

*Strand 2: The Historiography of Art Nouveau (looking back on the past)*

Casa Bellesguard: the Link between the art of Gaudí and the European Symbolism

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Casa Bellesguard, until recently one of the works of Antoni Gaudí less known, is erected in a site of great significance for the history of Catalonia: it is the place where the King Martí I (“The Human”) lived the last months of his life. There he received the bad news of his son’s death, Martí “The Young”; and there he married Margarida de Prades to try, with little success, to father a new heir. A few months later, in May 1410, the king died, ceasing the House of Barcelona, a catalan dynasty that had lasted more than five hundred years. And Antoni Gaudí, conscious of the historical importance of this place, from 1900 to 1909 built a house full of symbolism that seems to suggest by aesthetic means an alternative to the disenchantment and the decline of the country that had begun there five hundred years before. Generally speaking, a proposal like this one has been explained by the cultural context of the period: the *Renaixença*, a movement that demanded Catalan language and culture, and, within a predominant framework of a strong Christian belief, hoped for a rebirth of the grandeur that the nation had lived during the Middle Ages <sup>1</sup>. And also has been linked with the influence on that movement that had had the ideas of German Romanticism expressed by authors such as Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel and Schelling. The whole of such Romantic ideas can be synthesised by the following story: a) “God created man in His own image” (Genesis 1:27); b) with the Fall that original image nearly disappeared; c) Christians, however, can rediscover that original image in three ways: following the lessons of Jesus, studying nature and knowing the history of various cultures; d) once the original image has been regained, the artistic genius can create works of art that contains it; and e) in this way, artist and interpreter can contribute to the Creation <sup>2</sup>. It seems clear that it was this story what in German Romanticism, and also in the Catalan *Renaixença*, stimulated a great symbolic creativity that sharpened the sensitivity for the nearest things, given them, at the same time, a transcendental and open sense <sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In Catalan, “*Renaixença*” means literally “rebirth”.

<sup>2</sup> Some works of Romantic authors where one can see reflected this story are: Johann Gottfried HERDER, *Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen Seele* (1778); NOVALIS, *Die Christenheit oder Europa* (1899); Friedrich SCHLEGEL, *Ideen* (1798-1800); and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von SCHELLING, *System des transcendentalen Idealismus* (1800).

<sup>3</sup> On this subject, see: Carles RIUS SANTAMARIA, “El pensamiento de la *Bildung*: de la mística medieval a Philipp Otto Runge”, *Convivium. Revista de filosofía*, núm. 23, 2010, p. 49-72; and Carles RIUS SANTAMARIA, “La funció de l’artista en el pensament romàntic alemany”, *Comprendre. Revista catalana de filosofia*, 13/2, 2011, p. 105-131.

Nevertheless, in a piece of research I began in 2002 and that in 2011 I have published in a book entitled *Gaudí i la quinta potència La filosofia d'un art*, I prove that, in Casa Bellesguard, Gaudí left a message that, being adequately brought to light, allows us to understand in a more precise manner the way how those ideas are present in this work; and, in addition, opens a new way of research that allow us to link the work of Gaudí with the European Symbolism. Next it is my intention to present in a few words the main parts of this piece of work <sup>4</sup>.

To begin with, in a visit to Casa Bellesguard one can verify that, in this work, Gaudí, in a manner similar to the Socratic method, is suggesting to the visitor a succession of impressions and steps to take until he ends up in a cul-de-sac that only can be overcome by a procedure more daring <sup>5</sup>. Thus, when entering in the plot of land in Bellesguard, one can find on the left the ruins of the castle that lived in the King Martí I, restored soberly by Gaudí, and contrasting with the expressive force of the house built a little further away by himself. And entering on the right, in front of the ruins of the castle, there is a cross that has a base made of "trencadís" (the characteristic mosaic used by Gaudí) that represents a rough sea from which emerges an helical shaft that ends in a two-armed cross. This representation creates an atmosphere that will pervade the whole work: the sea can be understood as the unconscious just as the Romantics understood it, that is to say, not only a psychic unconscious, but also a cosmic one, the chaos into which dropped humanity after the Fall. And in this unconscious ground something happens, like a spark that produces a lifting force that ends up in the cross. This whole anticipates what will be found later in the pinnacle of the house, there culminating in a Catalan flag, a crown and also a cross, but in this case a four-armed cross. After taking the track, we will be situated in front of the main façade of the house built by Gaudí: a work of neo-Gothic style, with an imposing verticality.

