

# The Architecture of Antoni Gaudí

Fall Semester 2019 (Langley Hall, room A224)

Instructor: Matthew Schlieb

## Lecture 1: Tabicadas

Partis Pris (drawn from the Poblet Monastery):

**Parabolic arch:** The circular Roman arch and pointed Gothic arch, both required buttressing to stabilize lateral thrusts. Gaudí used the parabolic arch in all of his works, an improvement that transfers loads to the ground naturally, senza armatura.

**Artisan/worker community:** Gaudí always sympathized with the working class, honest labor, promoting the artisan trades.

“If its restoration is to be undertaken, the workers employed should definitely live in the monastery, inhabiting the ancient buildings and workshops. There they would form the basis for the establishment of a community: once the work was over, a house and a parcel of land could be given either free or at a low price to each of the families, and they would establish a permanent town on the edge of the monastery.”

**Locally sourced:** Material and labor drawn from the local region, to infuse the work with the local traditions and culture.

“The restoration must not go beyond the confines of Poblet; that is, all of the objects, artistic or otherwise, which need to be constructed must be made within the monastery walls, calling in artists to take charge of the work and inviting them to stay on with their families; therefore craftsmen must be sought whose social position allows for an easy change of domicile, so the various elements necessary to establish a town can be gathered together.”

**Restoration:** Through his work, Gaudí sought to restore the Catalan culture suppressed by the Spanish monarchy, restore the traditional crafts overtaken by a new industrial age of machine-made products, and restore the Catholic Church dissolving by the rise of the scientific age and a growing atheism.

**Resourcefulness:** Gaudí’s talent is found in his resourcefulness, to utilize common materials on hand, assembled in simple ways, to exploit minimum resources to maximum effect.

**Functionality:** Above all else, Gaudí’s design must first function for its intended use, otherwise he considered it a failure.

**Symbolism/Naturalism:** By historicizing Catalan myths in his architecture, Catalan history and the present are made mythic.

### **Casa Vicens (1883-1888)**

Leitmotifs:

Structural materials (stone) used as finish materials, in their raw state, laid bare, exposed.

Full tiles, painted, used as the unit of measure for the design of the elevation.

Detailing increasing vertically, drawing the eye up, toward the sky.

Voided corners, absence of articulation pronouncing/anchoring the lateral perimeter edges.

Decorative metalwork (palm fence) utilized a combination of cast iron, wrought iron and machine-made flat iron.

Decorations inspired by natural motifs of local flora and fauna found on the building site.

Mudéjar style Mocárabe (honeycomb/stalactite) vaulting concealing the Catalan bóvedas tabicadas structural vaulting.

Mechanical innovations (wire web fountain) cooling the air with misting water, while creating rainbow visual effects.

### **El Capricho (1883-85)**

Leitmotifs:

Egyptian style minaret tower, modified with the onion shaped roof suspended in the air, floating, by visually narrow columns.

Dimensional ceramic tiles, no longer flat.

Dimensional stone carvings.

### **Güell Estate stables, gatehouse, dragon gate (1884-87)**

Leitmotifs:

