defined by the anomaly Groups 90, 91, 93, 94, 95, 96 and  
17 97. Despite an orientation of some of the walls consistent with the structures of the first  
18 section, the rooms show a poorer definition. This was interpreted as a product of  
19 massive debris accumulations and is especially visible in the Groups 93 and 94. A slight  
20 change of orientation can be observed in the area of the Groups 91 and 92, probably  
21 indicating different construction phases.

22  
23 A third structure with a ground plan of 23 m x 12 m is interpreted from the anomaly  
24 Groups 102, 103, 104 and 105. In this particular case, the internal divisions of the  
25 building can only be roughly estimated, probably because of debris layers.

26  
27 In the eastern part of the grid, some irregularly shaped anomaly groups may also be  
28 ascribed to buried building remains (98 and 101) in poorer preserved conditions than the  
29 ones in the western part. To the east, the anomaly Groups 99 and 100 possibly  
30 correspond to bedrock rising up to depths of approximately 0.3 m.

31  
32 The Grid 6 covered an area where high-contrast magnetic anomalies were previously  
33 detected in an extension of nearly 3000 m<sup>2</sup>, at 25 m south of the main building bodies  
34 detected in Grid G4. The southern quarter of the grid is occupied from shallow depths  
35 onward by an intense anomaly group interpreted as a bedrock outcrop, where clear  
36 linear interruptions are described (150-151-152 or 157).

37  
38 The most significant anomaly groups are detected from 0.4 m to 0.8 m depth, including  
39 linear features 158, 166, 160, 169 and 155. In all cases, these reflective anomalies are  
40 compatible with building remains. However, it is important to remark that this means no  
41 necessarily walls, especially if we take into account an agricultural environment. Other  
42 features as channels or filled ditches could produce a similar response.

43  
44 In the center of the grid, where more intense magnetic anomalies were detected, the  
45 GPR data showed only subtle anomalies as in Groups 161, 164, 165 and 168. A possible  
46 explanation for this different response between magnetic and GPR data could be that the  
47 anomalies are produced by deeper objects or by local thermal alterations. In any case,  
48 the apparently unconnected linear features (158, 159, 160, 150) could also be related to a  
49 possible production area without discarding recent agricultural features (Figure 10, 11).  
50 Other features placed in the limit of the field (162 and 163) are also interpreted as  
51 possible building remains.

52  
53 Grid 7 was placed in the field contiguous to the north limit of Grid 4 to investigate  
54 possible continuity of the main building group. The results of the time-slice sequence do  
55 not show clear building features. A group of highly reflective anomalies called 171 was  
56 detected at the north of the grid from surface levels onward. The morphology and  
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3 response of that anomaly group suggests a new bedrock outcrop. The area occupied by  
4 the strongest magnetic anomaly (173) shows no evidence of possible walls, indicating  
5 that the magnetic anomaly was likely produced by fillings of more magnetic sediments  
6 moved by ploughing.  
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#### 10 4.3 Discussion 11 12

13 The survey strategy included the magnetic prospection as the adequate method for  
14 large-scale recognition of archaeological features within the wider surroundings of the  
15 basilica of Son Peretó, while the GPR served as a method to obtain more accurate  
16 geometrical descriptions and depth information of the localized structures. Nevertheless,  
17 the areas which were investigated with the two methods revealed the complementary of  
18 both geophysical data.  
19  
20

21 A good example is the southwestern region, where both data sets revealed the existence  
22 of a large building complex and a possible production area. Comparing the results of the  
23 magnetic survey and the GPR data, it is evident that the description of this survey  
24 region would be different if the area had been explored using just one of the two  
25 methods (Figure 12). The presence of building remains, suggested by the magnetic data,  
26 was also confirmed by the GPR data on Grid G1.  
27

28 On Grid 6, the southern GPR acquisition revealed almost no evidence of structures,  
29 apart from some linear anomalies interpreted as possible building remains or filled  
30 channels. However, the magnetic data for the same area revealed an important  
31 concentration of magnetic anomalies indicating both the presence of thermoremanent  
32 material and pit fillings, which are probably related to kilns and pottery production.  
33  
34

35 On Grid 4, where an extensive building complex was identified, the magnetic and GPR  
36 data sets also proved to be complementary. Indeed, the most remarkable magnetic  
37 anomalies consist of elongated dipole anomalies, which perfectly match the GPR  
38 results. Not only the shape of the structures 86 and 87 are similar in both data sets, but  
39 the GPR data also suggests a debris layer on top. This could be one cause of the high  
40 magnetic values measured, assuming that the debris layer contains ceramic, i.e.  
41 thermoremanent building materials, such as *tegulae* or *opus signinum* remains.  
42

43 A comparison of magnetic and GPR data further shows that the magnetic data reflects  
44 the bedrock outcrops only when they are related to vein fillings of the weathered  
45 limestone, while the GPR shows larger bedrock layers already in shallow depths, seen  
46 in Grids 5, 6, and 8. The absence of magnetic anomalies at these sites suggests that the  
47 largest part of the bedrock consists of more or less homogeneous diamagnetic  
48 limestone, and only the inhomogeneities of the weathered limestone layers (i. e. veins  
49 with highly magnetized fillings) are displayed in the magnetic data. Additionally, the  
50 measured value of the vertical gradient of the Z component is largely insensitive to  
51 magnetic field changes over large areas and at greater depth. For the magnetic  
52 investigation of the bedrock layer, a total field measurement with Caesium  
53 magnetometers would be recommended.  
54  
55

