APPENDIX A

Principles of Electrical Resistivity Surveying

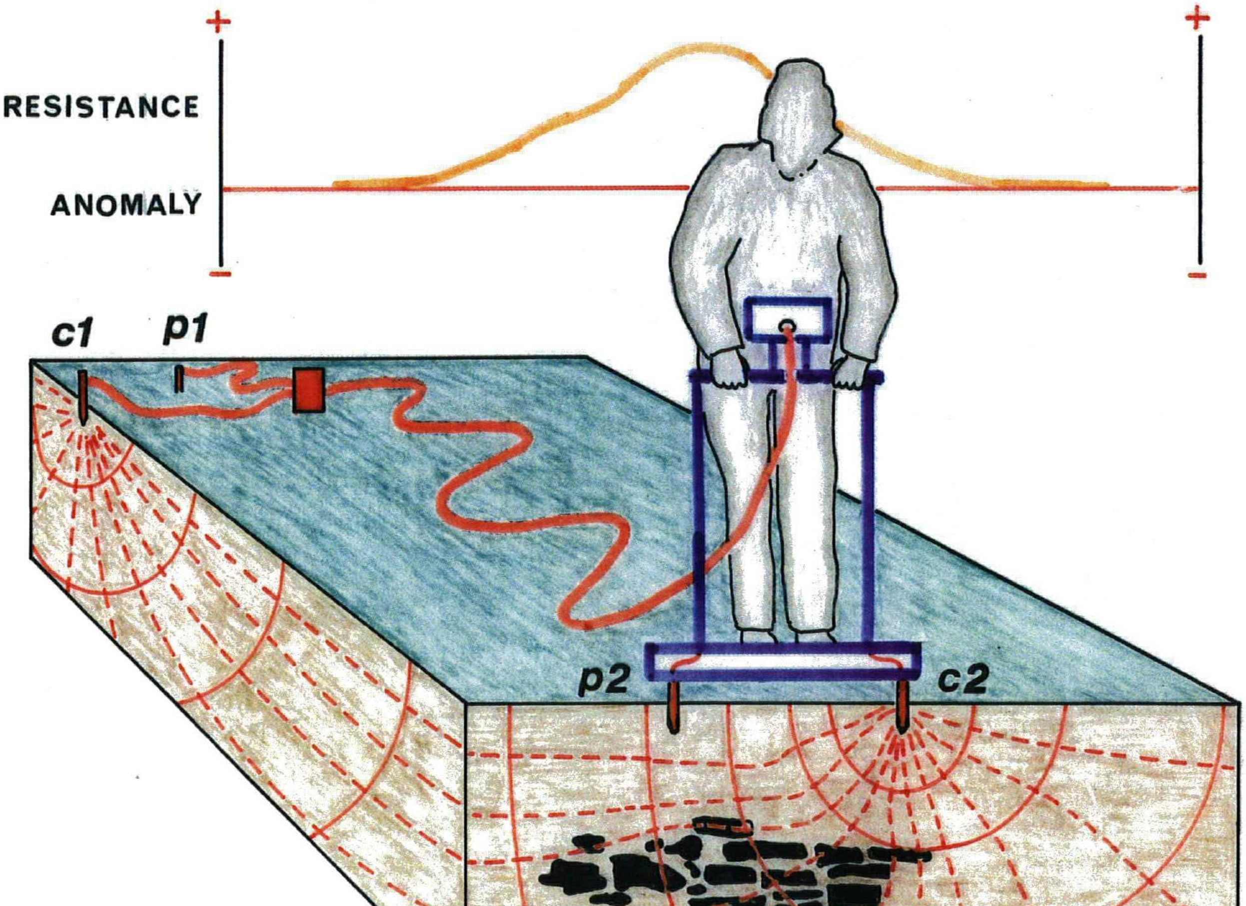
This is an *active* geophysical prospecting technique which detects subsurface features in terms of the resistance they present to the passage of an artificially induced electric current. In the dry state, most soils and rocks are insulators but, when they become moist, electric currents are able to flow through the movement of ions which are always dissolved in the porewater. As the soil or rock absorbs more water the conductivity increases since more ions become available for conduction and their mobility is enhanced. Hence electrical resistivity surveying primarily maps the volume concentration of ground moisture which varies according to lithology, porosity and time of year. Temperature fluctuations can also be important although in mid-latitudes this effect is insignificant.

