

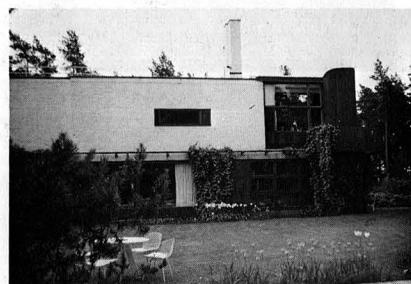
Classicism and Romanticism in Finnish Architecture

William C. Miller

I am driven by my longing,
And my understanding urges
That I should commence my singing
and begin my recitation.
I will sing the people's legends,
And the ballads of the nation.
To my mouth the words are flowing,
and the words are quickly falling,
Quickly as my tongue can shape them,
And between my teeth emerging.
Dearest friend and much-loved brother,
Best beloved of all companions,
Come and let us sing together,
Let us now begin our converse,
Since at length we meet together,
From two widely sundered regions.
Rarely can we meet together,
Rarely can one meet the other,
In these dismal Northern regions,
In the dreary land of Pohja.
Let us clap our hands together,
Let us interlock our fingers;
Let us sing a cheerful measure,
Let us use our best endeavors,
While our dear ones hearken to us,
And our loved ones are instructed,
While the young are standing round us,
Of the rising generation,
Let them learn the words of magic,
And recall our songs and legends,
Of the belt of Vainamoinen,
Of the forge of Ilmarinen,
And of Kaukomieli's sword-point,
And of Joukahainen's crossbow:
Of the utmost bounds Pohja,
And of Kalevala's wide heartlands.

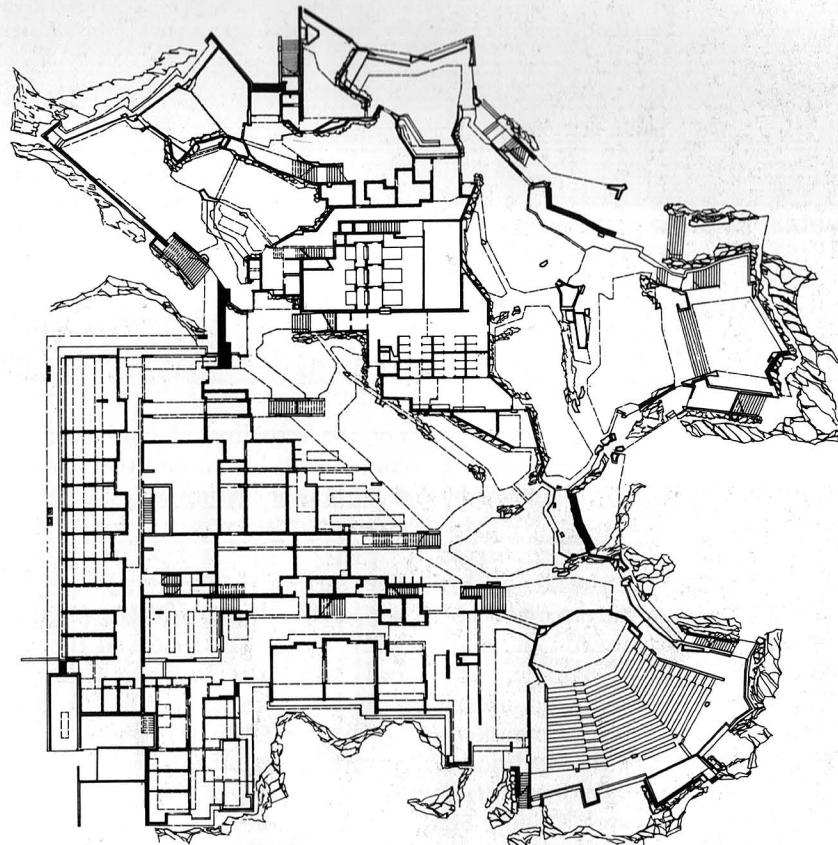
Kalevala, I, 1-36.

In the opening lines of the *Kalevala*, the bard speaks of being "From two widely sundered regions," where "Rarely can we meet together, Rarely can we meet the other." While the first canto of the Finnish national folk epic sets the stage for the ensuing poetic saga, the notion of the "two widely sundered regions" could be viewed as a metaphor for the two prominent modes of architectural ordering and expression



1. Martti Valikangas, Käpylä Housing Estate, Helsinki, 1920-25.
2. Alvar Aalto, Villa 'Mairea', Noormarkku, 1938-39.
3. Reima and Raili Pietilä, 'Dipoli' student union center, Institute of Technology, Otaniemi, 1961-67, plan.

underlying twentieth century Finnish architecture: classicism and romanticism. In Finnish architecture this specifically means the Neo-Classicism of the early nineteenth century *fin-de-siècle* National Romanticism. While classicism and romanticism, as the bard wryly notes, continuing our metaphoric sojourn, "Rarely one can meet the other," yet the two have formed a tradition which provides a continuing source for formal architectural expression for twentieth-century Finnish architecture. "In these



dismal Northern regions," the picturesqueness and tactility of romanticism and the clarity and astringency of classicism become interlocked together in Finland's modern architecture: Martti Valikangas' Käpylä housing, Alvar Aalto's Villa 'Mairea,' and Reima and Raili Pietilä's "Dipoli" student center being exemplars of this synthesis (Figures 1-3).

