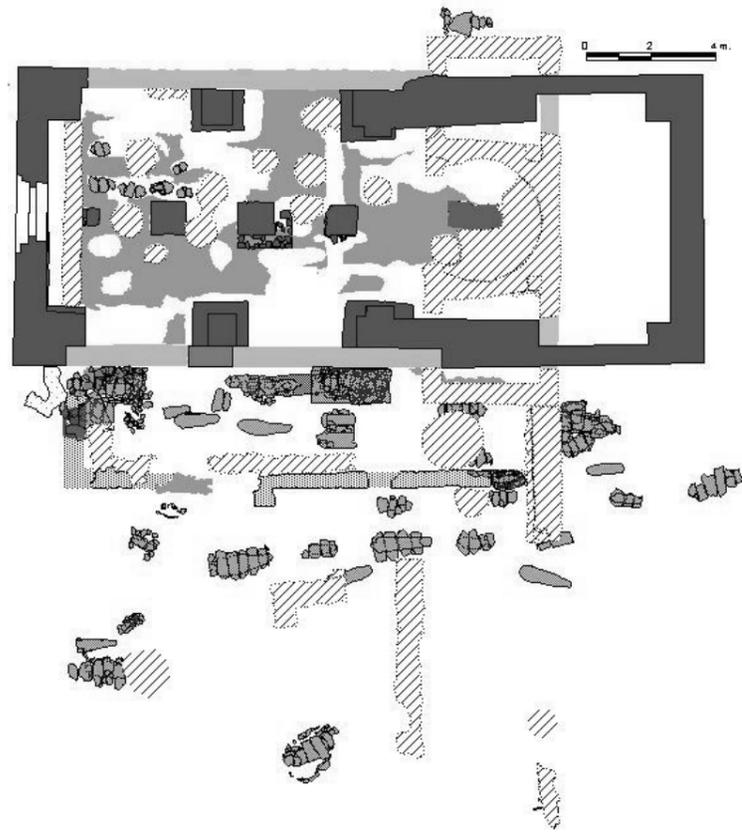


## The priorate of Sant Genís del Rocafort



The Lordship of Castellvell de Rosanes included the land of Santa Margarida and, in 1042, the Lords Bonfill and Sicarda decided to set up a monastery in the area, which would be the priorate of Sant Genís del Rocafort. Consequently, since this foundation, on the top of the hill there would be the priorate facilities and at the bottom, Santa Margarida's



church, which became a parish of the neighbourhood.

At the end of 12th century, the parish was in its best moment, as the new buildings and the reforms done at that moment show. It was then when the ancient structure of the primitive church was transformed and only two lateral walls were preserved. A new façade was built at the west side and the door which has been preserved until now was opened. Inside the church, the lateral walls were reinforced by two new walls more, presenting two arcs in each one, which were used as lateral chapels and allowed the building of a vaulted ceiling. This new building transformed the whole environment, where the sacred area buildings were out of use.

With the monastery set, the inhabitants depended feudally on the monks, who became the landlords of the area. Anyway it should be pointed out that the

length in time of the monastery was really limited. At the end of 14th century it was in a precarious situation and in 15th century it was just a priorate instead of an abbey. The forthcoming earth movements made both the church and the monastery ceilings fall down and the area began a long period of increasing degradation.

In 1534 the Barcelonese businessman Joan Bolet was interested in buying the priorate and, effectively, he bought the lands by that time. A brief recuperation period started the same for the buildings as for the rents. Joan Bolet rebuilt Sant Genís ceiling and he might have ordered the construction of a wall in the middle of Santa Margarida' church which divided the nave in to areas forever more and some burials dated back to 16th century have been documented in that area. After that last push, the whole site experienced an increasing depopulation and ruin process. Finally, in the 19th century there was a freedom for mortmain procedure

which took the entire site to private owners.

Near 1870 the last rebuilding works in Santa Margarida were carried out. The site had lost its church status but it was a hermit where an annual neighbours meeting took place. At the same time, the first excavation works were carried out as well.

During the Spanish Civil War, from 1936 to 1939, the destruction of the area reached its maximum. The church was completely abandoned and this situation was made still heavier because of the economical transformation during the Sixties, which made the situation of all the farms in the zone really worse. The motorway building finished the environment transformation and broke the territorial unit between Santa Margarida and Sant Genís.

In 1971 both the house and the church of Santa Margarida were abandoned and



suffered from vandalism and degradation despite of the Council ownership and Pau Sendrós' will. In 1972, a group of people which would be the CEM founders, started cleaning, documentation and preservation works in this site. Since its foundation, the CEM has worked for the archaeological and historical research in this site and its preservation.

CEM work, the annual excavation fieldwork and the jobs which have been carried out as well by the Escola Taller Vicenç Ros have made possible to bring life again to our archaeological site and to make Santa Margarida a reference point for Martorell' cultural wealth.