(fig. 1)

On this façade stands out the hierarchical and symmetrical forms of its left side, in which there is a centre of attraction: a window with a multicoloured stained-glass star embossed, which transmits a mysterious feeling of harmony and retreat, the sense of which, however, seems to be beyond what is seen in the foreground. And it is just at the top of this part where there is the pinnacle with the three constituents mentioned: the helical Catalan flag, the crown and the four-armed cross, which is pointing towards the four cardinal points. These three elements, which express the force that now emerges from the inside of the house, can be understood as symbols of: the rebirth of Catalan

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<sup>4</sup> The results of this piece of work I presented first in 2006 as a PhD thesis at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Barcelona, entitled *Interpretació de l'obra d'Antoni Gaudí a través del pensament de F. W. J. Schelling*. And subsequently, in 2011, a synthetic version of this thesis has been published in the book *Gaudí i la quinta potència. La filosofia d'un art*, Publicacions i Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona.

<sup>5</sup> The idea of conceiving a work of art as a "subject" that can address to us and move us to search something that is hidden in the work itself, is an idea that appears implicitly in the text of Johann Georg HAMANN, *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten* (1759), and then spreads to German Romantics and other artists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as Philipp Otto Runge.

nation, the recovery of the sovereignty, and the expansion of the Christian message, respectively. The fact is that the general impression one has, when contemplating the whole exterior of the house, is that the artist wants to suggest to the visitor, by means of high and inaccessible openings, and by aggressive forms in details made of iron and displayed in grilles and window-boxes, that there one is defending something very valuable; but, at the same time, this is presented in a so burlesque manner, that the visitor is tempted to enter in order to discover what is such an estimable thing that is worth preserving by all means.

Before entering, one finds on the lintel of the door an inscription that reproduces an old salutation in this country, which refers to the dogma of the Immaculate Concepcion, and that reads: *Ave Maria Puríssima, sens peccat fou concebuda...* (“Hail Mary ever-pure, born without sin...”). And as soon as one has gone in, one is surprised by the austerity and the bright whiteness that prevails, only altered in a contrasting manner by the vividness of some stained-glass windows such as the multicoloured star, which from inside seems to expand like a beating heart. Moreover, one can verify that the verticality of the work seen outside continues inside, suggested by folded, helical and ribbed forms, and especially experienced in a disturbing manner as one walks up the stairs, which narrow gradually as if they were stages in an initiation process. Once you have arrived upstairs, however, the space widens again in the two attics: the first covers an spacious square constructed with ingenious combinations of bricks; the second, also square but smaller, forms a confined and silent space with a cross vault, where one perceives a very special light: thick and intense, it suggests by plastic means the states narrated by the medieval mystics. At this point, you can go outside, where narrow flights of stairs in a zigzag take to a small terrace situated above the second attic: it is the highest accessible space of the house, near to the pinnacle, and from which you can enjoy a wonderful view to the harbor of Barcelona, where it is possible to distinguish the ships that arrive and leave.

Nevertheless, after having visited the interior of the house, one can not help feeling disconcerted and disappointed: there is nothing that indicates the origin of that lifting and promising force that has been perceived outside, and that also inside only finds an indirect expression by means of the light. The search, therefore, has to go on and in a deeper way. And then, when reading what has been said and written about this work of Gaudí –that until now has been very few–, one will find two notable pieces of information –at least, so they seemed to me–: the fact that, in this work, Gaudí, as an exception, did not want the help of any of his regular collaborators; and also that once the work was finished, several architects have wondered how did Gaudí manage to get the attics to hold <sup>6</sup>.