Although provincial and isolated for the majority of its history, the notion of "two regions" plays heavily

in Finland's past, for it physically straddles eastern and western Europe. From the depths of the Middle Ages, the pre-Christian period sung of in the *Kalevala*, Finland was under Swedish rule. Resulting from Finland's remote location and relative inaccessibility, Christianity came late to the Finns (after 1300); and not without a struggle between the eastern (Byzantine) church from Novgorod in Russia and the western (Roman) church from Sweden. The earliest extant architectural works date from



4



6



5

7



the period following adoption of western Christianity: the Turku Cathedral, the small stone rural churches, and the several castle fortresses (Figures 4,5). These medieval buildings were unpretentious works whose builders were responding to the exigencies and traditions of their provincial context.

While architectural development was gradual from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries — a period characterized by the execution of a number of wooden churches built by master carpenters using the traditional interlocking log construction technique (Figure 6) — the Finnish countryside was being colonized and populated, and the first agricultural and industrial manors were established. While dominated by Sweden, Finland was never more than a rural protective barrier to Russia. Beginning in the eighteenth century, Russia expanded westward, winning Finnish territory from Sweden in 1721 and 1743, thus steadily increasing its influence in the region. When Finland was ceded to Russia as part of the Napoleonic settlement, the czars actively brought the new Grand Duchy into the nineteenth century — socially, politically and architecturally.

From the provincial and rustic vernacular building traditions exemplified by the small stone medieval churches and the later wooden churches, Finland's architecture, as a result of Russian in-

4. Church, Porvoo, 1414-18.

5. Olvanlinna Castle, Savonlinna, from 1475.

6. Jaakko Klemetinpoika Leppänen, Church, Petäjavesi, 1763-64.

7. Carl Ludwig Engel, Senate Square, Helsinki, 1818-40.

intervention, was abruptly propelled into the cosmopolitan world of late eighteenth-century Neo-Classicism (Figure 7). By the end of the nineteenth century, this international orientation had succumbed to an interest in national and regional models as sources for formal architectural expression. This National Romantic movement in Finland looked back to the building traditions of stone and wooden churches and peasant vernacular dwellings for inspiration (Figure 8). In the course of a century, both classical and romantic sensibilities became established as the dominant themes in Finnish architecture, and occurred concurrently with events of historical, political and social significance.

More importantly, an awareness of these nineteenth-century developments is essential to the understanding of the vicissitudes of twentieth-century Finnish architecture. Subsequent to the First World War, a new, "rational" classicism emerged as the predominant mode of architectural expression in Finland and throughout Scandinavia in reaction to the perceived exaggerations of National Romanticism (Figures 1,9). From the Italian inspired *architettura minore* of the 1920's, Finnish architecture moved to embrace the International Style (Figure 9). But although the International Style, or "Functionalism" as it was termed in Finland, had become the normative mode of expression by the late 1930's, its initial severity was soon tempered by an introduction of romantic features (Figure 2). Thus a continual dialogue between classical and romantic qualities has occurred in Finland's pre- and post-War architecture. To better comprehend the particular qualities common to the work of Alvar Aalto, Erik Bryggman, Viljo Revell, Timo Penttillä, the Pietiläs, the Sirens, Aarno Ruusuvaori, Aarne Ervi, and the Suomalainens, an understanding of the classical and romantic foundations comprising modern Finnish architecture is necessary.



8. Gesellius, Lindgren and Saarinen, studio and villa, Hvitträsk, 1902.

Sir John Summerson provides a two-part definition of classical architecture in his book, *The Classical Language of Architecture*: "The first meaning is the most obvious. A classical building is one whose decorative elements derive directly or indirectly from the architectural vocabulary of the ancient world — the 'classical' world as it is often called ..." In addition to this "uniform" worn by classical buildings "... the aim of classical architecture has always been to achieve a demonstrable harmony of parts."¹ Thus, classical architecture usually exhibits an understandable, logical and articulate geometric order, coupled with the use of classical elements and ornamentation (Figure 7). Romantic architecture in contrast, as defined by Christian Norberg-Schulz in *Genius Loci*, is "distinguished by multiplicity and variety ... Romantic architecture is characterized by a strong 'atmosphere', and may appear 'phantastic' and 'mysterious', but also, 'intimate' and 'idyllic' ... and aims at 'expression'." He continues, "The 'atmosphere' and expressive character of romantic architecture is obtained by means of formal complexity ..." ² Romantic architecture thus makes use of picturesque compositional elements in the plan form and volumetric massing, expressiveness and tactility in material selection and usage, and emphasizes the personal idiosyncrasies that pertain to the designer's quest for individuality and originality (Figure 8).



9. Alvar Aalto, Worker's Club, Jyväskylä, 1924-25.

Classicism

*Modern scholars of architecture are of the opinion that Engel performed a monumental task in creating a Finnish architecture, and that stylistically he was not provincial but a brilliant artist on a European scale.*³

In 1809 an event of historical, political and social importance occurred affecting Finland that was to also have architectural significance; as a consequence of the Napoleonic settlement King Gustav IV ceded Finland to Russia. Finland was made a semi-autonomous Grand Duchy with czar Alexander I taking an active role in Finnish affairs. It was at this time that the city of Turku, long the capital of Finland under Swedish rule, lost its position as the center of Finnish cultural and political life to Helsinki. In 1812 Helsinki, a small unimportant town up to that date, became the new capital of Finland; Alexander was moving political control away from the former center of Swedish influence and closer to his capital of St. Petersburg. Helsinki had been destroyed by fire in 1808 and a new town plan, Neo-Classical in conception and spirit, incorporating wide streets, esplanades and large squares, had been developed by Johan Albert Ehrenström. Alexander I, at Ehrenström's request, invited Carl Ludwig Engel to take charge of the architectural development of the new capital plan.

