

The Architecture of Antoni Gaudí

Summer Session 2020 (Online Zoom)
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Lecture 1: Parabolic Arc (2020.06.29)

leitmotif:

Parabolic Arc: The arc of Antoni Gaudí's life was parabolic, a wide foundation of knowledge on architectural precedent and the methods of construction, that was inclined upward by the patronage of industrialist Eusebi Güell, reaching a peak creating the most expressive examples of Catalan Modernism, discovering true originality by returning to a grounding in the natural world, handmade craft traditions, and Catalan mythology of his childhood origins in the countryside village of Riudoms, Tarragona.

“It is a question of placing yourself inside the time, the setting, and the resources available,
and anchoring your spirit there.”

manifesto:

Palau Güell (1885-88): Austere Garraf marble façade, with Dragon Güell triumphant atop the Catalan crest and atop the roof spire, guarding Hesperides Garden treasure of spoils, from Barcelona's disease filled streets of degeneration, poverty, and thieves. **Architecture as propaganda**, to permanently **fixed Güell at the center of Catalan mythology and the Renaixença**. Mural paintings by Aleix Clapés turn the corners, creating **a sense of solidity** by becoming a part of the walls, not temporarily hung on center as a possession in an age of consumption. Building developing vertically through eight levels, 20 meter high central hall topped with a **cúpula parabòlica at the heart of the house**, for social receptions, religious ceremonies, poetry and theatrical concerts. In 1888, hosting the King and Queen of Spain, presenting formal demands for Catalan autonomy. Five years later, premiering Hymn of Apollo, a composition discovered from 138 B.C. Delphi, played with full orchestra and choir, on an organ built into the house, melodies in short intervals, disjointed rhythmic sequences, continuously returning to a keynote, a **metaphor for the eclectic style of extravagance**, precious rare and exotic materials, inlaid into assemblies from faraway lands and mysterious cultures. Gaudí's **first decorated roofscape terrace**, with eighteen uniquely patterned ventilators, **clad with shards of glass, marble, tile waste** from construction, now set artfully on privileged **display, at the highest point of the house, redeemed, cleansed of sin**, in the heavens reflecting sunlight through perforations in the central conical spire, becoming starlight in the sky and earth below.

“There are no straight lines or sharp corners in nature. Therefore, buildings must have no straight lines or sharp corners.
The straight lines belong to men and the curved ones to God.”

parti pris:

Cúpula Parabòlica: Parabolic dome, Gaudí's signature, **a spiritual curve rising like a flame through the house**, elevated atop four parabolic arches, supports narrowing down and cantilevering over voided interior corners, as if **a floating celestial canopy**. Integrating the structural, architectural, metaphorical elements of the house into **a synthesis of all the arts** (Gesamtkunstwerk).

“The false distinction between supporting elements and supported sections results in an imperfect discontinuity between upright or column and the arch or lintel. Designers try to conceal this discontinuity using decorative elements: capitals, cartouches, and fascias, and so on. Continuous forms are perfect forms.”

architecture:

Poblet Monastery, Roman (12th century) 43448 Poblet, Tarragona, Spain.

Plaça Reial Street Lamps, Antoni Gaudí (1878) Plaça Reial, 08002 Barcelona, Spain.

Glass Display Cabinet (Comella Glove Factory), Antoni Gaudí (1878) Carrer de la Cendra, 8, El Pedró, Barcelona, Spain.

Cotton Bleaching Facility (Mataró Workers Cooperative), Antoni Gaudí (1883) Carrer Cooperativa, 47, 08302 Mataró, Barcelona, Spain.

Finca Güell Horse Stables & Dragon Gate, Antoni Gaudí (1884-85) Av. de Pedralbes, 7, 08034 Barcelona, Spain.

Palau Güell, Antoni Gaudí (1885-88) Carrer Nou de la Rambla, 3-5, 08001 Barcelona, Spain.

bibliography:

Gaudí: The Man and His Work, Joan Bergós (Ariel, Barcelona, 1954, English 1999)

The Beehive Metaphor: From Gaudí to Le Corbusier, Juan Antonio Ramírez (Reaktion Books, London, 2000)

Living Gaudí: The Architect's Complete Vision, Maria Antonietta Crippa (Rizzoli, New York, 2002)

Little Story Güell Palace, Tina Vallès (Editorial Mediterrània, Barcelona, 2011)