(fig. 2)

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<sup>6</sup> According to Joan Matamala, Joan Rubió i Bellver, one of the regular collaborators of Antoni Gaudí, said to him on one occasion: “Bellesguard wanted to plan and to manage alone Mr Gaudí, from beginning to end. He did not want us to help him”, Joan MATAMALA, *Antonio Gaudí. Mi itinerario con el arquitecto*, Barcelona, Editorial Claret, 1999, p. 140).

From these facts, it is important to analyse the plans of Casa Bellesguard. When carrying out it, you will notice that in this work of Gaudí stands out a square base, which can be seen clearly in the plans of the attics. And also that the diagonals of the square base are pointing towards the cardinal points, as it is the four-armed cross. Besides, when analysing the concentric figures of this square base in attics's plan, you can infer the three basic figures of the Euclidean geometry: the square, the circumference, and the triangle. And in fact, in the plans of the two main flats of the house, you can see a similar layout that consists of a central nave around which the rooms are arranged; but the two naves of the flats are situated at a right angle, so that if you superimpose the two plans, in the square base you can see also the form of a Greek cross. In other words: you can verify that in the plans of Casa Bellesguard stands out a square base in which the square, the circumference, the triangle, the Greek cross and the diagonals can be clearly distinguished. All these figures have the same central point, which in the vertical section of the building fits an axis. This central point-axis is the one already alluded as a force in the helical shaft of the cross, in some decorative elements and in the helical flag of the pinnacle. But after analysing the plans one has found its final location in Casa Bellesguard: in the very middle of the square base, as a centre of the work's geometry. Nevertheless, neither this explains much, seeing that one can realize that in the interior of the house this central point-axis has not a decorative or functional element that matches up with it, and that, therefore, can indicate how it turns into that force and what meaning it has. In short: at the end of the analysis of the plans one becomes aware that in Casa Bellesguard, from the very beginning, all is organised in such a way that all the decorative and geometrical forms allude to a central point-axis; but that the sense of this central point-axis is not in Bellesguard, and that, consequently, it has to be searched outside, in another place.

In order to find such a location, one has to start analysing again the plans to see if one can discover there something that indicates where we have to look for this second place. So one can observe that, apart from the square base, there are several salient parts. And that among these salient parts some of them form a certain kind of unity, that is: the part where there is the home main door (southwest façade), a strip along the northwest façade, and a right angle on the northeast façade. And the unity that these parts form is one that can be understood as an arrow, which at the same time can be interpreted as a boat <sup>7</sup>. As soon as you have located the arrow-boat form in Casa Bellesguard, considering that the diagonals of the square base mark the cardinal points, you situate the house in a map and draw a line that goes along the keel of the boat and leaves from the tip of the arrow. This line will go through several places of Catalonia, France, Italy and Central Europe, and we are supposed to find out where exactly the arrow-boat is pointing to. In order to know it, what I did was to read what the biographers of Gaudí had written to see if I could find some piece of information about a possible relationship between Gaudí and Middle Europe. What I could check was that Gaudí did not travel

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<sup>7</sup> The idea that in Casa Bellesguard there is a part that can be considered as a boat is supported not only by the history of the place, from where the King Martí "The Human" looked at the harbor to see if he could distinguish a ship that brought him news of his son, but also by the fact that in this part of the house there is a leant bench made of "trencadís" in which a boat is just represented.