To record the soil electrical resistivity an alternating current is injected into the ground through a pair of metal electrodes and the surface potential detected between a second pair. This arrangement is needed to minimise errors arising from contact effects, earth currents (usually of mains origin) and polarisation potentials. Several configurations have been evaluated for archaeological use but the 'twin electrode' scheme shown overleaf has proved popular for this purpose. A mobile frame is used to carry one potential and one current electrode (**p2** and **c2**) which are connected, via the meter, to their respective **p1** and **c1** soil electrodes. Alternating current is passed between **c1** and **c2** and the potential measured between **p1** and **p2**. The presence of a zone of anomalous resistivity modifies the distribution of current flow (dotted streamlines) and also the contours of constant potential (curved solid lines) and is depicted for the case of a high resistivity structure such as a wall. The instrument thus senses a maximum (or minimum) in the apparent soil resistance which is centred over the feature.

Through good instrument design, resistivity surveying is now a rapid technique although the need for soil contact and cables makes this a slower method than magnetometry. Our surveys employed a Geoscan RM15 instrument with variable spacing between the mobile electrodes which enables the sensing depth to be optimised.

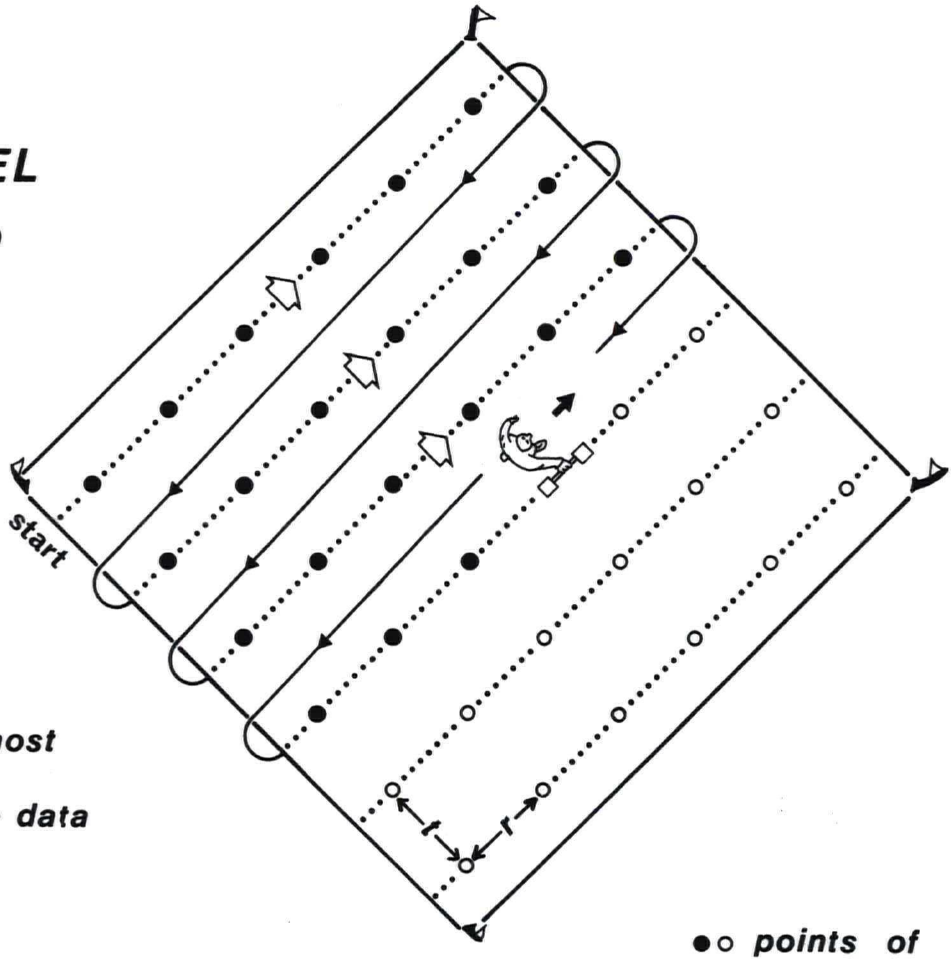
Measurements are generally taken at regular intervals on a grid. Both parallel and zig-zag traverse schemes are used; the first method is slower but minimises systematic errors in the resulting data.