This action aligned provincial Finland with the major contemporary direction in European architecture through Engel's develop-

ment of Helsinki as a Neo-Classical city. Engel, born in Berlin, studied under Friedrich Gilly at the Prussian Academy of Art (*Bauakademie*), where he was a fellow student with Karl Friedrich Schinkel. Engel came to Helsinki after serving as town architect for Tallinn (Estonia), and spending 1813 and parts of 1815-1816 in St. Petersburg. The influence of St. Petersburg, with the progressive Neo-Classicism of Thomas de Thomon, Nikiforovich Voronikhin and Adrian Dimitrievich Zakharov among others, is evident in his architecture as is the influence of his German education.⁴ Engel was brought to Helsinki in 1815 and in 1824 was named Comptroller of Public Buildings, a position he held until his death in 1840. During this twenty-four year period, Engel's work provided the dramatic three-dimensional physical realization of Ehrenström's grand plan for Helsinki. Exhibiting an unparalleled consistency in architectonic form and refinement (Figure 7), the Finnish architectural historian Nils Erik Wickberg has commented:

*When Engel died in 1840, "Empire" Helsinki was almost complete — a city in which all the buildings had been built in the same neo-classical style, with the same low sloping roofs and painted the same light shades. Surrounded by water and massive grey outcrops of rock, the city lay new and gleaming, its heart the magnificent columned buildings of the Senate Square.*⁵

The consistency of Engel's Senate Square, which stands almost totally intact today, and the surrounding older city center of Helsinki is virtually unmatched in its formal consistency and detail development and refinement. The ensemble consists of four major buildings — Nicholas Cathedral, the Senate House, the University, and the University Library — and is encompassed by a significant number of neighboring buildings also executed by Engel featuring similar formal characteristics. The Senate Square slopes gently from north to south, with the Senate House and the University forming the respective eastern and western enclosures of the

Utsida till Pantheonens Rikshuset i Hämminen af J. L. Desprez, 1787.

Utsida till Pantheonens Rikshuset i Hämminen af J. L. Desprez, 1787.

Prof. J. L. Desprez, 1787.



10



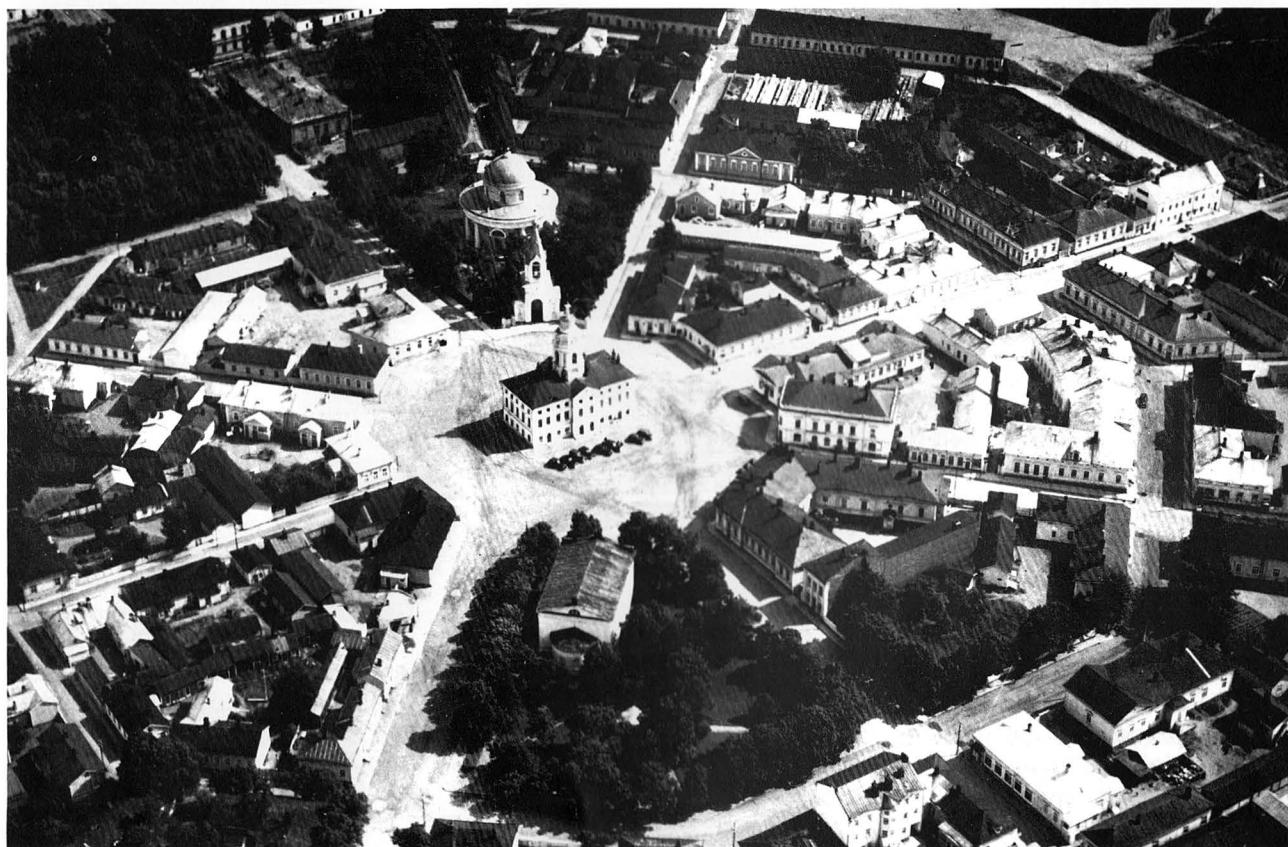
11



12

space. The south edge is comprised of a number of governmental and private buildings. On the north side of the Square, the monumental steps are surmounted by Nicholas Cathedral, which physically dominates the space and acts as the positive reciprocal of the void formed by the square.