56 The geophysical survey was undertaken with a clear initial hypothesis that the basilica  
57 was not isolated but built in a nucleus of pre-existing population. The dimensions and  
58 capacity of the church, the large extension of its necropolis, the significant  
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3 refurbishments completed over the course of time, and the importance of its baptisteries  
4 suggested that this Christian complex was an important religious center in the territory.  
5 The presence of the funerary inscription of *Bassus*, a priest from the Holy Roman  
6 Church, in the cemetery supports this assertion. All this evidence denotes the  
7 importance of the Christian community linked to the basilica and opened the possibility  
8 of the existence of an important settlement.  
9

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11  
12 Of course, geophysics has been applied before to the study of Christian basilicas from  
13 different periods in other parts of the Mediterranean; its application helped to  
14 investigate buildings both in urban (e.g. Cozzolino et al. 2018; Tsokas et al. 2007) and  
15 rural settings (e.g. Apostolopoulos et al. 2015). In our case, although we certainly  
16 explored the basilica and its immediate surroundings, the primary object of attention  
17 was the nearby landscape as we attempted to verify whether it was an isolated  
18 construction or formed part of a wider settlement. A similar methodology was applied  
19 to the basilica of Es Cap des Port in Minorca, where, in a more limited extension, the  
20 geophysical survey was able to locate productive areas likely related to pottery  
21 production in what could be a monastic complex (Murrieta et al. 2012). In the previous  
22 and still unpublished results of the Christian basilica of Son Fadrinet in Mallorca, the  
23 existence of other constructions apart from those already excavated were also  
24 demonstrated.  
25  
26

27  
28 In Son Peretó, the results of the geophysical investigation show some traces that are  
29 linked to the already known early Christian complex. This is the case of some  
30 anomalies corresponding to several graves that reveal the continuation of the  
31 necropolis. Some walls in other fields surrounding the excavation seem to have a  
32 similar orientation to those exhibited by the ecclesiastical complex and its annexes.  
33 Nevertheless, the presence of other remains at a relative distance and with a different  
34 orientation, as well as the quantity of poorly defined traces scattered in the  
35 surrounding fields, show a major complexity of the settlement. It is particularly  
36 important to note that the large building found in Grids G7, G4 and G6 and measuring  
37 a total area of 8174 m<sup>2</sup>, could correspond to some of the forms of rural occupation  
38 (Roman *villa*, *mansio*,...) (Fernández Ochoa et al. 2014). Although it is better to be  
39 cautious with the exact identification of this building, the results confirm the  
40 hypothesis that the early Christian complex was not isolated and built in a pristine  
41 location, but instead erected in a place with a preexisting population. This is a major  
42 change in our understanding of the site and its significance. Although there is a  
43 tendency to identify rural Roman sites as *villae*, there are other forms of occupation in  
44 the countryside. The fact that Son Peretó could also be linked to a communication  
45 route—something that we have explored somewhere else (Mas Florit et al. in press)—  
46 cannot rule out the possibility of a *mansio*. The results allow us to hypothesize the  
47 presence of a *villa* or *mansio*, of Roman origin—as suggested by the surface ceramic  
48 materials—that was transformed in Late Antiquity and where the ecclesiastic complex  
49 was erected. Also, the large extension of constructions scattered throughout the area  
50 could point to the presence of a *vicus* or small village. Of course, this would have to be  
51 confirmed with archaeological excavations in order to understand the chronology of all  
52 the archaeological remains scattered through the area (they could not all be  
53 contemporary), and the exact character and typology of the constructions.  
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## 59 **Conclusions**



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4 The geophysical survey, using a combination of magnetometry and GPR, has proven  
5 to be successful in locating archaeological remains in the area of Son Peretó. The  
6 presence of what can be interpreted as the remains of a relatively large Roman *villa* or  
7 other form of rural occupation not far from the church is a major discovery. This  
8 suggests that a Roman building evolved into some kind of secondary agglomeration  
9 that was finally Christianized with the construction of the religious complex.  
10  
11

12 The results of the geophysical survey substantiate the hypothesis that the ecclesiastical  
13 complex of Son Peretó was not isolated, but instead erected in a previous settlement.  
14 Of course, archaeological excavations are needed in order to crosscheck the  
15 information provided by geophysics, but the results so far are promising for future  
16 excavations and have contributed to a change in the site's interpretation as a whole.  
17  
18  
19

## 20 **Acknowledgements**

21  
22 This contribution forms part of the results of the project *Archaeology, Remote Sensing,*  
23 *and Archaeometry: A multidisciplinary approach to landscape and ceramics from the*  
24 *Roman to the Medieval period in Mallorca (Balearic Islands)* (ARCHREMOTELANDS) (HAR2017-83335-P), PI: Miguel Ángel Cau Ontiveros,  
25 funded by the Ministerio de Ciencia, Innovación y Universidades, with contribution  
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35 d'Universitats i Recerca of the Departament d'Economia i Coneixement of the  
36 Generalitat de Catalunya, as well as to a Juan de la Cierva-Incorporación contract,  
37 funded by the Ministerio de Ciencia, Innovación y Universidades.  
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## Figure Captions

1. Map of Mallorca and the location of Son Peretó, and aerial photograph of the early Christian Complex with indication of the main areas cited in the text.
2. The topography of the site and the areas of investigation. A) Contour lines of the site and the location of the basilica. B) Survey areas by method.
3. GPR data interpretation parameters. Examples of features detected in the survey as seen in single GPR profiles.
4. Results of the magnetic investigation displayed in greyscale values of  $\pm 5$  nT/m.
5. Interpretation of the magnetic investigation.
6. Results of the GPR survey inside the remains of the basilica, including two single profiles crossing anomaly Groups 72, 78, 83 and 84 Lower-right image: IDS GPR system used in the surveys.
7. GPR results obtained in the surrounding areas of the excavated remains of the basilica complex. Grids 0, G2 and G3.
8. GPR results southeast of the basilica complex (Grid 9).
9. GPR results on the central region, including Grids 8, 5 and G1.
10. Interpretation diagram of Grid G1 and single GPR profiles of located cavities
11. GPR results on the south-west region, including Grids G4, 6 and 7
12. Complementary character of the magnetic and GPR data. A and B show the magnetic map and the interpretation diagram. B and C show the GPR vectorial anomaly map and the synthetic interpretation.

