

Claramunt Castle

Visit





Historical synthesis

The first mention of the castle in records dates from 978. As a frontier castle it formed part of the defences of the County of Barcelona against Saracen attack. The first lords of the castle were the knights of Claramunt, who exercised their lordship in the 10th and 11th centuries. From the beginning of the 12th century the viscounts of Cardona appear as allodial lords. In 1306 the Torre de Claramunt branch of the Claramunt family assigned their rights over the castle to the Cardona family. Subsequently it was an administrative centre for the domains of the Cardona-Medinaceli dynasty in the Conca d'Òdena, except for Igualada.

Archaeologists have distinguished three phases of construction: the late 13th century, the late 15th century and the 17th century. The fortress has been rebuilt and ruined again since 1463, when it was devastated during the civil war between John II and the Diputació del General. After that war, Joan Ramon Folc III of Cardona ordered it to be rebuilt, a task which was to last until the 16th century. Around 1714, during the War of the Spanish Succession, the castle was partly demolished, and has never since served as a residence. During the last Carlist War it was fortified for the last time with two guard-towers. In 1898 the Supreme Court definitively abolished the lordship of the dukes of Medinaceli over Poble de Claramunt.

In 1925 Alphonse XIII awarded the marquisdom of Poble de Claramunt to the paper magnate Antoni Miquel i Costas, who had paid for the widening of the access road and a partial restoration of the fortress. The castle now belongs to the Generalitat de Catalunya (the Government of Catalonia) and is managed jointly by the Catalan Ministry of Culture and the Media, and the Poble de Claramunt town council.



1



Outer defensive wall

It is thought that this was built in about the 11th century. It is defended by seven towers, five of them round and two of them rectangular. Several courses of herring-bone masonry, known as opus spicatum, can be seen. The original height must have been about double what it is now.

Plane



2



Entrance

This was built in about the 13th century. One side of it is supported by the south wall of the Romanesque church. The other side is conjoined with the buttress that reinforces it and links it to the outer defensive wall.

Plane



3



Lower bailey

This accounts for most of the surface area of the castle with its 4,164 square metres. All that now remain inside it are an old pond and the cistern that formerly belonged to the rector, rebuilt in the 1990s. When this large bailey was occupied, it would also have contained the castellans' houses, the rectory, a cairn used in the ritual of "blessing the boundary", vegetable gardens and other subsidiary facilities.

Plane

4



Inner defensive wall

This can be dated to the late 15th century, coinciding with the rebuilding of the castle. It contains six loopholes designed for use with firearms.

Plane



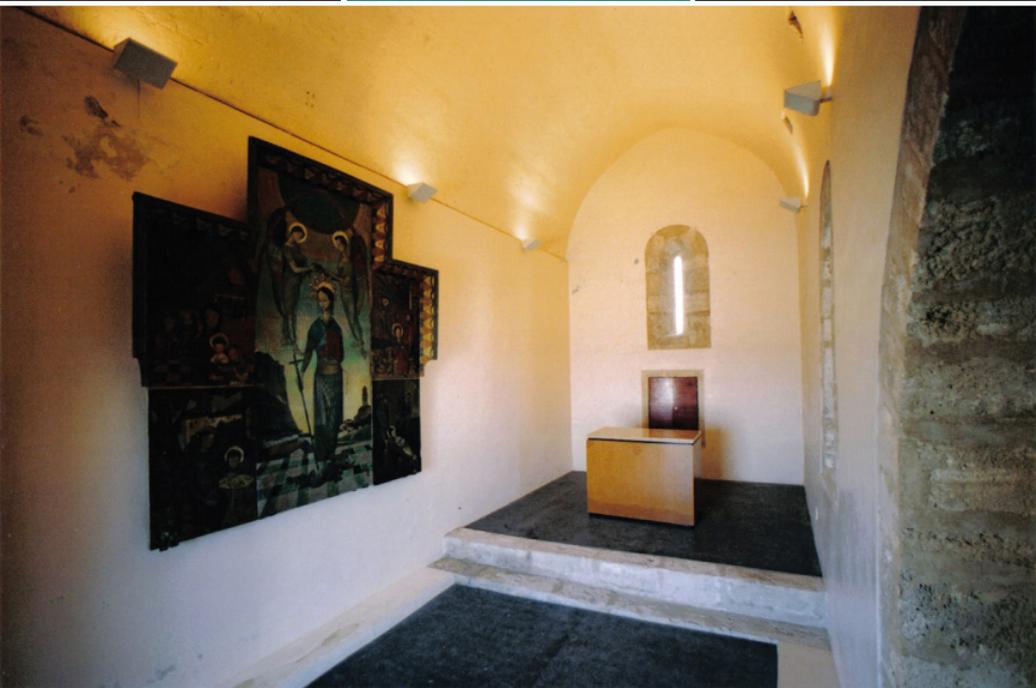
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Church of Santa Maria

Mentioned in records at the end of the 10th century. It was the first parish church in the district. In about the 11th century, the original pre-Romanesque church was enlarged, transforming it into a magnificent Romanesque edifice. Of the basilical type, it had three aisles separated by six columns arranged in the form a cross. The apses, decorated with blind arcades and pilasters, are built mainly from small blocks of travertine. The central apse is pierced by three double-splayed widows, while the southern side apse has only one. The north side apse disappeared in the 15th century. When the church was rebuilt the two surviving apses were reincorporated and a new wall was made to close the north-eastern corner. In spite of this, the functions of parish church were taken over by the chapel of the Santíssima Trinitat in La Pobla.