There is an important research and students training task since 1981 when the University of Barcelona joined itself to the research projects. Also with the Town Council and the Catalan Government support, we aim to preserve the site as a cultural museum area and to adequate the zone as a countryside area as well.



# (The archaeological site)

## Centre d'Estudis Martorellencs

At the beginning of sixties there were some farming houses –*Santa Margarida, Can Pastaller, Can Sunyolet and Can Santjoan*– which were in function in the area called *Partida de Sant Genís*. Nowadays farming has been progressively decreasing and only *Santjoan* continues farming. Can Pastaller is in a very bad preservation state and Can Sunyolet has become a restaurant. *Santa Margarida*, wasn't inhabited since 1963 and now it is the archaeological research point of the *Centre de Estudis Martorellencs* (CEM).

The land of Santa Margarida and that one of the ancient monastery of *Sant Genís del Rocafort* were given to the Town Council of Martorell by its landlord Pau Sendrós, in 1967. He willed the place to be destined to the archaeological research. This gift took place in an urban arrangement framework which was affecting the whole area and the fieldwork in Santa Margarida didn't started.

In 1972 the farming house and the church were completely abandoned. The CEM started the recuperation tasks in the area after having talked to the ancient owner and the Town Council. Those tasks allowed the house restoration, which now works as accommodation place during the fieldwork and as a research centre during the whole year.

The research project in the site of Santa Margarida del Priorat de Sant Genís del Rocafort in Martorell (Barcelona), was started in may 1972 by the CEM, when the institution was set up. Since 1981 the project has been integrated to the main research lines of the Department of Prehistory, Ancient History and Archaeology of the University of Barcelona. The CEM takes care of the financing

and gets some economical support from the Generalitat de Catalunya and the Town Council. The research team is directed by Dr. Rosario Navarro, Dr. Alfred Mauri and Ms. Montserrat Farreny and there are a small group of researchers whom some students are joined to during the fieldwork in summer. The site aims to carry out three main functions: researching, teaching and divulgating.

This site had been given a special attention in the past. We know that during the last fieldwork to rebuild the church around 1870, some archaeological excavations took place and some artefacts were dug out. Some of them are part of de collection of Francesc Santacana i Campmany, in the Enrajolada museum, in Martorell. He may have been its promoter. In modern excavations some points affected by the ancient ones have been detected, which allows us to think that those excavations were quite long in time. Unfortunately, we have no information about those excavations and maybe the authors didn't realize the importance of the site.



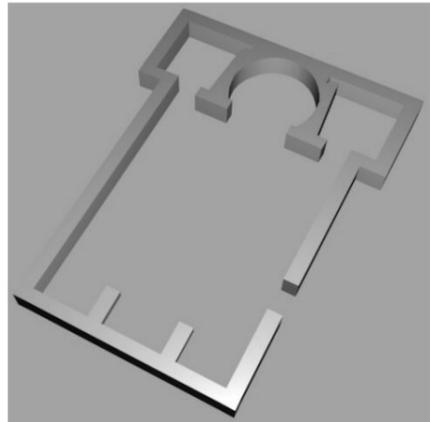
# Historical evolution

Santa Margarida is placed onto the ancient drawing of the Via Augusta, in a place which could correspond to the mansio ad-Fines. The remains of a milliarium which can be dated back to 350 by 355 BC are the best evidence of this roman link.



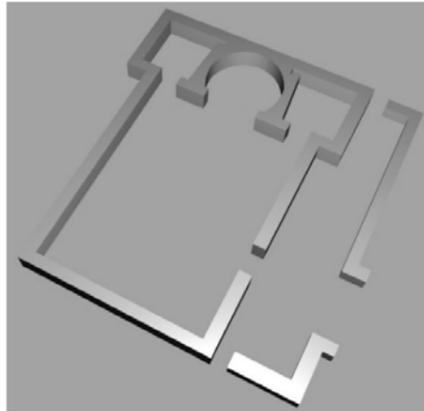
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The first church was built and was surrounded by a cemetery



In the 5th century, the first church was built and was surrounded by a cemetery. It can't be insured that the church was placed onto the ancient emplacement of the mansio, but it might have been a near place. The building presents three phases.