much, and that nowhere is recorded that he did it in that direction; but that he did indeed read a lot. And what did Gaudí read? Many things, but above all there was a book that he read and read again: *L'Anné Liturgique* by Prosper Guéranger. Who was this author? Prosper Guéranger (1805-1875) was one of the initiators of the catholic liturgical movement of romantic kind. In 1833, he began to restore the Benedictine life in the monastery of Solesmes, on the outskirts of Paris, becoming abbot in 1837, and promoting the Gregorian chant. So far, what the biographers of Gaudí say about Guéranger and the importance of his work in the Catalan architect. But all this happened in the north France, in Solesmes, and the line of the arrow-boat that leaves from Casa Bellesguard heads towards Central Europe, towards Germany. Therefore, it was necessary to find out if there had been some relationship between Germany and Solesmes. And, that is right, when I carried on researching, I could get to know of the following. In 1862, in Bavaria, in a place named Beuron, a monastery was built and a new Benedictine Congregation was founded. His abbot, Maurus Wolter, with another monk, Roman Sauter, travelled to Solesmes to study its theories about Gregorian chant. Later, they went back to Beuron, and then they tried to apply the mathematical relations that in Solesmes were used for music to plastic arts, forming a new school: the Beuron Art School. The early leader of that school was Peter Lenz (1832-1928), who once he had entered as a monk in the Order he adopted the name Desiderius Lenz. In 1871, when the Chancellor Otto von Bismarck established the new German Empire ("Second Reich") and launched what is known as *Kulturkampf* ("Culture Struggle"), persecuting some institutions of Catholic Church for considering them little liberal, some monasteries were closed and the monks of Beuronese Congregation had to emigrate to other European countries. One of the places they went to was near Prague, Smíchov, where in 1891 a convent of nuns was built, the St. Gabriel's Abbey. And few years later, in 1895, Peter Lenz and his team of artist monks were asked to paint the church of the convent, dedicated precisely to the Annunciation of Virgin Mary, what they did until 1899. Well, it turns out that the line drawn from the arrow-boat of Casa Bellesguard goes through this convent. Consequently, St. Gabriel's Abbey may be the place where Gaudí had pointed to from Casa Bellesguard<sup>8</sup>.

In order to know if St. Gabriel's Abbey is really the location Gaudí pointed to from Casa Bellesguard, it is necessary to compare the two works, to try to see if the are relations between them and, in this case, which they are. So, firstly, if one superimposes the plan of Casa Bellesguard on part of the plan of St. Gabriel's Abbey, so that the arrow-boat of the first coincides with the nave of the church of the second, one will observe several lines that match up; and besides you will see that the form of the capitals of the columns in Casa Bellesguard are very similar to the ones in the cloister of St. Gabriel's convent. Secondly, since this first superimposition has been done, you can notice that the left side of the main façade of Casa Bellesguard, the side that the first time I saw surprised me by its harmonic unity, matches up with the place where in the

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<sup>8</sup> On St. Gabriel's Abbey and the work that Peter Lenz and his team did there, see: Helena CIZINSKA (text), Karel HOLUBA and Monica SEBOVA (editors), *Die Beuroner Kunstschule in der Abtei Sankt Gabriel in Prag*, Prag, Nakladatelsví Karel Holub, Ars Bohemica, 1999.

church of St. Gabriel there is the apse, so that if you do a second superimposition between the lines of that side of Casa Bellesguard and the paintings in St. Gabriel's apse, you will check that the first are a stylization of the second. Thirdly, the window with the multicoloured star in Casa Bellesguard proves to be a stylisation of the painting that occupies the centre of the church apse in St. Gabriel: a work painted by Lenz and entitled Mater Dei-Isis because it represents the Mother of God with Baby Jesus, but that, at the same time, is the Egyptian goddess Isis with her son Horus. And finally, once the boat of Casa Bellesguard has been situated on the nave of St. Gabriel's church, one can see that the bow of the ship of Casa Bellesguard points to the choir of the nave of St. Gabriel's church: Is there any interesting thing in St. Gabriel's church that justifies such a signal? Yes, there is a large size fresco entitled The Piety: the most important work of Peter Lenz, the one to which he devoted most of his time and efforts. In connection with these two works, the painting Mater Dei-Isis and the fresco The Piety, the experts praise them, but at the same time admit that they have a cryptic symbolism that is difficult to discover<sup>9</sup>. And some of these experts point out that this symbolism is related to a theoretical side in Lenz's work. Therefore, then it is necessary to study this theoretical aspect of Lenz's work, that he called "aesthetic geometry"<sup>10</sup>. The geometry of Lenz has aesthetic, ethic and religious connotations, and it comprises a series of figures that can be summarised as follows. The basic forms are: a) the square, that symbolises the Father; b) the triangle, that represents the Son; and c) the circumference, that is equivalent to the Holy Spirit. And the gathering of these three forms makes up a figure that Lenz calls the "key of God" (*Schlüssel-Gottes*), because he considers that taking this figure as a starting point it is possible to construct all the other figures. So the forms are further complicated until one achieves to represent geometrically the first man and the first woman, Adam and Eve, that is what Lenz calls "the Canon". And in the end appears the most complete and complex figure of the