RESISTIVITY SURVEYING



SURVEY SCHEMES

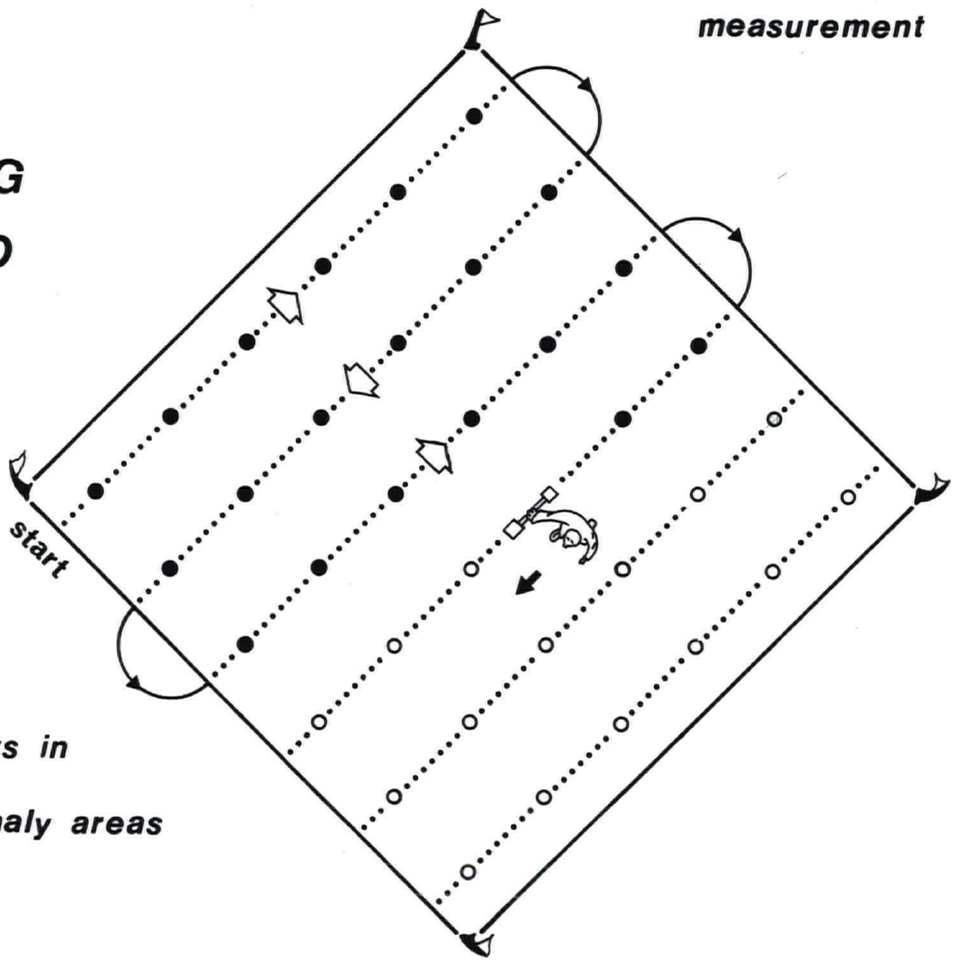
PARALLEL METHOD



slower but minimises most errors in the data

●○ points of measurement

ZIG-ZAG METHOD



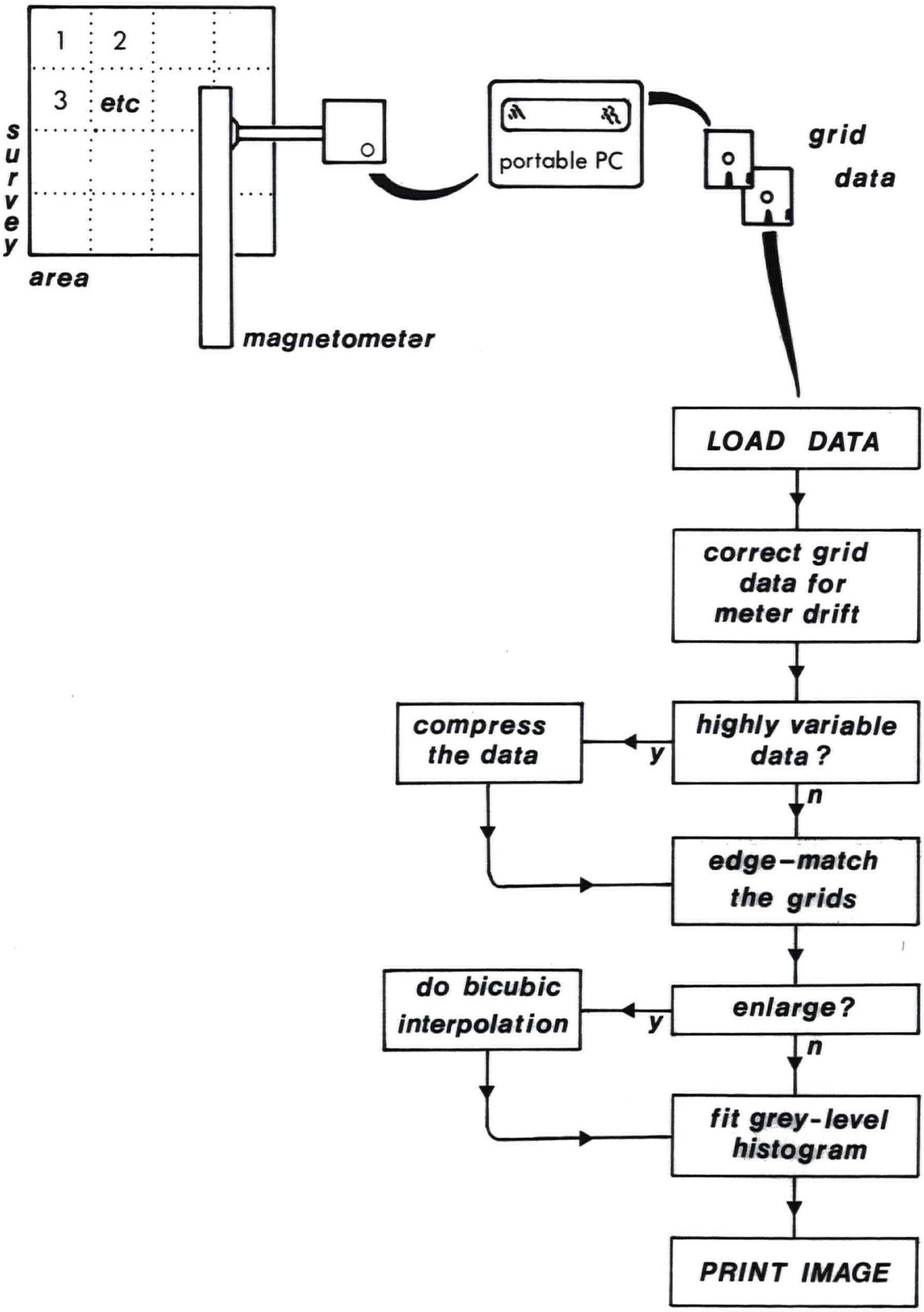
suitable for rapid surveys in strong anomaly areas

APPENDIX B

Data Processing Procedure

The various stages involved in gathering and manipulating the field measurements are summarised in the flow diagram overleaf. Data are downloaded from the magnetometer or resistivity meter to a portable computer, via a serial cable, inspected graphically and then stored on disc. Once the survey is completed, the data from individual grids are corrected for instrument drift (typically a few % per hour for the magnetometer) and then their dynamic range reduced if they contain highly variable values. This is often necessary where an area contains strong dipole sources if one is to make the best use of the grey scales available from the printer. Next, the area image is constructed by 'tiling' together adjacent grids. To achieve this, a special graphical technique is applied that minimises 'seams' in the image which would otherwise mask the anomalies of archaeological interest. If enlargement of a selected area is required, then this is achieved by expanding the data with bicubic splines; an approach which helps to reduce blurring. Finally, the data are numerically mapped to a set of 33 grey levels (true half tones) which are programmed to have a normal distribution in the printed image. From experience, it has been found that such a distribution is pleasing to the eye and by adjusting the mean density and variance the appearance of the anomalies can be optimised. All processing is carried out by proprietary GeoQuest software.

DATA PROCESSING



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