## Table captions

Table 1. Technical conditions of the magnetic survey

Table 2. Technical condition of the GPR survey

Table 3. Archaeological site of Son Peretó, general information

Method	Magnetic prospection
System	LEA MAX (Eastern Atlas)
Sensors	7 Förster Fluxgate Gradiometer FEREX CON650
Data logger	LEA D2 with 10 channels (Eastern Atlas)
Measurement category	Vertical gradient in nT
Configuration	7 sensors, mounted on cart Vertical sensor separation: 0.65 m
Resolution	0.5 m profile distance max. 0.1 m point distance
Topographic measurement	2x SMART V1 GNSS receiver (with embedded NovAtel OEM6 technology)
Data positioning	Relative error: 0.02
Processing and filters	Eastern Atlas decoding program including offset and drift correction
Data format	ASCII, GeoTiff
Image resolution	0.1 m x 0.1 m

**Table 1**

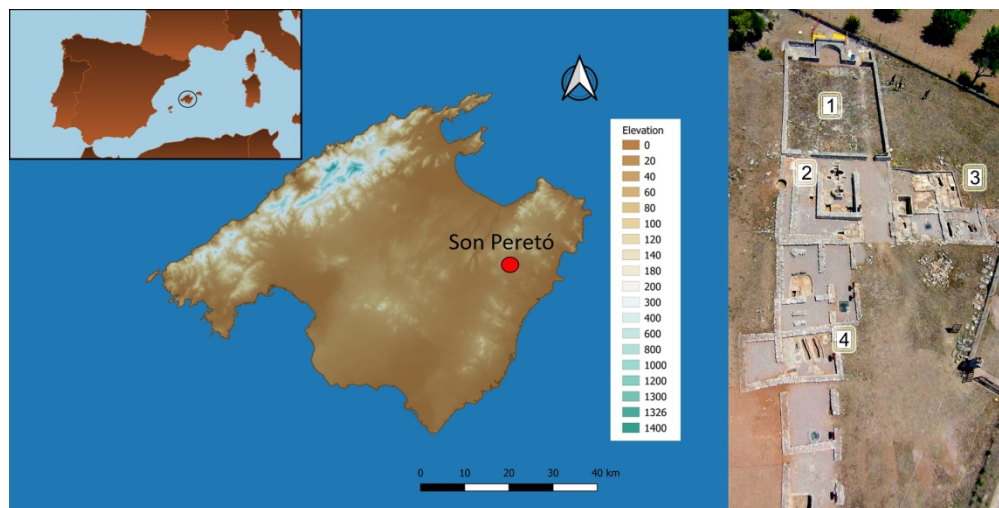
Method	GPR prospection		
System	IDS Fast-wave custom 5-antenna system		
Sensors	IDS 5X600MHz		
Data logger	Panasonic CF-18		
Measurement category	Amplitudes (SI)		
Configuration	5 antennas separated 0.20 m		
	600 MHz	60 ns	512 samples per trace
Resolution	0.20 m between profiles; 0.027 m between traces		
Data positioning	Integrated encoder and local coordinates with subsequent georeferencing.		
Topographic measurement	3 points of the local system were measured using a DGPS (EPSG 25831)		
Processing and filters	Drift correction (based on 24-28 average samples), background, time slicing		
Data format	ASCII, GeoTiff, .grd		
Image resolution	0.1 m x 0.1 m		

**Table 2**

Site	Son Peretó
Historical context	Roman and Late Antiquity
Terrain	Flat to very steep
Geology	Miocenic and Pleistocenic marès (biocalcarenite)
Soil	Sand, silt, partly organically enriched
Surface	Mostly even, plough marks
Above ground archaeological features	Archaeological excavation, fragments of pottery and building material
Vegetation	Grass, a few trees
Land use	Harvested crops, uncultivated grass land
Weather	Max. 33°C, sunny, dry
Sources of disturbance	Fences, few scrap metal
Investigated area	Approx. 7.75 ha (Magnetic prospection), 1.958 ha (GPR)

