

HORAM EXPECTA VENIET

Laudatio in honor of Ignacio Vicens

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There is a well-known photograph of Federico García Lorca in New York in 1930, at Columbia University, seated on a marble podium, under a large black onyx dial. That was a curious sundial that marked the time by means of the shadow cast by the dial on that podium where the hour marks were. And an inscription with bronze letters that read: HORAM EXPECTA VENIET, at the expected hour he will come.

Over the years the sphere broke and was removed. The podium with the inscription still remains today, which, without the sphere, causes perplexity in the people who read it. And where I have the habit of taking pictures with friends when we go to Columbia.

Well, that long-awaited hour of retirement has arrived, and we are here today to celebrate this event which, more than an end, signifies the beginning of a new stage.

Professor Ignacio Vicens y Hualde is an outstanding figure. I have known him for more than 50 years and the affection and admiration that I have for him, that we have for him as a person, as an architect and as a teacher, has never ceased to grow.

As a person he is extraordinary. He has a heart of gold. Extremely generous, he is always ready to help others. With the words of the poet in "Copla XXVI", we can say about him:

Friend of his friends, what a master for servants
and relatives!
What an enemy of enemies!
What a master of the hardworking
and brave!

As an architect, he is of the highest order. His work, recognizable and recognized throughout the world, is brilliant, very brilliant, rigorous and profound.

As a teacher, he is one of the most beloved professors of this School of Architecture in Madrid, and of the countless schools around the world in which he has taught.

With Ignacio, I had the good fortune to collaborate in an incredible adventure in the late 70's, when we were both teachers with Javier Carvajal. We brought to Madrid the most important architects of that time. From Richard Meier to Peter Eisenman, Alvaro Siza and Souto de Moura, and even Tadao Ando himself. And Vittorio de Feo, Raimund Abraham, Jorge Silvetti, Mario Gandelsonas, or Emilio Ambasz. For almost all of them, that was their first visit to Madrid.

The adventure turned out to be extraordinary, and clearly served to make the Madrid School of Architecture a worldwide reference. Perhaps the recent appointment of Kenneth Frampton as Doctor Honoris Causa can be read as the culmination of that operation.

As a Professor, he has done an enormous amount of work. I had the honor of presiding over the Tribunal of his competitive examinations for the professorship he won in 1997.

And if I may say so, Ignacio Vicens is a paragon of culture, he has a vast culture, he is the walking culture. I still remember that, for my building in Zamora, I had asked for advice to the Canon Latinist of the Cathedral of Zamora. After that consultation, Professor Vicens still corrected the text that we finally engraved on that cornerstone: HIC LAPIS ANGULARIS MAIO MMXII POSITO. Because that, a cornerstone, is what Professor Vicens has been, is and, if he wishes, will continue to be for our School, for his students and for his friends.

I would like to end with Cervantes. In chapter VIII of the second part of Don Quixote, Cervantes sings a hymn to humility that I think is perfect for praising Professor Vicens:

Our works must not go beyond the limits set for us by the Christian religion we profess. We must kill pride in giants; envy, in generosity; anger, in quietness of spirit; gluttony, in not eating enough; lust and lasciviousness, in the loyalty we keep to those we have made masters of our thoughts; laziness, in walking everywhere in the world. You see here, Sancho, the means by which the extremes of praise that good fame brings with it are achieved.

The good reputation of Ignacio Vicens has been rewarded with his appointment as professor emeritus of our ETSAM, of the Polytechnic University of Madrid.

Thanks be to Professor Vicens!