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## INTERVIEW



### Vueling flies

Co-founder Carlos Muñoz says his fast-growing airline is on track to land a spot at El Prat's new Terminal Sud

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### Montilla keeps cool, so far

In his first 100 days, the Catalan president has moved legislation, but challenges lay ahead

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### Water, water everywhere

Melting of polar ice cap has its effects in Catalonia, with more flooded coastlines

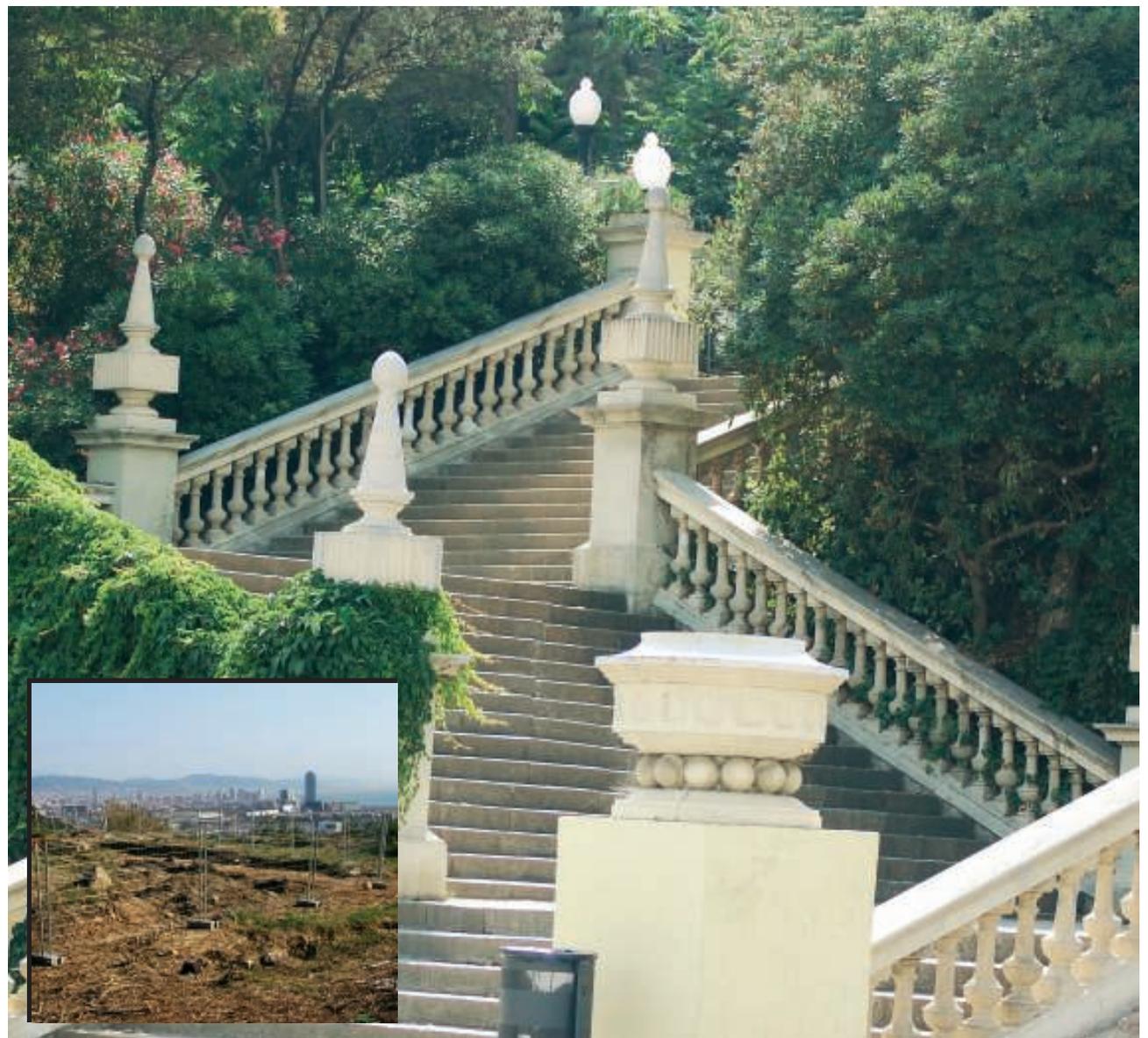
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### Instruments of sound get a brand new venue