**Table 3**

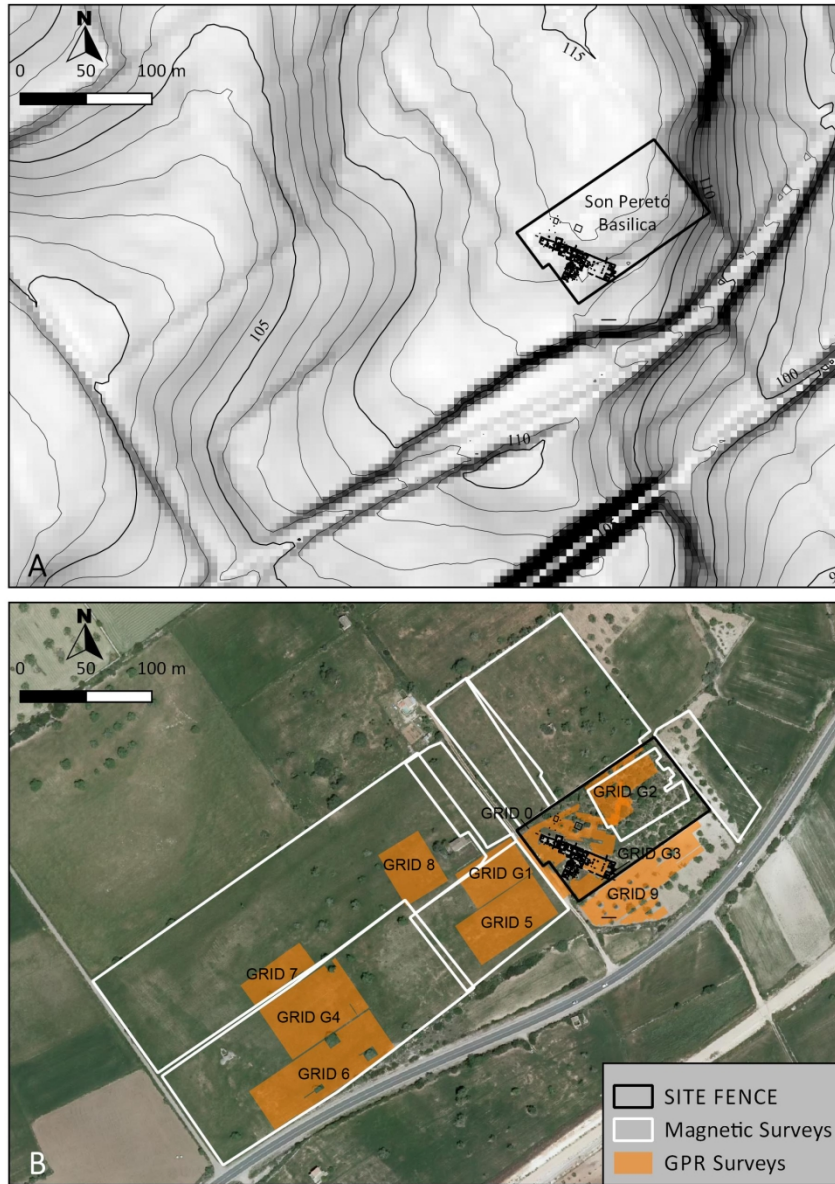




Map of Mallorca and the location of Son Peretó, and aerial photograph of the early Christian Complex with indication of the main areas cited in the text.

169x85mm (300 x 300 DPI)

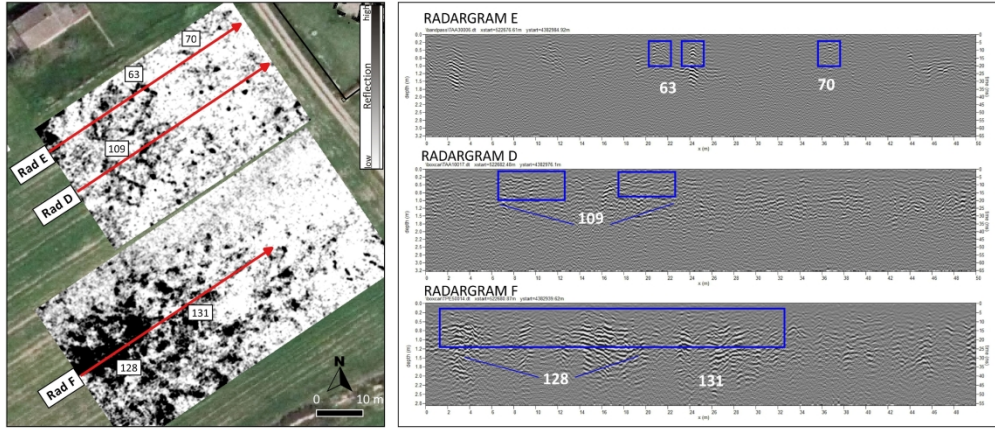
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The topography of the site and the areas of investigation. A) Contour lines of the site and the location of the basilica. B) Survey areas by method.

154x216mm (300 x 300 DPI)

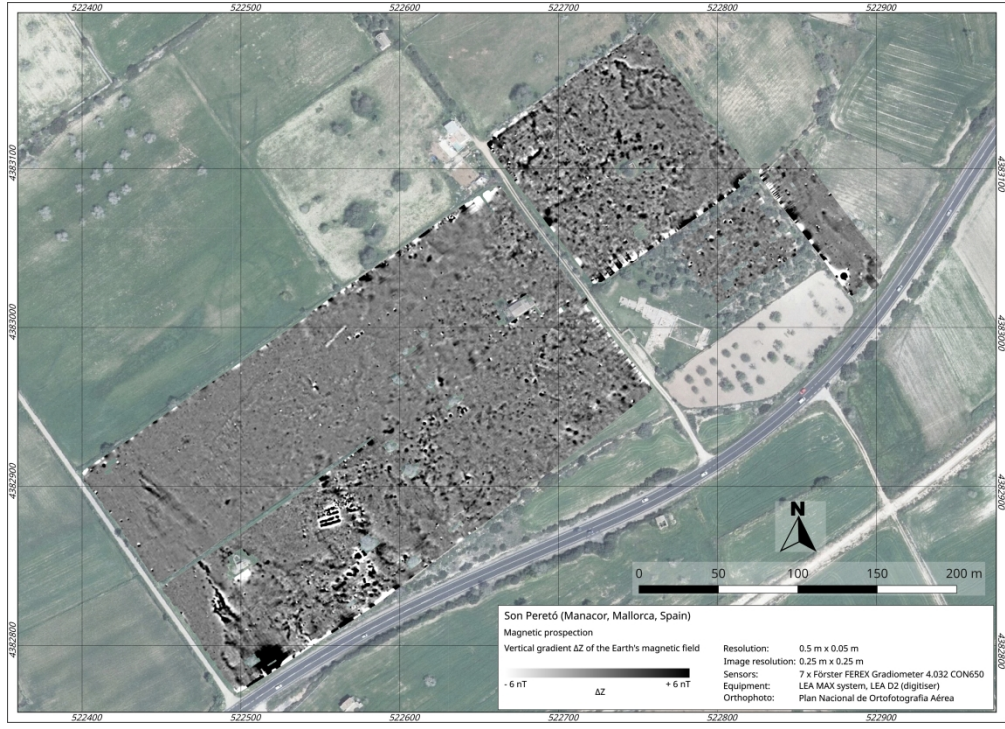
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GPR data interpretation parameters. Examples of features detected in the survey as seen in single GPR profiles.