There are a number of common characteristics seen in Engel's Senate Square complex. First, the image of the buildings' primary form is based upon an overall geometrical simplicity and a flatness of surface. Engel's designs demonstrate a preference for the subordination of individual elements to the unity of the building as a whole. Second, within this framework of clean forms and smooth surface treatment, the classical language is crisply and definitely modeled upon the surface. Third, these monumental works were constructed of brick, the facades were plastered and then painted with strong colors (predominantly in yellow ochre and blue-grey). The facade details and ornamentation were accented in white while the roofs were black. This form of ordering and detail development is similar to contemporary work seen in St. Petersburg; yet in Helsinki its impact is somewhat more gentle and intimate than the often unrelenting streetscapes of the czarist capital. Thus, through the control of volume and mass, surface elaboration and color, a unique architectural totality was created. With the realization of the Senate Square, Neo-Classicism came to represent the public ar-



13

chitectural style of the new Grand Duchy, and simultaneously transformed provincial Helsinki into an appropriately monumental European capital.

But Engel was not the first designer to bring Neo-Classicism to Finland. The Pantheon inspired church at Hämeenlinna (1787) (Figure 10), by the Swedish court architect J. L. Desprez, is usually considered to be the earliest example of Neo-Classicism in Finland. In Turku, the Swedish capital of Finland, Carlo

Francesco Bassi's Old University Building (1802-15) (Figure 11) for the *Abo Akademi* exemplifies the Swedish-influenced Neo-Classicism. A Swedish-educated Italian, who preceded Engel as Comptroller of Public Buildings, Bassi's more severe form of Neo-Classicism was composed of plain wall surfaces unbroken by columns or pilasters, but accented with string courses, cornices and window surrounds, and a more subtle use of color. In 1827 a major fire destroyed the greater part of Turku (over 2500 buildings) and a

10. J. L. Desprez, Church, Hämeenlinna, 1787, elevation.
11. Carlo Francesco Bassi, Old University Building, Turku, 1802-15.
12. Old Town Hall, Porvoo, 1764.
13. Town center with Town Hall, Hamina, plan from 1721, Town Hall from 1789.

Neo-Classical town plan, which included parks, squares and esplanades, was developed by Engel.

Classical design has even earlier roots in Finnish architecture. The town halls at Porvoo (1764) (Figure 12) and Rauma (1776), although quite provincial in formal conception and execution when compared to the works of fifty years later, indicates the classicizing influence exported from Sweden. The fortified town of Hamina, with its radial street plan (1721), has a town hall (1798) centered in its geometrical composition that reflects pre-Engel Russian provincial architecture (Figure 13). The manor houses on a number of industrial estates exemplify the rural classicism found in Finland from the late seventeenth century (Figure 14), including Louhisaari (1655), Sarvlax (1683), Fagervik (1773), Mustio (1783), and Orisberg (1804).⁶ These buildings are restrained in character, modest in scope and execution, and rural in context. Their common formal properties include simple geometrical forms topped by a mansard or double-sloped saddleback roof, appointed with a modest amount of ornamentation consisting primarily of pilasters, window surrounds, pediments, and horizontal string coursing.

By making Neo-Classicism the official architectural style of the new Grand Duchy's public buildings and town plans, Engel and his Department of Public Building created a Finnish architecture that achieved a level of refinement and execution contemporaneous with continental developments. The unparalleled amount of production during the first half of the nineteenth century by the Department made the style an integral part of the Finnish landscape. Town halls, churches and bell towers, and other public buildings stood out in marked contrast to the lakes, granite outcroppings, and birch and pine forest comprising Finland's distinctive landscape. The centralized domed church with freestanding bell tower in Alajärvi is exemplary of these classicizing



14. Manor House, Fagervik industrial estate, 1773.
15. Church, Alajärvi.

tendencies integrated with Finland's traditional wooden building techniques (Figure 15). Like their predecessors from antiquity, these crisply articulated buildings announce being man-made through their geometrical contrast with the primal forest.

Beyond the execution of public works, Neo-Classicism affected domestic architecture; basically by adding a patina of respectability and gentility to rural farm dwellings and wooden town houses. Thus, it provided a stylistic consistency at both the public and residential scales in Finland's mid-nineteenth century environments. Like their monumental models, the farm buildings exhibit an overall geometric simplicity in addition to being painted in bright colors (red and yellow ochre), with their classical appointments accented in white. These works being of traditional wood construction, indicate the ease with which Neo-Classicism was able to mesh with vernacular precedents; the typical Ostrobothnian farm house being a



16. Ostrobothnian farm house, now located in the rural farm museum in Seinäjoki.

normative example (Figure 16). In the early part of the nineteenth century, single-story wooden houses began to line the residential streets in a number of cities, creating a continuous urban edge that provided a strong sense of continuity and enclosure. Now considered typically Finnish, it is a streetscape formed by pavilion-shaped wooden houses joined by fences and framed gateways. Simple buildings like the farm houses were complemented through the use of classical appointments. The majority of these urban dwellings were executed in a manner referred to as "wood Empire," and examples can still be found in a number of older and smaller Finnish cities.