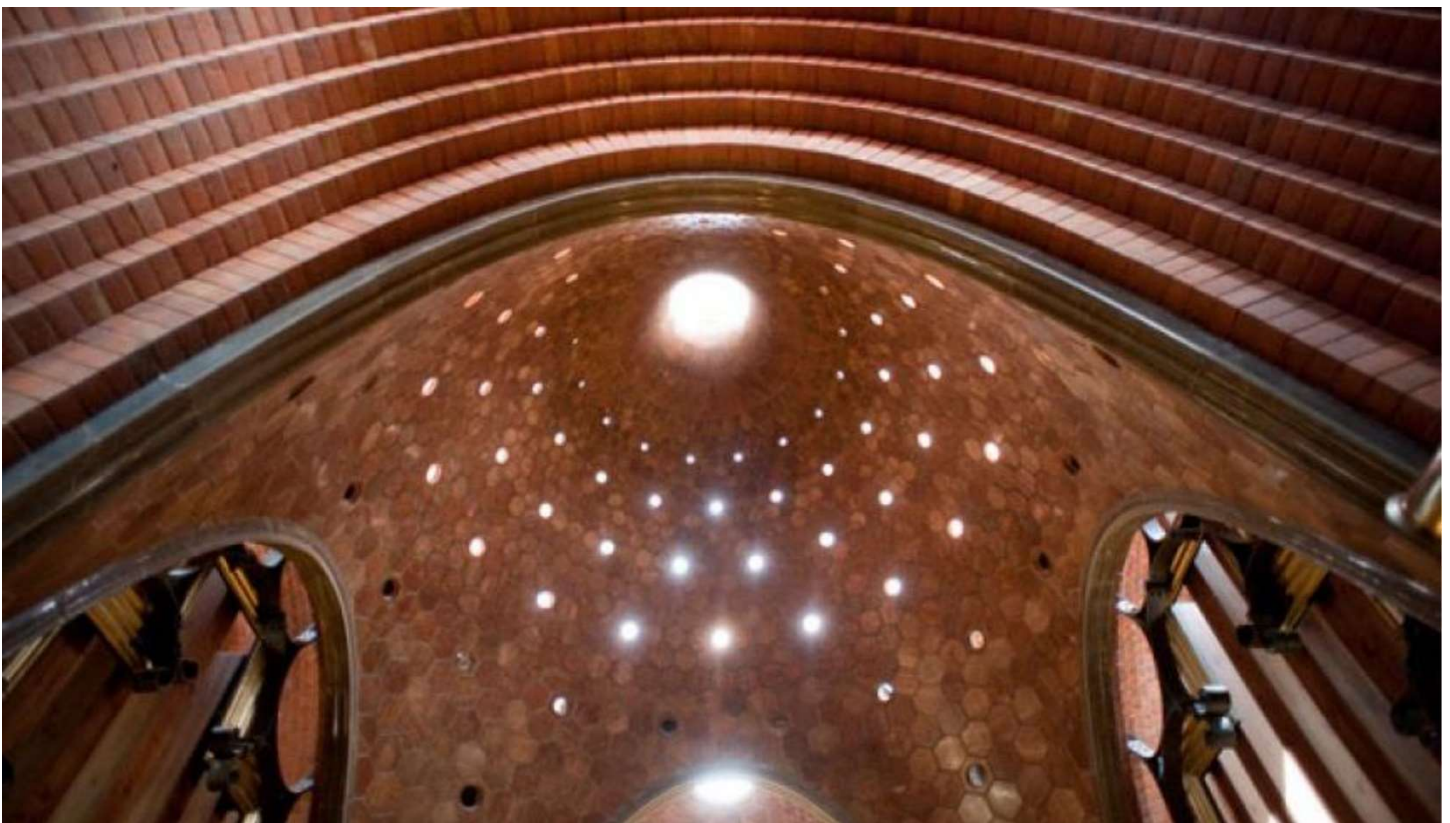
materials:

<http://finalmove.com/the-architecture-of-antoni-gaudi-parabolic-arc/>

<http://www.schluebarchitecture.com/lectures/2020/cmu/gaudi/parabolic/>



Wood beams bolted together into parabolic arches to provide open floor space within the cotton bleaching facility for the Mataró Workers Cooperative, of which Gaudí was a member and received his first building commission (1883).



Cúpula Parabòlica atop four parabolic arches, anchoring and rising vertically through Palau Güell by Gaudí (1885-88).