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Results of the magnetic investigation displayed in greyscale values of  $\pm 5$  nT/m.

421x303mm (299 x 299 DPI)

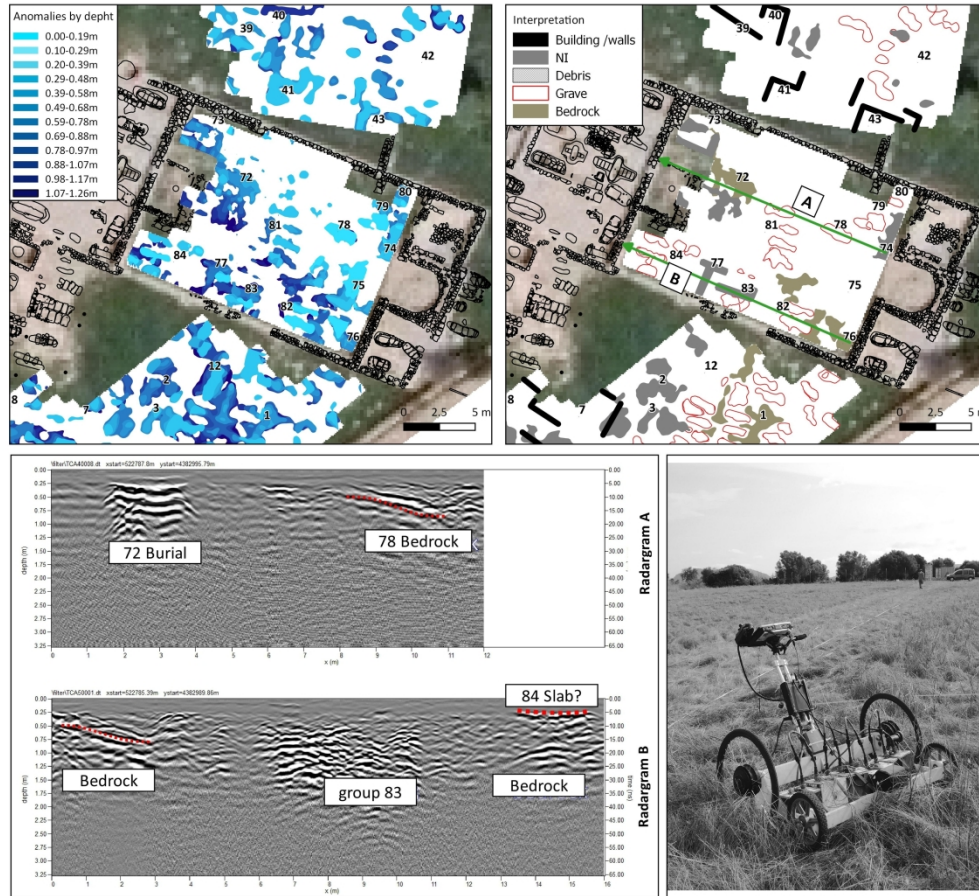


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Interpretation of the magnetic investigation.

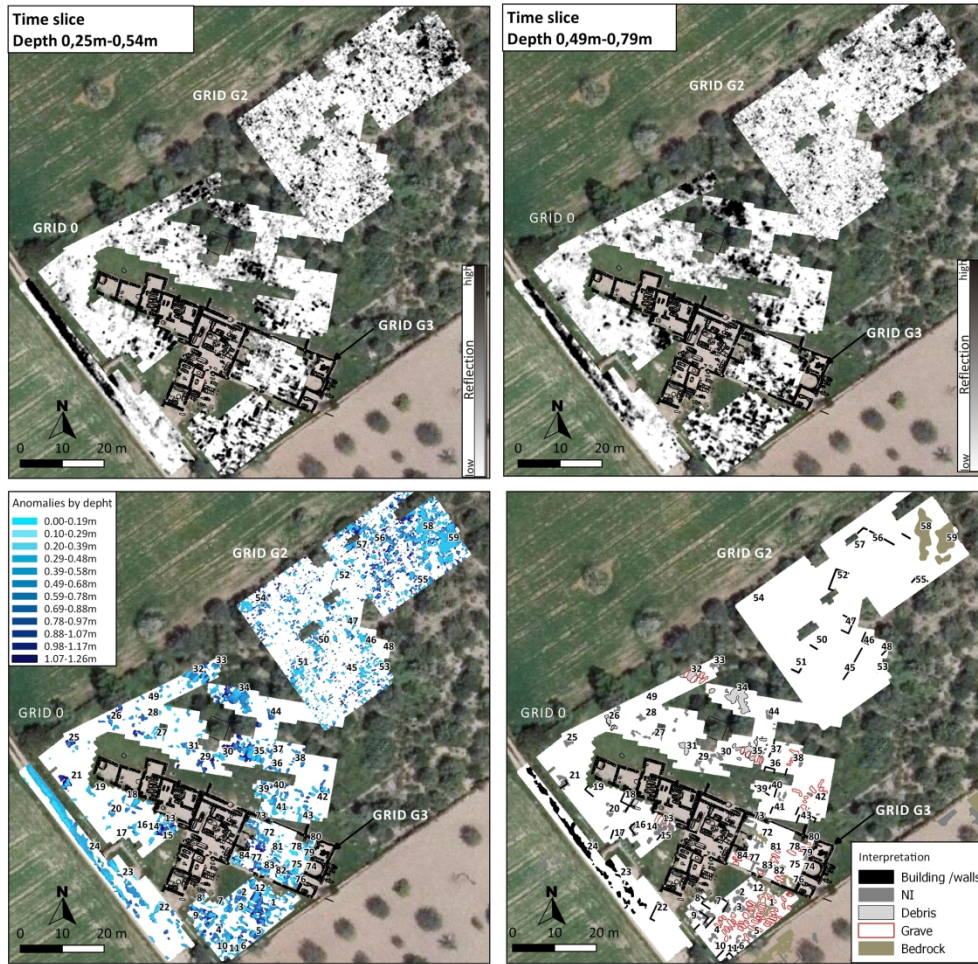
421x303mm (299 x 299 DPI)