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<sup>9</sup> The art of Peter Lenz is considered by some scholars as one of the expressions of Symbolism and one of the sources of Art Nouveau. In fact, some members of the Nabis group such as Paul Sérusier and Maurice Denis, through the artist and also monk Jan Verkade, made contact with Peter Lenz just when he was working in St. Gabriel's Abbey. Moreover, in 1898, was published in Vienna an essay of Lenz entitled *Zur Ästhetik der Beuroner Kunst*, which is said to have enthused the painter Gustav Klimt; and in 1905 the art of Beuron was presented successfully in the exhibition of the Vienna Secession, and later in other cities such as Aachen (1907), Düsseldorf (1909), and Regensburg (1910).

<sup>10</sup> About the life and the work of Peter Lenz, see: Martha DREESBACH, «Pater Desiderius Lenz OSB von Beuron, Theorie und Werk», *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinischer-Ordens und seiner Zweige*, vol. 68, 1957; Hubert KRINS, *Die Kunst der Beuroner Schule. Wie ein Lichtblick vom Himmel*, Beuron, Beuroner Kunstverlag, 1998; Desiderius LENZ, *The Aesthetic of Beuron and other Writings*, Londres, Francis Boutle Publishers, 2002; P. Gallus SCHWIND, *P. Desiderius Lenz*, Beuron, Kunstverlag Beuron, 1932; Harald SIEBENMORGEN, *Die Anfänge der Beuroner Kunstschule. Peter Lenz und Jakob Würger 1850-1875*, Sigmaringen, Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1983; and Adolf SMITMANS, "Die internationale Rolle der Beuroner Kunstschule um 1905", *Erbe und Auftrag*, n° 61, 1985.

aesthetic geometry, the sphere of the five regular solids, which according to Lenz expresses “God’s instruments to form the sacred”. In fact, this sphere was already worked by Plato, Euclid and Kepler, but Lenz gave a different order of the figures. The order of the figures in Lenz is, from outermost to innermost: dodecahedron, cube, octahedron, tetrahedron and icosahedron. According to Lenz, with the Fall all this geometry almost disappeared, and he believes that in all the history of mankind there has been one moment in which this divine geometry has appeared again: in Christianity, in the Incarnation, the dogma of the Word made Flesh. However, in Lenz’s opinion, man can rebuild such a geometry studying nature; and also he can do works of art that contain it. In other words, you can see that the main ideas of Lenz’s aesthetic geometry coincides with the story of German Romanticism I have stated above: “God created man in His own image”; with the Fall that original image nearly disappeared; man, however, can rediscover that original image, studying nature; and the artistic genius can create works of art that contain it, so that artist and interpreter become collaborators of the Creation. What happens is that Lenz has a geometrical conception of that original image. And this, in my opinion, Lenz got it from the hermetic tradition, which taken root in the culture of ancient Egypt –a culture that Lenz admired especially–, had been recovered and studied during German Romanticism.

Once one has examined deeply the theoretical side of Lenz’s work, it is possible to interpret adequately the two main paintings in St. Gabriel’s Abbey.

