

*Tourism and religious traditional practices in historical religious sites:*

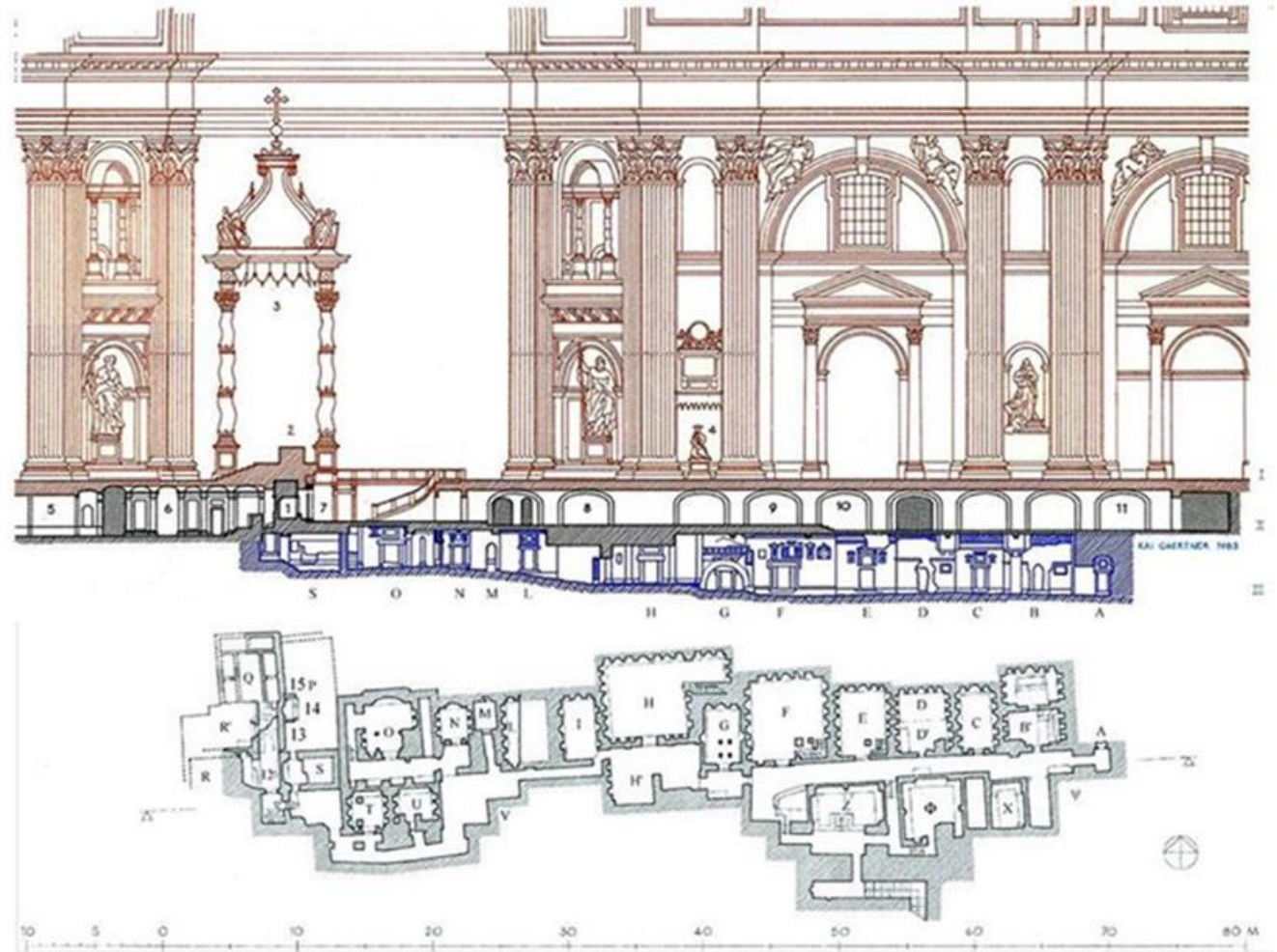
## **The case of the necropolis of Saint Peter in the Vatican**



# The values of the site: tangible and intangible features

- **Religious value:** The tomb of Peter the first Pope
- **Archaeological value:** tombs of the Ancient necropolis dated back to 2nd century AD
- **Historical value:** a long and complex history of religion, architecture and significant historical events
- **Architectural and artistic values:** two churches built in 4th in 16th century
- **Symbolical and spiritual values:** the Popes have lived and live in the Vatican near the tomb of the first pope and where they have performed the most significant rituals and religious Feasts.
- **Touristic value:** simultaneous use of the area on different levels from the archaeological area, to the site where there are the tombs of the popes up to the Basilica

**Managed by a traditional and old institution within the Vatican: Fabrica di San Pietro**



# The discovery of the necropolis and the opening to the public

- Discovered in 1940's 10 meters under the church
- An office settled for a first rough reservation system
- Opened to the public in the late 70's
- A niche site until the '80s with high percentage of religious groups
- Small group tours
- Higher request of visits during one of the most important religious events: the Catholic Jubilee of the year 2000



**1940s excavations (men at work)**

# A sustainable religious site

- A specific entrance for visitors joining the tour not interfering with the queue of the Basilica
- Security check for reservation
- Special attention to the site conservation: groups every 15 minutes, limited number of visitors for each group (max. 12)
- Crowd management from the exit of the archaeological area to the Basilica
- More regular tours
- Professional guides trained to give historically correct information and to manage the tours on time

## A more accessible site for the new millennium

- It has become a place accessed by tourists in regular bases: promotion of the site through internet, fast booking system
- It is a place where people come back: social importance of the site that is still well known through the word of mouth
- Academic papers on the site have increased over the years
- Universities and cultural institutions use the site for field studies
- Pilgrimage site with connection to parish churches and cultural organizations

**The necropolis under Saint Peter:** where devotion and cultural interest are managed by opening the site to everyone



(mosaic from one of the tombs of the necropolis with an early image of Christ)

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