Results of the GPR survey inside the remains of the basilica, including two single profiles crossing anomaly Groups 72, 78, 83 and 84 Lower-right image: IDS GPR system used in the surveys.

279x254mm (300 x 300 DPI)

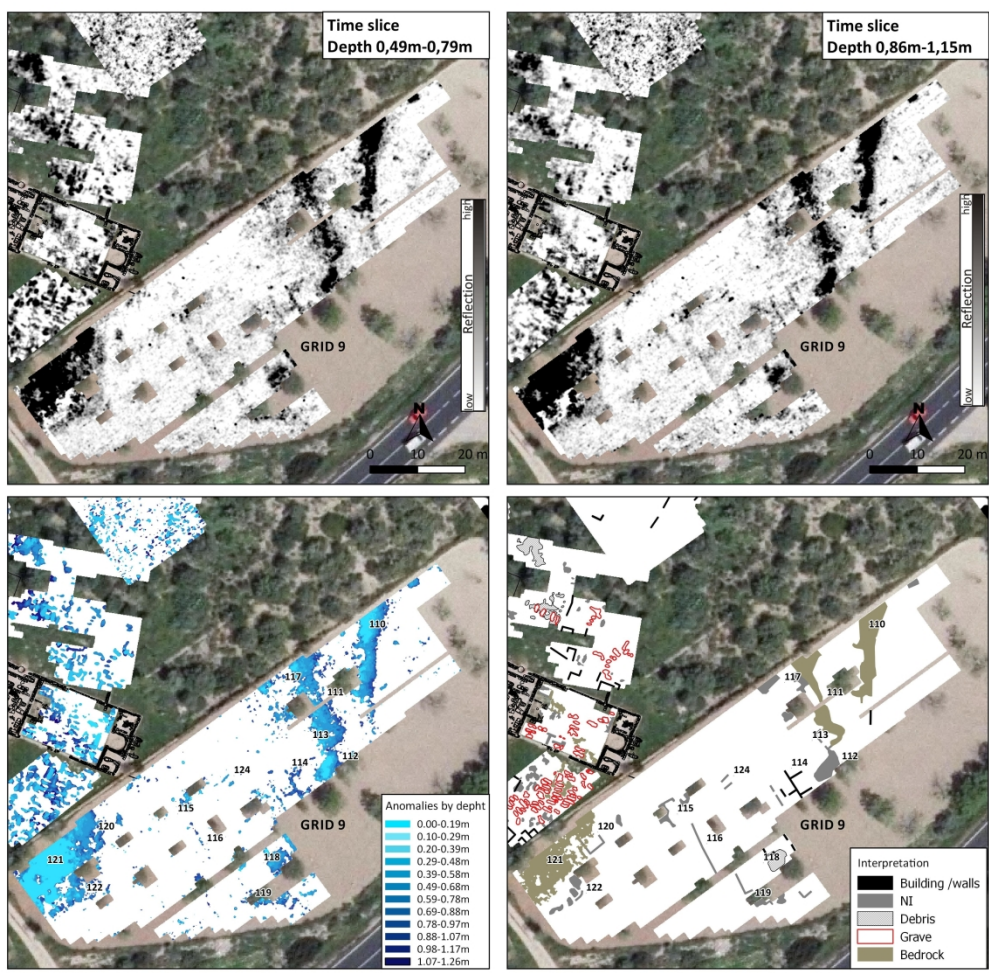




GPR results obtained in the surrounding areas of the excavated remains of the basilica complex. Grids 0, G2 and G3.

279x273mm (300 x 300 DPI)