Head of Barcelona's new music museum sounds off on collection

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A stairway ascends Montjuïc; inset: The medieval Jewish cemetery with signs of recent excavation

# A mounting dispute

■ *Generalitat pushes forward with development of medieval Jewish cemetery on Barcelona's Montjuïc*

■ *Local Jewish group says the current course of action contradicts a previous understanding* PAGE C9

# A clash of cultures on Montjuïc

*The Jewish cemetery on Montjuïc, one Europe's oldest, seemed slated for protection, but development proceeds apace*

## BRADEN PHILLIPS

● The future of one of the oldest and largest Jewish cemeteries in Europe is in doubt. Located on Barcelona's Montjuïc, the "Mountain of the Jews" in Catalan, the cemetery was used from the ninth to the 14th centuries, with more than 700 graves identified by researchers.

For over six months, the Heritage Committee of the Jewish Community of Barcelona and Catalonia has sought to protect the land from development, a goal it believed it had achieved when the Generalitat sent a letter last January 12, stating its intention to make the cemetery a Cultural Landmark of National Interest. Just over a month later, on February 14, the Generalitat signed an authorisation to excavate the site, as part of its plan to transform the area into a ramp, garden and observation area. However, until the Generalitat publishes its decision in the *Diari Oficial de la Generalitat de Catalunya*, decreeing the area a landmark, it is denied the protection on its status.

"There is a total contradiction between the two actions," says David Stoleru, a local architect and member of the heritage committee. "Trucks are removing huge quantities of earth, where people had been buried and which may contain objects

of historical value."

Stoleru and other members of the heritage committee take no solace in the possibility that the site may contain a plaque indicating its history, if that history has basically been eviscerated.

The Generalitat could not be reached for comment at deadline.

Oriol Granados, president of the Centre d'Estudis de Montjuïc, says the actions of the Generalitat actions are "irreversible."

"It seems the Ajuntament wants to start the (development) project in order to announce it ahead of elections," he says, referring to the municipal elections on May 27.

The heritage committee had been very pleased with the Generalitat's responsiveness to its concerns, and considered it the start of a collaboration. But with the current situation, in which work proceeds despite the Generalitat's stated intentions, there is great uncertainty. While the full scope of the cemetery has never been determined, this is the first time development of the land has taken place knowingly.

"What's happening on Montjuïc is a symbol of the city's frenetic urban development without taking the time to reflect," says Stoleru. "Instead of telling their own history, they are covering it up."



The Jewish cemetery on Montjuïc, showing excavation (right) that began one month after calling it a cultural landmark

## Montjuïc master plan not so grand, some say

● When Frederick Olmsted designed New York's Central Park, with its sprawling meadows, ponds and natural feel, he did not envision a built-up tourist trap on a hill. That is how critics perceive the City Council's plans for Barcelona's mountain to become *Parc Central de Montjuïc*. Rather than creating an oasis of open space like Manhattan's, critics say the city will pave over paradise adding more activities and facilities to the already populated museum, stadium and performance spaces.

The city makes its case for the park in a new book published by Barcelona Serveis Municipals, called *Montjuïc: Barcelona Parc Central*.

Oriol Granados, president of the independent Centre d'Estudis de Montjuïc, says the plan does not even amount to a park. "What City

Council wants is to urbanise Montjuïc, not make it more of a park," Granados says. He describes three of the main pillars of the project—nature, sport and culture. "The nature they have in mind is highly domesticated and urbanised, nothing like Central Park or most European parks," he explains.

The scheme has faced a rising chorus of skeptics since it was hatched more than five years ago by Barcelona's former mayor, Joan Clos. Now his successor, Jordi Hereu, has agreed to follow through with the pledge to make Montjuïc more accessible by public transport by 2010 and offer greater variety of cultural and sporting events to lure the locals.

Granados contends, however, it is not the locals they are after but visitors.