From the mid-nineteenth century until the emergence of National Romanticism some 50 years later, Finnish architecture maintained a Neo-Classical complexion. The prominent stylistic idiom was neo-Renaissance (as it is termed by Finnish architectural historians), which is characterized by its eclectic,

northern European influences. The most exemplary works are found in Helsinki and include C. T. Höijer's *Ateneum* (1887) and Erottaja office building (1889-91), K. A. Wrede's commercial building on the Esplanade (1888), and Gustaf Nyström's House of Estates (1891). Through this classicism, Finnish buildings continued to reflect new architectural developments on the continent.

Romanticism

I mean architecture whose young representatives have enthusiastically placed themselves in the service of "the new art," trying to create something not only new, but at least in part Finnish New.⁸

In the latter part of the nineteenth century a growth in national self-awareness occurred in Finland, and other European countries. This nationalism was partially based upon an interest in searching for cultural origins. Throughout Europe nationalism was also fostered by the political and social achievements represented in universal suffrage, the establishment and growth of democratic institutions, and the concomitant liberalism and socialism in thought that accompanied the industrial development. These achievements resulted in a sense of national focus and unity in a number of countries. Because of the pressures exerted by Czar Nicholas II's russification program during the late 1890's, the Finns' desire for national self-assertion and political independence was intensified. Within the Finnish arts, this self-assertion and search for a national identity resulted in a style known as National Romanticism.

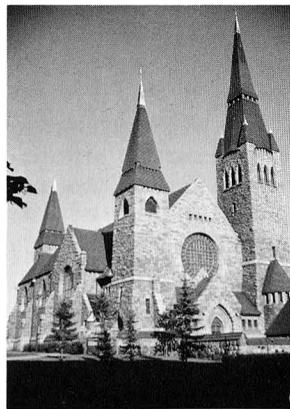
The Finns' interest in their traditional culture began as early as 1835 when Elias Lönnrot published the first edition of the Finnish national folk epic, the *Kalevala*. Published in Finnish, the poem became a focus for self-awareness and strengthened the language's use in cultured circles.⁹ The powerful, poetic imagery of the *Kalevala*, coupled with the interest in developing a national

form of artistic expression, provided a profound source of inspiration for Finnish artists. From the paintings of Akseli Gallen-Kallela to the works of composer Jean Sibelius, and eventually to architecture, National Romanticism had both artistic and political impact. The political aspects of National Romanticism cannot be understated, for as Leonard Eaton has noted:

... the Finns fought hard against Russian oppression, and the artists played a leading role in the struggle. Sibelius wrote Finlandia for a patriotic occasion: a national demonstration in aid of newspapermen who had lost their jobs when the Russians suppressed one paper after another. It could scarcely have been anything other than soul-searching; the Russians forbade its performance as soon as they heard it played.¹⁰

Thus the cultural atmosphere in Finland at the turn of the twentieth century was affected by political events in addition to the question of whether Finnish would be recognized as the national language. These concerns had an impact upon architectural discussion, for as Ritva Tuomi has noted, the important question facing architects became "the direction taken in the development of national culture — was it necessary to lean on the west, or was there some uniquely Finnish foundation to be found."¹¹ While architectural discussion in Finland, as elsewhere at that time, was concerned with the issue of what style to follow, there was also a concern regarding the qualities required for a national architecture.

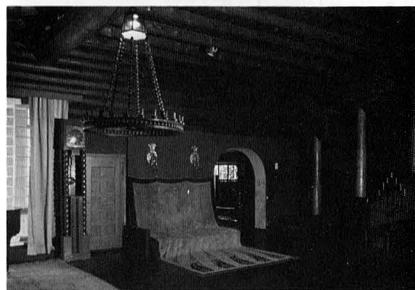
Formally, National Romantic architecture is characterized by several features (Figures 8,17). It is picturesquely composed, with irregular asymmetrical plans and masses. Mass and volume, rather than surface, are emphasized. It also employs tactile materials: granite or soapstone (left uncut or often crudely dressed), hand-molded or specially made bricks, rough hewn logs, and wooden siding, shingles, and roofing tiles. Thus ragged and irregular building masses and profiles are complemented through the use of