(fig. 3)

Thus, with regard to the painting *Mater Dei-Isis*, as I have said above, it represents the Mother of God-Isis with Baby Jesus-Horus in her lap<sup>11</sup>. But in this work you can identify next forms of aesthetic geometry: square, triangle, circumference, Greek cross and diagonals; and, in addition, the duplicated and inverted square and triangle, so that it appears an eight-pointed star and several concentric six-pointed stars, hexagrams. The first forms I have mentioned are the same I have situated above in the square base of the Casa Bellesguard, when I have presented a first analysis. There, in Casa Bellesguard, we have seen that these forms have the same centre: the central point-axis about which we did not know anything, and which has just been the cause of our research of a second place. In the painting *Mater Dei-Isis*, these forms have also a central point, but here this centre coincides with the womb of the Mother of God-Isis. And that means that, in the foreground the painting represents the Virgin Mary-Isis with Baby Jesus-Horus, but in the background the work symbolises the conception of Maria and also that of Jesus Christ, the Incarnation, intermingled with the Egyptian myth in which is

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<sup>11</sup> It is important to remember that during German Romanticism, and also in the Catalan *Renaixença*, there was an increasing interest in mythology, for example in authors such as Creuzer and Schelling, and that it was usual to superimpose different mythologies. See, for example, the poem of the Catalan poet Jacint Verdaguer “Afrodisius”, in *Jesús Infant, La fugida a Egipte*, (1893), where the figure of Virgin Mary is compared with the goddess Isis.

explained that Horus was born from the reconstruction that Isis made of Osiris' chopped body. Therefore, this work is done in a way that the interpreter has to discover in it the aesthetic geometry, until he gets inwardly the representation of the sphere of the five regular solids, in which centre there is the icosahedron, which in the painting coincides with the womb of the Virgin Mary-Isis: this is the same sphere that, according to Lenz, was present in the Incarnation and with which God created the first man and the first woman. And the inward representation of this sphere produces in the interpreter an aesthetic sparkling experience that is precisely the one expressed in the painting by the diagonals, formed of bright stars.

And now one can go on to deal with the analysis of the fresco *The Piety*, also through the aesthetic geometry. So this work represents the Virgin Mary with the dead body of Jesus Christ in her lap, who are at the same time the goddess Isis with the body of her husband-brother Osiris. In general, in this painting predominate dark shades, which give it a rather gloomy appearance. But there is also something that seems to point out another phase: bright dots, some of which form a circle that is at the centre of the picture, where there is the body of Jesus Christ. And also here the central point of this circle coincides with the womb of the Virgin Mary-Isis, so that also here, once having identified the forms of aesthetic geometry implicit in the work, the interpreter can imagine the sphere of the five regular solids, the centre of which, the icosahedron, coincides with the womb of the Virgin Mary-Isis. As it happens in the painting *Mater Dei-Isis*, this sphere refers to the moment of the Incarnation, and also to the creation of the first man and the first woman by God, but here also it is alluding to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and the birth of Horus from the dead body of Osiris, that is: the Resurrection conceived as a rebirth. In addition, in this work, at the end of the interpretation one can form a mental image of a little white Greek cross on the left side of the picture, above the heap where there is the inscription *Sion coel ests*. This little white cross symbolises, in a stylised manner, the Heavenly Jerusalem as in the Apocalypse of St. John is related, that is: the arrival of the Time of Spirit, where one will find again the Tree of Life at the centre, the return of the origin. This representation is important because with it the picture achieves a complet symmetry<sup>12</sup>.

To sum up, after this interpretations of the painting *Mater Dei-Isis* and the fresco *The Piety* by means of the aesthetic geometry, these two works show themselves as particular exemples of works of art as they were understood by German Romanticism: they try to present here, on earth, the original image, conceived with a cryptic language that being adequately discovered converts the artist and also the interpreter into collaborators in the process of Creation.

Nevertheless, Peter Lenz not only did apply the aesthetic geometry to the painting, but he also tried to apply it to the architecture. So he and some of his pupils tried to discover that divine geometry in some of the great temples built in the history of the mankind

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<sup>12</sup> The Heavenly Jerusalem as a symbol of the Time of Spirit appears at the end of Schelling's philosophie, in his *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, Lesson 37, where Schelling presents the last stages of the history conceived as a divine process of revelation. See: Carles RIUS SANTAMARIA, *Schelling esencial. El arte es la única y eterna revelación*, Barcelona, Ediciones de Intervención Cultural, Montesinos, 2011, p. 53-57.