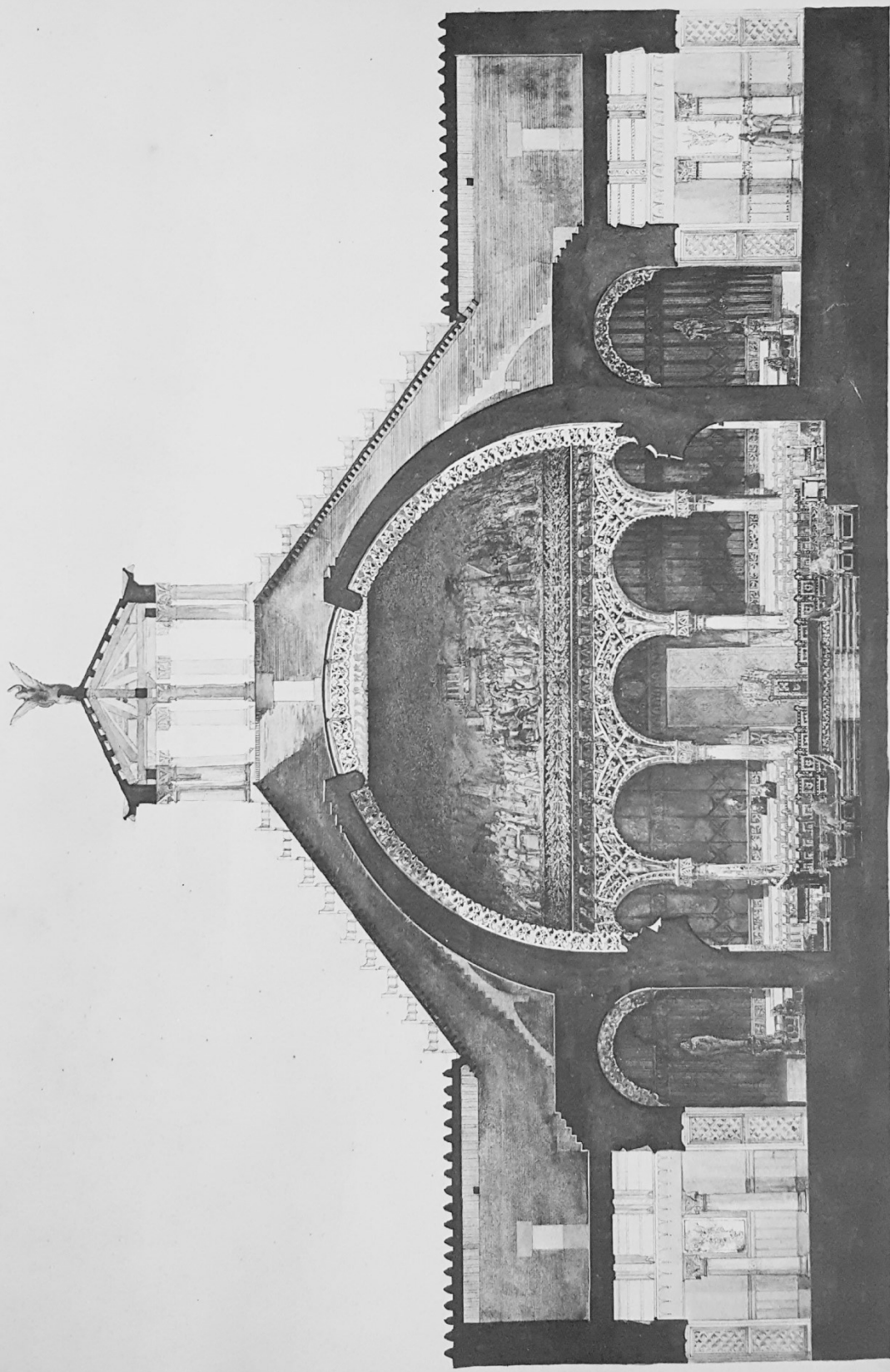
Metaphor (Heracles & Ladon dragon gate/fountain) excludes the uninitiated, while uniting the family and friends in the know.

Dimensional metalwork, in the dragon gate, demonstrating Gaudí’s visual sense and command of space.

Maó de pla (flat adobe walled vaulting) using tapias (pressed earth) technique from 15th century Catalonia, labor from Sucs.

Utilized tile scraps off the ground, as a finish material to clad rooftop domes and inserted in mortar between bricks.

<http://www.schliebarchitecture.com/lectures/2019/pitt/gaudi/>



PARANINFO.  
SECTION TRANSVERSAL 1877

*Antoni Gaudí*

*Paraninfo de la Universidad de Barcelona  
1877*

Paraninfo (academic auditorium) Transverse Section drawn by Antoni Gaudí, student thesis project, 1877.

Note the pure circular form of the Roman dome, requiring buttressing to stabilize the lateral thrusts.