17



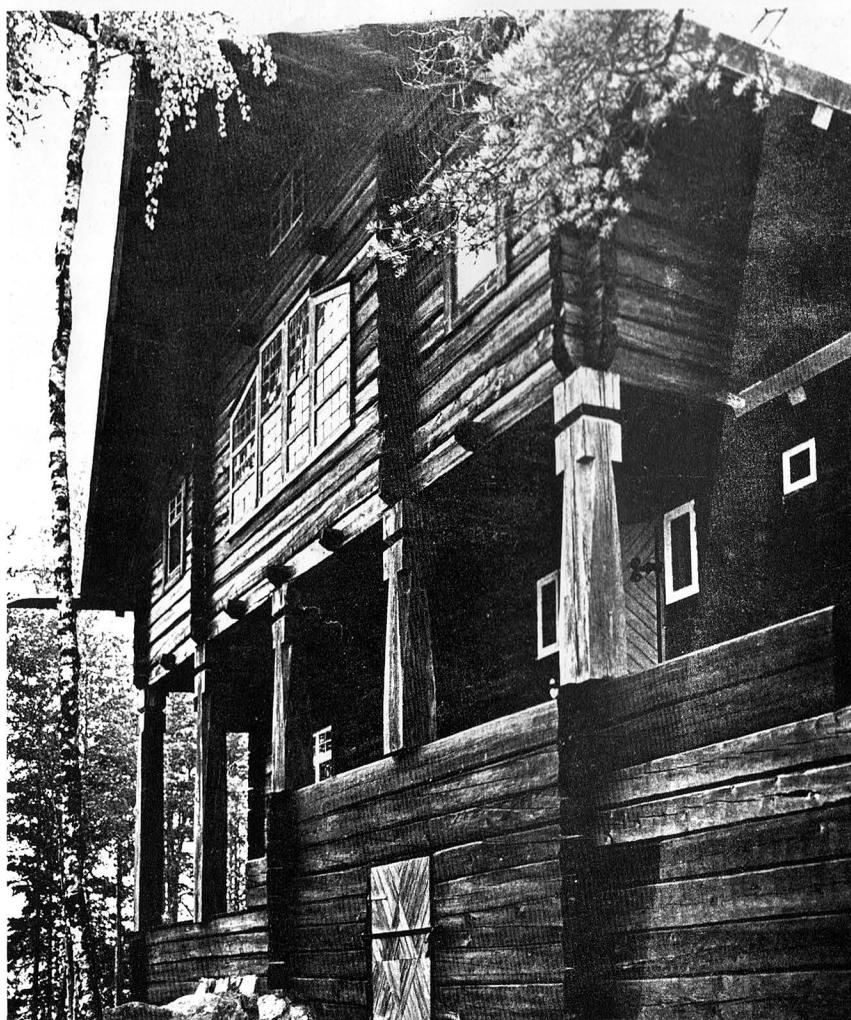
18



19



20



heavily rusticated masonry surfaces, protruding log ends, and numerous textural variation in materials. While the forms and images comprising National Romantic architecture contained both national and international precedents, the ornamentation featured motifs of a specifically national character derived from Finnish nature and folklore. Motifs included bears, squirrels and other animals at entrances and portals; tree boughs, pine cones and other flora as window surrounds; and the occasional character from folklore sprinkled here and there (Figure 18). Lastly, a general feature of the style was the desire to create integrated architectural ensembles, with artists and craftsmen working with the architect to ensure that even the smallest detail harmonized with the overall building conception. A complete work of art was intended, with the architecture exploiting the full potential of the pictorial and decorative arts (Figure 19).

National Romanticism was an adventurous admixture of elements which contained both national and international sources of formal expression, while simultaneously being a reaction to the eclecticism found in academic movements of the day. For Finnish architects and artists, national inspiration for the style developed from several sources. A primary model for its imagery and expression came from rural farm complexes and traditional folk architecture. The buildings of the

17. Lars Sonck, Cathedral, Tampere, 1902-07.

18. Gesellius, Lindgren and Saarinen, Pohjola Insurance Company, Helsinki, 1901, entrance detail.

19. Gesellius, Lindgren and Saarinen, studio and villa, Hvitträsk, 1902, interior.

20. Log farmhouse from Karelia, now located in the Seurasari Museum.

21. Akseli Gallen-Kallela, 'Kalela', Ruovesi, 1894-95.

Karelian region of southeastern Finland, which was considered the cradle of Finnish culture, was of particular interest, for this folk architecture was believed to be an inheritance from the ancient days of the *Kalevala* (Figure 20). It was quite common for the leading artists of the day — painters, composers and architects — to journey to Karelia to gain direct knowledge of the local handicraft and building traditions. These men hoped that elements discovered in the countryside would provide both the inspiration and techniques for a national architecture. This interest led to an ethnographic approach to the development of architectural form and detail on the part of some designers. This approach was partially a vestige of the principles of historicism coupled with the desire to document the “Finnishness” of Finland’s traditional folk architecture. Simultaneously, it can be considered part of a generalized appreciation of, and interest in, traditional wooden vernacular buildings that was occurring among a number of Scandinavian architects. This interest eventually led to a blending of regional and provincial styles into a generalized “Nordic” imagery, a northern manifestation of the “Swiss Chalet” style which occurred in the more forested regions on the continent.

It is not surprising, due to this interest in traditional vernacular buildings and complexes, that the earliest examples of National Romantic architecture included artist studios, summer houses and suburban villas for the middle class. Akseli Gallen-Kallela’s studiohouse “Kalela” (1894-95) (Figure 21) is an early example, as are Lars Sonck’s own summer house in Finström (1894-95) and his design for “Ainola” (Jean Sibelius’ house). Combining the general formal characteristics mentioned above with the particulars of Finnish vernacular folk architecture, an imagery emerged that became inextricably associated with the new national style. The main hall of Hvitträsk

(1902), the atelier-dwelling of the architectural firm of Gesellius, Lindgren, Saarinen, is a romantic reinterpretation of the interior of the traditional log house (Figure 19).