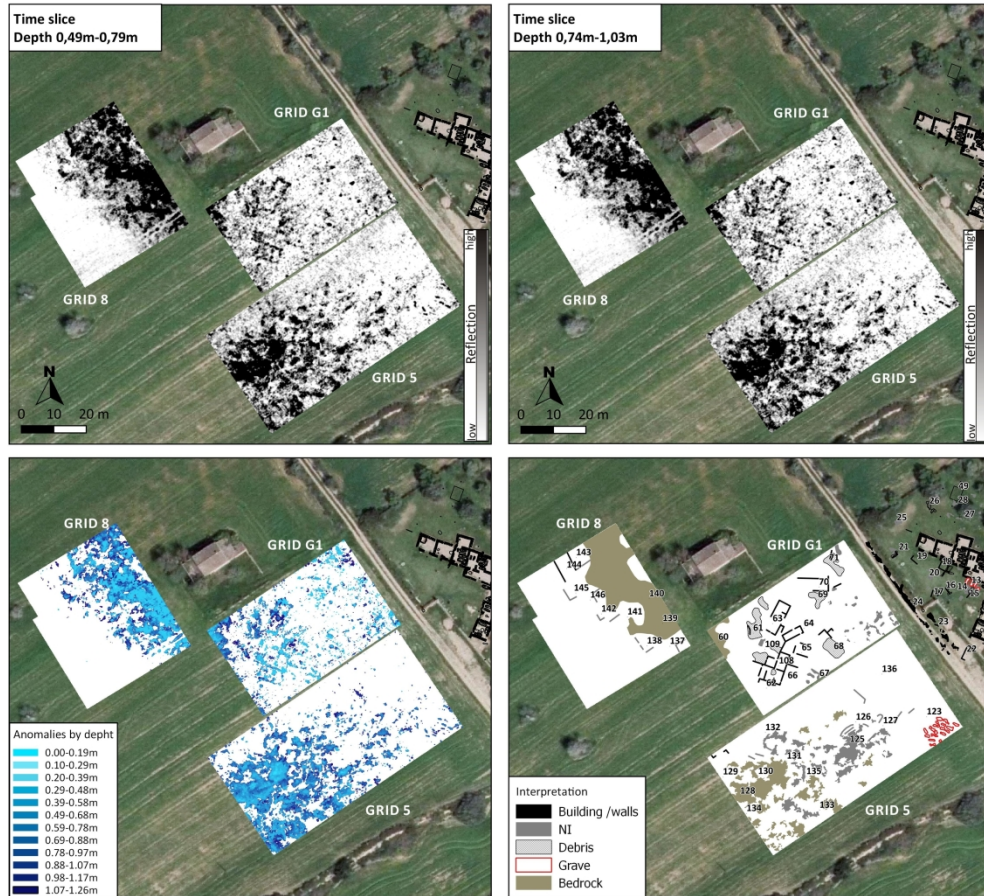
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GPR results southeast of the basilica complex (Grid 9).

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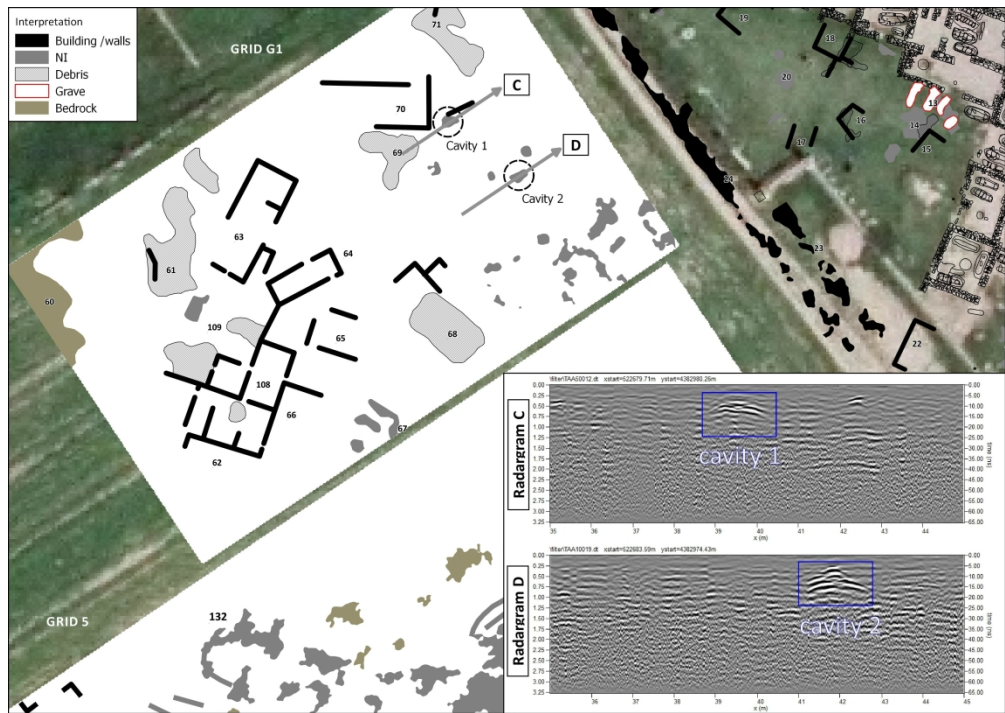




GPR results on the central region, including Grids 8, 5 and G1.