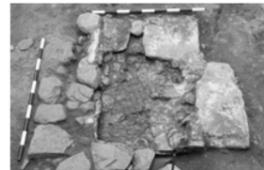
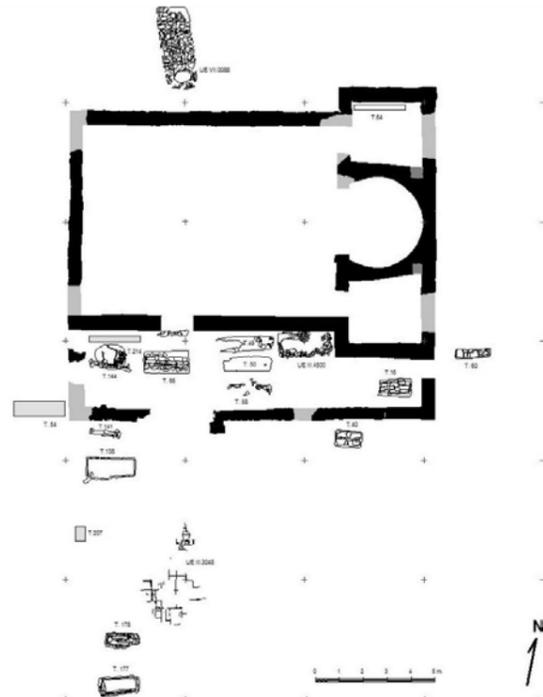
In the first one shows a rectangular floor with to small walls at the bottom which evidence a contra-chorus being there, opposite to a tripartite head formed by two squared chambers at the sides and another rounded one in the middle. The squared ones were used for liturgical assistance and in the north one a burial was found.



In a second phase, chronologically very close to the first one, a kind of hall was built in the south side protecting the entrance door placed in the north side as well. This hall may have had a funerary function. At the same time the whole floor of the church was modified by raising it with an opus signinum pavement among all the area inside the church and the hall, covering the ancient chorus, which

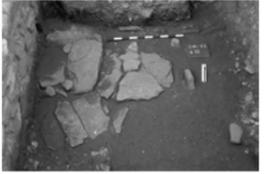
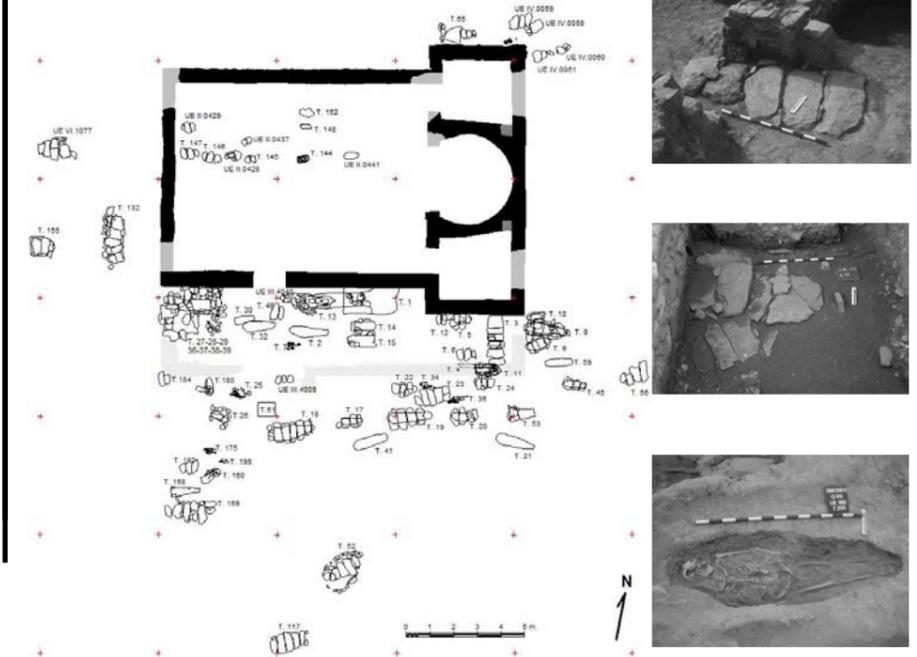
became useless. The altar in the central chamber was partially modified and closed with a gate. A door may have been opened at the bottom of the raised view to communicate the church to a new building which maybe contained a baptistery inside.

The third phase seems to be quite later and introduced some squared buildings, as pillars, in a row inside the nave axe. They may have had a liturgical function more than an architectural one. At this time, the door at the bottom was definitely closed and a necropolis started to be set around the church. Some of the burials were closely placed inside the hall and the rest were making rows on the sides of a small way which seems to lead to the lateral door and presents remains of pavement.



## 8th and 9th centuries

During 8th and 9th centuries the church was still in use. On the ancient necropolis there were some burials dated back to High Middle Ages while the area of the church was in use even though the chamber placed at the bottom and the hall had been broken down. The same happens with the pillars in the nave axe, which had fallen as well and all the floor was covered by mortar cement which raises the level floor of the building. Another arrangement had taken place before in order to raise the apse with a stair.



## The sacred area

During the second half of 11th century, while the church was being used, some medieval buildings were placed in the area of the ancient high medieval cemetery. They show stone wall footings and the walls may have been built of cob. Probably they were houses built during this century in the sacred area (30 feet around the church), when the pressure from feudal landlords against farmers took them to search for a save place to live. A great number of silos were found dug inside the church and around the houses as well as an evidence of this pressure. Inside those silos the cereal was stored both by the farmers and the priests who collected the payments.