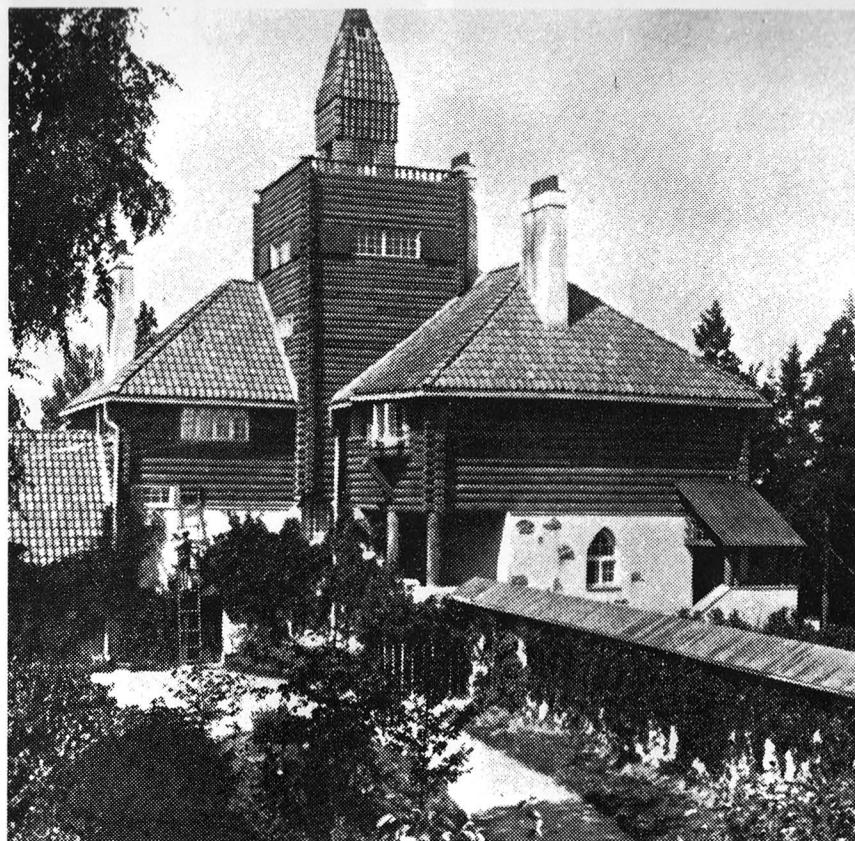
As interest in the historical architecture of Finland increased, medieval church and castle architecture (Figure 4-5), as well as seventeenth and eighteenth-century wooden church architecture (Figure 6), provided additional inspiration for Finnish architects. Originally these

works were considered slightly too “Swedish” for the Finnish purist, but later gained credibility as part of a neo-gothic focus which occurred in Scandinavian ecclesiastical architecture. Medieval architecture was considered a “northern” style, and Finland’s modest stone churches and castles were significantly provincial for inclusion as important stylistic sources, in addition to being suitably picturesque and romantic in image. These works were never copied. Instead, the stone work and

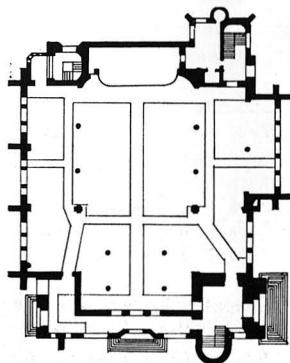
primitively decorated vaulting in the medieval churches, and the interlocking log construction, detailing and shingled roofs of the wooden country churches, provided an idiom that was reinterpreted by the National Romantic architects in an inventive and original manner. Hvitträsk is an excellent example of a collage of images, associations, and materials synthesized to recall a variety of models (Figures 8, 22). The lower walls are of partially plastered granite stonework, the upper portion is of log construction, and the roof is of pantiles and shingles. This combination exemplifies the tactility of National Romanticism’s material vocabulary. The plan of Lars Sonck’s Tampere Cathedral has corners recalling the interlocking log construction technique of traditional folk buildings (Figure 23).

William Morris and the English Arts and Crafts movement provided the greatest foreign source of influence for Finnish architects. The principles espoused by proponents of the Arts and Crafts movement — simplicity, utility, and honesty in expression of materials — found sympathy among the Finns. The Finns’ interest in the natural and handcrafted qualities of wood, hand-molded bricks, and crudely cut granite and soapstone, was reinforced by the traditional uses of these materials in medieval and folk architecture. These materials could be used simply and honestly, and represented a simple tradition of handwork. Again, Hvitträsk becomes an example, as it demonstrates the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement; and the interior is comparable with the works of Charles Mackintosh, M. H. Baillie Scott and Charles F. A. Voysey.

Another source which contributed to the international context of Finnish National Romanticism was the work of Henry Hobson Richardson. Through the Swedish, German, and Austrian architectural periodicals that were available in Finland, new developments in England and America were followed with great



22



22. Gesellius, Lindgren and Saarinen, studio and villa, Hvitträsk, 1902.
23. Lars Sonck, Cathedral, Tampere, 1902-07, plan.

interest. Richardson's work especially, with its heavy Romanesque inspired masonry masses and detailing, provided a major influence on Finnish architects of this period.¹³ Onni Tarjannes' Finnish National Theater (1899-1901) and Lars Sonck's Tampere Cathedral (1902-07) (Figure 17) and Helsinki Telephone Headquarters (1905) (Figure 24) are among numerous Finnish works consciously indebted to Richardson in their conception and detail.

While National Romanticism paralleled the Arts and Crafts movement in England, and Art Nouveau, Secessionism and Jugendstil on the Continent, it was simultaneously instrumental in the Finns defining their national character and aspirations. Despite its brief existence (approximately two decades) National Romanticism was an inseparable element in the *fin-de-siècle* quest for Finnish national identity. Because of its ethnographic and material interest in the Finnish past, National Romanticism created new artifacts which could act as a cultural focus. As the introduction of Neo-Classicism was associated with Finland's being ceded to Russia, with its resultant political, historical, and social changes, National Romanticism is inextricably linked with the growth of Finnish nationalism cultural self-awareness, and quest for political independence.