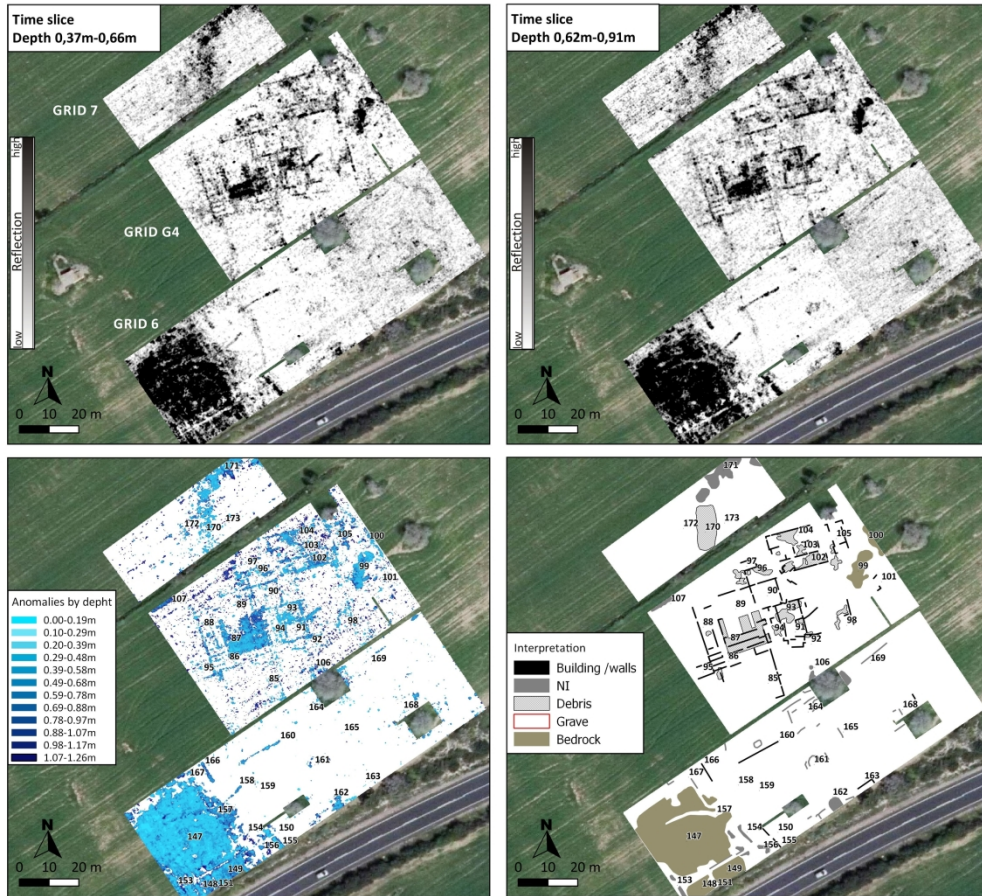
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Interpretation diagram of Grid G1 and single GPR profiles of located cavities.

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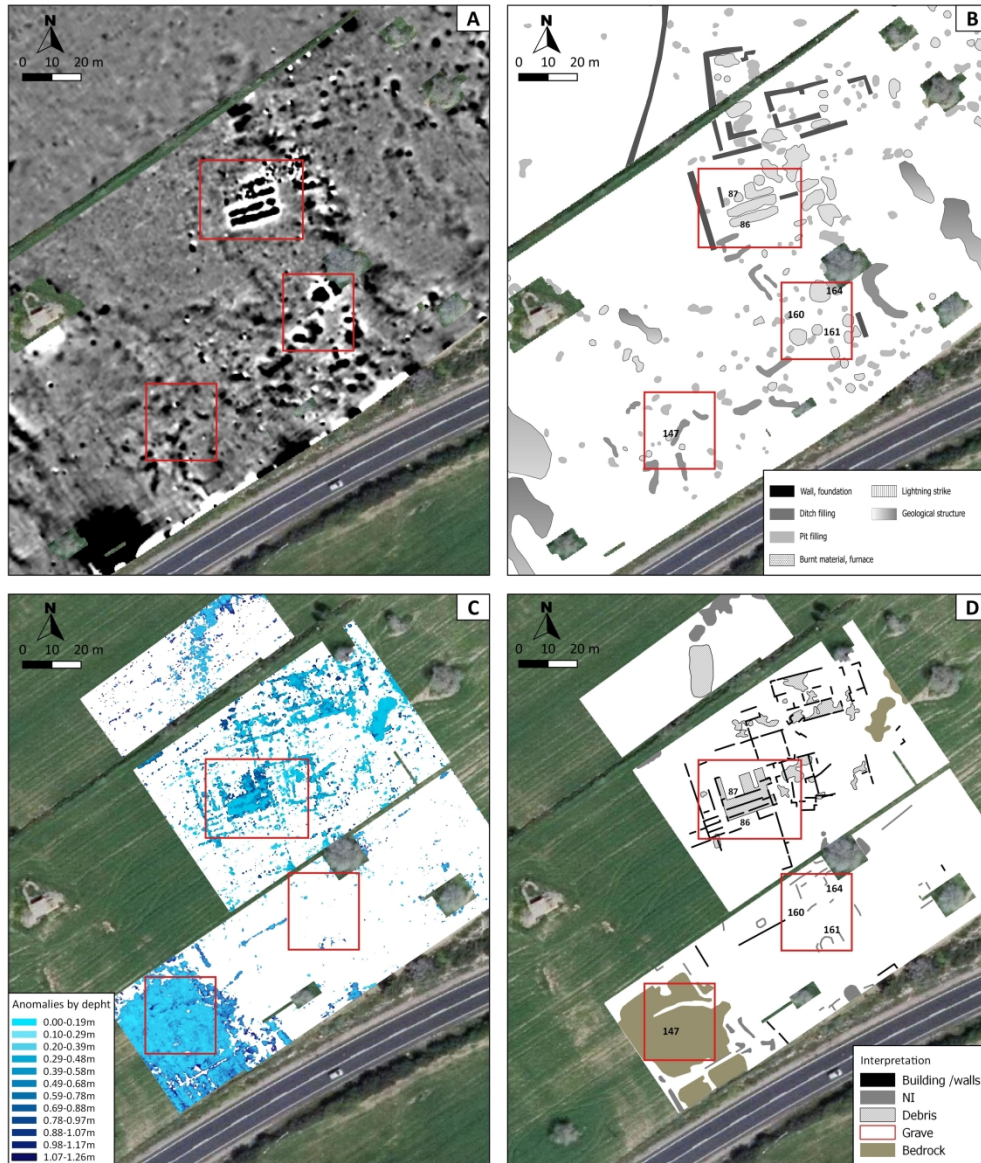


GPR results on the south-west region, including Grids G4, 6 and 7.

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Complementary character of the magnetic and GPR data. A and B show the magnetic map and the interpretation diagram. B and C show the GPR vectorial anomaly map and the synthetic interpretation.

284x333mm (300 x 300 DPI)