(ancient Egypt, Greece, Rom and the Christian era) <sup>13</sup>. And besides, he also drew up some plans for a large church that included styles of different cultures and religions. However, Lenz never could put into practice this application of aesthetic geometry to architecture.

Then, once we have understood Peter Lenz's work in St. Gabriel's Abbey, and with it the sense of the central point-axis of Casa Bellesguard, that is, the Resurrection conceived as a rebirth through a divine geometry, we can return to the work of Antoni Gaudí and verify if now it is possible to understand it better. So the square base of Casa Bellesguard can be comprehended by applying the aesthetic geometry as follows:

(fig. 4)

This application of aesthetic geometry to the square base of Casa Bellesguard, in a three-dimensional space corresponds to the presence of the sphere of the five regular solids in the attics. And it is the situation of this sphere in this place what determines the structure that makes possible that the attics hold.

All in all we can see that in Casa Bellesguard Gaudí did as Lenz did in St. Gabriel's Abbey: a work of art that contains the original image with which God created man, understood in a geometrical manner. The difference between Lenz and Gaudí is that the first only did it in the painting, whereas the second, Gaudí, achieved to apply it to the architecture. But, in addition, doing this in the site Bellesguard, Gaudí tried to use the aesthetics effects of this geometry to demand the culture of his country: the presence of the sphere of the five regular solids that had brought about the Incarnation and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, but now in the place where five hundred years ago his homeland had "fallen", so that relating such sphere with the patron saint of Catalonia, the Virgin of Montserrat, could be promoted the *Renaixença*, the rebirth of Catalan nation.

However, Gaudí did not confine himself to use Lenz's geometry in Casa Bellesguard. If, as we have seen, aesthetic geometry has a religious sense, could Gaudí have used such a geometry also in his most religious work, that is, the Temple of the *Sagrada Família*? In my opinion, the answer is affirmative. And this in the following way. The dimensions of the square base of Casa Bellesguard are very similar to the ones of the crossing of the *Sagrada Família*; and, moreover, the diagonals of the crossing, as well as the ones in the square base in Casa Bellesguard, are pointing towards the four cardinal points. Then the application of the aesthetic geometry that has been done in Casa Bellesguard, can also be used for the crossing of the *Sagrada Família*. And therefore, the structure of the five regular solids that explains how the attics of Casa Bellesguard hold, can also be used for building the tower of Jesus Christ in the *Sagrada Família*, the main and highest tower of the Temple, which, as the pinnacle of Casa Bellesguard, has to be crowned by a four-armed cross. In other words: Gaudí built Casa Bellesguard with the

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<sup>13</sup> See: Odilo WOLFF, *Tempelmasse. Das Gesetz der Proportion in den Antiken und altchristlichen Sakralbauten*, Wien, Verlag von Anton Schroll and Co., 1912; and Odilo WOLFF, *Der Temple von Jerusalem. Eine kunsthistorische Studie über seine Masse und Proportionen*, Wien, Verlag von Anton Schroll, 1913.

aesthetic geometry of Lenz also because he wanted to leave a legacy that showed how he had thought that the Temple of the Sagrada Família should be finished.

In conclusion, the discovery of the message that Antoni Gaudí hid in Casa Bellesguard, the link with the work of Peter Lenz, allows us to understand the forms and structures of this house and other works, but also the sense of symbolism in the work of Gaudí: promoting the Christian message and the ideal of Catalan sovereignty (Christian Resurrection and Catalan Renaixença) both through the revitalizing effect that produces the artistic use of a divine geometry. In this way, it also appears a clearer picture of the links between the work of Antoni Gaudí and the European Symbolism, its Romantic roots and its modernistic consequences.