

The Formentera Department of Patrimony announces the start of a fresh round of archaeological digs at the byzantine-era necropolis that was unearthed in 2017 on a plot of land on Carrer del Metge Vicent Riera. As work began this week, a team of archaeologists from Sociedad Ciencias Aranzadi announced the discovery of four graves adjacent four which had already been uncovered and dated to seventh century, late Antiquity.

Department chief Raquel Guasch applauded the efforts currently under way, asserting that the findings “help thicken the texture of Formentera’s history”. “That’s why it’s so crucial that they have our support”, she continued, “and that we equip ourselves with tools, such as our catalogue of cultural sites and the Special Archaeological Committee, that put us in a position to safeguard such heritage”.

For her part, archaeologist Glenda Graziani highlighted a number of other local necropolises from the same epoch of the Late Byzantine Empire —Can Gabino, Can Toni Blai and Monestir de la Mola— that were slightly older than the current site, which sits on a plot known as Sa Tanca Vella. Graziani hopes the current efforts will illuminate a period about which details have remained elusive: “This necropolis was likely linked to a settlement which may eventually come to light”. In fact, crews have already identified stone carvings perhaps related to the necropolis. Crews have also found a field that was at one time used for farming—“immensely important to our ability to trace the course of agriculture throughout history”, said Graziani.

Archaeologist Almudena García-Rubio pointed out that the graves in question sit farther apart than those found previously. She also noted that one contains the remains of two children, and the other, an adult and a child. “The remains are quite poorly preserved”, remarked the archaeologist, who affirmed that a sediment study would be in order to determine whether surrounding soil had impacted the preservation process.

On a dig commissioned in 2017 as a prerequisite for building permits for two proposed dwellings, part of a byzantine-era necropolis was uncovered in a stretch of land known as JA-111, which is listed in Formentera’s catalogue of protected cultural heritage sites. Meeting with the site’s owners, the Consell subsequently agreed to oversee excavation of the rest of the plot. Valued at €25,703.74 (VAT included), the contract to carry out the work was awarded to

Sociedad Ciencias Aranzadi.

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