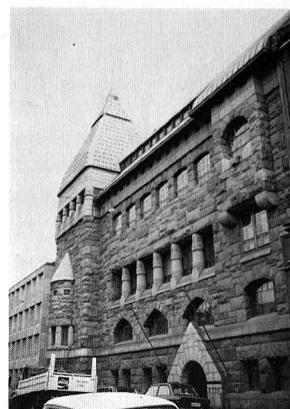
Conclusion

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Finland's architecture had achieved an international reputation as a result of National Romanticism. But the style now seemed regressive, heavy and somber to young Finnish architects who desired to generate a purer and more rational form of expression. Sigurd Frosterus and Gustaf Strengell, the leading polemicists of this generation, criticized the winning competition entry for the Helsinki railroad station, denouncing National Romanticism in the process.

[Frosterus:] To use archaic forms without real justification is as senseless as it would be to go around dressed in skins, eat with fingers, or shoot with bow and arrow instead of rifle.

[Strengell:] In Finland we no longer earn our living by hunting and fishing; floral ornamentation and bears — let alone other animals — are hardly representative of an age of steam and electricity.¹⁴

Thus the exaggerations of National Romanticism gave way to a classicizing tendency emergent throughout



24. Lars Sonck, Telephone Building, Helsinki, 1905.

Scandinavia before the First World War. Referred to as either "rational classicism" or "romantic classicism," it became the predominant style found in Finland in the 1920s (Figures 1,9,25). This form of classicism is characterized by the use of simply proportioned geometric forms with sparsely decorated stucco surfaces. These flat stucco surfaces with their crisply modeled classical appointments recall the Neo-Classicism of Engel and Bassi. Despite their classical uniforms, these buildings contain a number of non-classical characteristics. The plan order is often distorted, making use of asymmetrical compositions rather than symmetrical or axial ones. A freer disposition of plan elements occurs to accommodate both functional necessities and the exigencies of context. These properties seem to be characteristic of National Romanticism, and point to the fact that Finnish architecture in the 1920s contained both classical and romantic aspects. The two became engaged in a dialogue that

continued into the post-War years and to today. In the late 1930s when Functionalism seemed to hold sway, the dialogue continued when a reintroduction of vernacular of romantic elements occurred (Figure 2). The dialogue continued a quarter of a century later in the dichotomized plan of "Dipoli" (Figure 3) and other works by the Pietiläs.

But it is necessary to end the discussion here, for as in the ending of the



25. Hotel Tammer, Tampere.

Illustration Credits
Museum of Finnish Architecture: 3, 4, 7, 10, 13, 14, 19, 21, 22, and 23.

All others, the author.

Kalevala, this is the beginning of another chapter. As such, the bard must have the last word:

*But let this be as it may be,
I have shown the way to singers,
Showed the way, and broke the
tree-tops,
Cut the branches, shown the
pathways.
This way therefore leads the pathway,
Here the path lies newly opened,
Widely opened for the singers,
And for greater ballad singers,
For the young, who now are growing,
For the rising generation.*

Kalevala, L, 611-620

NOTES

1. John Summerson, *The Classical Language of Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1976), pp. 7-8.

2. Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980), p. 69.

3. Rainer Knappas, "Eastern and Western Neoclassicism in Finland," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, XXXVIII (May 1979), p. 128.

4. Czar Alexander's participation in the development of Helsinki was partially due to his more general interest in architecture coupled with his desire to bring Russia into the mainstream of European architectural development. He and his successor, Nicholas I, brought foreign-trained architects to St. Petersburg to assist in creating the powerful neo-classic setting for the Russian capital.

5. Nils Erik Wickberg, *Finnish Architecture* (Helsinki: Otava Publishing Co., 1962), p. 21.

6. Finnish manor houses were part of large industrial estates, usually iron works, which developed during the late seventeenth century. The most comprehensive publication to date on these estates is: Asko Salokorpi, *Ruukinmiljö (Early Industrial Milieu)* (Helsinki: Museum of Finnish Architecture, 1979), pp. 71.

7. Until recently, a great number of these wooden town houses were being torn down throughout Finland to make way for more progressive development. But recently, resulting from legislation enacted in 1977, preservation of these districts has begun, saving an important part of the Finnish urban environment from destruction.

8. Eliel Aspelin, in an essay appearing in *Valvoja* (1901), quoted in Ritva Tuomi, "On the Search for a National Style," *Abacus* (Helsinki: Museum of Finnish Architecture, 1979), p. 57.

9. Finland now has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish; but Finnish was not taught in the public schools or used in the universities until the close of the nineteenth century. Until then Swedish and Latin, or Russian, were the official languages.

10. Leonard K. Eaton, "Finnish Architecture: Tradition and Development," *Progressive Architecture*, April 1964, p. 156.

11. Ritva Tuomi, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

12. Trips to the Karelian district were undertaken to document and record the wooden folk architecture and other cultural material from the region. This interest in the folk architecture of Finland led to the establishment of the outdoor museum on the island of Seurasaari by the National Board of Antiquities and Historical Monuments in 1909. Groups of buildings from every region of Finland, which illustrate the typical local culture, were brought to the museum for preservation and display.

13. Leonard K. Eaton, "Finnish Architecture: the Richardsonian Phase," *American Architecture Comes of Age: European Reaction to H. H. Richardson and Louis Sullivan* (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1972) pp. 176-207.

14. Quoted in Nils Erik Wickberg, *op. cit.*, p. 85.