Plane



6



Chapel of Santa Margarida

Adjacent to the south wall of the church of Santa Maria, it was built in 1303 and rebuilt starting in 1492. It is a single-aisled, rectangular structure covered by a slightly pointed barrel vault and its doorway has a semi-circular vousoired arch. It is constructed of ashlar masonry and it combines elements of the Romanesque and Gothic styles. On one of the walls there is a retable painted in 1954 by Jordi Alumà, a Barcelonese painter and maker of retables.

Plane

7



Castle court

Former burial ground. The angular band of stones marks the line of the mediaeval defensive wall that bounded the castle until 1915, when it was demolished to enlarge the space. This enlargement was carried out by the paper magnate Miquel i Costas, who owned the hill on which the castle stands.

Between the mediaeval wall and the long facade can be seen the remains of what seems to have been a wine press.

Plane



8



Great hall

Trapezoidal in shape, it covers an area of 126 square metres and is roofed by a barrel vault. Masons' marks can be seen on the walls. Formerly the hall was divided horizontally into two storeys. It is believed that the ground floor accommodated the stables, the cellar, a carpentry shop and other facilities; while above, there would have been rooms for the garrison and service rooms. It has been calculated that 15 to 30 people could have lived in the castle.

Plane

9



Main cistern

Rectangular in shape, when it was in use it would have stored 130 cubic metres of rainwater. At the present time, it is used to screen a video about the history of Claramunt castle and the various buildings and features that make it up.

Plane



10



Inner courtyard

Here there were silos and store-rooms. It is said that there was once a dungeon that has since disappeared. In the Middle Ages, the structure that is now used as a service building was a cistern.

Plane



11



North square tower

According to Josep Maria Vila, the archaeologist who dug there in 1992, it was built approximately between the late 13th century and the early 14th. On the ground floor can be seen several loopholes, one of them double. The upper floor has almost entirely disappeared. In some places the walls are more than two metres thick. It seems that in the 16th, 17th and early 18th centuries it was used as the prison for Conca d'Òdena.

Plane



12



Keep

This decagonal tower has walls two and a half metres thick and stands seventeen metres high. The corners are built in travertine ashlar while the flat walls, rough-cast, consist of small, undressed stones. It defended the north-west corner of the castle. It must have been over 20 metres tall, being the highest point in the fortress and the last bastion to be taken.

[Plane](#)

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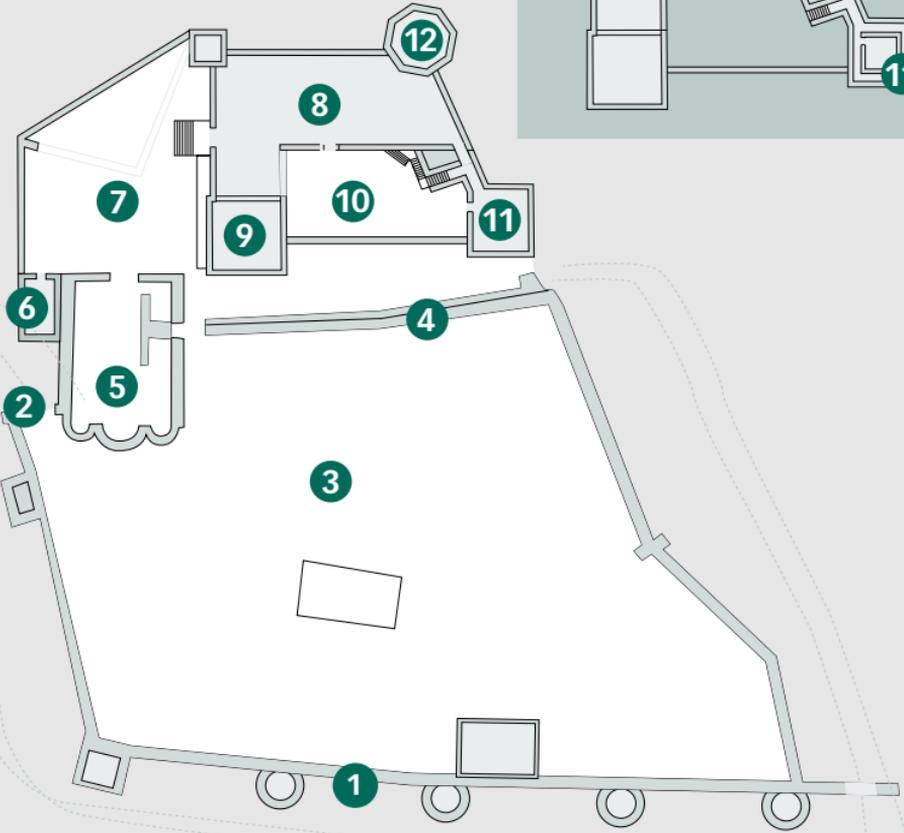


Roof

Claramunt castle originally had two storeys. The upper floor, now a flat roof, contained the lord's residence. It included several chambers, a kitchen and a hall, amongst other rooms. On the side of the keep you can still see the start of a wall with the springing of a window-arch.

Plane

Ground floor



Upper floor

